

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114711

Acting Headteacher: Mrs L Evers

Reporting inspector: Christopher Rhodes
16408

Dates of inspection: 08 - 11 July 2002

Inspection number: 196549

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Colchester Essex
Postcode:	CO2 7HE
Telephone number:	01206 573457
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms A. Inman
Date of previous inspection:	07/07/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16408	Christopher Rhodes	Registered inspector	English History Physical education Religious education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32177	Sean Curran	Team inspector	Science Geography Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Design and technology Foundation stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. John's Green Primary School is in the centre of Colchester in Essex. There are 238 pupils aged between four and eleven, which is an average size for a primary school. Children come from all parts of the town, living in a wide range of types of accommodation. An average percentage of pupils are entitled to free meals. Approximately one in every five pupils has special educational needs, usually moderate learning difficulties. This is broadly in line with the national average. Three pupils, whose educational needs are severe, complex or persistent, are given the protection of statements of special educational needs. The number of pupils from ethnic minority families is very low, and all speak English confidently. Attainment on entry to the reception classes is below the levels expected of children of this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school that is currently providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards in English are below national averages in both Year 2 and Year 6, but have risen to average levels in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is good. Leadership and management are also good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The acting headteacher has made a substantial and positive impact on the quality of education. The headteacher, staff, pupils and governors are committed to improvement.
- Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good or excellent.
- Children are given a flying start in the reception classes.
- Standards are rising in mathematics and science.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and is evident in their positive attitudes and good relationships.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly in writing, and in information and communication technology [ICT] are not high enough in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The school day is not organised so that best use is made of the time available; there is no whole-school curriculum plan for the year to ensure that all subjects are taught regularly and in sufficient depth.
- Not enough use is made of the analyses of test results. Marking varies too much from class to class.
- Subject co-ordinators do not have enough opportunities to monitor standards or evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. The rate of improvement until the appointment of the current acting headteacher three months ago was generally unsatisfactory. Progress since her appointment has been rapid and highly effective, especially in planning school improvement. Standards are similar. Overall progress is therefore satisfactory. Considerable work remains to be done to develop assessment and curriculum planning, and to extend the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating standards. The headteacher and revitalised governing body have already implemented well-formulated and effective plans for improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	E	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	E	E	E	
science	E	E	E	E	

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were in line with national averages in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Standards were close to those attained in similar schools in reading and mathematics, but were not so high in writing. Standards have been rising but the improvement in writing was not as great as in other subjects and was close to the overall improvement seen nationally. Standards in Year 6 have risen considerably in English since 1999, but have worsened each year in mathematics. Standards in science have risen slightly each year but only in line with the national trend and have remained well below average.

Current standards in English are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science are in line with the national averages, and have improved considerably in Year 6 when compared with the levels attained in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. Pupils' books in Year 6 reflect the good progress made since the beginning of the summer term in response to a rigorous revision programme in mathematics and science. Standards in reading are average, but attainment in writing is below average and spelling is particularly weak. Initial indications are that the school will not have achieved its targets for either English or mathematics. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. They are in line with expected levels in history and religious education in Year 2 but are below average in Year 6 because little work has been completed for two terms. Standards in ICT are below expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in music are at typical levels in Year 6; there was not enough evidence during the inspection to make a judgement about Year 2.

Pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points is satisfactory overall. Progress in the reception classes is good, and nearly all the children are reaching the early learning goals expected for their age. Progress in Years 1 to 6 varies from class to class, and has been affected by changes in teacher. Pupils in Year 1, Year 4 and Year 5 have made good progress over the year, and progress in Year 6 has been noticeable this term.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in all its activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. A significant minority of pupils are immature, lack self-discipline and behave in an unacceptable manner unless well managed.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and respect their feelings. Relationships are good.

Attendance	Good. Attendance rates are improving but too many pupils are late for school.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Two out of every three lessons seen were judged good or better and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Three of the lessons, all by different teachers, were judged excellent. Teaching in the reception/Year 1 classes is very good because the planning is extremely thorough and makes certain that each child's work is organised and set at the correct level for their age and ability. The planning takes full account of the different national requirements for the younger children and the National Curriculum for the older. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, with particular strengths in Years 1, 5 and 6. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively in most classes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when they are taught in small groups within the class and receive good quality assistance from learning support staff. Pupils from ethnic minority families do not need extra support with their spoken English.

Teachers ask questions very effectively at different levels of difficulty so that higher and lower attaining pupils have to think carefully and give considered reasons for their answers. The best teaching was seen when teachers were confident with the subject material, managed any challenging behaviour quickly and fairly, and taught with a pace and rigour that kept pupils alert, interested and aware of the standards their teacher was expecting to see in the completed work. In the best examples, work was marked carefully and pupils knew how to improve. In a small number of cases, work was left unmarked. This is unsatisfactory because pupils do not know how well they are doing and lose interest. In some lessons, although the overall standard of teaching was satisfactory, teachers spent too long talking and pupils lost concentration.

The quality of learning is also good because pupils respond positively to the good or better teaching. This is particularly noticeable in Year 6 where there is a consistent standard of demanding and interesting work that stimulates the pupils throughout the day. It is also very evident in the reception classes because pupils are enthused by the wide range of interesting ideas and activities provided by the staff. Learning in other classes is also good when the teacher is well prepared and confident with the materials, but learning is only satisfactory when skills are not taught rigorously enough and pupils are not set precise targets for completing work, or are not told of the standard the teacher requires.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for children under five is very well planned. There is no whole-school curriculum plan that sets out the work for the year. The school day is not organised in the most effective way. The time allocated to some lessons is too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The school works closely with support agencies. Gifted pupils are given opportunities to work at higher levels.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Good. Teachers provide an increasingly wide range of opportunities for pupils to think about values and beliefs, understand the moral code that guides the school, develop a sense of community and be aware of their

development	own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' welfare. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory overall and are not used consistently to guide teachers' planning.

Links with parents are satisfactory. One in three parents replying to the questionnaire did not feel the school worked closely enough with them. Links are good in the reception classes but vary too much from class to class in the rest of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher has identified the most significant priorities facing the school and has made notable progress in addressing them. She realises that there is still much to do. She is well supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. Insufficient responsibility has been delegated to subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The commitment and leadership from a strong chair, with the support of the governing body, have enabled the school to make difficult but essential decisions, and to lay the foundation for continued future improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior staff monitor progress effectively against criteria in the new action plan. Subject co-ordinators do not evaluate standards of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory.

Staffing levels are satisfactory but the high staff turnover over the past two years has had a negative impact on standards. Accommodation is relatively spacious, and former classrooms have been converted into a library, ICT suite and spacious office. The current toilets are unsatisfactory and there is no separate exterior area next to the reception classes which teachers can use to extend the range of opportunities for children's physical, social and creative development. Resources for ICT and music are too limited. The headteacher, staff and governing body now seek to get the best value when purchasing goods or services.

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 • They feel comfortable approaching teachers with concerns or problems • The good teaching • The school expects the children to work hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • The amount of information they are given • Homework • The relationship between school and parents • Uncertainties about leadership and management

One in four of the parents who returned a questionnaire expressed an individual concern. Inspectors understand parents' current uncertainties and why they are anxious to meet the new permanent headteacher before she takes up her post in January. This is to be arranged as part of the school's new proposals to strengthen relationships with parents. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the majority of parents, and agree with those who feel that the school could do more to improve the quality of curriculum information. The range of extra-curricular activities is similar to that found in many schools but is limited because the school has no playing field. Homework arrangements vary too much

from class to class and governors will shortly agree a new policy. Some teachers use the home-school diaries more effectively than others. Annual reports are of a generally good quality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are judged at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because they are the ends of the two key stages in primary education.
2. **Current standards in English are below average in Year 2.** Standards in reading are below average and are not as high as those attained in 2001 in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds. Standards in writing are also below average and similar to those achieved then. The 2001 results in reading and writing were much the same as those attained in schools containing pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards in reading and writing have been improving steady for three years but are not yet high enough. **Standards in mathematics in Year 2** are in line with the national average and are similar to those attained in the 2001 tests and in like schools. Early indications from the 2002 national tests are that the number of pupils who did not reach the expected national standard in reading and writing was three times greater than in mathematics. Standards in English have been affected by changes in teacher and the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in these classes. The school has appropriate systems for analysing test results and setting targets for improvement, but these have not been used enough in the past to plan the work for the following year.
3. **Current standards in English are below average in Year 6.** Standards are not as high as those attained in the 2001 national tests and the steady improvement seen since 1999 has not been maintained. Standards of reading are in line with national expectations, but spelling and writing are below average. The negative effects of three changes of teacher in one year can be seen in pupils' books, especially during the spring term when little work was marked and pupils therefore did not know how to improve. Story writing skills, in particular, had not been developed enough. **Standards in mathematics and science in Year 6** are in line with national averages and have improved significantly when compared with the 2001 test results. The downward trend in mathematical attainment has been reversed, and the steady improvement in science has been increased. The current Year 6 teacher started a rigorous revision programme at the beginning of this term that helped the pupils catch up on some of the lost ground, particularly in mathematics and science, but initial indications are that the school will not have met its targets for either English or mathematics in the 2002 tests.
4. **Achievement** is measured by comparing how much pupils improve as they pass through the school. Children in the reception classes start with levels of understanding that are below those expected for their age. They do well in response to the very good teaching, and most will achieve the expected levels in all aspects of their development by the end of the school year. The good progress continues in Year 1 but is not so apparent in Year 2, where there have been changes of teacher. Progress is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Good progress is seen in Years 4 and 5 in response to good teaching, and in Year 6 during the current term. Sixty percent of the pupils currently in Year 6 were in other schools when they took the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, and it is not possible to compare their current attainment with the standards they reached four years ago because the school does not have the full range of data.
5. **Standards** in science, religious education, art and design, design and technology, history, geography and physical education are in line with nationally expected levels in Year 2. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education are in line with expected levels in Year 6. Standards are below expectations in the current Year 6 in history and religious education because the subjects have not been taught regularly enough during the year and pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge. Standards in these two subjects are at appropriate levels in all other classes. Standards are below expected levels in ICT in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their skills in handling and communicating information electronically, or to use technology to control events or the use of

computer-based simulations. There was insufficient inspection evidence to make a judgement about standards in music in Year 2.

