

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Saffron Walden

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115155

Headteacher: Mrs. Lorna Ritchie

Reporting inspector: Mr David Owen - 1957

Dates of inspection: 4th - 8th December 2000

Inspection number: 224627

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Castle Street
Saffron Walden
Essex

Postcode: CB10 1BQ

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. Gill Pike

Date of previous inspection: 24th - 29th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr F. D. Owen 1957	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements.
Mrs J. D. Darrington 13418	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs M. A. Archer 20407	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage; English; Art and design; History.	How well are pupils taught?
Mr A. Cox 21306	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Information and communication technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr J. Sangster 20010	Team inspector	Equal opportunities; English as an additional language; Design and technology; Geography; Music; Physical education.	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's, a voluntary aided Church of England primary school, is situated in Saffron Walden in north-west Essex. With 255 pupils on roll it is average in size compared with primary schools nationally. The pupils live in a mixture of privately owned and rented properties. They come from a diversity of home backgrounds, socially, economically and educationally. Although the range of abilities of the children entering the school is wide, overall attainment is below average on entry, particularly in language development. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 31 per cent which is 50 per cent above the national average. At the time of the previous inspection it was roughly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, one per cent, is below average. Nine per cent, a below average proportion, are eligible for free school meals. Six per cent are from ethnic minority families and four per cent speak English as an additional language. Including the headteacher, each teacher is responsible for 23 pupils, which is broadly in line with the average for England as a whole. The high turnover of pupils experienced in the past has now stabilised.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Mary's has improved since the last inspection in June 1996 and the headteacher, governors and staff are thoroughly committed to further improvement. The school is well led and managed and much effort is put into raising standards. The teaching is good, the pupils learn well and they make good progress in lessons. They enjoy their work and they are well behaved. The arrangements for the pupils' welfare are sound and the school has established a good partnership with parents and carers. Attendance is satisfactory and the procedures for monitoring and improving it are very good. Mathematics apart, standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 are satisfactory despite the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. All pupils, including able children, achieve standards which are at least appropriate for their abilities and the achievement of those with special educational needs is particularly good. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management are good and these factors contribute well to the pupils' learning and their achievement.
- The quality of teaching is good and as a result the pupils learn well.
- There are good relationships between adults and children and consequently the pupils have positive attitudes to school and they are well behaved.
- There is effective provision for pupils with special educational needs and therefore they make good progress.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The school communicates well with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in reading and writing in Key Stage 1.
- Standards of attainment in mathematics throughout the school.
- Standards of attainment in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2.
- The match between the work set and the abilities of individuals and groups.
- Opportunities for pupils to think through ideas for themselves and to conduct their own research.
- The relationship between the school's curriculum and the revised National Curriculum.
- The use of assessment information to help teachers plan further work for the pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in June 1996 the results achieved by eleven-year olds in the national tests have risen at a rate which is above the national trend. Lesson observations during the inspection indicated that standards of attainment have improved in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 there have been improvements in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and history. In Key Stage 2 attainment has risen in music, and at both key stages pupils are now reaching higher standards in design and technology.

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues identified in the previous inspection. In particular, the curriculum for the Foundation Stage has improved substantially. Furthermore, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the curriculum now covers all elements of information and communication technology, design and technology and music. Subject schemes of work have been drawn up, short-term planning improved and assessment procedures developed in response to other key issues. However, revisions to the National Curriculum have made some of this work redundant and the school has now started to revise its curriculum and its assessment procedures in line with these national changes.

Since the last inspection there have been considerable improvements in the quality of teaching particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1. Significant improvements have been made to the school's provision for special educational needs.

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	B	C	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	D	D	D	
Science	B	C	D	D	

In 2000, in comparison with schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools, the results at the end of Key Stage 2 were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. However, when account is taken of assessments made on entry to the school and the very high proportion of pupils with special needs, achievement is satisfactory overall with good achievement by pupils with special educational needs.

Although the table indicates a decline in performance since 1998, this is due to variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs from year group to year group. In fact it is very much to the school's credit that over the five year period from 1996 to 2000 standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen more rapidly than is the case nationally. The quality of the teaching is the most significant factor in the progress which pupils make, and in Key Stage 1 the good teaching has contributed to improved performance in science where results were very high in the 2000 teacher assessments. Good teaching throughout the school underpins a steady rise in performance in English with well below average test results in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 rising to average performance in English by the end of Key Stage 2. In mathematics test results are also better at the end of Key Stage 2; below average rather than the well below average results found at the end of Key Stage 1. Over the last three years, the performance of the girls has been better than that of the boys at the end of Key Stage 1. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the reverse was true. The staff and governors are seeking to minimise these discrepancies. The school achieved the relatively low targets in English and mathematics which it set for the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000. In mathematics a much greater proportion of the pupils achieved the expected level than that indicated by the target.

