

INSPECTION REPORT

KENDALL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115604

Headteacher: Mr C Holmes

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 26 – 30 March 2001

Inspection number: 209296

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Recreation Road
Colchester
Essex

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr G Hay

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22629	Jayne Clemence	Registered inspector	English Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Art and design Music	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9163	Geoffrey Humphreys	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1710	Thelma Edwards	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kendall primary school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school, with 181 pupils between the ages of four and eleven. There are 90 girls and 91 boys. Most pupils are from a white ethnic background, with a small number from Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean heritage. 29 per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals- a figure that is higher than the national average. 34 per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is higher than average. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs. Five pupils have English as an additional language, though none are at the early stages of English language acquisition. 14 per cent of the pupils have either arrived at the school, or moved away during the previous school year. This is a relatively high mobility rate. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below that expected for their age. The area the school serves has the highest economic and social disadvantage in Colchester, which is currently being developed in order to regenerate the community. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Kendall Primary School provides a sound education for the pupils and has many good features. It is effective in raising standards steadily, and ensuring pupils with wide ranging special needs are fully included in all areas of school life. The headteacher provides sound leadership and management and is ably supported by an effective senior management team. Together they have worked hard to improve the school, where previously it was judged to have serious weaknesses. The good quality teaching seen overall across the school is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning and achievements. The school now provides satisfactory value for money; many pupils enter with low levels of attainment and the effective strategies deployed help them to make clear progress socially and academically. By the time they leave, many pupils reach standards that are close to those found nationally, and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

What the school does well

- Standards are improving steadily; by the time pupils leave, they are attaining levels close to those found nationally
- The high proportion of good and very good teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning and achievement
- The good provision in the Foundation Stage; children have a good start to school life and are well prepared for the next stage
- Assessment procedures are comprehensive and detailed, ensuring trends in the pupils' achievements and learning are tracked carefully, and work is well matched to their needs
- The high quality provision and effective organisation to support pupils with special educational needs, enables pupils to be included fully into school life and achieve well
- The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour mean they are ready to learn; they understand the importance of effort and hard work in order to improve further

What could be improved

- The school development plan lacks clarity for senior managers and the governing body to monitor and evaluate the school's work efficiently
- Standards reached by pupils in writing and handwriting could realistically be higher
- The poor outside accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage limits their physical development
- Arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers are too vague, and as a result, some parents do not take the opportunities offered

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection. The low standards in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily, and pupils' with special educational needs are achieving well, where previously their progress was unsatisfactory. The leadership and management is now sound, although there are improvements still to be made in the quality of the school's development plan. The curriculum is now suitably balanced with the necessary subject plans, where it was previously unbalanced and lacking appropriate planning. Procedures for assessment that were weak are now very good, and higher attaining pupils are no longer underachieving. These improvements have ensured that the serious weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been eradicated effectively.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	D	D	C	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	D	A	A	
Science	E*	D	C	B	

Standards have improved steadily over time and the school is rightly proud of its recent award from the Department of Education and Employment in recognition of its achievements. Standards reached by seven year olds in the most recent national tests were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards were above the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Standards reached by eleven year olds have improved. In English, standards were below the national average and in line with the average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, standards were well above the national average, and well above average when compared with similar schools. In science, standards were in line with the national average and above when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings confirm a similar picture. Pupils achieve well in relation to their relatively low starting point on entry to the school. They have particular weaknesses in language and communication, including limited speaking and listening skills, but gain much ground during their time in the Foundation Stage. Higher attaining pupils achieve well due to the challenging work set, and suitably high expectations from teachers. A significant minority of pupils struggle to produce writing to a satisfactory level and their handwriting is poorly formed and difficult for themselves and others to read. The school sets realistic, yet suitably ambitious targets for the pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy coming to school, and demonstrate high levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils are polite, courteous and show respect and consideration for each other and adults.
Personal development and	The personal development of pupils and their relationships with each

relationships	other and with adults is very good. Older pupils have a caring attitude towards younger ones.
Attendance	Satisfactory and unauthorised absence is in line with the national figures.

The very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships are a very positive feature throughout the school. Pupils understand the importance of hard work and effort in order to improve and develop very positive working routines from an early age. There is a high degree of harmony regardless of pupils' different backgrounds or circumstances. Pupils show respect and consideration for one another and recognise the importance of including others in whenever they have the opportunity.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

Overall, teaching is good throughout the school, and this is having a direct and positive impact on standards, the pupils' learning and their achievements. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons observed. 43 per cent of the teaching was good and 27 per cent was very good. A small minority of one per cent of the teaching was excellent. A very small minority of teaching was unsatisfactory and lacked sufficient challenge. As a result of the good quality teaching, pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn and maintain concentration and perseverance throughout most lessons. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall throughout the school. Teachers are careful to ensure that work is well matched to the wide ranging needs of the pupils. This means that higher attainers are challenged, and pupils with special educational needs given suitably modified, yet challenging work. Procedures for assessment are very good, and teachers use the information effectively to plan for future work. Teachers have a secure knowledge in subjects, apart from information and communication technology, where some are less confident in their use of computers, and in music there is not a specialist for the subject. The teaching in literacy and numeracy skills is effective and there are suitable opportunities where these skills are developed across other subjects of the curriculum. This approach maximises the pupils' reading, writing and number skills effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, the curriculum is broad and balanced, apart from weaknesses in the curriculum for music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and the very good provision ensure they achieve well
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision overall Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good; provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; the support, guidance and welfare of the pupils is given a high priority. Staff know the pupils well and provide a caring, secure and

	supportive environment. The very good procedures for assessing pupils and monitoring their progress enables trends to be noted and provision modified
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The school works effectively in partnership with parents and seeks to welcome them into the school at any time. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, apart from music where there is a relatively limited range of musical activities to develop the pupils' musicianship skills effectively. The strong emphasis placed on valuing pupils as individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances means there is a high level of inclusion for pupils into all areas of school life. The high quality care for pupils means their academic and social needs are given careful consideration. All staff go out of their way to consider the pupils' welfare and safety.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides sound leadership and is supported by an effective senior management team, including the deputy headteacher. Senior managers make a very positive contribution in driving up standards
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are led ably and the chair of the governing body adds rigour and challenge to the school and senior management. Governors are active and supportive and fulfil their responsibilities diligently
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school discusses its work informally and standards are analysed rigorously; procedures for evaluating its performance systematically are not yet embedded into the school improvement plan
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used efficiently and staff are deployed well

There is a suitable number of well qualified staff and the accommodation is satisfactory overall. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, apart from music, where instruments are limited in quality and quantity, and geography where there are too few resources to support the subject adequately. Outside accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is poor, with little space and equipment to use productively. The principles of best value are used effectively when making strategic decisions in the use of resources, time and staff. The school improvement plan has some weaknesses in its current form. It is not yet a sufficiently effective and efficient tool for senior managers and governors to monitor and evaluate the school's work as it is vague in timescale for priorities, identifying the standards expected to be achieved and the methods to be used for monitoring and evaluation. The leadership and management have worked hard to ensure that the school's serious weaknesses have been eradicated.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The positive improvements made since the last inspection Their children enjoy coming to school The school promotes good values and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong The school is approachable and keeps close informal contacts with parents The school promotes high expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The behaviour of pupils A more consistent provision of homework Closer working partnership with parents Stronger leadership and management A wider range of activities outside of lessons

The inspectors agree with the positive comments. The inspectors found the behaviour of pupils to be very good both in and out of the classroom. The inspectors judged that the use of homework to support learning is satisfactory and the information provided on the attainment and progress of pupils is good. The inspectors consider that the school is working hard to develop closer working partnerships with parents and that the leadership and management is sound. Inspectors agree that the range of activities outside of lessons is limited, particularly in relation to sporting and recreational pursuits.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the last inspection, standards reached by pupils aged eleven have improved overall. In the most recent national tests in English, standards were below the national average, and in line when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, standards were well above the national average, and well above when compared with similar schools. In science, standards were in line with the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. Standards reached by pupils aged seven were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards were above the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Inspection findings confirm this picture. The school is justifiably proud of its recent award from the Department of Education and Employment in recognition of its improvements in standards and the pupils' achievements.
2. The good quality teaching for children in the Foundation Stage helps them to make good progress towards meeting the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. The good quality teaching for children in the reception helps them to achieve well and meet the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development by the end of the foundation stage. They achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development, enabling them to settle quickly and make a good start to school life.
3. Pupils' achievements are good overall throughout the school, as many start from a low baseline and have particular difficulties in their language and communication skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good gains in their learning because of the highly effective procedures for identifying their individual needs, and the effective support provided. Higher attaining pupils achieve well because they are challenged with appropriately high expectations from the teachers. A higher proportion of pupils are reaching higher levels in literacy and numeracy now by the ages of seven and eleven. The school sets realistic, yet challenging targets for the pupils, and is suitably ambitious for them. The inspection found there were no differences in standards or achievements of pupils from different backgrounds, or between girls and boys. Most pupils with special educational needs have identified difficulties in English and mathematics although a significant minority has emotional, behavioural and physical difficulties. They achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and the very good extra support they receive. In both literacy and numeracy sessions they work in small groups within their own classes. Occasionally they are withdrawn for special help and again do well and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. By the time they leave the school, many attain levels that are in line with national expectations.
4. In English, by the age of seven, pupils are reading with increasing fluency. They recognise the difference between fiction and non fiction, and express their opinions about favourite authors. Many pupils use dictionaries accurately to help their spellings and choice of vocabulary. The quality of writing varies widely. In the best examples, pupils write imaginatively, with carefully structured stories, using correct punctuation and grammar. A significant minority of pupils struggle to write at any length and produce very basic written work as a result. Their handwriting is poorly formed and difficult for themselves and others to read. This affects other areas of their school work in addition to English. By the age of eleven, pupils develop a widening vocabulary, and present their arguments clearly when expressing views on a range of topical issues. Many pupils read for pleasure and enjoy reading and writing poetry for themselves. They use appropriate idioms, metaphors and similes in their written work to add expression and interest. A significant minority of pupils find writing the most difficult aspect of English and struggle to produce good quality work of any length. Their handwriting hinders the process and this aspect restricts their speed when recording work in other subjects. The school is working hard to target

these pupils in order to help their learning and ensure more rapid progress during lessons. Pupils throughout the school develop their speaking and listening skills effectively and have growing confidence to express their thoughts, views and feelings.