6. Current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are the same in English, mathematics and science as those reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. They are also very similar in all other subjects except in art and design, where standards are not as high as they were previously, and in geography in Year 6 where attainment is now higher.
7. Teachers make satisfactory use of **literacy and numeracy** in other aspects of the broader curriculum. Year 6, for example, used note-making skills in preparation for their debate about corporal punishment, Year 5 wrote persuasively to the headteacher hoping that she would change aspects of the school, and Year 3 supplied the text for a display in the hall that set out their work on pneumatics. Year 6 have not had the opportunities they need to use literacy skills in history or religious education by skimming texts for information or writing vivid historical accounts. Pupils use the skills learned in mathematics lessons to measure accurately in science and design and technology, and to present data in charts and graphs. A good introduction to Imperial measurement was made in a Year 4 history lesson when pupils converted pounds to grams in their work on wartime rationing.
8. Pupils with **special educational needs** make good overall progress in their learning as they move through the school. The good quality support they receive allows them to progress at the same rate as other pupils in nearly all lessons. They make especially good progress when working with a skilled and supportive adult in small groups within the classroom. Pupils are sometimes withdrawn for group work away from the classroom. If this happens in the afternoon, they occasionally miss the teaching in another subject that is happening at the same time in their own rooms. Progress in the subject they have missed is then unsatisfactory.
9. The number of pupils for whom **English is an additional language** is very small. They speak confidently in English and reach the same standards as the rest of their classes. None are at an early stage of learning English. Older pupils understand the idiomatic phrases used in challenging texts. They read and enjoy a wide range of suitable authors.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' **attitudes** to school and learning vary but are generally good. Pupils and parents say that most, though not all, pupils like school. They take part in extra-curricular and other activities enthusiastically. Children in the reception classes have very good attitudes but these are not always maintained in the rest of the school. Most pupils take a keen interest in lesson activities and want to do well. They talk with visitors willingly and sensibly about what they have done. For the most part they settle well and sustain concentration. However, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4, there are some pupils with short attention spans or who lack the self-discipline to apply themselves consistently. In a few lessons, especially those that lack pace, or where pupils have not been well briefed or sufficiently challenged, this results in wasted time and hampers progress. These pupils' poor self-management skills also lead to a restlessness that is sometimes apparent in assemblies.
11. **Behaviour** is satisfactory overall. Inspection evidence supports the parents' view that behaviour is less good than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Many pupils are well behaved. For instance, inspectors encountered several examples of great courtesy when pupils opened doors for them or helped them find their way around the school. They also found older pupils sensible, friendly and polite when speaking with them. Behaviour in many lessons is often good and sometimes even better. Pupils sit quietly and listen to teachers and each other. They put up their hands to answer questions and take turns when doing so. They understand and respond to set routines and codes of conduct.
12. Behaviour is unsatisfactory in parts of some individual lessons, particularly in Years 2 and 3. Pupils talk amongst themselves or fidget when the activities are not appropriate, and progress is slowed. Although there are a few pupils whose behaviour is sometimes unacceptable, the school

has managed them internally and it has not been necessary to exclude any pupils recently. Pupils generally move sensibly around the building and behave appropriately in the dining hall. They also behave well at playtimes, where good behaviour is encouraged through the provision of small games equipment, and 'zoning' for different types of activity.

13. Pupils are taught to value and support each other, and **relationships** amongst pupils, and between them and adults at the school, are generally good. Most pupils mix well together, playing and working harmoniously. This contributes to the caring and friendly ethos of the school. Pupils usually work constructively in small groups, as when Year 2 worked in pairs to compose a poem about sounds of the sea. They learn about respect for others and their differing needs and views in assemblies. This was seen, for example, in the great interest Year 5 pupils showed in the rites of Buddhism, and the understanding Year 2 pupils have of life in a drought-ridden country.
14. Pupils with **special educational needs** reflect the satisfactory behaviour and good attitudes of the rest of the school. Respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs are good, and pupils are generally supportive of those with special educational needs. There were several instances of fellow pupils showing respect and consideration for the views and comments expressed by pupils with special educational needs, especially in the time allowed for a response and for the pupil to fully articulate the point they were making. Staff reinforce these values in the day-to-day life of the school. Some individual pupils whose extra support is set out in a formal statement find it difficult to fit into the general level of satisfactory behaviour in class lessons when their learning support assistant is not present.
15. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and a boy from a minority ethnic group was at pains to tell an inspector, unprompted, how well he was respected at the school. Some pupils, particularly those in Year 1 and Year 2, and some of the parents at the meeting, say that bullying does occur and has not always been dealt with effectively in the past. One or two cases of name-calling were noted during the inspection and some behaviour -when leaving the dining hall at lunchtime, for example- is unnecessarily boisterous.
16. Pupils respond positively to **opportunities for taking responsibility**. They volunteer happily for messenger and monitoring duties, and perform them conscientiously and with pride. Older pupils willingly take on greater responsibilities, which contributes to their development as appropriately mature and confident young people. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about the new school council. Class representatives undertake their role seriously and sensibly. They clearly appreciate the opportunity to have some autonomy and to show initiative.
17. The school's overall **attendance** rate has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It was higher than the national average for primary schools in the reporting year until May 2001, and the rate of unauthorised absences was lower than the national average. Overall attendance was even higher in the year up to May 2002 and there were very few unauthorised absences. Most absences are for common childhood ailments and other medical reasons but a substantial number of pupils are removed for holidays during term time, several for more than two weeks. Lateness amongst the pupils continues to be a problem. On most days many children arrive a few minutes after the start of the school day and some even later. A small number are late fairly often. The school does not fully comply with statutory requirements for reporting absence data because information in the prospectus is incomplete.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of good teaching has doubled and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. One in three lessons in this inspection were judged very good or better, a further third of lessons were good and the remaining third were satisfactory. Standards in mathematics and science teaching are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

19. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes is very good and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The teachers and their assistants have a very good understanding of the needs of younger children and work closely and purposefully together. Planning is particularly strong because every lesson, although designed round a common theme, contains a range of activities and tasks that are suitable for the younger reception aged children in the Foundation Stage of their education, also challenges the Year 1 pupils in the same class whose learning is based on the National Curriculum. Children are managed extremely well, and get on with their work quickly in an atmosphere of enjoyable, orderly learning.
20. Overall standards of teaching in **Years 1 and 2** are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Basic literacy and mathematical skills are taught well in most lessons, as was seen in a Year 1 group when pupils identified the vowels in 'wept' and 'soft' correctly, and higher attaining pupils sorted all the vowel sounds into the correct alphabetical order. Lessons are well prepared and teachers move from one part to the next without a hitch because all their materials are ready and at hand. The variations seen in teaching during the previous inspection in **Years 3 to 6** persist, but standards are good overall. In the best examples- in two lessons in Year 6, for example- the teaching was outstanding; pupils learned very effectively because they were very well managed, the work was intellectually challenging and progress within the lesson and over time was rapid and sustained. High quality teaching was also seen in Year 5. Standards of teaching in Year 3 are satisfactory on balance, but not enough progress is made when the pace slackens in parts of the lesson and pupils lose concentration, or when the teacher's expectations of standards of behaviour or work are not made clear enough.
21. All teachers start their lessons by explaining what they hope to achieve by the end of the session. This is good practice because pupils understand why they are required to do the tasks. Many teachers also write the lesson target as a 'learning objective' on the white board for later reference. This, too, is good practice but, in several cases, the language used was taken from teachers' planning notes and was not expressed in a way that was easy for the pupils to understand, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers use questions very effectively in their lessons. This encourages pupils of all abilities to think more carefully about their answers, and to have reasons ready to justify their comments. Particularly good use of this technique was seen in Year 5, where pupils were continually stimulated by the oral exchanges between the teacher and themselves. Teachers also use a range of questions so that all pupils are involved in the lesson, and higher or lower attaining pupils are asked to respond at the correct level of difficulty.
22. Concerns about marking were expressed in the previous report. Not enough progress has been made and practice still varies too much from class to class. The marking in Year 2, for example, is of a high standard and pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. In contrast, some books in Year 5 had not been marked for several days prior to the inspection and much of the work done in Year 6 with a previous teacher had been unmarked for weeks on end. This unsatisfactory situation has had a direct impact on the quality of pupils' learning in Year 6 because they had no idea of standards expected and wondered why they should try hard if no one was going to check the work.
23. The quality of learning is good overall. This is especially noticeable in Year 5 and Year 6, where pupils respond actively to teachers' secure subject knowledge, and make a greater effort because they have been challenged intellectually or creatively. Their pace of work increases and they reach higher standards. A very good example was seen in a Year 6 debate about corporal punishment. The teacher was provocative and made pupils challenge their own feelings and ideas, present a balanced argument and learn from each other. Time flew by and all pupils, including those who found speaking in public challenging, finished the session with a much better idea of how to argue a case, evaluate a variety of sincerely held views, and respect those whose opinions were different. Learning is not effective in younger classes when the taught parts of lessons are too long and pupils lose concentration. ICT is not used enough in many English, mathematics and science lessons.