From lesson observations during the inspection it was found that, despite good teaching and the good progress which they make, many children in Reception will not reach the nationally specified standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and physical development by the time they are five. However, they are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals specified for personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the achievement of all pupils, including the most able, is sound. Overall, satisfactory standards are reached in most subjects. An exception is mathematics where, although they are close to it, standards are below what is expected nationally at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment is also below expectations in speaking and listening, reading and writing but it is in line with the expectations for eleven year olds by the time the pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2. Good teaching has led to improvements in information and communication technology by the end of Key Stage 1, where the pupils now achieve standards in line with the national expectation. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 standards remain below average in this subject. At both key stages the pupils' attain appropriate standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. The work of Key Stage 1 pupils exceeds the national expectation in science and standards in dance are good in both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are keen and eager to attend school. They are interested and involved in their lessons and other activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils are well-behaved in lessons and as they move about the school. There is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships are good and the pupils are keen to help.
Attendance	Overall satisfactory. However, there is an above average rate of unauthorised absence.

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.

The quality of teaching is good overall and as a result the pupils learn well. 93 per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better with 65 per cent of it good or better. 24 per cent was very good or excellent and 7 per cent was unsatisfactory. Pupils in the Reception Year are taught well. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2; it is good and sometimes very good in English where the basic skills of literacy are well taught. Good attention is given to developing the pupils' skills of numeracy within the generally satisfactory teaching to be found in mathematics. Science is taught well throughout the school. The pupils apply the skills of literacy and numeracy effectively within English and mathematics and, when given the opportunity, in lessons in other subjects. In most subjects the teachers have high expectations. They employ a good range of appropriate teaching methods and they manage pupils well. As a consequence pupils of all abilities understand the work they are doing, they behave well and they effectively acquire new skills and knowledge. The progress of pupils is slow in the small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. It is also somewhat limited where work is not well matched to the needs of the pupils or they are given insufficient opportunities to think through ideas for themselves. Whilst time is generally used well, some teachers finish lessons a little too early at the end of the school day thus reducing the total amount of teaching time available to them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school has a clear view of the curriculum it wishes to offer to the pupils. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on standards. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and there are good relationships with other schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. These pupils, including those with statements, are well taught. They learn well and they have positive attitudes to school. Procedures are well organised and the involvement of parents is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school supports these pupils well. They make effective progress throughout the school and achieve appropriate standards in their work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. There is a good planned programme for personal and social education. The provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall. However, there is a lack of planned opportunities for pupils to appreciate cultural diversity within Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall, with very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and effective procedures for promoting good behaviour.

Religious education was subject to a separate inspection. There has been much good work in developing the curriculum but, as yet, there is no overall curriculum plan, linked to the new National Curriculum and incorporating assessment procedures. The school communicates effectively with parents and they contribute well to the work of the school but a minority do not co-operate in ensuring that the staff are kept properly informed about absence. There is satisfactory provision for the welfare of the pupils, although there are inadequacies in the way assessment information is used to plan the next steps in learning. Furthermore there are weaknesses in the provision for health and safety and sometimes the staff do not respond quickly enough to identified concerns.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a clear educational direction and leads the school well. Senior members of staff provide good support for the headteacher but their roles in the management of the school are not yet fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors play an important part in shaping the work of the school and they are effective in ensuring that statutory duties are fulfilled. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governors and staff use national test results effectively to monitor the work of the school and to set targets for improvement. The literacy co-ordinator, the numeracy co-ordinator and the headteacher have been effective in monitoring the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses financial and other resources well. An appropriate set of educational priorities is well supported through good financial planning. The school makes good use of grants, for instance to employ an additional teacher to help raise standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1.

The governors, headteacher and staff are thoroughly committed to improving the quality of the school's provision. They apply the principles of best value effectively. Whilst the accommodation is satisfactory overall, that for the Reception children has certain inadequacies which make it difficult for staff to provide all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been many improvements since the last inspection. • There are good links between school and home. • The quality of teaching is good, pupils are expected to work hard and they are helped to become more mature. • Their children are making good progress and they like school. • There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. • The school is led and managed well. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. Reports and consultation meetings are good. 	<p>Some of the parents who returned the questionnaire are concerned that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not work closely enough with them. • There is inadequate provision for homework. • There is unsatisfactory behaviour. • They would not feel comfortable in approaching the school with concerns or suggestions. • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. <p>Those present at the parents' meeting expressed views contrary to those above.</p>

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' and carers' positive views. Little evidence was found to substantiate the concerns of a minority of parents. Homework makes a good contribution to the progress made by pupils and the school provides an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. The school is striving very hard to improve relationships with parents and wishes, in particular, to reach those with whom contact is limited. Although some pupils occasionally behave in an inappropriate manner, these incidents are generally handled well by both the teaching and the non-teaching staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The children entering the school have a wide range of abilities but their overall levels of attainment are below average, particularly in language development. The teaching is good and consequently the children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. However, for some of them there is much ground to make up and not all will achieve the nationally specified Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical development and creative development by the end of the Reception Year. They are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Overall, standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection.

2. Most children in reception are well behaved, concentrate hard and develop independence. They recognise, use and write single letter sounds in writing or in games, and more able children know the importance of vowels. They recognise and write numbers to ten or above, they count accurately, they know some coins and they can measure when cooking. Most children understand 'old', 'very old', and 'new', they care for rabbits and goldfish and they have impressive computer skills. They sing songs and say nursery rhymes with enthusiasm. Despite the limitations of the building the children show good levels of independence as they draw from observations and experiment with bubble and potato printing. They use the excellent large climbing equipment and bicycles carefully and confidently.

3. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 7 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics, and in each subject a below average proportion achieved the higher level. In reading and mathematics the rate of improvement in standards over the past five years is roughly the same as that found nationally, but in writing, standards have declined in relation to national standards over the last two years. When compared with similar schools, the 2000 results in reading were well below average and those for writing were very low, in that they were in the lowest five per cent nationally. The results in mathematics were also well below average. However, in relation to the assessments made on entry to the school and the fact that the school has 50 per cent more pupils with special educational needs than the national average, the achievement of all pupils is at least in line with their abilities. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good and the higher attainers reach appropriate standards. The impact of good teaching is found in the results of the teachers' assessments in science in 2000. In a subject which is less dependent on pre-school experiences than English and mathematics, these results were very high when compared with the national average. Pupils achieved standards that were very high in all aspects of the subject including experimental and investigative science.

4. When compared with schools nationally and with similar schools, the 2000 results for Year 6 pupils in the end of Key Stage 2 tests were average in English, and below average in mathematics and science. Although an average proportion achieved the higher level in English this was not the case in mathematics and science, where the proportion was below average. Overall achievement is satisfactory and the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because of the effectiveness of the support they receive. More able pupils achieve standards in line with their abilities. The effect of good teaching throughout the school is to be found in the fact that the results in English and mathematics are better at the end of Key Stage 2 than they are at the end of Key Stage 1. It is very much to the school's credit that at the end of Key Stage 2, the rate of improvement in test results is above the national trend.

5. Over the last three years the girls have performed better than the boys at the end of Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and writing. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 the boys have performed better than the girls with the greatest discrepancies in English and mathematics. The school has analysed these results and related them to various factors, especially the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It has started to take some action to deal with the gender differences, for example by seeking to raise the self-esteem of boys in Reception.

6. The school sets itself targets in English and mathematics, based on the predicted performance of each pupil by the end of Key Stage 2. It is gradually improving the accuracy of its target setting within the context of considerable variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs from year group to year group. The school achieved the relatively low targets which it set for itself in 2000 but the pupils achieved much higher standards in mathematics than the school had estimated. The procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment and progress are not as well developed in mathematics as they are in English but the school has started to address this.

7. As judged during the inspection, the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reach standards in line with the national expectation in speaking and listening. However, standards are below what is expected in writing and mathematics, and well below in reading. In science the standard of work exceeds what is expected nationally. The pupils' work in information and communication technology is in line with what is expected. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils attain standards in line with the national expectations in English and science. Attainment in mathematics is below the national expectation but close to it and the pupils' attainment in numeracy is satisfactory. In information and communication technology attainment is below the national expectation. By the end of both key stages the pupils' attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, and history is in line with the expectations for the age group. The pupils also perform to expectations in physical education with particularly high standards in dance. It was not possible to make firm judgements about standards in music in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2 the pupils' work is in line with what is expected for the age group.

8. Generally the school has improved standards of attainment in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection. The standard of the pupils' work is now better in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology and history. Standards have been maintained in art and design, geography and physical education. However, overall standards in reading and writing are not as high as they were. In Key Stage 2, where overall standards were higher at the time of the last inspection there have been improvements in design and technology and music. There has been a slight drop in overall attainment in mathematics but the pupils' skills in using and applying the subject have improved. In all other subjects, including English, science and information and communication technology, standards are similar to those found previously.

9. The improvements that have taken place since the last inspection are attributable, in the main, to the improved quality of teaching and the dedication and hard work of the staff. The quality of teaching is good overall and this contributes well to learning, to the progress which pupils make as they move through the school and to attainment. There have been particularly significant improvements to teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1. Other factors contributing to improved standards include the satisfactory introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, and the temporary setting arrangements for literacy in Years 2 and 6. These have had a positive effect on the quality of writing at Key Stage 1 where results had declined over the last two years.

10. It was clear from all the evidence collected during the inspection, including that relating to National Curriculum tests, that the pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards. In lessons during

the inspection they made good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The pupils who have English as an additional language progress well throughout the school and they achieve standards that are appropriate in relation to their abilities.

11. Inspection observations show that standards in speaking and listening improve steadily throughout the school; so that whilst they are below the national expectation for seven-year olds at the end of Key Stage 1, they are in line with what is expected for eleven-year olds by the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils listen attentively and collaborate with other pupils, for example when writing a play in Year 6. However, progress is constrained by too few opportunities for speaking and listening in a structured situation. The pupils do not often develop an argument or give reasons for their views. Whilst reading standards are well below the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 2 they reach the appropriate standard. Throughout the school, the pupils read for pleasure as well as for information. They learn about authors and illustrators and the older ones use index and contents pages well to retrieve information. Standards of writing seen during the inspection were below expectations in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. By Year 2 they compose simple sentences and communicate their ideas. By the age of eleven they have the skills needed to plan, draft and revise their writing. They use these skills appropriately in English and other subjects.

12. Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of the number system and they use effectively what they know to calculate mentally. By the end of Key Stage 1 they recognise odds and evens and they know the value of coins. They can count on and back in 2s, 5s and 10s and can draw simple block graphs. They can name a range of two-dimensional shapes and measure everyday classroom objects to an appropriate degree of accuracy. They recognise repeating patterns, and they conduct investigations and carry out practical work in a satisfactory manner. By the end of Key Stage 2 they have a satisfactory knowledge of multiplication and division facts and most can multiply and divide by multiples of 10. Many of them understand the relationship between division and fractions. They can measure angles to the nearest degree and classify different types of triangle. They can collect relevant information to solve problems and express mathematical relationships appropriately in words.

13. In both key stages attainment is particularly good in experimental and investigative science, and the pupils consistently use correct scientific terminology. The pupils think through ideas for themselves, a skill which is less well developed in other subjects. During the inspection, the Year 2 pupils were reaching standards above the national expectation. They show good observational skills in examining, sorting and classifying everyday objects according to whether they are transparent or opaque. Year 6 pupils were working in line with what is expected nationally. They have a sound understanding of forces, and, although some have a weaker knowledge of electricity, they manage to use what they know well. Overall the pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts and a rather better understanding of experimental methods. The latter factor enables them to make sensible decisions, skilfully compare differences and decide whether tests are fair. They can explain the results of their investigations clearly.

14. Year 2 pupils can use information and communication technology well to present their findings. They confidently make decisions, they have sound keyboard skills and they can control a mouse well. Year 6 pupils can use art and word-processing programs, and control the movements of an object using another program. They can enter data into a spreadsheet, and are learning to use spreadsheet formulae. However, their work in all aspects of information and communication technology is at a relatively low level.

15. The quality of the pupils' work in art and design varies considerably from class to class. It is at its best when pupils make decisions. This was seen, for example, as Year 1 pupils made good observational drawings. The work is also good when there is an appropriate context. For instance, the Sydney Olympics provided an effective starting point for Years 3 and 4 pupils to paint in the style of Australian Aborigines. Most pupils develop a clear idea about the process of designing and making different items. In Key Stage

1, they design and make sock puppets and in Year 6 they have developed their skills sufficiently to design and construct a device which successfully produces moving pictures.

16. By the age of seven the pupils can describe their route to and from school. Their geographical skills develop so that by the age of eleven they can use six figure grid references to locate places on a map. In Key Stage 1 the pupils develop an idea of chronology and in Key Stage 2 they can discuss the period they have been studying with appropriate understanding, for example Florence Nightingale's point of view when nursing in the Crimea. However, in history, as in other subjects the pupils are not skilled at conducting their own research.

17. Although no music lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, the pupils sing tunefully in assemblies. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils can compose short pieces of music, representing it with either non-standard or standard musical notation depending on the knowledge of the pupils concerned. Throughout the school the pupils reach good standards in dance. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class showed good control of their movement in responding to music in order to portray episodes from the story 'Old Bear'. In Key Stage 2 the pupils strive hard to improve their skills in games and the majority swim to the expected level by the time they leave the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Most pupils enjoy attending school. They arrive punctually and start the day in a calm, purposeful manner. For example, after an enthusiastic arrival, the younger pupils settle quickly before the start of the school day. Most pupils are interested in the life of the school, some take part in inter-school sports tournaments and public performances and many older pupils are involved in the satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Overall there is a satisfactory response to curriculum related activities, social occasions and extra-curricular provision.

19. In the main, the good attitudes and behaviour evident in the last inspection have been maintained. There are some examples of very good behaviour, notably amongst the older Key Stage 2 pupils. Where behaviour is unsatisfactory, it occurs when teaching is uninspiring in combination with poor class management. Respect for property is clearly evident and pupils are polite and trustworthy. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

20. The school staff, including midday and administrative staff provide good role models for the pupils and, as a result, the latter relate well to one another and to adults. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils say that any minor incidences of poor behaviour are very quickly and appropriately resolved. The youngest pupils are beginning to take note of what others say, and the oldest pupils listen very well to each other. They have a satisfactory understanding of, and respect for, the different values and beliefs of others, although the extent of this is limited by weaknesses in the provision for their cultural development.

21. Pupils respond well to the increasing responsibility which they are given as they move through the school and this makes an appropriate contribution to their personal development. The youngest children, assisted by Year 6 pupils, return registers to the school office. Pupils in Year 5 provide a 'buddy' mentor service for the youngest pupils, listening to them read, for example. When opportunities are provided, pupils show initiative, take responsibility and join in school activities. For example, in all years they respond well to the opportunity to take part in the school council.

22. Overall the satisfactory level of attendance reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained but unauthorised absence is above the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The overall quality of teaching is good. The teaching was very good or good in 60 per cent of the lessons observed in Reception where there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 1 the teaching was good or very good in 80 per cent of the lessons seen. Very few lessons, 5 per cent, were unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2 there was good, very good or excellent teaching in 60 per cent of lessons. Here, 10 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. There has been an improvement since the last inspection when a higher percentage of the lessons was unsatisfactory, especially in Reception and Key Stage 1. There is no significant variation in the quality of teaching in different subjects. Pupils' learning throughout the school is good and is closely related to the quality of teaching. As a consequence of the good teaching and learning, pupils generally behave well in lessons, develop positive attitudes to school and work hard. They acquire knowledge and skills at a good rate.