5. In mathematics, by the age of seven, pupils understand the place value of each digit in numbers to 100, and most deal confidently with sequences of numbers, including multiples of 2, 5, and 10. Their mental mathematical skills are being developed steadily by the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. By the age of eleven, most pupils use a range of methods accurately to add, subtract, multiply and divide, and show good understanding of the relationships between the different operations.
6. In science, by the age of seven, pupils understand the importance of healthy eating, including those foods that provide energy and help growth. They recognise that change is an important part of the human life cycle. By the age of eleven pupils extend their scientific knowledge and skills of investigation and enquiry. They understand that there are solids, liquids and gases, and that water can exist in different states. Pupils conduct scientific experiments with due regard to the principles of a fair test, and write up their findings accurately. In a study of light, pupils realise that light travels in straight lines and is reflected in mirrors.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), pupils by the age of seven use the key boards with increasing accuracy, find different fonts and edit their texts using a range of print sizes. Pupils use the mouse control effectively and give accurate instructions to the floor turtle in order to bring about the required movements and changes in direction. By the age of eleven, they use computers confidently to retrieve and handle information. Many pupils communicate with others using e mail and understand how to access and use the internet.
8. In religious education, standards are broadly in line with those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils by the age of seven know a range of stories from the Bible, and other religions. They understand the sequence of events, for example of the Easter story from the Christian faith. By the age of eleven, pupils understand the importance of artefacts and special celebrations to people with different beliefs and faiths. They realise that symbols, such as a candle may be used for different purposes in Christianity, in the Hindu festival of Diwali and the Jewish festival of Hanukah.
9. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards are in line with expectations for the pupils in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
10. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection, ensuring pupils starting from a low baseline achieve well and often attain standards in line with the national average, and in some instances attain above those found nationally.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very good attitudes towards their learning and demonstrate high levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, and returned questionnaires, confirmed that their children enjoy coming to school.
12. Children in the reception class settle well into school routines. They develop good listening skills and observe the discipline of holding up their hands to answer a question. These younger children develop very good social skills, share and take turns, and concentrate well on the tasks they are given. Good examples were observed when children were learning their numbers and talking and listening to each other in a group session, with a teacher.
13. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their interest and enthusiasm and learn to express their ideas with growing confidence. A good example was observed in an English lesson where pupils were keen to express their reactions to the characters and events in a story during a group session,

and in a personal and social education lesson when they discussed personal rights and responsibilities.

14. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' enthusiasm and interest in their work continues to grow. They begin to develop independent learning skills and seek information through a variety of sources including books, computers and personal observation. Good examples were observed in information and communication technology lessons. Year 3 pupils investigated the habitats of animals using the school computers and books from the library, and Year 6 pupils produced pie charts depicting the relative popularity of a number of pop-groups. Pupils were also seen working diligently in literacy and co-operating well together in mathematics and science.
15. The pupils' behaviour is very good. There has been only one fixed period exclusion in the past twelve months. Pupils are polite and courteous and show respect and consideration for each other and towards adults. Staff treat pupils with courtesy and respect and this sets the tone for a very positive school ethos in which pupils become very confident in their relationships. The small numbers of pupils who come from other cultural and ethnic minority backgrounds, or who have special educational needs, are fully included into the life and social structure of the school.
16. Pupils are sensitive to the feelings, values and beliefs of others and fully appreciate the impact that their own actions can have. Unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying, is not tolerated either by the pupils themselves or staff. Older pupils have caring attitudes towards the younger ones. Overall the personal development of pupils and their relationships with each other and with adults is very good and a strength of the school. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work. As a result of the school's highly inclusive approach they have high self-esteem and are keen to succeed. They enjoy very good relationships with teachers and support staff and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development. In both the classroom and the playground they integrate well and are respectfully treated by their peers.
17. There are good examples of pupils being encouraged to show initiative and take responsibility. They help with the preparation and clearing up after lessons and learn to make choices and work independently. The pupils' council, with two representatives from each class from Years 1 to 6, meets regularly and is consulted on a variety of appropriate issues. For example the council is currently considering how to spend a small budget for school play and games equipment. Pupils also demonstrate a high level of maturity and responsibility when using expensive school equipment, often with minimal supervision.
18. Attendance is satisfactory and unauthorised absence is in line with the national expectation. During the inspection, morning punctuality was good. Good attitudes and behaviour has been maintained since the previous inspection, but the degree of maturity and personal development achieved by pupils has improved. Overall the attitudes and behaviour of pupils makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and attainment. They are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection with a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than seen previously. The good quality teaching is having a direct and positive effect on standards, learning and pupils' achievements. Overall, teaching is good throughout the school. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons observed. 43 per cent of the teaching was good and 27 per cent was very good. A small minority of one per cent of the teaching was excellent. As a result of the good teaching, pupils make good gains in their learning, achieve well and show enthusiasm, perseverance and effort in their work. A very small proportion of the teaching was unsatisfactory and insufficiently challenging for the pupils.
20. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage, with a high proportion of very good teaching. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1, with a smaller amount of very good teaching. In Key Stage 2,

teaching is good overall, with a higher proportion of very good teaching. There was an example of excellent teaching seen in information and communication technology.

21. A high proportion of the very good teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage, and Years 2, 3 and 6. This means that pupils are being challenged, and their rate of progress is boosted steadily as they move through the school. Teachers in the Foundation Stage have a thorough knowledge of the early learning goals. As a result, they plan carefully and provide a wide range of interesting activities that are well matched to the children's needs. There is a clear emphasis upon developing the children's language and communication skills in all activities. The strong team, including teachers and nursery nurse support, work efficiently and effectively. This was seen for example in a literacy session, where children were grouped carefully according to their skills in reading. The work was very well chosen to challenge the children as they linked letter shapes to the correct sounds, developing a growing awareness of the reading process and a widening vocabulary of words. At the same time, another group of younger children were thoroughly absorbed in finding words beginning with "s" as the nursery nurse used a large puppet to maintain their interest and enjoyment. There was obvious delight and pleasure as children learned effectively, helping to teach the puppet as he made mistakes, whilst making rapid progress themselves.
22. There is very good teaching for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have a clear understanding of the pupils' needs, and work is well matched to reflect the targets identified in their individual education plans. The teaching maintains a very good balance between support focused on the pupils' individual special needs, and discrete help when they work in larger groups within the class. The highly effective teaching, modelled by the special educational needs coordinator, enables pupils with wide ranging special educational needs to be fully included in school life and achieve well. Teachers now work and plan closely with each other and where necessary with colleagues from specialist agencies. Learning support assistants make a particularly important contribution to the teaching and learning team. They are highly motivated and work closely with teachers on a daily basis to provide sensitive support that successfully promotes pupils' learning. Occasionally the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) withdraws pupils from the classroom in small groups or as individuals. In these lessons the quality of teaching is very good. Work for these pupils is very carefully planned. Each of them has an individual education plan to meet his or her particular learning needs. Practical targets for learning are set in the plans and teachers devise suitable activities throughout the curriculum that help pupils to meet them. Teachers, educational support assistants and parents alike are clearly aware of the targets so that all the adults involved are pulling together and are helping pupils to succeed.
23. In mathematics, the very good teaching in Year 6 was characterised by a very brisk start to the lesson, including "brain gymnastics" as pupils worked out mental calculations as speedily as possible. This moved swiftly to questions, carefully targeted to sharpen the pupils' memory of multiplication in groups of 7, 8 and 9. All tasks were well planned, ensuring pupils' wide ranging needs were met, including suitably challenging activities for higher and lower attaining pupils. There was very good use of mathematical vocabulary as pupils learned to find the mean, mode, median and range. The highly effective teaching ensured pupils were very well motivated and genuinely eager to learn. Their contributions were considered carefully, and used constructively by the teacher to draw out learning for everyone. This ensured all pupils were confident to contribute, and not only those who were quick to think of the correct answer. The efficient use of time at the end of the lesson enabled pupils to revise and review what they had learned, including areas for further improvement by the end of the week.
24. Teachers have a good subject knowledge in most areas of the National Curriculum, although there are wide variations in their ICT skills. Some teachers, for example, are highly confident in teaching and developing the pupils' technology skills, whilst others are at earlier stages of its use themselves. Teachers are effective in teaching literacy and numeracy, and implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. The many examples of good teaching in literacy and numeracy is bringing about steady improvements in the pupils' reading, writing and number skills, as they are becoming increasingly fluent using these skills in practical situations.

25. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the pupils and their individual needs, and take great care to include and involve pupils whatever their particular needs may be. This is particularly well illustrated in Year 2 where there is a high proportion of pupils with wide ranging special educational needs. The very effective planning and efficient use of support staff enabled all pupils to take part in the overall lesson, whilst having suitable work at their own level in group and individual tasks. Teaching was creative and flexible to capture the pupils' imagination, including those with very limited concentration and attention. As a result, pupils learn to value one another's contributions regardless of their backgrounds or needs. This is a strong feature seen elsewhere throughout the school.
26. There are very good procedures used by teachers to assess pupils in English, mathematics and science. They are detailed and comprehensive, enabling teachers to note trends in standards and the pupils' rate of progress. These strategies have been instrumental in bringing about improvements in standards and pupils' achievements.
27. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection and weaknesses at that time have been eradicated effectively. The quality of teaching is bringing about steady improvements in standards, pupils' achievements and the rate of their progress.

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

28. The school provides a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils. The statutory curriculum is in place and the school teaches religious education in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs and all pupils are offered a good range of learning opportunities, which promote their intellectual, physical and personal development. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. The school ensures that all pupils are equally and fully included in the curriculum and indeed in all aspects of school life. Where pupils are withdrawn from classes for small group support good learning gains in the long term enhance their equality of access to the curriculum. Pupils with statements of special educational needs have their individual requirements met fully through a carefully planned programme of support, which is regularly reviewed by the school and the local authority.
29. The school provides well for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, both in English and mathematics lessons and through their further development when used in other subjects.
30. The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, with pupils having opportunities to play team games; sometimes in a local league, and to sing in the choir. There is extra provision for pupils who are interested in dance. Some parents feel that more could be offered, but the school has rightly focused attention on offering Booster classes for pupils who would like extra help in their work. These classes are open to every pupil in Year 6. The school ensures that all pupils have equality of access to what is offered in class and after school so that they have every opportunity to achieve.
31. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Older pupils receive sex education and pupils of all ages learn about healthy ways of living. They are taught how to be good citizens. Discussions during circle times encourage pupils to express their thoughts and to listen to the views of others. There is a detailed and appropriate scheme of work covering all aspects of social education, including health, hygiene, sex education, awareness of drugs misuse and citizenship.
32. The good links with the community contribute to pupils' learning. Pupils have worked with a sculptor. They have interviewed a local resident in connection with their studies in history. Pupils have been taken on visits to the GNER railway, to the local newspaper, they have visited the zoo

and, as part of history, have been taken on a Victorian walk around Colchester. Local theatre groups and well known authors have also visited the school. The new Victorian Garden and the school's own woodland enhance the learning experiences offered.

33. There are satisfactory links with the local secondary schools to which pupils transfer and there is an appropriate exchange of information about the particular needs of individual pupils. There is also some feedback on how well pupils have settled in to the next stage of their education.
34. The school provides pupils' with good guidance on their spiritual development. Daily assemblies provide opportunities for prayer and reflection and promote the teaching of the Gospels. During the inspection, in a particularly effective pre-Easter assembly, an explanation of the reason for Christ's sacrifice on the cross, expressed in terms that young children could understand, was observed. The spiritual experience of very young children in the reception class is good. For example taking time to say a prayer for the animals during a visit to the woodland by the school. Displays and artefacts around the school celebrate Christian beliefs and introduce important aspects of other world religions. The religious education syllabus also plays a successful part in developing pupils' spiritual awareness.
35. The school provides pupils with very good guidance for their moral development. Through the daily assemblies, and in all areas of the curriculum, pupils are taught moral values. They learn the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to make their own judgements and form their own opinions. They are expected to be considerate and respectful towards each other and towards adults. The boundaries of good behaviour are clearly defined and understood.
36. The social development of pupils is also very well catered for. The development and appreciation of social and inter-personal skills is an important element of the teaching and learning in the reception class. Throughout the school pupils co-operate very well in lessons and play well together. They show care and consideration for others, particularly older pupils for younger ones. Pupils are very tolerant towards those who present emotional or behavioural difficulty, and supportive of those who are slow to learn or who have specific learning difficulty.
37. The cultural development of pupils is good. Suitable opportunities are taken in lessons to draw parallels between different cultures and to ensure that pupils have an awareness of a multicultural society. They gain an insight into other religions and cultures through the curriculum, particularly the religious education syllabus, and from displays around the school. However opportunities for pupils to appreciate the art and music of other cultures is limited.
38. Overall the spiritual, moral, social and cultural experience and understanding of pupils is very good and has improved since the last inspection. This is as a direct consequence of the development of curricular content and the greater opportunities provided.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance are good. The assessment coordinator has a very practical and clear understanding of the purposes and uses of assessment, which is quite rightly seen as a major factor in the school's continuing efforts to raise standards. It is based upon the identification of each pupil's likely attainment and achievements and provides a clear direction for the future development of this aspect of the work of the school. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection when weaknesses were reported in the school's arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. One of the key issues arising from the inspection was concerned with the consistent implementation of an agreed policy designed to show pupils how to improve the standard of their work. Very good procedures are now firmly established as an integral part of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science. In combination with teachers' high expectations of their pupils these have been instrumental in raising standards in these subjects.
40. When children first enter the school they are carefully assessed using baseline tests and the information is used to form groups and to plan teaching programmes. As well as the statutory

tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6, non-statutory national assessments in English and mathematics are used in Years 3, 4 and 5 together with regular testing of reading throughout the school. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for these procedures and this has been an important element of the school's drive to raise standards. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum are less well developed

41. The school gathers a considerable amount of information about its pupils in these ways that builds into a detailed picture of their current strengths and weaknesses and their potential attainment. Good use is made of this information to set challenging individual and school targets for improvement that provide a clear focus for the work of both teachers and pupils. The careful recording of this information by the assessment coordinator with the efficient use of new technology enables the school to monitor the performance of both individuals and whole year groups. As the system becomes more firmly embedded and the bank of data grows year on year pupils' progress will be tracked with increasing detail as they move through the school. In addition it enables the school to identify pupils who are not achieving their true potential and to provide them with focused teaching and additional support where appropriate. This systematic use of assessment to inform planning is in the relatively early stages of development and implementation therefore is not yet consistent through the school. However, it is successfully addressing an area of concern arising from the previous inspection.
42. Subject leaders rigorously analyse the results of English, mathematics and science tests and assessments in order to identify and deal with weaknesses. For example, analysis of test results by the mathematics coordinator showed up data handling as an area of weakness. This led to modifications to the curriculum in order to improve its quality, which in turn led to significant improvements in the teaching of this aspect of mathematics. The structured development of pupils' skills in carrying out surveys and presenting data in a variety of different forms is now a strong feature of the subject.
43. Staff know the pupils and their families well and follow their personal development closely. All teachers monitor personal development and they record significant comments on the individual profile sheets about pupils' attitudes and behaviour, learning styles and relationships.
44. The support, guidance and welfare of pupils, provided by the school, is good. Staff know and understand their pupils well and provide a caring, secure and supportive environment. The steps taken to ensure that this is an educationally and socially inclusive school are good. The majority of parents, who expressed a view through the pre-inspection meeting or returned questionnaires, felt that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals who are expected to work hard and achieve their best. The school has good methods in place for the early detection, diagnosis and support for pupils with special educational needs. For example there is an effective liaison between feeder playgroups so that any early concerns about learning are shared. The school also makes good use of base line assessments completed by children aged five as an indicator of special needs. In addition all pupils are screened for difficulties in literacy and the school has identified the need for a similar procedure in numeracy. All individual education plans are reviewed twice yearly. The SENCO and class teachers work together closely to make a thorough evaluation of the progress pupils make towards their targets.
45. Health and safety procedures are diligent and include good arrangements for first aid. The head teacher is the designated child protection co-ordinator and procedures for dealing with child protection issues are securely in place. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and have received appropriate training. There are established links with relevant outside agencies.
46. Personal, social and health education is provided through timetabled lessons and teaching across the curriculum. The programme, which is fully supported by detailed schemes of work, covers all aspects of social education including health, hygiene, sex, awareness of drug misuse and citizenship. Good hygiene practice is actively promoted at break and lunch times.

47. Staff are successful and consistent in monitoring and promoting good behaviour in accordance with agreed policies and procedures. They check all forms of oppressive or unacceptable behaviour very effectively and are supported by the parents and pupils. The arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Only three parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and only 21% of those eligible returned the pre-inspection questionnaires. The majority of those who expressed a view consider that the school has made positive improvement since the previous inspection and that it promotes good values and high expectations. They state that their children enjoy attending school, make good progress, and are taught the difference between right and wrong. They consider the school to be approachable, that it maintains close informal contact and provides good support for individual pupils who need it. The inspectors agree with these positive views.
49. Through the returned questionnaires a significant minority expressed concern over the behaviour of pupils, the lack of consistency in the use of homework to support learning and the lack of information about the progress of their children. There were also concerns about the effectiveness of the leadership and management, the closeness of the working partnership between the school and parents and the range of activities outside of lessons.
50. The inspectors found the behaviour of pupils to be very good both in and out of the classroom. Relationships throughout the school are very good and one of its strengths. The inspectors judged that the use of homework to support learning is satisfactory. The school homework policy is clearly detailed in the home/school agreement that all parents are required to sign. The amount of work that pupils are required to do at home is increased appropriately as they progress through the school.
51. The inspectors consider that the information provided on the progress and attainment of pupils is good. The annual progress reports provide a summary of curricular coverage, a concise report on what pupils can do and understand, sets targets and provides guidelines to enable parents to help their children achieve future learning objectives. In addition termly summary reports have been trialled for Year 6 pupils during the last academic year and parents welcome these. The school also publishes a newsletter every two weeks that provides information on all events and activities of interest to parents and carers.
52. For pupils with special educational needs the quality of information provided to parents is good. Regular review meetings are held to discuss the progress of pupils towards the targets specified in their individual education plans, and to agree new targets. Relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. They are fully involved in decisions regarding their children and receive strong encouragement to support their learning. The school sees the partnership with parents as a two way process in which each will keep the other fully informed of developments that raise concerns. Parents of children already identified with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their child's progress.
53. The inspectors also consider that the school works hard to develop a closer working partnership with parents and that the leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has organised a number of evening and weekend daytime events at which there have been displays of pupils' work and presentations on areas of the curriculum including literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology.
54. Parents are also encouraged to make appointments during the year to discuss their children's progress and attainment. However, there is no formal programme of termly consultation evenings to ensure that all parents, including those who are reticent about making special appointments, have the opportunity to meet teachers, and the management team, to discuss their children's work, progress and welfare. The inspectors conclude that this is a weakness in an otherwise good provision.