24. **Learning support assistants** make an important and effective contribution to most lessons by working quietly with the pupils nearest to them in whole-class sessions, by recording how well the pupils are doing and by leading group activities within the classroom. A very good example was seen when pupils in Year 1 wrote their reactions to sandwiches that contained mustard, pretending to be seagulls sampling the lighthouse keeper's lunch. However, there are occasions when learning support assistants sit silent on the edge of the class or busy themselves with tidying the classroom or changing displays. This is distracting and is not an effective use of their time or skills. Learning support assistants tend to be allocated to the groups containing lower attaining pupils. This is appropriate for groups containing a pupil whose specific needs are recorded in a formal statement, but limits the opportunities open to other groups of pupils who would also benefit from extra adult support.
25. The quality of teaching for pupils with **special educational needs** is good. It is very good in the Foundation Stage. It is good in the rest of the school, but not all staff take enough account of the targets set in pupils' Individual Education Plans [IEPs]. Assessment of pupils' work, and tracking the progress they make, are not always detailed enough. This makes it harder to match the work to pupils' abilities and needs. Members of the support team are well trained and are effective when liaison on the daily tasks and pupils' progress takes place with the teacher. Although teachers take care to include pupils with special educational needs in the whole-class teaching that begins and starts most lessons, there are occasions when pupils are withdrawn for specialist help or to work on their own with a learning support assistant. This tends to exclude them from the main class activities. The needs of the few pupils with English as an additional language are fully met through the general class teaching.

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

26. The curriculum for children in the **Foundation Stage** is very well planned in all areas of learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and contributes very effectively to children's progress. Best use is made of the space available for outdoor development, but the lack of a separate 'outdoor classroom' next to the reception classrooms limits the curriculum and range of 'free-flow' activities that teachers can plan for children's physical, creative and social development.
27. **The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6** is satisfactory. It is sufficiently broad in that all the National Curriculum subjects are taught as well as religious education. However, the balance of learning within some subjects is not addressed well enough because there is no overall curriculum plan for the year linked to effective schemes of work. The school has adopted government guidelines on how the various subjects should be taught but has not yet fully adapted them to reflect the school's own circumstances. The school complies with the broad requirements of the National Curriculum but there are some omissions in its delivery. The school is not yet able to offer pupils the full depth of the ICT curriculum, in using computers to control events or for making experiments by using simulations, for example, as it does not yet have the full range of equipment needed. The Year 6 history and religious education programmes have not been taught in any detail for six months and pupils do not have the knowledge and understanding expected for their age. There is a good policy for personal social and health education [PSHE] but this has yet to be fully implemented. Similarly the draft policies for homework and behaviour management have yet to be finalised and recognised within the overall curriculum provision. The acting headteacher is aware of all of these deficiencies and has made appropriate plans to address them. The school has appropriate arrangements for sex education and for making pupils aware of the dangers of drug misuse.
28. The **National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies** have been implemented satisfactorily, although some teachers have not yet received their full training entitlement. Further support in both subjects has already been booked for the coming year. The high level of staff turnover has meant frequent changes in curriculum management. Currently there are co-ordinators for all subjects. All have had recent training, which has resulted in noticeable improvement in the direction and organisation of subjects. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done to embed schemes of work in all subjects and in sustained monitoring of provision, quality and standards.

29. The overall structure of **the school day** and the length of some lessons means that time is not always used effectively. Lessons that are too long result in pupils losing concentration, and teaching and learning become less productive.
30. The curriculum for pupils with **special educational needs** is satisfactory overall. It is good in the reception classes because the teachers make good use of early assessment, individual needs of the children are well supported by detailed plans, and the nursery nurse and teaching assistants give very effective support. In other parts of the school, the provision is satisfactory rather than good because not all teachers take into account the targets set in Individual Education Plans [IEPs] when planning lessons. IEPs are of a sound quality, and are drawn up by class teachers with the support of the special needs co-ordinator. They have been improved in recent months to make the targets more specific and measurable. The aim of the school is to include all children in every aspect of its daily life. However, there are occasions when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional help and miss key teaching. During the inspection, for example, two Year 5 pupils missed the whole of their religious education lesson. This is unsatisfactory.
31. The school recognises the needs of the more gifted and talented. For example, some younger pupils work with older groups so that they are more challenged in literacy lessons, and special provision has been arranged for pupils who exceed expectations in sport.
32. The provision for **extra-curricular activities** is satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of sports coaching outside of school time, but opportunities for pupils to develop their aesthetic interests or skills in non-sports activities are more limited. There is a recorder club, which did not meet during the inspection, and a mathematical games club that is increasing in popularity. The lack of a playing field in the immediate school site necessarily limits the range of activities that can be offered.
33. Work undertaken with partner institutions and other organizations within the community adds to the quality of provision. The school has established very good links with the community playgroup that rents part of the premises. Links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer are also positive and, consequently, pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to prepare for the next phase of their schooling. Learning in religious education and history is extended through links with the local churches. There are some sports links with a local special school. Community playground activities are shared and the pupils' development in sports skills benefits from the use of the garrison field.
34. The provision for the pupils' **spiritual, moral, cultural and social development** is good and the high standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. This reflects the school's concern for the development of the whole child and affects all aspects of its life. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and offer pupils specific teaching on a range of religious, moral and social themes. Singing together in assemblies and the weekly celebratory assemblies are used to create a sense of community.
35. Provision for **spiritual development** is good. The school continues to provide many good opportunities for pupils to gain insights into their own and others' beliefs and values. Assemblies are very firmly based in the Christian tradition. Other world religions such as Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism are carefully considered in religious education lessons. Good opportunities for reflection are built into each day, some during assembly and some during lessons. In all cases the issues considered are presented in a meaningful and relevant way. This was very obvious, for example, when pupils in an assembly were invited to consider what it would be like to be enslaved and have no freedom. Pupils are given opportunities in science and mathematics lessons to reflect on such things as the wonder and meaning of pattern in nature. English lessons are used well to allow pupils to explore personal feelings such as sadness and joy through, for example, the analysis of a poem about bullying. In a reception class lesson Marc Chagall's painting of himself and his wife floating in the air was used skilfully to encourage pupils to think about happiness and what it means.

36. The school also makes good provision for the **moral development** of its pupils. Pupils learn about right and wrong and other moral concepts through discussions about such things as the preservation of endangered species and the effect of persuasion in advertising. This effectively reinforces messages in assemblies about issues such as personal responsibility. Although the school's sanctions system is not fully in place or applied consistently throughout the school, the good conduct of many pupils is generally the result of a shared sense of responsibility rather than of the fear of punishment. This is reinforced by each class drawing up its own code of conduct at the start of the school year, and by the way teachers encourage pupils to make the right moral choices.
37. Provision for pupils' **social development** is good and is enhanced within the curriculum by opportunities to work collaboratively on class projects and in team games. Pupils' sensitivity to the values and feelings of others is further developed effectively through opportunities to discuss and reflect on concepts such as fairness and justice, as was very apparent in a debate about corporal punishment amongst pupils in Year 6. The learning of good manners is a feature of the personal, social and health education programme and the benefits of this are evident in the courteous way many of the pupils conduct themselves around the school. The residential course for pupils in Year 6 provides them with further opportunities to live and work together and is a good feature of the school.
38. Pupils are also encouraged to develop positive attitudes to good social behaviour in a wider context. There are established routines across the school for pupils to distribute books and equipment and to tidy up at the end of an activity. As pupils become older they are given the chance to take on greater responsibilities such as running a tuck shop at break time. Pupils are encouraged to support each other, for example in the 'Buddy' system whereby older pupils help new pupils settle into school. The school council provides pupils with chances to make decisions that affect them and to develop an understanding of democracy. Visits from the local Member of Parliament and other community leaders also help pupils to obtain a broader view of their role in society. Pupils become aware of the different experiences of other people through fund raising for charity and supporting a family in India.
39. Provision for **cultural development** is good. Pupils learn about past cultures and those found in Britain's modern multi-racial society in art and design, music, history and geography lessons. They become familiar with their own cultural heritage in English and music, and through visits to museums, art galleries and places of interest, and by visits to the school by artists and theatre groups. In addition, as with the spiritual and moral dimensions, the school exploits many other opportunities to expose pupils to a range of cultural diversity in more subtle ways. For example in an assembly about the importance of water, pupils' attention was drawn to African music and at story time pupils in Year 1 heard a tale from China.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Staff provide pupils with good **pastoral support**, particularly with regard to their personal needs. They are caring and considerate towards the pupils and clearly respect them as individuals. As a result most children feel safe and secure at the school, approach staff confidently, and show positive attitudes towards learning and in their play. Importantly, staff are now insisting on higher levels of attainment. The careful monitoring of pupils with dyspraxia through their first year in school is an example of the school's caring approach towards pupils with special educational needs, which enables pupils to be included in all aspects of the school's work and curriculum.
41. The school's arrangements for the pupils' **health and well-being** are broadly satisfactory. There is first aid cover throughout the day although there is no separate medical room where this can be administered or where a sick or injured child can lie quietly. Most, although not all, incidents resulting in injury are logged, and parents are always informed in writing if their child receives a bump to the head. The school has an appropriate policy to ensure that pupils access only approved Internet sites.