24. Literacy and numeracy are well taught at both key stages. During the inspection there were examples of pupils applying what they know in other subjects. For instance, in science teachers ensure that pupils choose an appropriate style and vocabulary to write up experiments. From the scrutiny of work and from display, there is some evidence of extended writing in other subjects, for example in history. Similarly mathematical skills are effectively applied in design and technology where Year 3 and Year 4 pupils measure length and angles carefully to enable them to make photograph frames. However, generally this application of skills is unplanned and opportunities are sometimes missed. In particular there is little evidence of pupils' engaging in personal research.

25. In both key stages, there is some unsatisfactory teaching when, for example, the pupils are not well managed or when there is insufficient work for them. This limits the progress made. Progress is also constrained by two general factors present in some lessons that are otherwise satisfactory. First of all, work is not always matched to the needs of individuals or groups, although the temporary setting arrangements for literacy for pupils in Years 2 and 6 works well. Secondly, in most subjects the teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to think through ideas for themselves. The organisation of classes where two age groups work together does not affect pupils' progress adversely.

26. Planning is satisfactory across the school in literacy, numeracy and science. The basic skills are well taught. Proper attention is given to identified areas of weakness such as spelling and handwriting. Although lessons are well planned in the core subjects, they are less well planned in some other subjects, where learning objectives are not always identified clearly. As a result, the steps needed to meet particular objectives are not always clear, and in these cases attainment is more difficult to measure.

27. Where teaching is very good, teachers have an appropriate knowledge of their subject. In a very good Year 6 lesson about the sinking of the Titanic, pupils sensed the teachers' confidence and were attentive and interested. In most lessons the teachers have high expectations of the pace and quality of the pupils' work. Pupils understand these and respond well. Where expectations are well established, pupils settle quickly, concentrate on their work and collaborate well in resolving problems or sharing ideas. This was observed in a physical education lesson for Years 3 and 4, and two literacy lessons; one for Years 4 and 5 and the other for Years 5 and 6. High expectations are also evident in the challenging questions posed by some teachers. Despite these examples, many pupils are given insufficient opportunities to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning.

28. Pupils are well managed throughout the school and, as a result, behaviour is good. Teachers are kind but firm in their relationships with the pupils and when necessary show persistence but understanding in their dealings with those who have behavioural problems. In a small minority of cases, teachers do not ensure that all pupils are listening before they begin a lesson and this adversely affects the learning of others.

29. Teaching methods are good and help to ensure appropriate acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding by pupils of all abilities, including the higher attainers. Teachers use a variety of methods in all subjects. Introductions and explanations are often lively and engaging and resources imaginative. Questioning is used in different ways throughout lessons and this is particularly true when teachers are assessing pupils' understanding. Group work is used well as a means of focusing teaching and learning in all classes. Good use is made of teaching assistants and volunteer helpers to spread the load of supervision and support and this contributes well to the pupils' progress. Whilst time is generally used well, some teachers finish lessons a little too early at the end of the school day, thus reducing the total amount of teaching time available to them.

30. Good use of assessment was seen in science, music and physical education. In music the teachers check on what pupils are doing, when they are working in groups composing a piece of music, and make suggestions which help them to improve. However, the use of assessment, as a means of taking learning forward, is sound rather than good overall. It is not used consistently and effectively by all teachers in all subjects. As a result some pupils are given work inappropriate to their level of understanding and this affects their progress. They are not always given sufficiently challenging work, nor are they encouraged to think for themselves enough. Lessons do not always build on what has gone before. Furthermore, whilst pupils' work is monitored throughout lessons, it is not marked rigorously enough. Marking seldom points out how pupils can improve their work, and when it does there is little evidence that teachers' comments are heeded or result in an improvement in learning.

31. Most of the teachers use resources imaginatively to stimulate interest and to support pupils' learning. For example in a Year 3 and 4 class, short selections of different kinds of music were played as an introduction to a poetry lesson on moods. Similarly, in a geography lesson for the same year groups, the teacher skilfully used a Victorian Christmas pudding to focus interest on the geographical origins of the ingredients. However, information and communication technology and the reference library are both underused as sources of information and, as a result, pupils' research skills are underdeveloped.

32. The school offers reasonable and regular homework, which is closely linked to current work in lessons. There is a clear policy for homework and very good leaflets of suggestions, for activities that might be carried out at home, are provided each term for each year group.

33. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are well supported and well taught. The latter pupils work with the rest of the class with help from the special educational needs teacher, a teaching assistant or the class teacher. When necessary they are withdrawn from lessons to work individually or in small groups. Good support was seen in a lesson where the teacher sat with a group of less able readers supporting them in understanding a text. This quiet positive intervention enabled the pupils to participate fully in the lesson and to make a valuable contribution to it. The special educational needs teacher and the teaching assistants are appropriately involved in planning work for these pupils and feed back to class teachers either orally or in writing depending on the circumstance and the task. Useful records of individual progress are kept. The special educational needs teacher and the support staff are positive and understanding and have high expectations for these pupils; they want them to succeed. As a result the pupils have positive attitudes and make good progress. The more able pupils are also well supported. This was seen in one lesson where a group of higher attaining pupils worked with their teacher on the development of a story.