55. The inspectors agree that, the range of activities outside of lessons is limited, particularly in relation to sporting and recreational pursuits. The after school booster classes are, however, well attended and are open to all pupils. The parent teacher association organises a number of social and fund raising events and forms an important link with the wider community. The contribution made by parents to their children's learning and their impact on the work of the school is satisfactory. Overall the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory, as it was after the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher provides sound leadership and management. The senior management team is effective and has a clear understanding of the school's priorities, standards and trends in pupils' achievements. The deputy headteacher is an effective manager and ensures good support for senior managers, teachers with responsibilities and other staff.
57. Teachers with responsibilities for developing subjects are effective and carry out their management roles well. They understand the areas of strength in their subjects and have clear priorities for bringing about further improvements. Others with responsibilities, for example, the coordination of assessment and special educational needs, are very effective and make a strong contribution to the school. Teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' standards and achievements as a result of the very good quality assessment information provided by the assessment coordinator. The very effective coordination for special educational needs means that staff have a thorough and detailed overview of the individual needs of pupils. The pupils' individual education plans and specific targets are reflected consistently in lessons, and there is a good balance achieved between individual support outside of the main lessons and discrete assistance for pupils as part of the whole class. The governing body and headteacher are firmly committed to the provision of good quality support for pupils with special educational needs, and the schools arrangements are managed very efficiently by the SENCO. Together with the whole staff they promote the full inclusion of all pupils and ensure that the Code of Practice is fully implemented. Teachers are ably supported by a good number of learning support assistants who make valuable contributions to the quality of learning of these and all other pupils. Very good liaison with specialist support agencies ensures that targets are closely monitored and regularly reviewed. The coordination of the Foundation Stage is efficient, ensuring all staff have similar expectations for the children, with a high degree of consistency as a result.
58. The school's aims are reflected well and implemented consistently by all staff. There is a strong emphasis on valuing pupils as individuals, regardless of their particular backgrounds or needs. This feature ensures all pupils are included and made to feel valued and part of school life, whatever their specific needs may be.
59. There are weaknesses in the quality of the school's improvement plan currently. It is not sufficiently precise in what is to be achieved and to what standard. The timescale is often too vague and leaves considerable room for ambiguity. Methods for monitoring the school's progress are not always detailed and those for evaluation are limited. There is little to demonstrate how the school will evaluate the impact of its actions on standards, teaching and the rate of pupils' progress. Although there is much useful discussion taking place between senior managers informally, there is not a rigorous framework or systematic schedule whereby priorities are tracked, monitored and evaluated regularly.
60. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, with a regular schedule for observing lessons. Some of the written records of the observations are too descriptive, without the necessary judgements on the quality of teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning. The school has suitable arrangements for appraisal and assessing the teachers' performance.
61. The governing body is led ably, and the chair of governors adds rigour and challenge to the senior management. Governors are organised efficiently into sub committees, and there is appropriate expertise, for example the chair of finances has professional experience that is both useful and relevant to the school. The weaknesses in the quality of the school's improvement plan limit the

usefulness of the plan as a tool for the governing body. It is not clear, for example when priorities are to be completed as there are no clear dates and deadlines. Governors are left with insufficient information to pose their own questions and track the school's progress. Governors are active and supportive of the school and monitor different aspects regularly, providing written reports to the full governing body of their findings and recommendations.

62. Governors and senior managers discuss the principles of best value in their decision making, and seek to gain the best deals in staffing and resources. The relatively high percentage of the school's finances, carried forward from the previous year's budget, is due to the school's plans for future building works. It is awaiting decisions from the local education authority on the size of the school and needs of the area. This money set aside is entirely appropriate under the circumstances. Educational priorities are linked closely to the budget and grants for specific purposes are used prudently.
63. There is a suitable number of well qualified staff, and procedures for supporting new teachers are good. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, apart from poor outdoor accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage. There is too little space and consequently limited access to larger construction, including mobile wheeled equipment. Resources are satisfactory, although the library is underused by pupils. The school's use of its new technology is good. The day to day administration is carried out smoothly and efficiently. The secretarial and administration staff help to create a welcoming atmosphere to the school. The school has good capacity to succeed further and appropriate targets have been identified.
64. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory and weaknesses centred upon the leadership and management have been addressed effectively.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(* indicates the school is addressing or partly addressing this issue as part of its school improvement plan.)

- (1) **Improve further the leadership and management by:**
 - ensuring the school improvement plan is an efficient and effective tool for the governing body and senior management to monitor and evaluate the school's work
 - establishing a more precise schedule for starting and completing actions
 - identifying clear criteria for measuring the success of actions
 - further develop methods for evaluating the impact of actions on standards, teaching and pupils' achievements
 - As referred to in paragraphs 59,60,61

- (2) **Further raise standards in English by:**
 - improving standards in writing and handwriting
 - using the library for more independent enquiry
 - As referred to in paragraphs 4,75,76

- (3) ***Improve the outdoor accommodation and equipment for children in the Foundation Stage**
 - As referred to in paragraphs 63,70

- (4) **Improve arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress by:**
 - establishing regular times for parents to meet with teachers
 - As referred to in paragraph 54

The school may also wish to address the following less important weaknesses:

- Enhance the opportunities for activities outside lessons (paragraph 55)
- Improve the range of opportunities and resources in music (paragraphs 129,130)
- Continue to develop teachers' confidence in the use of all aspects of information and communication technology (paragraph 24)
- Ensure all parents know the school's policy and arrangements for homework (paragraph 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	27	43	27	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	R – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	181
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	53

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	R – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	62

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.6

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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	93 (89)	93 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	24	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (89)	93 (89)	89 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	7	13	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (71)	80 (68)	85 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Omissions are due to the small number of boys sitting the tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	10	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55(55)	55(59)	50(58)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	164
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: R– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26

Education support staff: R – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	438,430
Total expenditure	426,085
Expenditure per pupil	2131
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,958
Balance carried forward to next year	57,303

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	176
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	46	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	57	3	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	49	16	5	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	43	19	5	11
The teaching is good.	22	59	11	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	38	46	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	38	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	59	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	8	51	32	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	22	49	22	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	62	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	0	16	43	24	16

Additional comments may be found in the summary section under Parents' and Carers' views of the school

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

65. Children start in reception and stay throughout their time in the Foundation Stage before moving to Year 1. The children's assessments show their attainment on entry is below that expected for their age, particularly in language and communication skills, including speaking and listening. Teachers make good use of the assessment information to set targets for the children's future learning. The children achieve well and this ensures they reach the expected early learning goals in all areas by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children make very good gains in their personal, social and emotional development and achieve well. This is due to the effective teaching and organisation from the time they arrive at the school. Activities are carefully structured to encourage cooperation, group work and independence. Snack times are used productively to develop the children's social skills in sharing and taking turns, and the system whereby children have weekly responsibilities as monitors for different aspects of their environment enhances their personal development. They wear monitor badges with great pride and carry out their duties diligently. In turn, this develops further their sense of responsibility and independence. Children learn routines quickly, because teachers use systematic procedures. They understand the importance of following instructions when for example, the choice of activities is deliberately limited, and numbers of children restricted. They also realise that tidying away and looking after equipment is essential. The large construction equipment is used effectively to develop cooperation skills and teachers set suitably high, yet realistic expectations for the children to resolve conflict quickly as they learn to say sorry and think of others. This in turn prepares them thoroughly for the next stage of their school life. The teaching in this area is very good, and children develop positive attitudes and a genuine enjoyment for learning from a young age. Children are on course to meet this early learning goal.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, often from a low baseline. They enjoy listening to stories and understand that print has meaning. The good quality teaching ensures that children are developing literacy skills in a structured manner. The short, yet purposeful and productive daily literacy sessions are planned to include a focus on simple vocabulary and letter sounds, as well as shapes and patterns, including rhymes. Children participate eagerly in these sessions as they notice similarities and differences in words and spellings. On arrival at school, children learn to recognise familiar words every day by choosing wooden flowers with their names printed clearly. Their writing skills are developed effectively as they learn to form letters with increasing accuracy. There is much useful emphasis on developing the children's language and communication skills. There are good quality resources and activities to develop language and role play, for example a well stocked and interesting shop and shopping trolley, and telephone box nearby encourages lively and clear conversations between children as they make their requests known. Children are on course to meet this early learning goal.