42. Governors accept that they have not fully complied with their statutory duties regarding the health and safety welfare of the pupils during the past few years. Although, for example, they have ensured that all apparatus and equipment have been checked annually, they have allowed some procedures to become too informal. They and the acting headteacher have done a great deal towards rectifying this situation since Easter. Governors carried out a whole-school safety check in June and took immediate action where necessary. The health and safety issues noted by inspectors during the inspection were brought to the attention of the acting headteacher, who took prompt action to correct them. Governors are determined to develop a more systematic approach to health and safety issues in the future. They plan to re-organise, update and evaluate health and safety documentation, undertake training, and to make more regular safety checks and risk assessments with time scales for action and review. The acting headteacher has improved the administrative procedures relating to child protection and has almost completed a programme of awareness training for all members of staff.
43. Most teachers apply the school's behaviour management policy, which emphasises a positive approach and the development of the pupils' self-esteem, quite well. They apply discipline firmly but fairly, and use rewards such as a 'smiley' sticker or the award of a certificate judiciously. Pupils confirm that this generally has a positive effect in improving behaviour. Pupils and parents also say that the yellow and red card system for poor behaviour is not used consistently so that it is not totally effective as a way of dealing with unacceptable behaviour. As reported in the previous inspection, there are a number of pupils, many of whom have significant personal problems, who have not yet fully understood the need for good behaviour.
44. The school's procedures for **monitoring and promoting attendance** are generally satisfactory. Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance through the prospectus, the governors' annual report and newsletters. Through the home-school agreement they contract to get their children to school regularly and on time, although not all of them adhere to this commitment especially with regard to punctuality. Parents are also frequently reminded of the procedure for reporting absences and those who fail to let the school know on the first morning of their child's absence are always contacted immediately. This is a fairly new procedure and has resulted in a lower rate of unauthorised absences. Although the school has succeeded in improving attendance over the last few years, lateness continues to be a problem. Governors have not yet fully considered ways of improving punctuality.
45. The school supports pupils with **special educational needs** effectively so that they can meet targets set in their IEPs and statements. A measure of the school's success is that pupils are taken off the register as well as placed on it. There are effective systems for assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs and identifying their future requirements. The special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCO] and class teachers review pupils' individual targets and amend IEPs accordingly. The school meets the requirements outlined in any formal statements of extra provision. Learning support assistants meet fortnightly with the SENCO to discuss pupils' needs.
46. The development and implementation of a range of **assessment** strategies was a key issue at the last inspection but this was not addressed in any detail until the appointment of the acting headteacher in April 2002. A policy was formulated in 1999 but there is no evidence of its implementation. Assessment in the school is unsatisfactory overall, but the new senior management team has identified this area as a priority and systems are already being put in place. Records lack detail about what pupils can and cannot do, and it is difficult to use them effectively to analyse the achievement of different groups of pupils or of individuals. This means that pupils are sometimes given inappropriate work that may be too easy or too difficult for them.
47. There are examples of good assessment in some areas of the school, especially in the Foundation Stage. Teachers make good use of daily tracking systems that use the small 'stepping stones' in the Foundation Stage guidance to measure progress towards the early learning goals. This enables them to set short-term targets that build on the children's previous experiences and, as a result, the children make good progress which can be clearly measured. There are also good examples of assessment this term in Year 6, where teachers have recorded

how well the pupils did in lessons and what they needed to do next. Another good example, in Year 4, is of the use of assessment in numeracy and literacy, where targets are set for individual pupils and are then shared with them. Pupil assessments and records are passed on to the new teacher at the end of the year, but there is no evidence to show how these are being used to plan future teaching and learning or to set targets for pupils.

48. The school has a considerable range of data, including the results of national tests and teachers' own assessments but is not using management systems or software to analyse the information in sufficient detail. The assessment co-ordinator, who has been in post for just one term, is aware of the unsatisfactory progress that has been made, and actions have been planned to ensure that assessment in the coming year will be an integrated part of planning, teaching and learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Understandably, given the recent changes in the headship and deputy headship, and the appointment of an acting headteacher for the period to January 2003, many parents are uncertain about the school at this time of change, and fewer express full confidence in the school than did so at the time of the previous inspection.
50. Whilst most parents say their children are happy at the school and are making good progress, a good number are unhappy about some aspects of the school. For example, a third of those parents who completed the inspection questionnaire say they are not kept well enough informed about how their children are getting on, and almost as many feel the school does not work closely with parents. Inspection findings show these concerns to be only partly justified. There are opportunities for parents to meet formally with staff to discuss their children's work and progress in the autumn and summer terms, and teachers are always available to see parents at the spring term open day. Parents are also encouraged to approach staff at any other time to share concerns about their children's education. Most feel able to do so because they find teachers very approachable and willing to help.
51. Parents of pupils with **special educational needs** are invited to be fully involved in the reviews of their children's progress. Parents cannot always attend, and the school initiates telephone reviews to ensure that they are kept fully informed. This is very good practice. Parents are given copies of the individual education plans and are involved, as are the pupils, in setting the targets.
52. The pupils' **annual reports** are generally of good quality. They give a clear indication of the individual's attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science. They also report on all other subjects, although sometimes the comments are too broad to be meaningful. Clear targets for improvement are set for English, mathematics and science. With only one or two exceptions, the reports are positive and encouraging and this is particularly the case in the comments about the child's personal and social development.
53. The acting headteacher and new deputy headteacher work hard to **involve parents**. They held an open meeting early in the term to introduce them and to explain about the issues that needed to be addressed, and how the school might move forward. Parents who attended very much appreciated the opportunity to meet the new school managers and to hear about developments. They feel reassured about the school's future. The school has also recently responded to a parental request for a cycling proficiency course by asking how many would be interested and if any could help with it. The school accepts that more could be done to inform parents about the curriculum and currently has plans to send parents topic information sheets each term indicating what their child will be learning and suggesting possible out-of-school activities that might reinforce that learning. They also hope to start inviting parents to the special celebration assemblies on Fridays. Parents in the reception classes are already given good quality information about the curriculum. Inspectors agree with some parents that **homework** is not set and marked consistently throughout the school, and that not all teachers use the home-school reading record diary effectively to give parents an on-going overview of their child's progress.
54. Parents express no particular concern about how they are kept informed about general matters, and the school has a satisfactory range of ways to keep them up to date. The prospectus and governors' annual report both contain much useful information, although both omit one or two required details such as the progress that has been made with the action plan following the last inspection. Governors are aware of this and are currently revising both documents to ensure that they comply with statutory requirements, and to improve the layout so that the content is more easily accessible to the reader. Regular newsletters give diary dates and reminders about such things as paying for school dinners and the importance of the children wearing sun hats. They also include details of any changes to school organisation and invitations to parents to help at the school.
55. The school considers it important that parents support their children's education and actively encourages them to become involved, especially at the Foundation Stage. Some do so, for

example by listening to their children read at home and by monitoring homework. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, few parents are more actively involved in the life of the school. About eight give valuable classroom support on a regular basis by helping the pupils with reading. Some assist on educational visits or walk with the children to the garrison playing field. A few sometimes help by tidying the library or the garden. The school is anxious to strengthen such links by encouraging parents to help with extra-curricular activities. A good sign is that an enthusiastic group of parents has recently revitalised the parent-school association. They have already run a cake stall to raise funds for a new colour printer and are organising a disco for this year's 'leavers.'

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. There have been significant staff changes at a senior level since the previous inspection. These led to a period of considerable uncertainty from which the school is emerging rapidly. Progress made against the key issues identified in the previous report was generally unsatisfactory until the appointment of the acting headteacher three months ago. Overall standards of leadership and management by the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher are good but not enough has been done to develop the management role of subject coordinators. Staff turn over has been high.
57. **The acting headteacher**, who has been in post only since the start of the summer term, provides very good leadership and management. She has identified the significant issues facing the school very quickly and acted upon them to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These improvements have been strongly supported by the newly appointed **deputy headteacher** and the senior management team. They have initiated the short-term and rapid changes necessary to raise standards and re-create a sense of purpose in the school. The local education authority [LEA] has played an important and vital role in overseeing the improvements in close partnership with the governing body. The strengths and weaknesses of the school have been clearly prioritised and medium-term action plans, with defined teaching and learning outcomes and success criteria, are in place.
58. The current role of the **subject co-ordinators** is limited. Some have been in post only for a short period of time. They do not have enough planned opportunities to assess standards in their subjects or to monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching and learning through direct observation of lessons. This also makes it harder for them to support colleagues and spread good practice. Due to the school's current staffing situation, there is insufficient time available to enable middle managers to develop and fulfil their management roles effectively. There is some monitoring of teachers' planning but this is not directly cross-referenced to pupils' work, the learning outcomes or the quality of teaching.
59. Over the past two years the school has suffered from an extremely high turnover of staff. This has had a detrimental impact on standards, pupils' progress and curriculum planning. The high turnover is not limited just to teaching staff, and has affected all roles in the school. There are no formal procedures for the induction of new staff.
60. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with **special educational needs** is effective. Additional support for pupils with formal statements of specific need is used efficiently and extended from the school's own budget. Specific grants for additional support for pupils with special educational need are being used effectively. Liaison with outside agencies is good and provides the school with specialist support. The co-ordinator provides good management and is committed to improvement. The transition to the new code of practice is at an advanced stage and will be meeting the statutory requirements in the autumn term. The school has the recommended link governor, who works very closely with the co-ordinator and monitors and supports the work taking place in the school. Resources are adequate. The co-ordinator keeps the register up to date, with identified dates for review and notes about the progress children are making. The provision of extra staff, who have received additional training, has a positive impact on pupils with special needs by supporting their inclusion in the curriculum.