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

34. The curriculum throughout the school is appropriately broad and it is relevant to the pupils. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for children up to the end of the Reception Year meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage. However, the school has not yet completed an overall curriculum plan which incorporates up-to-date schemes of work and assessment opportunities. Religious education was subject to a separate inspection.

35. Several significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been improved substantially, and is now satisfactory. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 now includes all aspects of information and communication technology, history, geography, design and technology and music, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. The school is taking advantage of the revised National Curriculum not only to improve subject schemes of work but also to conduct a complete review of the type of curriculum offered to the pupils. This development has been managed well, and has made good use of a visiting consultant who has worked with staff and governors to establish a clear, shared vision for the future educational direction of the school. This includes improving the relevance, quality and range of the learning opportunities, making greater use of the environment, developing effective links with the local community, and developing pupils' thinking skills and social skills.

36. Changes to the National Curriculum mean that many of the existing policies and schemes of work are no longer relevant. There is also no clear overall curriculum plan to guide the development of effective long-, medium- and short-term planning. These factors limit the extent to which the school can progressively develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding as they go through the school. The weekly plans seen during the inspection were satisfactory overall, and they were good in literacy, numeracy and science. These plans showed clearly what the pupils will learn, and indicate activities which are well-matched to these objectives.

37. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been introduced effectively. They have helped to improve the quality of teaching, and this is starting to raise standards in English and mathematics. However, planning currently pays little attention to the use and application of the skills of literacy and numeracy within other subjects. There is insufficient planned use of the reference library and information and communication technology to support the development of pupils' research skills. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, with clubs for art and design, French and a range of sports. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and opportunities to succeed.

38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is well planned, effective, and meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice. Individual education plans are drawn up where necessary. These contain appropriate targets which are well communicated to and used by teachers and teaching assistants. The procedures for special educational needs are thorough and systematic. As a result the pupils make good progress towards the targets set.

39. The school has good links with the community which contribute positively to the pupils' learning. This was shown during the inspection when some of the youngest children were taken out into the local streets to improve their understanding of road safety. There are also constructive links with local schools. These include a programme to improve teachers' information and communication technology skills, a project to improve the progress pupils make as they move to secondary school, and a project to alert pupils to the misuse of drugs. There is a useful new policy for personal, social and health education, and an appropriate programme for sex education is taught to pupils in Years 5 and 6.

40. The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral and social development; provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities for spiritual development and for insights into Christian values are provided in the daily act of collective worship. However, there are few planned opportunities for spiritual development in subjects other than religious education.

41. The pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, and generally meet the school's expectations for good behaviour. This is encouraged by the work of the school council and the involvement of the pupils in developing classroom rules. Assembly stories also contribute to the pupils' understanding of how to act in different situations, as in an assembly for pupils in Years 3 and 4 which considered the story of a boy who ran away from home.

42. The school makes good provision for social development. There is a planned social skills programme, set out in a new policy. Teachers help the children learn to relate to each other and to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour. Adults provide valuable role models for the children in the respect they show to the pupils and the relationships they form with them.

43. The school promotes the cultural traditions of the area well. This is achieved through the celebration of Christian festivals like Christingle, and the good use of visitors and the local environment. Work in music and geography helps to develop an understanding of the richness and diversity of cultures in other countries. Nevertheless, there is a lack of opportunities to appreciate the cultural and ethnic diversity of Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school makes effective provision for the care of all its pupils. Their general welfare is the responsibility of caring class teachers with good support from teaching assistants, midday and administrative staff. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school and a high standard of general care is evident.

45. The monitoring of health and safety arrangements and subsequent remedial action are generally satisfactory. For example, the fire-fighting equipment is maintained regularly and all portable electrical and physical education equipment undergo an annual safety check. The adventure playground is checked weekly and the perimeter of the school grounds is examined twice each week in order to remove any hazardous or unwanted objects. However, as indicated in the previous inspection report, there are examples of the staff responding too slowly to the outcomes of monitoring. In particular, not enough attention is paid to ensuring clear access to fire exits in all parts of the school.

46. Safe storage areas are provided for hazardous substances and equipment, including the school kiln, but these areas are not always secure. First-aid provision in the main school and systems for informing staff of pupils' medical needs are very good but it is inadequate in the demountable classrooms. The school's total number of qualified first-aiders is inadequate for events such as school visits. Pupils practise emergency evacuation from the school building each term and are made aware of safe working procedures and practice.

47. Procedures for child protection continue to be very effective and comply with legal requirements. All staff regularly receive training to maintain and update their knowledge and understanding.

48. The whole school approach to the monitoring and promotion of positive behaviour and the elimination of bullying is effective and as a result the standard of behaviour is good. Any incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are almost entirely due to inappropriate management or less inspiring teaching. The school is making every effort to reduce the level of unauthorised absence through the introduction and implementation of very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.

49. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. In addition to the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, a range of standardised tests is used on a regular basis, and these are analysed to give an idea of the progress the pupils make. However, this apart, the monitoring of pupils' academic performance is unsatisfactory. Although teachers know their pupils well, they do not identify and record sufficiently well the strengths and weaknesses that pupils have in subjects, in order to provide a proper basis for future planning. An exception is English where assessment information is used effectively to guide the curriculum planning. This has worked well and has resulted in an increased emphasis on the teaching of writing, spelling and handwriting. The school has been developing portfolios of pupils' assessed work since the last inspection. When this work is finished teachers will be confident that they share a common view of pupils' attainment.