Mathematical development

68. Children achieve well in their mathematical development. They notice numbers and patterns around them, and often count for practical purposes during the course of the day's activities. Children count how many of them are allowed to play in certain areas such as the shop, sand area and painting table. They further develop these skills by recording objects using numbers, copying patterns and making useful numerical links. There are good links with other subjects, for example children made mice with different lengths of tails and identified those with long and short tails. Some children then went on to make comparisons between the mice and their tails. In music, children copy simple rhythms by counting and repeating the notes using untuned percussion instruments. They clap the appropriate number of beats to words including "duck,

seagull and woodpecker”, thus having to count carefully, depending on the number of syllables in the word. They sing simple number rhymes using a row of socks on a number line to help them count onwards and back to 10. Children use the computers daily, and programmes are chosen carefully to help a range of skills including recognition of numbers, matching to the correct number of objects and counting on from a given number. Teaching is good and children are on course to meet this early learning goal.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Children achieve well and are on course to meet this early learning goal, as the good teaching enables them to develop a growing understanding of their own environment and the wider world. They understand the importance of looking after their surroundings and realise that people carry out different work to help them. They understand the role of the postman in collecting and delivering letters. During one activity, they wrote letters and assisted in addressing envelopes to their homes, posting the letters locally and waiting several days for their arrival. Children understand the principles of growth as they recognise changes in themselves from babies to children, using pictures and photographs to remind them of the differences between babies, toddlers, children, young adults, adults and older people. The daily activity of completing the weather chart further helps children notice the world around them alongside the passage of time, as reference is made to vocabulary including yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Physical development

70. From their average attainment on entry, children achieve satisfactorily and are on course to meet this early learning goal, although they are restricted in developing their physical skills further by the poor outside accommodation and lack of space to use large apparatus and equipment with wheels. Teachers make every effort to compensate for this weakness by using the hall regularly and ensuring the large classroom facilities are used to the full. Children show appropriate skills in controlling their movements and increasing dexterity in throwing and catching objects. They use apparatus in the hall safely and think about the possible shapes they can make with their own bodies. Children develop a growing awareness of space and travel safely on and over different types of apparatus. They develop a growing use of language, for example in their movements, as they “wobble like a jelly” and attempt to lift their feet after imagining they have walked through toffee. Teaching in this area is satisfactory due to the restrictions imposed by poor accommodation and facilities.

Creative development

71. Children achieve well and are on course to meet this early learning goal. The good teaching enables them to explore a wide variety of materials, including paint, clay, dough and collage to good effect, as they select and construct models using different types of adhesive in the process. Children use paper, for example in making a rabbit using simple paper folding techniques, and make green snakes from play dough. There are good links, for example with religious festivals, as children celebrate the Chinese New Year, with a snake as the current theme. They create large collage pictures to depict stories such as Jack and the beanstalk and make sheep on a hillside with a shepherd to remind them of the story in the Bible of the lost sheep. Children enjoy the creative activities provided and use materials carefully and to good effect. In their art work, children produced a range of different prints from various objects using one colour only. They described what they had used and thoroughly enjoyed the process and exploration of the materials. They learn to sing with enthusiasm and experiment to make different sounds with their musical instruments, for example using the story “ We’re going on a snail trail”.

72. Children with special educational needs are well supported enabling them to make good gains in their learning and achieve well. The high quality education provided in the Foundation Stage enables children to have a very positive start to their school life, and they are thoroughly well prepared for the next stage. Strengths from the previous inspection have been sustained, with overall good improvements.

ENGLISH

73. Standards for pupils in the most recent national test results by the age of seven were in line with the national average in reading and above average in writing. By comparison with similar schools, standards were above the national average in reading, and well above in writing. A greater proportion of pupils reached higher Levels in reading and writing than that reached nationally. This represents a steady upward trend in standards over time. By the age of eleven, standards in English were below the national average and in line when compared with similar schools. Far fewer pupils reached the higher Levels than the national average. A significant proportion of pupils taking the most recent national tests at the age of eleven was on the school's special educational needs register. Overall, there is a steady and improving trend over time in English for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven.
74. Many pupils have a low level of attainment on entry to the foundation stage in their language and literacy skills, and given these factors, the vast majority of pupils achieve well in English as they move through the school. The evidence of the inspection confirmed that by the age of seven, pupils' standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are in line with the national expectations. There is a high proportion of pupils in this group with special educational needs who are reaching standards that are below national expectations. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading during lessons, due to the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Higher attaining pupils read with increasing fluency and expression. They understand the difference between fiction and non fiction and express their views and opinions about different authors. Many can locate information in dictionaries and use the computer to access further information about different topics related to their literacy work.
75. The quality of pupils written work is variable. In the best examples, pupils write imaginatively, with well structured stories and factual accounts, including learning to write instructions accurately and in the appropriate sequence. A significant minority struggle to write at any length, and make basic errors in their spelling, with inconsistent and inaccurate use of grammar and punctuation. This hinders their ability to record and write their findings in other subjects across the curriculum.
76. The inspection found that standards in English by the end of Key Stage 2 are close to those expected nationally in speaking, reading and writing, and often above in listening, although there are significant variations between the higher and lower attainers. Pupils develop a widening vocabulary and use this to present their arguments and develop logical views on a range of topics. They continue to develop their reading skills and many clearly enjoy reading for pleasure. The range of writing increases for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven, although for a significant minority of pupils, it remains an area of weakness. Pupils write book reviews explaining their likes and dislikes, and many draft and redraft their stories with good effect in order to further improve the use of language. They use their widening vocabulary to write arguments "for" and "against" a given subject. Pupils also learn to use metaphors, similes and idioms in order to add interest to their work. The quality of pupils' handwriting is variable, and for a significant minority, it is scruffy, poorly formed and difficult for themselves and others to read. This in turn limits the pupils' capacity to record efficiently and effectively for other subjects.

77. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school, with examples of very good teaching seen. The very good teaching was characterised by lively and interesting activities, carefully modified or extended to match the wide ranging needs of the pupils. In a Year 2 English literacy lesson, pupils learned how to use key words from a chosen text. There were very effective strategies using white laminated boards for attempting to write new words and most pupils made an attempt without concern for getting things wrong. Resources were very well chosen, for example using soft toys linked to the "Owl Babies" story enabled otherwise restless and distracted pupils to maintain concentration and perseverance throughout. Higher attaining pupils looked for speech marks and speech as evidence of the baby owl's concerns over the lost mother, whilst others were challenged to produce a passport and profile of the owl of their choice. Pupils remained keen and enthusiastic throughout the lesson and produced high quality work, including posters for the missing mother owl. Learning support assistants were used very efficiently to help those pupils with special needs make good progress, and all pupils were included purposefully in the overall activity.
78. In a very effective poetry lesson in Year 6, there were clear learning intentions for the pupils to analyse how messages, moods, feelings and attitudes are conveyed through poetry. Time was used efficiently as TS Eliot's poem "Macavity's cat" was read swiftly, and used as a basis for the pupils to develop their own work. Pupils moved quickly into groups and the work was carefully planned to stretch the higher attainers, support pupils with special educational needs and maintain a challenge for the average attainers. Pupils produced interesting verse that they planned and drafted, set in modern day, whilst others thought of arguments to support the cat in his adventures and mishaps. There was a sense of urgency to the lesson and everyone applied themselves with effort by the end. Pupils were very well managed and their contributions used sensitively for further learning to take place. In otherwise satisfactory teaching, the pace at times became a little slow and delivery of the lesson somewhat rigid, although pupils remained attentive and polite throughout the session.
79. The subject is led and managed well. This includes systematic monitoring of teaching, and regular scrutiny of the pupils' books to track their learning and progress. The teacher responsible for developing the subject has a clear understanding of the trends in standards, and relative strengths and weaknesses. There are appropriate targets and priorities for bringing about further improvements. The very good procedures for assessing the pupils ensures a suitably rigorous approach to tracking their progress and rate of learning over time. Information and communication technology is used as an integral part of many English lessons, particularly for those pupils who struggle to record their work legibly. This is an effective strategy in helping this weakness. There is good use of the pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum as teachers take care to identify key words related to the different subjects for further explanation. This approach helps to enhance the pupils' literacy skills further.
80. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory and there is now more good and very good teaching in English that is making a positive impact on the standards and pupils' achievements.

MATHEMATICS

81. Standards in the most recent national test results in 2000 for pupils aged seven were in line with the national average and above when compared with similar schools. Although results fell to below average in 1998 they have risen sharply since then. At the end of Year 6, results have improved considerably rising from well below the national average in 1998 to well above average in 2000. The pupils reached standards that were well above the national average by comparison with similar schools. As a result of the school's high expectations a particular feature of both sets of results is the high proportion of pupils attaining above average levels. In 2000, for example, more than one third of pupils in Years 2 and 6 attained these higher levels. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in mathematics and learn to use their numeracy skills effectively across the curriculum.