61. Members of **the governing body** are developing their roles effectively and, led by an astute and strong chair of governors, their role in the management of the school is good. The chair, with the support of the governing body, has had the strength and conviction to make some very difficult staffing and management decisions for the benefit of the whole school. Governors are well informed, capable and have the confidence to guide the school forward. The governing body has the appropriate systems, committees and standing orders to ensure that they are fully informed when formalising the strategic management of the school. Governors have identified the development of teaching and learning in the school as their first priority. This has been greatly assisted by the appointment of an effective 'link' governor, and by combining of governors' development plan with the school development plan. Governors have recently attended many courses to develop their skills further. Although these initiatives are in the early stages of development, there is a strong will to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education.
62. Oversight of **financial management** by the headteacher, office manager and chair of finance is good. The chair of finance visits the school monthly to review the budget and ensure that the newly adopted principles of obtaining the best value when purchasing goods and services are being maintained. Reviews by the responsible LEA officer over the past two months have shown no issues of concern. Governors' finance meetings take place on a regular basis, with the school office manager in attendance. This has enabled closer working relationships to evolve, and has created a sense of commitment and motivation from the support staff which ensures that the school improves and moves forward. The past lack of long-term planning throughout the school means that the monitoring of spending to meet future needs is not yet satisfactory, particularly in terms of knowing what works and why, and whether particular developments are effective or not in raising pupils' attainment, or how particular groups of pupils are performing or progressing over time.
63. The school has only just started to make use of new technology to improve the quality of information available. The present office is of considerable size, but does not best meet the individual needs of those working there. It is not possible to ensure the privacy required when dealing with personnel issues. Most of the office staff are new to their roles, again there has been considerable staff turnover, and new staff are working with both new and old practices. The implementation of new practices has reduced the non-payment of lunch monies by two thirds. The use of the office as an area for sick and ill children is not appropriate.
64. The **teaching assistants** support the school, teachers and pupils effectively in their everyday work. However, their deployment is not always efficient and they have not had enough opportunities for professional development. The school has introduced a system of performance management for all staff in the school, in addition to the requirements for the teaching staff.
65. **The school site** presents many problems, not the least being that it is a listed building. This has limited the school's ability to improve its facilities, especially the quality of the toilets. There is no provision for an outdoor area for the reception aged children, which constricts teachers' ability to plan and deliver the full Foundation Stage curriculum. Storage space is limited. The school does not suffer from any significant vandalism and is well maintained by the site manager and his staff. The building is in a satisfactory state of repair, but there is evidence of a lack of annual maintenance. Some high level windows were painted incorrectly and now no longer open. Pupils are at present debating through the school council how improvements to the playground can be made. The covered area is a priority for refurbishment.
66. The overall level of **resources** is unsatisfactory. Whilst there has been considerable improvement, the provision for children's physical development in the reception classes, and for music and ICT software, is limited and restricts the full delivery of the curriculum. The library is centrally located. The current book stock is limited for a school of this size and the library can no longer be described, as it was in the previous report, as excellent. No pupils were observed using the room for research during the inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. The acting headteacher, headteacher designate, staff and governing body should continue to work closely together to maintain the school's current rapid improvement and
- raise standards in English, particularly in writing, and in ICT; [See paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 84, 88-89, 121-122]
 - reorganise the school day so that best use is made of the time available; [See paragraphs 29, 112]
 - draw up a whole-school curriculum plan for the year to ensure that each subject is taught regularly and in sufficient depth; [See paragraphs 5, 27, 116, 130]
 - use the information gained through the analysis of test results more effectively; and develop a more consistent approach towards assessing and marking pupils' work, and using the information to plan lessons; [See paragraphs 22, 46-48, 89, 91]
 - give subject co-ordinators regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects; [See paragraphs 58, 91, 103, 115, 126, 129, 132]

In addition to the above, the governing body should plan to

- improve toilet facilities and the provision for sick pupils, and provide an outside area for the youngest children to use as an extension of their classrooms [See paragraphs 63, 65, 81]
- improve the resources for ICT and music, and the overall quality of the library; [See paragraphs 27, 66, 123]
- continue to work with parents to reduce the amount of lateness; [See paragraphs 17, 44]
- review the value of withdrawing pupils with special educational needs from lessons; [See paragraphs 25, 30]
- address outstanding issues relating to healthy and safety. [See paragraph 42]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	16	16	0	0	0
Percentage	6	24	35	35	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	15	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	9	15
	Girls	14	15	16
	Total	26	24	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (78)	77 (81)	100 (91)
	National	84 (83)	84 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	15	13	16
	Total	30	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (75)	90 (84)	100 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	16	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	7	9
	Girls	10	6	9
	Total	19	13	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (55)	48 (62)	67 (76)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	7	8	9
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (48)	67 (41)	70 (48)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	189
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.3
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	193

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Total number of education support staff	
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	533409
Total expenditure	550570
Expenditure per pupil	2458
Balance brought forward from previous year	41483
Balance carried forward to next year	24322

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	39	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	26	59	7	6	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	59	12	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	52	23	6	1
The teaching is good.	34	45	10	6	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	45	22	11	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	43	10	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	48	11	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	43	19	8	5
The school is well led and managed.	16	40	15	9	20
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	20	56	12	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	26	27	17	16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. The school's baseline assessment of children's attainment when they start school shows that their language, mathematical and personal development is below what is expected for their age. However, they make good progress because of the quality of teaching they receive, and nearly all the children achieve the standards expected nationally by the end of their reception year. Some exceed expectations. Provision for children in the reception classes has improved since the last inspection and the curriculum is better planned.
69. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children achieve well in all areas of learning. This is because teachers have a very good understanding of how children learn, and plan well for each step in their development of skills and knowledge. There is a very good pace to the teaching and sufficient challenge to sustain children's interest and curiosity. Children concentrate hard and learn effectively.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Very good teaching ensures that children develop confidence and independence, and make good progress. The majority achieve the early learning goals by the time they move to Year 1. They are enthusiastic learners. They share ideas confidently and respond positively to the views expressed by others. They take turns to talk about what they enjoy doing at home during 'circle time', when the children sit quietly with their teacher in a discussion group. This helps them to listen attentively and to be sensitive to the feelings of others. Children work well together, demonstrating a good understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. They show very good levels of independence when selecting activities, and dress and undress by themselves for physical education lessons. They are able to work with concentration, independent of adult supervision.
71. Teachers have very high expectations of the children, who consequently behave very well and follow the daily classroom routines sensibly. Children tidy up after activities and work well together in groups, needing very few reminders. Relationships between children and adults are secure and trusting.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Very good teaching ensures that children make good progress and most achieve the expectations for their age by the end of their reception year. Children listen to each other well, take turns in conversation and respond appropriately to questions and instructions. They enjoy listening to stories and poems and sometimes re-enact their own, using the characters they hear about in books such as 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch.' Most children read familiar words in simple sentences. For example, one group had to re-arrange words into a coherent sentence before matching them to the corresponding picture in a story. They know that print and pictures carry meaning and that stories follow a sequence of events.
73. Children develop their handwriting skills effectively by writing letters in sand or by tracing over shapes, before practising letter formation in their books. More able writers join up their letters, managing to keep the size consistent and forming the letters correctly. Children use their knowledge of letter sounds to attempt writing simple words and write their own names unaided.
74. Teachers use sections of the literacy strategy successfully to prepare children for the National Curriculum. Learning resources such as games for matching words are used very effectively and books are always accessible to children. Adults talk to children continually in order to develop and extend the range of words they use. They correct grammatical mistakes gently so that 'Can I go toilet?' becomes 'Can I go to the toilet?' Support staff make a valuable contribution to children's learning by engaging them skilfully in conversations about what they are doing, encouraging them to think about language and how to express themselves clearly.

Mathematical development

75. Children's understanding of number when they start school is below that normally seen. They respond positively to the very good teaching and make good progress to reach nationally expected levels by the end of reception year. Most children count reliably to 10 and many count beyond. They match numbers to sets of objects, and higher attaining children find the total number of objects in two sets. They learn mathematical language like 'lighter' or 'heavier' and teachers use stories such as The Three Bears to consolidate understanding of 'large' 'medium' and 'small.' Children recognise and name regular shapes including 'square', 'circle' and 'rectangle.'
76. Teachers make lessons interesting and challenging by using resources very well. In one lesson the teacher used a telephone to talk to 'Mr Muddle' when teaching children how to sequence numbers from 11 to 20. This captured children's interest so they quickly spotted when the teacher 'muddled' 51 and 15. The lesson linked well with the creative role-play area and the sequencing of tickets for 'airline seats.' Simple songs such as '10 Little Sausages' are used very effectively to help children count back in ones and twos.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Teachers plan a good range of activities to broaden children's general knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. By the time they leave the reception class most children's attainment is at the level expected for their age. The provision is enriched by visits to places like Clacton, Castle Park and Maldon Promenade, which help children's understanding of the past. Scientific curiosity is developed very effectively because children are encouraged to question why things happen and how they work. In one lesson, for example, children followed a line of investigation to see if they could 'hear a pin drop.' The exploration of sound was extended very effectively into the area of creative development when children also learned that the sounds of musical instruments are caused as a result of shaking or striking. The teacher used this opportunity very effectively to allow children to listen to the different timbre of instruments before organising a performance of background music to a poem about the sea. All activities are punctuated by questions from teachers and support staff that encourage pupils to explain their thinking and clarify their learning.
78. Children learn about growing things when they plant beans and seeds and begin to understand the importance of looking after living things by taking care of the fish in the classroom tank. The restricted nature of the school site outside the classrooms limits children's opportunities to grow plants or care for an outside environment. Stories about the seaside, looking at aerial photographs and planning their own maps with key features, help them to develop an awareness of places beyond their own locality.
79. Children explore the potential of construction sets and malleable materials, including sand and water. One group rigged a 'boatswain's chair' using a piece of string and a small container to send sandwiches to the lighthouse they were playing with. There are too few opportunities or resources for children to handle tools, to saw or to hammer. Children use the computer confidently and show increasing control of the mouse and keyboard, for example when selecting 'paint' tools from the icon bar or typing in their names.