50. Pupils agree personal targets with their teacher in mathematics and literacy and these are shared with parents. However, in some cases, the targets are too general and, as a consequence, it is difficult to decide whether or not they have been met. There are appropriate arrangements to support individuals and groups of pupils in order to improve achievement. For example, the school has started to take some action to deal with the differences in attainment between boys and girls. In Reception this involves an emphasis on raising the self-esteem of boys. Throughout the school, there are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development.

51. The statutory requirements outlined in statements of special educational needs are met well. The provision identified is implemented and reviews are regular and up-to-date.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school has maintained the strong partnership with parents, which was evident at the last inspection. Most parents feel that the quality of teaching is good and that pupils enjoy school, behave well and make good progress. They say that there is good leadership and management and as a consequence significant improvements have been made. These include improvements in academic standards, the provision for information and communication technology, provision of information on the curriculum, the good use of outside expertise, such as a visiting orchestra and art and design workshops, the quality of written reports, the visibly caring relationship between the headteacher and the pupils and the quality of provision for pupils with special needs. Most parents feel that the right amount of homework is set and that it is appropriate and relates to what is taught in class. They recognise that there are good links between school and home and that there are good arrangements for them to communicate with their children's teachers. A minority of parents say that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. In fact, the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.

53. The school has developed effective links with parents. There are regular and very informative letters and newsletters written in a friendly, accessible style. The home-school agreement includes detailed information on the school's expectations with regard to homework, standards of behaviour and pupil attendance. However, the level of unauthorised absence remains unsatisfactory. The school offers open access to parents outside lesson time. A number of parents help regularly both within the classroom and on school visits.

54. Individual reports provide detailed information on each pupil's progress and achievement and include some targets for the future. Formal consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms, and an open evening is held during the summer term when parents may view pupils' work. Parents are fully involved when pupils are identified as having special needs and parents have regular opportunities to discuss progress, both formally and informally.

55. The provision of homework is in line with the school's guidelines and increases in quantity and range as pupils progress through the school. It is used to good effect to support, extend and reinforce learning and to provide opportunities for learning independent research and time management skills, particularly for older pupils.

56. Parents are supportive of school productions and events. An active parent teacher association raises a considerable amount of money each year, through social and fund-raising events, which is used to good effect in the enhancement of both resource provision and the school environment. Parents are consulted regularly about major decisions concerning the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. She has a clear vision of the direction in which the school is going. In her first year in post, she has focused rightly on monitoring provision in the classroom, which has contributed to the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The school's aims are broadly reflected in its work, but it does not always provide opportunities for pupils to reflect sufficiently or understand the diversity of cultures represented in society. The deputy head and senior management team provide good support for the headteacher, but their roles in the management of the school are not well defined and this limits the extent to which the headteacher can delegate responsibility. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have monitored provision well in their areas, supported by the headteacher and an outside adviser, and this has had a positive impact on standards in these areas. In her role as science co-ordinator the headteacher has also observed some lessons in Key Stage 2. Other subject co-ordinators have just begun to look at teachers' planning for their subjects, but they do not yet monitor teaching and learning directly through observation in the classroom or looking at pupils' work throughout the school.

58. The governing body meets its statutory requirements and plays its part in shaping the direction of the school through its input into the school's plans for improvement and its support for the headteacher and staff. It has a good understanding of the strengths and also of the weaknesses of the school, for instance of the importance of maintaining and raising standards and also of improving the school environment. Overall, it makes a good contribution to improving the school and to accounting for its performance

59. The provision for special educational needs is well organised. The co-ordinator has managed change well following the last inspection, and significant improvements have been made to the school's procedures and classroom provision as a result.

60. Following advice it has received, the school has constructed a strategic plan for one year only, although there are a few pointers in it for longer-term development. Not all items in this sound plan are linked directly to the raising of standards, although this is the clear overall aim. The school has put in place its strategy for performance management and has made a satisfactory start to the process. It has also made good progress in meeting its literacy and numeracy targets. There is a clear commitment on the part of the headteacher, governing body and teaching staff to improvement, and the school is well placed to improve further. This commitment also underpins the way in which the school has dealt with the key issues from the previous inspection and the considerable effort put into raising standards of attainment. Currently, for example, the school is employing an additional teacher in Key Stage 1 as part of its drive to improve standards in reading and writing.

61. The school's financial planning is good, clearly supporting the priorities in its strategic planning. The school at present has a contingency of about nine per cent of its budget, but this is clearly earmarked to meet its responsibilities as an aided school, as well as improving resources in information and communication technology. At present the school's use of new technology both in its administration and in teaching is satisfactory, but it is aware of the need to improve its use for teaching. The school makes good use of grants, for instance to support pupils with special educational needs and to employ additional staff to form smaller teaching groups for literacy in Key Stage 1. The governing body monitors spending well, and the day to day financial management is carried out very efficiently by the headteacher and school administrator, who together with her colleague in the office, plays an important role in establishing a warm welcome for visitors and parents. The school is effectively applying the principles of best value, for example, through the use of diocesan consultants on larger building projects. The most recent auditor's report confirms that financial control is good, and all its minor recommendations have been acted upon.