82. In addition to the good quality of teaching, the school's strong arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school lie at the heart of these recent improvements. Together they enable the school and individual teachers to focus specific teaching and support where it is most needed. The teachers responsible for assessment and mathematics make effective use of data gathered through these assessment procedures. They make accurate predictions about the results of individual pupils and whole year groups so that now there are few surprises at the end of the year. This is particularly important when dealing with the relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group, which are therefore particularly susceptible to variations from year to year. Pupils are beginning to share responsibility for their learning through involvement in setting and reviewing their personal targets for improvement.
83. The test results for 2000 are broadly reflected in the inspection findings. This year standards are on course to be in line with the national average in Year 2 and above the national average in Year 6. There are fewer pupils attaining higher Levels because of the characteristics of the year groups and this is not a reflection of the school's provision. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of mathematics. However, the analysis of pupils' past work shows that as a result of a structured approach to teaching, pupils' data handling skills are a strength. They make good gains in their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school from below average levels when entering the school at four to above average levels when they leave at eleven. The significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieves particularly well. They make good progress towards their learning targets as a result of the very good support they receive in all numeracy sessions. Lessons are well organised and learning support assistants are well briefed to develop pupils' confidence and understanding. Higher attaining pupils also do well because of the appropriately challenging tasks which teachers set. There is no difference between the performances of boys and girls from year to year.
84. By the time they are seven, almost all pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 100, and most, as in a Year 2 lesson, deal confidently with sequences of numbers such as the multiples of 2, 5 and 10. They estimate and measure length carefully and are developing a good understanding of the need for standardised metric measurements in real life situations. They identify the particular features of common two dimensional and three dimensional shapes, and compile tables, block graphs and pictograms to record their birthdays, pets and favourite snacks. In Years 3 to 6, teachers build successfully on these earlier experiences. As a result pupils make more rapid gains as they near the end of the junior phase. By Year 6, most have acquired a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide and show a good understanding of the relationships between these operations. They calculate area and perimeter and construct and interpret line graphs and pie charts.
85. Throughout the school, pupils use mathematical skills in practical situations in other subject areas. For example, in Year 5 pupils use their experience of data handling to conduct a survey in geography. In Year 6 they extend their knowledge of shape by exploring the work of Pythagoras as part of their study of Ancient Greece. However, teachers do not always plan systematically for activities such as these to enhance pupils' mathematical understanding. At the same time, although there are isolated examples, there was little evidence of the regular use of classroom based computers to support pupils' learning.
86. Teachers have conscientiously adopted the National Numeracy Strategy, and by using it consistently to guide their planning, are ensuring that pupils' learning builds progressively as they move through the school. This has been a major contributory factor to recent improvements in the quality of teaching. However, there are relative weaknesses in the ways that some teachers are implementing the strategy. For example, teachers do not always make the three-part lesson structure explicit to pupils so that they share an understanding of the purposes of the introductory, main activity and review phases of the lesson. In the introductory mental mathematics sessions, they do not always make sufficient use of practical aids such as counting sticks and whiteboards to involve all pupils in the activities. The review phase of the lesson is often used effectively for pupils to share their work and ideas with others as, for example, in Year 1 where they were exploring a variety of estimating and measuring experiences in length and weight. In Year 5 a similar session was used by the teacher to assess the progress made by

pupils in devising tests for divisibility by 2, 4, 5 and 10. However, it is rarely used more thoughtfully to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by suggesting ways of extending the work or by considering the next steps in learning.

87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The good bank of information on pupils' likely and actual attainment that is building as pupils move through the school is beginning to provide strong support for teachers' planning. The school makes very effective use of this information to manage the mathematics curriculum, and individual teachers are better able to identify precisely what pupils know and therefore what they need to do in order to improve. As a result, carefully planned activities for pupils of all attainment levels were a feature of all lessons seen.
88. The best lessons were characterised by teachers' high expectations leading to the planning of challenging and interesting tasks. In a lesson where older pupils were finding the mean of a set of data, the teacher skilfully increased the challenge as the lesson progressed so that all pupils of differing abilities were able to learn at a level which matched their needs. As a result, pupils were highly motivated, keen to participate and sustained high levels of concentration. Teachers throughout the school demonstrate good knowledge of mathematics. In a Year 4 lesson this was evident in the teacher's good questioning technique and in the assessment of pupils' progress in their learning about the use of place value to multiply numbers by 10 and 100. There was a very good working ethos in which pupils' very positive attitudes made a significant contribution to the success of the lesson. Weaker aspects of teaching include inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work where pupils are not always given suggestions about how to improve. Teachers' high expectations do not always extend to pupils' presentation of their work, which occasionally is untidy and carelessly organised.
89. Mathematics has moved forward considerably since the last inspection. Teaching has improved. Very good whole school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment have been introduced leading to a good match of planned tasks to pupils' needs and abilities. The successful implementation of the numeracy strategy has provided a detailed framework for teachers' planning. The coordinator's role has been strengthened with opportunities provided to monitor teaching and learning and this is now a well managed subject. All of these have contributed to the good improvements in standards and pupils' achievements seen throughout the school.

SCIENCE

90. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds in the year 2000 were close to the national average, but less pupils attained the higher Level than nationally. In comparison with the results in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was above the average. In the four years from 1997 to 2000, the pupils' attainment has varied, with a particularly weak year in 1998. Since then performance has improved, more quickly than the national trend. Girls have done slightly better than boys in recent years. Teachers' own assessments of the attainment of eleven year olds were well below the standard test results due to a significant proportion of the pupils being absent at the time of the assessments. Teachers' assessments of the attainment of seven year old pupils in 2000 showed standards were in line with the national average and with the average for similar schools in the number of pupils attaining the expected standard. However, teachers judged that fewer pupils were attaining the higher Level.
91. The evidence of pupils' school work shows that the majority of the present Year 2 pupils are at or close to the standard expected for their age, with some pupils doing better. The majority of the present Year 6 pupils are also at or close to expected standards; again with some pupils doing better. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In both classes there are pupils with special educational needs and other pupils who need consistent support with their work. This is particularly the case in the present Year 2. Pupils, overall, are achieving satisfactorily in the younger classes and achieving well as they move through the older age groups. This is due to the good quality of the teaching and the interest shown by pupils in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes because they are well supported in the classroom and have every opportunity to take a full part in class work.

92. Both boys and girls are achieving well. For many, the standards of attainment on entry to the school are rather below that normally expected. However, they are acquiring a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the content of the National Curriculum and how to conduct investigations. By the age of seven, pupils have considered the kind of food they eat and which foods are healthy, give them energy and help them grow. As part of this study they have made a graph of their favourite food. They have also noticed that after exercise they puff and feel hot. Pupils have noted the changes that come about as people grow older by discussing what a baby can do and what they can do as older children. They know that change is part of growing. In extending this to plants, some pupils have considered what plants need to grow and have made careful drawings of a flower bulb growing, recording how it changes over a period of time. In their studies of materials, pupils have sorted and grouped them, looking at objects made of wood and others made of metal. In another class, pupils have gone on to look at different types of shoes, such as wellingtons and trainers, slippers and walking shoes, considering the material they are made of, what they feel like and finding words to describe them. When learning about physical processes they know that light comes from a variety of sources, and that we use electricity at home. Pupils have made a bulb light up in an electrical circuit. They show, in their work, that they have considered safety. In all classes pupils engage in investigative work and are learning how to observe and record carefully. They handle objects and materials and look at reference books and use their ICT skills investigating CD ROMs for further information.
93. By the age of eleven pupils have extended their knowledge and understanding of science and refined their investigative skills. Older pupils have learned the names of different parts of a plant and have thought about the conditions necessary for growth. In conducting an experiment to see whether a plant will grow when light is excluded, pupils' records included observations before the experiment, their predictions and the results. Pupils have learned more about the importance of a healthy life style. They know how the heart works and have considered, drawn and labelled the human skeleton. They have extended their work on different materials to classify substances. In doing so, pupils know that there are solids, liquids and gases and that water, for example, can exist in all three states. In a very interesting lesson seen, groups of pupils investigated the conditions needed for evaporation to take place and whether all their jars containing liquids would evaporate at the same rate. In doing this, pupils judged whether the tests were fair and made good use of observations and careful measurements to see if their predictions were right. They reached their conclusions and wrote their results clearly. In extending their knowledge of light, pupils have found out that light travels in straight lines and is reflected from mirrors. They successfully use their scientific knowledge to explain how shadows are formed. In their investigative work pupils understand how to write up a test in an appropriate format. They understand the importance of fair testing and how to ensure this and they show that they can draw conclusions from their investigations. They have a good understanding of how to conduct and record investigations, but pupils have not yet moved to the next step where they sometimes conduct an investigation for themselves. For example choosing as a group the methods and equipment needed, selecting information from sources available and agreeing how a conclusion might be reached.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory for pupils aged six and seven. It is overall good, and occasionally very good for pupils aged eight to eleven. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers evidently enjoy the subject and transmit this interest to their pupils, who respond well. Their subject knowledge, particularly in older classes, is good and they give clear explanations. They teach the investigative skills well, showing pupils how to record clearly the investigations they have made and reminding them about the need for correct scientific vocabulary. The teaching methods used are always satisfactory and are good or very good in the older classes. Little time is wasted and pupils' interest is well maintained in the lessons. The management of pupils is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together supporting the pupils. Lessons are well planned. They show that teachers' expectations of their pupils are appropriate and this is reflected in the activities chosen, which help pupils of all abilities in the subject to move on in their learning. When homework is given it is chosen to add to pupils' understanding of the work they are doing in lessons. Older pupils show that they can organise themselves into small groups. Teachers' assessments of

what pupils have understood and can do are satisfactory and sometimes good, though more could now be expected of some of the older pupils to encourage more independence in their work. Pupils behave well. They are interested and ready to learn.