Physical development

80. By the end of their reception year children demonstrate typical levels of co-ordination and control of their bodies and most attain the skills expected for their age. They are increasingly skilful in managing smaller tools such as scissors, pencils and brushes as well as malleable materials such as plasticene and dough.
81. There are good opportunities for indoor activities in movement. During physical education lessons children find different ways to move freely around the hall, showing good awareness of others in

the space around them. They throw, bounce and catch a ball with confidence and balance well when controlling a ball with their feet to guide it around a cone. Provision for the full range of appropriate physical development is limited by the lack of a suitable outside area next to the classrooms. The school is aware that it does not have enough resources, such as wheeled toys, for children to develop the full range of their physical skills.

Creative development

82. Children make good progress in this area of learning because teachers make ample provision for them and the quality of teaching is very good. The majority of children attain the skills expected for their age by the time they leave the reception classes. They are given good opportunities to work with a wide range of materials to explore colour and texture by creating pictures, three-dimensional models and collage. For example, they used grasses, twigs and leaves to design and create 'natural sculptures.' Children expressed their ideas effectively in drawings to show how they feel when they are happy, after the teacher had talked about the work of an artist who painted himself 'floating in the air.'
83. Teachers are skilled at setting up role-play areas that encourage children to explore language and relationships through imaginative play. They encourage children very well by entering into the play themselves, for example by asking a child to put the 'baby back into the airline seat,' rather than simply asking for the doll to be put away. There are displays of musical instruments, some made by the children themselves, which allow them to explore sounds. They are beginning to build a repertoire of simple songs that they sing from memory and to match movements to music.

ENGLISH

84. **Standards** are below average in Year 2 and Year 6, a similar position to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. Overall progress is satisfactory although staff changes in both Year 2 and Year 6 have slowed improvement over the past ten months and have contributed to the below average standards. Pupils with special educational needs have made satisfactory progress, especially in the lessons where the group work is set at the correct level of difficulty, when a learning support assistant sits with them during whole-class teaching, encouraging and helping, or when they work with an adult in group activities within the classroom. Pupils whose needs are met through a formal statement make steady progress because they are supported and encouraged at every step of the way. Pupils with particular gifts in reading are encouraged to work at higher levels.
85. Standards in **speaking and listening** are in line with national expectations at seven and eleven and have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 2 speak confidently and listen carefully to stories. They are keen to answer questions but occasionally find it difficult to find exactly the words they need to explain their ideas. Teachers recognise this, and phrase questions carefully so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or who are capable of high attainment, are asked questions and are expected to reply at the correct level. Year 6 pupils are confident speakers and enjoy the opportunities they have in many lessons to explore ideas in depth and to test out their ideas in debate. They listen to each other with concentration, and many are willing to alter their own opinions when the arguments they hear from others are convincing. The few pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language are all confident speakers and are well able to cope with standard and idiomatic English.
86. **Standards in reading** are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read voraciously at levels well ahead of those expected for their age. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the sounds letters make, and use these phonic skills to tackle unfamiliar words. Initial indications from the results of the 2002 national tests and tasks confirm that although pupils work hard at their reading and are taught the basic skills, approximately a quarter of the current Year 2 will not have reached the nationally expected standard by the time they complete the year. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading and many have favourite authors. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils read fiction aloud

- with pleasure and good expression. Higher attaining pupils are able to discuss their texts in some detail and draw conclusions about character and mood. They use letter sounds and the context of the sentence to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. This is good practice.
87. Reading diaries are used in different ways. Some only contain a list of books the pupil has read and give parents no indication of where the pupil has difficulty. In the best examples, in Year 4 for example, the teacher and parents write detailed comments that record progress and indicate what the pupil needs to do to improve. This is very successful in helping the child concerned, and strengthens the partnership between school and home. It was unclear from some diaries whether teachers always reply to parents' requests for guidance. Year 6 make good use of the reading diaries to write a review of the text they have read, but do not have enough opportunities to discuss their reading choices with an adult.
88. **Standards in writing** are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' books in Year 2 show that most have made satisfactory progress since September. Their writing communicates meaning and is often expressed in a series of linked sentences. Full stops and capital letters are usually used accurately. Higher attaining pupils write in a clear and organised manner, extend their ideas logically and spell correctly. Most other pupils struggle with their writing and do not use a wide vocabulary in their stories. Standards of handwriting are satisfactory. Letters are usually formed correctly and are consistent in size.
89. Progress in Year 6 has been unsatisfactory because pupils were not given enough guidance on how to improve during the spring term. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 write in a varied and interesting way but make little use of paragraphs. Their vocabulary choices are often adventurous and reflect the range of their reading. Middle and lower attaining pupils include plenty of ideas in their work but do not have the grammatical skills, breadth of vocabulary or knowledge of punctuation they need to communicate effectively in writing. Although the spelling of simple words is generally accurate, overall standards in spelling are unsatisfactory. Handwriting is generally joined and legible. Little use was made of computers during the literacy lessons seen during the inspection, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to draft work on screen, skim text for information or use the other skills they have learned in ICT lessons. Pupils' use of literacy skills in other subjects: writing reports, reading for information, and discussing their work, is satisfactory.
90. The overall **quality of teaching** seen during the inspection was good. Basic language skills are well taught and, in the best examples, lessons move on briskly from one activity to the next, keeping the pupils alert and interested. In one Year 1 lesson, for example, the lesson started with an enjoyable exercise that tested and consolidated pupils' recall of the basic words they used in their writing, revised their understanding of vowels, and continued the previous day's work on alliteration. All pupils made good progress, and were keen to get started on their own written work. Teachers use questions effectively and, in the best examples, keep raising the level of challenge so that pupils of all abilities work even harder. A good example was seen in Year 5 when pupils read a text about endangered species. The teacher's questions enabled all the pupils to understand for themselves how 'The writing makes us feel sympathetic to whales.' Behaviour is usually well managed and pupils in most classes know that they are there to work and respect the standards that the teacher sets. Teaching is not successful when, as happened in several lessons, the teacher talks for too long and pupils become bored and inattentive. It is also unsatisfactory when work is unmarked or the worksheet does not meet the needs of the group of pupils for whom it was set. Similar concerns were noted at the time of the previous inspection.
91. **The co-ordinator** manages effectively. She works hard to support colleagues and has used the English budget efficiently to extend the range of reading materials in the school, especially in buying books that will be popular with boys. This has been successful and all the boys who discussed reading during the inspection spoke positively about books. The co-ordinator has been given some 'release' time to manage the subject but does not currently have any planned opportunities to monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in other classes. This makes it harder for her to assess standards, especially in older classes, support colleagues or

spread good practice. The co-ordinator analyses the outcomes from National Curriculum tests but not enough use is made of her deductions in teachers' long term planning.

MATHEMATICS

92. **Standards** are in line with expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and are similar to those seen in the previous inspection. Whereas standards for seven-year-olds have been maintained at average levels in national tests, pupils in the current Year 6 have shown a good improvement over the 2001 results, which were well below the national average. The rapid improvement seen in the current summer term indicates a reversal of the declining trend seen in the last two years. Pupils' overall achievement is in line with those in schools in a similar context. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys.
93. **By the end of Year 2** most pupils have a secure grasp of addition and subtraction to 20. Some attempt to work with number problems involving higher numbers such as 74 minus 31 and begin to understand the place value of hundreds, tens and units. They understand sequences of 2, 5, and 10 and order numbers correctly on a number grid. Pupils recognise regular two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. They identify $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a shape and know that shapes have symmetry. Higher attaining pupils use standard units such as centimetres to measure common objects. They record data about favourite colours, for example, on tally charts and present their findings in simple block graphs.
94. **By the end of Year 6** pupils are competent in their use of standard methods of addition and subtraction. They have a clear understanding of the place value of numbers including decimals. They use non-standard methods such as partitioning larger numbers in order to speed up their calculation. Most pupils recall number facts appropriately but do not yet apply their knowledge of tables to long multiplication and division problems. They investigate the properties of shapes and use co-ordinates effectively to translate them to a different location on a grid. They work out lines of symmetry by rotating shapes through 90, 180 and 270 degree turns and calculate the approximate metric equivalent of imperial units. Pupils collect and record data that they represent in line graphs and pie charts, and investigate mathematical ideas such as the probability of numbers coming up in equal proportions when rolling a pair of dice. Pupils in all classes make appropriate use of their numeracy skills in science and design and technology lessons.
95. **The quality of teaching and learning** has improved since the last inspection. It is now good overall. Teaching is stronger in Years 3 to 6 and particularly strong in Year 6, which accounts for the rapid progress seen in pupils' work and the improvements in their achievements in the summer term. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 feel secure with the routines of the numeracy strategy. The pace of mental and oral work is satisfactory and teachers use suitable strategies and resources to maintain interest in most lessons. They question pupils skilfully and allow them time to reflect before answering. Daily lesson plans are sound and show a clear distinction between the expectations of the different age groups and abilities in the class. In some lessons, however, although different tasks are planned, pupils are not challenged enough. For example, pupils in Year 1 who had the ability to work with much higher numbers were expected by their teachers to work only to 10. This does not contribute to their progress.
96. Lessons in Year 3 to 6 generally have more pace. Learning is more effective because teachers expect more of their pupils. They promote the correct use of mathematical language effectively and question pupils to ensure that they understand. Rigorous mental arithmetic sessions give lessons a brisk start. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the pupils played bingo games, matching their numbers with the answers to rapid-fire questioning such as 'five squared', '16 lots of 2' and 'what is the sum of ...?' Pupils showed good mental agility, enjoyed the challenge and entered into the next part of the lesson about fractions more enthusiastically. Teaching was highly effective in a Year 6 lesson because of similar pace and expectations. Pupils learned about factors and in a subsequent number investigation made interesting discoveries about squared and prime numbers. Pupils were enthusiastic and highly motivated learners because the teachers brought fun as well as challenge to the lessons. Not all lessons are managed so consistently and at times teachers' strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are not effective. This results in interruptions to pupils' learning and slower progress. All teachers make satisfactory arrangements for pupils who have additional learning needs. This is often through the classroom-based support of learning support assistants, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal

and academic progress. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their ICT skills as a regular part of classroom-based learning.