95. The co-ordinator gives very good leadership to the subject and sets a good standard in teaching. Science is effectively monitored across the school. Information from the school's own tests and from the standard assessment tests is studied and a close check is kept on pupils' progress. The curriculum is broad and balanced and of interest to the pupils. There is no unnecessary repetition of work and the investigative work has been well promoted. Good procedures for assessment are in place. Resources, which include a garden area and woodland, are readily available and support the teachers' work. Improvements overall since the previous inspection have been good with standards rising steadily and the pupils' achievements increasing.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Standards in art and design for pupils by the ages of seven and eleven are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they develop their artistic skills systematically.
97. By the age of seven, pupils paint in the style of well known artists, and make good progress in learning to do observational drawings. They experiment with a range of colours, and use a variety of materials in their art work. During their activities, pupils learn appropriate vocabulary for the subject and explain the reasons for their choices and actions. Pupils produce tiles with repeated patterns, and understand the basic techniques of printing. They enjoy art lessons and show consideration and respect for the materials and one another's contributions.
98. By the age of eleven, pupils have explored line, pattern, colour, texture and shape appropriately. Collage materials, paints and prints are used sensitively, showing that pupils understand how to mix colours in order to gain the best effect. Pupils have few opportunities to use sketch books, and those that have been used have limited amounts of work with little evidence of developing skills over time.
99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and very good when taught by a skilled and specialist art teacher. Teachers explain effectively how pupils can refine and improve their work. In Year 3, pupils were very effectively helped to evaluate their own work and that of others. They did this with insight and sensitivity. The well organised materials and resources enabled all pupils to work as independently as possible as they designed prints, cut squares and printed on a range of surfaces. Pupils recognised that the amount of paint, the boldness of print and depth of lines were important factors in successful printing. The very good teaching in Year 4 was characterised by highly effective explanations and a demonstration of printing techniques with the stages in the process explained carefully. Pupils were enthralled with their results and eager to develop their skills and techniques further,
100. The subject is managed effectively and planning for the art curriculum is now comprehensive. This includes aspects of drawing, painting, printmaking, construction modelling, textiles and visual elements. There are good links with other subjects, for example in religious education, pupils made clay Diva pots.
101. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory with more detailed planning and a higher proportion of good teaching than before.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Only one lesson was observed in this subject as most of the teaching centred on art during the inspection. The lesson observed was with older pupils and judgements are made on this, on a study of pupils' work done previously and on the displays of work around the school.
103. The attainments of pupils by the age of seven and eleven are in line with expectations for their age, and the evidence shows that they achieve satisfactorily in designing and making. Younger pupils plan and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways; sometimes by drawing what they intend to make and sometimes by making initial models from construction kits. The work seen shows that pupils are learning to handle and work with different kinds of materials and that their making skills are developing satisfactorily. Examples of interesting work seen include designs by pupils for the making of soap with thoughts about the ingredients they will need to make the bars of soap functional and attractive. The finished products, in different colours and designs, made an eye-catching display. In another class, pupils had drawn and then made hand puppets using fabric. As a further extension of their skills in designing and making, they had used cardboard and card wheels to make moving vehicles.
104. In older classes, pupils were in the process of making pop-up story books in a good link with both English and art. Good use had also been made of computers when pupils had produced a repeated pattern fabric design. In the oldest class, pupils had carefully designed and made slippers, using a selection of fabrics, and had also made and tested shelters. In their designing, pupils had used labels and annotations to show their intentions and that they had thought about the making process and what would need to be done. At the end of the process, they had evaluated their work and decided how it might be improved next time.
105. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching across the school. However, it is evident from the work seen that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are teaching the basic skills well. Teachers' expectations of the different age groups are at least appropriate. With the older pupils, teachers' expectations are good. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily as they move through the school. In the lesson seen, they were interested and applied themselves well; showing good concentration as they tried to produce an exploded drawing of a car. There is limited use of ICT in this subject.
106. The curriculum is interesting for pupils and is well linked to other subjects as well as being taught as a subject in itself. Teachers make their own accurate assessments of pupils' progress and keep some samples of work.
107. The co-ordinator is giving satisfactory leadership and keeps track of the work being done by studying the finished products and the displays but has no time to monitor teaching. Resources are sufficient for the teaching of craft, design and technology and are made available for teachers and pupils to use. Good links with a local firm of paper manufacturers provide extra consumable resources from time to time. Toolboxes of equipment are available in the school. Cooking takes place in a separate building although no evidence was gained during the inspection on this aspect of the subject. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory and the pupils' achievements are no longer unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards in pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding are average for their age and have been maintained at this level in both infant and junior classes since the last inspection. A significant improvement to the school's provision for geography is the adoption of recently published national guidelines to support teachers' planning. This ensures that pupils cover a balanced geographical curriculum and develop specific subject skills in a structured and systematic manner as they move through the school. As a result pupils of all abilities achieve well. An annual overview shows the topics chosen for each class. It includes a number of tasks that are particularly relevant to the pupils and excite their interest.

109. Most teachers alternate geography and history on their timetables. As a result only one geography lesson was seen. Judgements, therefore, are based on a range of evidence gathered from the analysis of pupils' previous work seen in displays and in their books, teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils.
110. In Years 1 and 2 pupils begin to develop a sense of place in their study of the school buildings and grounds. They also explore the question, "*Where does Santa go on holiday?*" They suggest, for example, Scotland to enjoy the peace and quiet, Spain for the sunshine or Hopton where he could drink lots of beer and his reindeer could swim in the pool. Teachers support their learning about distant places effectively by the use of pictures, photographs, wall maps and atlases, as they track Barnaby Bear's journeys to Italy and elsewhere. Year 2 pupils draw island maps and are introduced to the need for a key as part of their work on Struay, an imaginary Scottish island, described in the *Katie Morag* series of stories. With effective links with literacy teachers encourage the accurate use of geographical vocabulary to describe features of the island landscape such as the harbour, post office, land, loch and sea.
111. In Year 3, pupils' current work is based on the view from their classroom window. Although the teacher has identified that this particular view is fairly limited in its opportunities for study, pupils successfully devise and answer geographical questions about the immediate locality. At the same time they extend their knowledge and understanding of geography as a subject. However, this is an example of the need to adapt the guidelines to match more closely the needs of the school and its pupils.
112. Teachers of older pupils continue to make good use of the local area to support and develop pupils' learning and to ensure that their work is relevant and interesting. It provides a clear focus for geographical enquiry and investigation and in particular it promotes important fieldwork skills. In Year 5, in the only lesson seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory and pupils' work indicates that this is generally the case throughout the school. Pupils extend their earlier knowledge of the immediate neighbourhood by exploring the enormous potential of the town of Colchester. They use their mathematical skills effectively to analyse the results of a recent traffic survey and work collaboratively on a study of the High Street. In the lesson they were clearly motivated by this approach, which enables them to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding through first-hand experiences. These pupils have also been involved in a valuable learning experience about the impact of people on the environment as part of a local regeneration project.
113. In Year 6 pupils move on to more complex studies of world and physical geography. Their developing knowledge and opportunities for individual research enable them to gain a sound basic understanding of the geographical features of mountains and how they are formed.
114. There are currently no formal arrangements for monitoring the subject or assessing and recording pupils' performance and there have been few opportunities to develop the management role of the coordinator. The school has not yet undertaken a systematic audit to ensure that each unit of study is adequately resourced. For example, there are insufficient atlases, globes and maps, including Ordnance Survey maps of both the local area and more distant locations to support the systematic and progressive development of mapwork. The use of ICT as part of geography is currently underdeveloped. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory overall.

HISTORY

115. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and that was in a class of the older pupils. Judgements made are based on the lesson seen, a study of pupils' work done previously and the displays of work in history around the school.
116. Attainment in history is in line with the national expectations of pupils by the time they reach the ages of seven and eleven and they are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils' achievements are good as they have a widening understanding of historical concepts.
117. The younger pupils are learning about the past and are satisfactorily developing a sense of old and new. In doing this, they have looked at different kinds of houses, identifying those which are old and which are modern. They have studied an old tea-set and a new one and have given reasons for deciding which is which. In learning about famous people, they have heard the story of Guy Fawkes, and have written about him. They know that people dressed differently many years ago and have drawn pictures of people from the 17th century. As part of this study pupils have learned about the Fire of London and have decided that houses burned easily in the 17th century because they were made mostly of wood, unlike houses today. They are able to consider the past and relate what they have seen to their own lives.
118. Older pupils have studied different historical periods. They have learned something of the Romans and the Vikings, considered the way the Romans lived and the kind of ships used by the Vikings. Other pupils have learned about the Victorians. As part of this study they have made good use of different kinds of sources, including reference books, information from a census taken in 1841 and by going on a 'Victorian walk' in Colchester. A study of World War 2 has encouraged pupils to think what it must have been like for evacuees, for people who had limited rations and who had to make use of Anderson shelters during air raids. As part of their study of Ancient Greece older pupils have compared the Ancient Olympic Games with the Modern Olympics. As part of this study they have used the computer in their search for information. Children are achieving well. They are learning to behave as historians and know that there are many ways of finding out about the past. They know that there are primary and secondary sources of information. In a class discussion, pupils briefly considered the reliability of evidence. However, the interpretation of sources of evidence has not led the older pupils to consider that evidence might sometimes be conflicting and how that might alter a point of view. The use of ICT to support and develop the pupils' historical knowledge is underdeveloped.
119. It is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching in the school. In the lesson observed the teaching was good. Pupils were interested and used reference books and computer very readily, seeking information. The work seen shows that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are carefully teaching the pupils about different historical periods as well as teaching them how to behave as historians. Their expectations of their pupils and the work they are providing for them are appropriate and resources are well used.
120. The curriculum across the school is well planned to build on their knowledge systematically. The resources are well organised by the knowledgeable co-ordinator who is developing her role enthusiastically. She is ensuring that there are sufficient good quality resources to support the work in the classrooms. Samples of pupils' work, up-dated termly, are kept by the co-ordinator who looks for evidence that pupils are making progress. A file, kept by the co-ordinator, with information about places which classes might visit in connection with their school work, is a helpful resource for teachers. Improvements have been satisfactory as the pupils' achievements are no longer unsatisfactory as judged at the time of the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age at the age of seven and are above the standards expected at the age of eleven.
122. The younger pupils are able to write stories and messages on the computer. They are learning how to use the keyboard and to edit texts, to find different fonts and to print sizes. They handle the mouse competently. In mathematics lessons, pupils give instructions to the floor turtle and understand that these have to be precise if the turtle is to move in a chosen direction. When seeking information, pupils successfully use CD ROMs.
123. Older pupils confidently use computers to retrieve and handle information. They communicate with others through e-mail. They understand how to access and use the Internet. They make use of it to support their work in other subjects. For example, in science pupils were seen to use computers to collect information about a particular animal; combining this with a study of reference books. In history, pupils have collected information about the lives of the Ancient Greeks and have also learned what Anderson shelters were like when people had to use them in the Second World War. Pupils use information and communication technology to organise and present their work, sometimes including pictures and charts. Good use is made of a digital camera. In one very good lesson seen in an older class, pupils interpreted line graphs produced from tables of data, while others prepared the content of an e-mail for later input and despatch to the Middle East - a follow up to a previous study of Anne Frank. Pupils conduct surveys as part of mathematics and, using information and communication technology, considered the resulting statistics on personal data with a good analysis of the information gained and an evaluation of the survey itself; identifying some errors. In control technology, pupils have learned how to make traffic lights work and are using sensors to monitor fluctuations in temperature levels.
124. The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and occasionally excellent. No specific information and communication technology lessons were seen with the younger classes but teachers make good use of computers as part of their other lessons in some subjects, including English. At the top end of the school, teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and teach the basic skills of computer use very clearly. They plan their lessons so that pupils of all levels of understanding of computers can achieve and experience the pleasure of success. They have high expectations of their pupils and as a result the activities chosen present some challenge to them; making them think. In the best lessons, pupils draw on their previous learning when faced with a problem, and teachers do not step in too quickly to help. All pupils respond well and enjoy their work. They concentrate and make an effort. They have a very positive attitude to the subject and behaviour is good.
125. Pupils are achieving well and are making good progress in lessons. Few have computers at home, but their interest and enthusiasm for their work plus the good teaching and interesting curriculum gives all pupils the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of what computers can do and the skills to use them. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants and they make good progress. Information and communication technology is well used to support pupils who have special educational needs, not least in helping them to develop further their understanding of language and mathematics.
126. The co-ordinator is leading the subject well. He has been instrumental in setting up and maintaining the new network of computers, and has ensured that teachers and assistants have received training in their use. More training is already being organised. The school is well resourced, with computers in the computer suite and also in classrooms. The co-ordinator monitors how information and communication technology is being used in all classes and has identified areas for further development. The curriculum is broad and balanced and gives pupils a range of experiences. Assessments of pupils' progress are made at the end of a unit of work and some samples are kept. It is a rapidly and successfully developing subject in the school. There

have been good improvements since the previous inspection when standards and pupils' achievements were not as high as they are currently.

MUSIC

127. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages. Pupils achieve well in their listening skills.
128. By the age of seven, pupils develop a growing awareness of rhythm and use simple notation. By the age of eleven, pupils demonstrate greater fluency in their use of musical vocabulary and describe their feelings well in response to different styles of music. They show interest and enthusiasm for the subject and use the instruments with care and respect.
129. Teaching was satisfactory from the very limited evidence, but there is currently no music specialist to assist the pupils' technical skills and this is a weakness.
130. The subject is being managed temporarily whilst the school seeks to appoint a teacher with the specialist knowledge to develop the subject further. Music resources are very limited and currently unsatisfactory. The range is restricted, mostly to untuned percussion and this restricts the pupils' capacity to compose their own music beyond a basic and elementary level.
131. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Pupils throughout the school achieve appropriately, and reach the average standard expected for their ages. They enjoy their physical education lessons and the levels of commitment, co-operation and sporting behaviour seen in lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6 is often very good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the physical education programme, sometimes with direct support, and many attain similar standards to their peers. There is no difference in performance between boys and girls. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved.
133. All aspects of physical education, including athletics, dance, games, gymnastics and swimming are included in the school's curricular plan. The school is currently reviewing its provision for outdoor and adventurous activities. In Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils receive swimming instruction in the nearby public pool and almost all pupils currently in Year 6 meet the National Curriculum requirements and many have achieved higher awards. Standards in swimming therefore are above average.
134. In the one lesson seen in the infants, the quality of teaching and learning in gymnastics was satisfactory. Pupils develop good attitudes to physical education. In discussion with the teacher they recognise the importance of warming up before vigorous exercise and take part in this phase of the lesson to music with great concentration and pleasure. Working on the apparatus they explore a range of skills and actions demonstrating sound basic control of their bodies and awareness of the space around them. They have few opportunities to describe or comment on their own or others' actions and time is often lost as they queue to take turns on the mat or apparatus.
135. The work is of a similar standard in junior classes. In the lessons seen, in dance and games, the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Teaching is good overall. In dance, for example, pupils achieve well. As a result of teachers' good subject knowledge there is a clear focus on the development of skills. As a result, in the three dance lessons seen it is evident that pupils' skills are being developed progressively as they move through the school. In Year 3 pupils develop sequences of movements based on the theme of swimming and diving as they begin to work co-operatively, working in unison with their partners. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6 they respond to a wide range of musical stimuli to devise and perform imaginative movements with

good control and awareness of space. Successful elements of teaching included opportunities for pupils to observe the work of others and to make judgements about how they might improve their performances.

136. In games, pupils in Year 6 develop their passing, control and ball shielding skills. They show an increasing awareness of tactics, for example, in their marking of opponents and in their developing understanding of attack and defence. They thoroughly enjoy their lesson, are attentive to their teacher and co-operate very well to ensure a successful session with a strong competitive element. Well-timed intervention by the teacher increases the level of challenge through the refinement and addition of rules, as well as the coaching of specific skills. The lesson also included a good example of a pupil with special educational needs being successfully integrated with the sensitive support and encouragement of the teacher.
137. In contrast, younger pupils' behaviour in the less confined teaching space of the hall is sometimes inappropriate. This is particularly so when their natural exuberance and enthusiasm are not channelled effectively into successful learning.
138. There are currently no formal arrangements for monitoring the subject or assessing and recording pupils' performance and there have been few opportunities to develop the management role of the coordinator. The school's adopted schemes of work provide teachers with ideas for a wide range of interesting and motivating activities. However, recent national guidance is not being used to identify levels of expectation for pupils in each year. It is this exemplification of pupils' performance and a shared and clear view of attainment that are needed to raise standards further in the subject. Currently this view is very much dependent upon the knowledge and expertise of individual teachers. Arrangements for extra-curricular activities are satisfactory with limited opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment at the ages of seven and eleven were below expected levels. Insufficient time was allocated to the subject and there were weaknesses in the scheme of work. Each of these areas has since been addressed and good improvement has taken place. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education at seven are now in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Although there are some gaps in older pupils' knowledge as a result of earlier identified weaknesses standards at eleven are broadly in line with expectations also. Pupils achieve well as they develop a growing awareness and insight into the range of beliefs and religions across the world.
140. The quality of teaching is good overall and in lessons seen includes some very good teaching that creates a secure atmosphere in which pupils are confident enough to discuss and explore their feelings. Lessons and series of lessons are well planned to build effectively on pupils' knowledge and experiences in order to develop their understanding of Christianity and the world's leading faiths. As a consequence, and starting from a relatively low baseline, pupils achieve well acquiring sound knowledge of significant features and stories. All pupils, for example, appreciate the importance that Easter has for Christians and this was demonstrated clearly in daily acts of collective worship which are used successfully to reinforce pupils' learning in religious education lessons. In Year 3, pupils' learning about other faiths is successfully extended through their thoughtful responses in a lesson about the Indian festival of Holi which coincides with Easter and which was the focus of a recent assembly.
141. Teachers make good use of a range of techniques to enliven their lessons and motivate their pupils. Story telling skills are used extensively with younger pupils, as for example, when they read the Story of the Lost Sheep from a first bible or the story of Guru Nanak in Year 2. The latter is supported effectively by a classroom display of pictures, early reference books and Sikh artefacts that help to establish basic links between stories and festivals. In Year 3 pupils re-enact the story of Palm Sunday and compose a class prayer to remember the suffering of Jesus. Their writing shows that they are willing to take risks in expressing their innermost thoughts, confident in the knowledge that their feelings will be respected. They describe places and times that are

special to them such as a bedroom where they can be alone with their books or a garden where they can not be disturbed.

142. Older pupils' knowledge and understanding is deepened and extended by learning about and from other religions. Sensitivity is an important factor, particularly where teachers and pupils together explore delicate personal feelings. In Year 5 they explore the variety of responses shown by peoples of different faiths to death. They encounter different versions of the Creation story and through thinking about how "mankind can be unkind" make effective links with their study of the environment in other subjects. Teachers show considerable skill in the careful use of questioning to challenge pupils' thoughts. In Year 6 this was demonstrated effectively when the teacher made good use of a lighted candle as he encouraged the pupils to explore the symbolism of light in Christianity and in the Hindu festival of Divali and the Jewish festival of Hanukah.
143. The subject is well managed by the experienced and knowledgeable coordinator. She has monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work but has not observed teaching. To date this has not been sufficiently rigorous to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to continue to improve the quality of teaching. The locally agreed syllabus indicates expectations of pupils' attainment and is closely linked to the adopted scheme of work. Although the school draws heavily on these documents for its planning it now needs to use them to develop a system of assessing and recording what pupils know, understand and can do. The portfolio of samples of pupils' work that is currently being developed will support this process effectively. The school recognises that more use could be made of educational visits and visitors to the school to support and enhance pupils' learning. Visitors, currently are predominantly representatives of the Christian faith, thus reflecting accurately the type of school.