97. **The co-ordinator** has worked conscientiously to maintain the profile of mathematics in school. Initiatives such as the mathematical games club have contributed well to that aim. Since the recent changes in the school's senior management, there is more direction and urgency to the subject leadership, resulting in improved teaching and standards.

SCIENCE

98. **Standards** are line in line with nationally expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6, and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Overall progress, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Progress this term in Year 6 has been very good and has been in direct consequence of the new teacher's rigorous and systematic programme of revision. Pupils in all classes are given many well-planned opportunities to carry out their own experiments and to learn scientific principles through a practical approach. This is working well to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as making the work more interesting, enjoyable and relevant. The work seen in pupils' books and on display in classrooms shows a wide range of scientific applications being covered by pupils of all ages.
99. **Standards in the current Year 2** are sound. Pupils show a clear understanding of materials and life cycles in their work. Their presentation, especially the water cycle diagrams, is clear and shows detailed information. Although no lessons in which pupils conducted investigations or fair tests were seen during the inspection at this key stage, pupils' workbooks show satisfactory progress in this aspect of their development.
100. **Pupils in Year 6** have a good understanding of the need for fairness in their scientific investigations. They conduct a wide variety of experiments and know that only one variable should be changed at a time or their results could be inaccurate. This was evident in discussions with pupils who were carrying out a small-scale experiment on vibration. It soon became apparent to the pupils that the ruler they were using was twisted and not suitable for the task. They used past knowledge to realise that the initial results were flawed. Further discussion with pupils revealed a wide range of scientific knowledge. They were able to discuss the workings of the human body, especially the effect of exercise on pulse rate, the properties of materials and aspects of the solar system.
101. **The quality of teaching is** always good or better. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and share the lesson objectives with their class to enable pupils to focus on the learning intentions and know when they have achieved them. The correct scientific vocabulary is stressed and pupils, from an early age, learn to use it appropriately. This was seen, for example, in Year 1 when the teacher informed pupils that she was 'conducting an experiment.'
102. Teachers manage their pupils very well and create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere that helps pupils concentrate on their work without interruption. Lessons are often exciting and teachers use opportunities, which sometimes arise unexpectedly, to further extend learning. An excellent example of this was in a Year 1 lesson on sounds. The teacher had established excellent responses from the pupils to the levels of noise that can be made by dropping an object. Ensuring that a fair test was taking place, the teacher moved out of the classroom at the pupils' suggestion, to see if the noise became quieter when the object was dropped outside. They were totally engrossed, and at times mesmerised, waiting to see if they could still hear the sound the further the teacher went away. This was then built upon in the next lesson when pupils illustrated their concept of what sound looked like by drawing pictures. Several pupils expressed this in a pattern of a stone being dropped into a pool. A Year 5 lesson on substances presented the opportunity for the teacher to explore and discuss the effects of alcohol on people driving a car. Pupils' responses were excellent, and they started to understand the links between everyday life and science. Teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to make useful teaching points and help their pupils acquire new knowledge confidently.

103. The quality of **subject leadership** is sound. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but as yet has not had the opportunity to observe lessons. The results of past National Curriculum tests have not been analysed to identify any areas for future development. Assessment procedures to determine individual pupils' standards in science have yet to be fully developed. The school has a very well developed action plan that identifies areas that require immediate attention. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in ensuring that there is enough time for science teaching, an issue in the previous inspection report. For example, the time allocated to science in Years 3 and 4 is approximately half that seen in most schools. Whilst the current co-ordinator has only been in post for less than a year and the role is still under-developed, the strengths and future needs in science have been well assessed and the will to improve underpins all decision making.

ART AND DESIGN

104. **Standards** are close to the national expectations for the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has not maintained the higher standards seen during the previous inspection. The considerable staff turnover and intermittent co-ordination of the subject have contributed to the drop in standards of work.
105. Pupils gain a satisfactory range of experiences in drawing, painting, collage and three-dimensional work. Recent government subject guidance is used thoughtfully to support weekly planning and is beginning to lead to the satisfactory development of skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 combined their drawing and modelling skills to produce some commendable clay sculptures. The ideas for the abstract shapes of their models were translated from their original sketches of family groups. Another example was seen when pupils in Year 2 used their observations of local buildings as the inspiration for their mosaic work.
106. Although there was good **teaching** in the small number of lessons seen, the evidence of pupils' work over time and from talking to them, is that teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best taught lessons teachers have a secure understanding of the skills they plan to teach and give the pupils confidence in themselves. This was seen, for example, in Year 6 when pupils were shown how to apply watercolour and then used their new skills sensitively to draw out the features of their sketches of buildings. Lessons are well prepared with enough resources to ensure that all pupils are engaged. Relationships in the classrooms are generally good, so that pupils work in an environment that encourages their creativity and where teachers value their achievements. Work displayed round the school contributes to the range of pupils' experiences in art and enhance the overall ethos of the school.
107. The current **subject co-ordinator**, who has been in post for two terms, has revised the policy and has established links with Essex University to involve pupils in an art project. The subject has not been a high priority in the past so there has been no continuous evaluation of work in order to maintain high standards. Although national subject guidance offers a source of ideas for planning, this has not yet been integrated into a scheme of work that provides a systematic approach to the teaching and development of skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. **Standards** have been maintained since the last inspection at a level broadly in line with the national expectation. Attainment in most classes is satisfactory, though during the inspection some Year 6 pupils achieved at very high levels due to the quality of the specialist teaching they received. Talking to pupils, however, indicates that their experiences before Year 6 are typical of most schools.
109. Recent government subject guidance for design and technology is used as a basis for planning. In Years 1 and 2 pupils explore simple mechanisms by making vehicles with wheels and axles or

using a simple lever to make features of a picture move. Pupils in Year 3 adopt more sophisticated methods to produce movement, which they demonstrated by using pneumatics to make movement in their models of monsters. In Year 4 pupils combine scientific knowledge and understanding by incorporating electrical circuits when building their lighthouses.

110. **Pupils in Year 6** produced evidence of their earlier good work in the form of slippers. They explained how they discussed the function and design of their slippers before building a prototype and then the finished product. They showed good skills in assembling the materials they used. In the one lesson seen, teaching was outstanding because of the teacher's specialist knowledge and the rigorous challenge planned into the lesson. After very clear explanation and demonstration from the teacher of how a transmission system works, pupils were set a very challenging task in designing and building one of their own, which will eventually drive their 'buggy.' The teacher increased pupils' understanding very skilfully by responding to their questions with questions of her own, which helped them to solve the problem for themselves. Learning progressed at a very good pace.
111. **The co-ordinator**, appointed at the beginning of the term, has made considerable progress towards establishing a secure design and technology curriculum. A policy and programme of work have been agreed and the shortfall in resources is now being addressed. This new direction indicates a move towards more steady and consistent progress throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

112. **Standards** are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below expectations at the age of eleven, and is the result of the more consistent development of skills and knowledge. Progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
113. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge and understanding of seasons. They are able to talk about the water cycle, using appropriate vocabulary to describe the sequence of events from river to sea to evaporation and the formation of clouds. A sound basic understanding of geographical facts starts in the reception/Year 1 classes, where pupils used aerial photographs and large scale maps to create an imaginary inlet. These were then displayed in two- and three-dimensional form with symbols and a key to explain the major features. This gave them a good understanding of the use of symbols in map work. Good teaching encouraged pupils to recall their own experiences at the beach, but it also enabled higher attaining pupils to be stretched in their understanding of symbols. This work is continued in Year 2 by the use of first-hand evidence. Pupils visited a caravan park by the beach and good teaching linked their work with past knowledge, science and literacy. Pupils learn and use a correct geographical vocabulary and show awareness of such terms as 'abroad.' These experiences have enabled the pupils to have a good awareness of places beyond their locality.
114. Pupils in Year 6 have studied weather and climate to a satisfactory depth, measuring temperature and rainfall changes. They have used news events, for example, the forest fires in America, to indicate current world events on a map and noted where further information could be found. Pupils have a sound understanding of environmental damage in locations such as rainforests. They had used detailed mapping skills effectively in plotting all the types of water found in the school playground. A very good example of geographical work on settlements was seen in Year 4. Pupils have built up a detailed plan of a settlement from Viking times to the modern day with overlays at each stage of development. Good use of various sources was evident, and pupils could explain clearly, for example, the impact of the construction the railways had had on the settlement.
115. It was only possible to see one geography lesson during the inspection. The evidence from this, a scrutiny of pupils' work and conversations with them about their lessons, indicate that the **standard of teaching** is satisfactory. Teachers use the local area and field trips as much as possible to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn through direct observation. This has a positive effect on their learning because they see for themselves.

116. **The co-ordinator** has not been able to monitor and evaluate standards or practice for two years. The school has adopted the most recent government guidance on the curriculum, which has enabled staff to provide a more consistent programme for the development of skills but does not yet use any formal system to record how well pupils progress over the year. The co-ordinator is aware of existing strengths and of future developments needed to make sure that standards in the subject continue to improve. The resources for geography are good, and have been greatly improved since the time of the previous inspection, when they were barely adequate.

HISTORY

117. **Standards** in Year 2 are in line with national expectations, and pupils reach appropriate levels in Years 3 to 5. However, standards in the current Year 6 are below expected levels because pupils have had hardly any lessons since well before Christmas. The teacher who taught the class in the spring term made some reference to life in ancient Greece but pupils have very little recollection of what was taught. The current Year 6 teacher had to decide between quality teaching in either history or geography, and selected geography. Standards within the school are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection, except in Year 6 where they are not as good. Progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in all classes, except in Year 6 where it has been poor.
118. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of the passage of time and know that some events, like the Great Fire of London, happened a long time ago. They understand that a study of history will reveal a slow process of change where some things remain the same but others alter quickly. Pupils recognise that their grandparents watched black and white televisions, while they watch in colour, because of technological advances. Current work on holidays illustrates this effectively, and the comparison of photographs of Victorian beaches and those from their own visits to the seaside gives them good opportunities to compare 'now' and 'then' and give reasons for the changes. Year 6 are aware of chronology and recalled their work on Britain in the 1950s which they had completed eight months earlier. They regretted having had so few lessons since, and recognised themselves that standards were not high enough.
119. The quality of **teaching** is good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge which gives the pupils confidence. Work is set at different levels of challenge in the better lessons so that all pupils can make good progress. Pupils are taught the skills of historical enquiry, as was seen in Year 3, when pupils used a range of books and a video about the Tudors to answer the question: 'How do we *know* rather than guess what life was like?' Good use is made of resources including videos and visits to bring history 'alive.' Staff are beginning to plan ICT into their lessons but little use is made of the Internet for personal research. Some pupils compensate for this by researching at home. Year 4 made very good use of their understanding of a commercial publishing program to design and produce their own high quality World War 2 posters. They included photographs, clipped from a computer-based encyclopaedia, to encourage the population to use household waste more efficiently. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good when teachers talk too much or the management of silly behaviour takes too long. Pupils do not use the library often enough for personal research.
120. **The co-ordinator** manages the subject enthusiastically but has few opportunities to do more than support her colleagues with advice and information. She has used her budget allocation wisely to buy extra resources. The curriculum reflects national guidelines and the particularly rich archaeological and historic nature of Colchester. Good use is made of visits because pupils have been highly motivated by the opportunities to role-play and learn about Tudor life, for example, at 'first hand.'

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. **Standards** are below average in Year 2 and Year 6 because pupils do not have enough opportunities to experience the full range of activities in sufficient depth. Current progress in lessons is satisfactory but overall progress since the previous inspection in terms of raising

standards has been unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, and benefit from working in pairs with a more skilled work partner.

122. Pupils in Year 2 are able to understand the instructions on every day objects including tape recorders and make them work correctly. They have used a computer-based painting program to produce simple images and drawings. Good examples of these were fantasy islands and pictures drawn in the style of Mondrian. The school has access to simple robots that can be programmed to move across the floor following a pre-set route, but there was little evidence of their use. Pupils' basic skills in using ICT are not well developed, for example, the poor use of the mouse when accessing menus led to learning being hindered and time wasted in re-selecting the correct item. In Year 6 there were some very good examples of pupils' work using the 'Publisher' program and of other aspects of word publishing. The layouts were very clear and provided clear, concise information for the reader. Pupils can use different font sizes, style and colour when depicting information, with many pupils exploring the sub-menus within the programme confidently.
123. The overall **quality of teaching** was satisfactory in the lessons observed. The teaching in the Year 6 lesson was very good because expectations were clear and the work was planned so that learning built steadily on pupils' past experiences. Pupils were confident and co-operated well with their computer partners. Due to the high turnover of teaching staff, not all teachers have had the full opportunity for professional development available under the government training scheme. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in ICT are not secure in all cases. The school has timetabled the ICT suite to provide one skills lesson a week and a second weekly session so that teachers can introduce these skills into the wider curriculum. Some teachers are not making full use of this planned opportunity. The suite is a great asset to the school, but there are several different types of computer in the system, which makes it very hard to run the suite efficiently or install new software.
124. The subject is **co-ordinated** by two members of staff, both new to the post in April 2002. They have quickly identified areas of concern that are holding back the successful development of the subject. An impressive action plan has already been implemented and signs of improvement are clearly evident. A good example of this is the use of the newly acquired projector to enable clear and accessible teaching of the whole class. The co-ordinators are determined that pupils will be shown how to apply their new ICT skills to everyday learning in the classroom. Resources in terms of hardware are good, and the school has already achieved the government target for 2004 of one computer for every seven pupils. However, the school does not have the range of computer software needed to deliver the control and simulation elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study in sufficient depth.

MUSIC

125. Pupils in Year 6 reach the **standards** expected for their age and enjoy listening to and making music. This is a decline in standards from the previous report, when the attainment of the majority of pupils was above expectations. It was not possible to see any lessons in Year 2 or to make a secure judgement about standards. However, it is clear that younger pupils sing well, showing good control of pitch and rhythm, and are enthusiastic in their learning. This was confirmed in a singing practice, where the use of several different musical instruments was incorporated well in accompanying the chosen song. The pupils sing tunefully in unison in whole-school assemblies and maintain steady rhythm when accompanied. Singing is better when a piano or other instruments accompany the pupils. Pupils in Year 6 have opportunities to create their own compositions with a variety of instruments. Visiting specialist teachers from the Music for Schools Foundation also provide tuition. This gives those who wish the opportunity to play an instrument of their choice. The school provides further opportunities through a recorder club, a yearly music week and a local music festival.
126. **The quality of teaching** and learning in Years 3 to 6 is sound overall. It is very good in Year 5, where the teacher's very good knowledge and effective teaching of basic skills gave pupils the

confidence to perform their group compositions to a high standard. The good attitudes of the class were shown in the constructive and respectful comments on the performances of other pupils, which enabled the groups to evaluate and improve on their work. The enthusiasm of some teachers really engages the pupils' interest and motivates them to work hard. Pupils concentrate well, persevere, and develop confidence in their ability to be creative. They can co-operate, take turns and respond sensitively to the work of their peers. Teachers also include music in other subjects. A good example of this occurs in the reception/Year 1 classes where singing rhymes to develop addition and subtraction is very successful. However, music does not 'permeate the day-to-day life of the school' as was reported at the time of the previous inspection.

127. The **co-ordination** of the music curriculum is satisfactory, but staff has not had recent opportunities for further professional development or to build on their subject knowledge. At present there is no programme for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. There are not enough resources for instrumental or composition work, especially when two classes have a music lesson at the same time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach **levels of performance** that are close to national expectations, and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress because the emphasis is on developing individual skills as well as learning to be part of a team. The school has made good arrangements for pupils with particular gifts in hockey, and staff report that many Year 3 pupils can swim the 25 metres set as a national expectation for the end of Year 6.
129. It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection. Both contained a good variety of activity including a warm-up, skills training and a game. The **standard of teaching** was at least satisfactory and on occasion it was good. The best teaching was seen when pupils were given time to practise and improve their skills of catching and throwing, combined with clear teaching from the teacher on the best techniques. Year 6, for example, were given very comprehensive advice on how to control the flight of a cricket ball when it leaves the bat, and tried hard to use the guidance in developing their own skills. Progress was not so good when pupils were left too much to their own devices and had to work out the basic skills of catching and throwing for themselves. Pupils and staff change properly for PE, and pupils are aware of the importance of a 'warm-up' session at the start of each lesson. In the best lessons pupils who cannot take a full part in the lesson are still included by being asked to observe their friends and to take notes so that they can discuss improvements later in the lesson. All teachers take great care to ensure the health and safety of the pupils.
130. **The co-ordinator** works very hard to lead and manage the subject. She is a part-time teacher and has given of her own time to organise events such as annual sports days. She is also responsible for the management of another subject. The school has no playing field but is allowed to use the garrison field; some 15 minutes walk away, every Tuesday afternoon. This creates some administrative problems for the co-ordinator who has to be with her own Year 2 class at the same time, and therefore has no opportunity to support colleagues or to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in older classes. Some games lessons take place in the lower school hall or in the playground, but neither venue is really appropriate. The school is able to provide the full PE curriculum although some staff recognise that they need more professional guidance in order to teach the full range of suggested dance activities. The co-ordinator has arranged training sessions for the autumn term. She has established strong links with the local secondary school through a community sports organisation, and has been able to extend the range of sports offered to include basketball.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. **Standards** are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2. Pupils have an appropriate recall of the basic facts in the life of Jesus, know that he was a teacher and could explain the meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Standards are below expected levels in Year 6 because very little teaching took place between November and April of this year, and pupils do not have the range of knowledge usually seen at their age. Although the standards of attainment in a Year 6 lesson seen during the inspection were similar to those in most schools, discussions with pupils show that they have very little recollection of the basic facts of Christianity or knowledge of other faiths other than the lessons about Judaism they have had in recent weeks. Standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection in Year 2 but are lower in Year 6.
132. No teaching was observed in Years 1 or 2. **The standard of teaching** in older classes was good. The concerns in the previous report about the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 have been addressed successfully. One lesson, in Year 5, was very good. The teacher was very successful in creating an atmosphere in which pupils could consider silence and meditation as a part of worship. Behaviour was managed very well, and the teacher's confidence and well-prepared materials – a night light burning on an island of sand for each table – created an atmosphere in which pupils learned very effectively. There was a buzz of excitement as they watched the candles being set out and the teacher's careful explanation prepared them for the activity. Their responses were mature and reflective, and showed that the lesson had given them a good opportunity to explore their own and others' values and beliefs. The teaching in some lessons is good when information is being taught directly, as in the Year 6 lesson on synagogues, but written tasks are not always as stimulating and learning from these is not so effective. Good use is made of artefacts, as in the Year 3 lesson, when pupils handled and talked about a range of Christian artefacts including a chalice, paten and crucifix. Little use is made of ICT or of the library.
133. The **co-ordinator** looks at teachers' planning when it is available, but has not had an opportunity to monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching and learning for over two years. Little use is made of assessment to record pupils' progress or assist in planning future work.