62. The school has sound procedures for the induction of teachers who are new to the school, including those who are newly qualified, and also for supporting student teachers through its partnership with a nearby training institution.

63. All members of staff work hard to make the school successful and to improve standards. Teaching and non-teaching staff are appropriately qualified or experienced to match the demands of the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants are appropriately deployed. The specialist knowledge of the teachers is generally employed effectively. Teaching assistants work hard, and meet regularly with teachers to discuss how to provide for the needs of the pupils. There is an appropriate number of support staff and they are very much appreciated by the teachers with whom they work well. This provision has a positive impact on the level of support which teachers can give to individual pupils, especially those with special educational needs, and to the management of pupils with more challenging behaviour.

64. The accommodation and grounds have been improved since the last inspection and further improvements are planned. Overall the accommodation is in a good state of repair, clean and well maintained and meets the demands of the curriculum. However, there is a small number of health and safety issues which has yet to be addressed. Furthermore, the accommodation for the Reception children has certain inadequacies which make it difficult for staff to provide all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

65. Learning resources for most subjects are adequate. The school has had a sound programme for expenditure in the past and further appropriate improvements are planned. Whilst the range of books is satisfactory overall, the library does not provide an appropriate setting for pupils to conduct personal research.

66. The pupils come from a diversity of home backgrounds, socially, economically and educationally. Attainment on entry is below average and the school has a high proportion of pupils on its special educational needs register. The expenditure per pupil is a little above average. Pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 with attainment which is close to average in most subjects. They are well taught throughout the school and their attitudes to work and school life are good. Taking account of all these factors the school is judged to provide sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to raise standards of attainment and to improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve standards in reading and writing in Key Stage 1; (Paras. 3, 7, 11, 78, 80 and 81)
- Improve standards in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2; (Paras. 7, 14, 105 and 107)
- Improve standards in mathematics throughout the school; (Paras. 3, 4, 7, 86 and 88)
- In order to bring about these improvements in attainment the teachers must ensure that the work given to pupils is always appropriate in that:
 - it matches their individual abilities; (Paras. 30, 93 and 117)
 - it provides proper opportunities for them to think through ideas for themselves (Paras. 13, 30, 93, 119 and 129)
 - it ensures that they have regular opportunities to conduct personal research; (Paras. 16, 24, 27, 31, 37, 65, 84, 119 and 123)
 - it is based on a school curriculum which is fully in line with the new National Curriculum; (Paras. 34, 109, 118 and 135)
 - it originates from the effective use of assessment information. (Paras. 30, 49 and 109, 133)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

68. The school should also consider the following issues:

- The need to develop the role of the senior management team; (Para. 57)
- The cultural development of the pupils in order to make them aware of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of Britain today; (Paras. 20, 43 and 57)
- Weaknesses in the provision for the health and safety of pupils and the need to ensure that staff respond appropriately and swiftly when concerns are raised; (Paras. 45 and 46)
- The inconsistent ending of the school day with some teachers dismissing pupils before the agreed time. (Para. 29)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	22	41	28	7	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		255
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		78

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	14
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	20	19	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (81)	61 (79)	87 (79)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	16
	Girls	12	12	15
	Total	25	25	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (81)	81 (81)	100 (86)
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	14	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (74)	69 (74)	72 (85)
	National	75 (70)	71 (69)	84 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	22	22
	Girls	8	8	7
	Total	25	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (70)	77 (71)	74 (74)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	248
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.95
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per wk.	142

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	464,332
Total expenditure	473,488
Expenditure per pupil	1,734
Balance brought forward from previous year	23422
Balance carried forward to next year	14,269

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	255
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	41	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	45	2	4	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	58	18	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	46	16	0	2
The teaching is good.	46	39	11	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	45	9	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	29	16	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	36	12	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	36	20	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	36	12	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	39	7	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	42	5	11	15

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

69. At the time of the inspection there were 34 children in the reception year, the 24 youngest in one class and the older 10 taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. On entry to Reception, whilst the range of abilities of the children is wide, overall attainment is below that expected nationally, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Assessments, carried out when children begin school reveal that a significant majority need to develop their skills substantially if they are to meet the nationally specified early learning goals in all six areas by the age of five. Children enter school at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five following a variety of pre-school experiences. The majority come to school confident and happy. They attend on a part-time basis for their first few weeks to enable assessments to be carried out, increasing their attendance gradually over the next two terms until all are attending full-time. The staff work hard to ensure that both children and parents have a good introduction to school and a positive beginning to education. The early years classes are housed in three moderately sized prefabricated classrooms set apart from the main school building in a securely fenced area, and are surrounded by grass but with very little hard standing. Staff make every effort to create an attractive, stimulating environment, and to give the children the experiences indicated in the Foundation Stage curriculum, but are somewhat hampered by the drawbacks of the accommodation. Teaching was judged to be good overall during the inspection despite, the fact that both classes are staffed by teachers who are very new to this age group. The teachers are well supported by a full-time nursery nurse who works in the Reception class and a full-time teaching assistant who works in the mixed-age class.

Communication, Language and Literacy

70. A large proportion of children come to school with attainment below that expected for their age, particularly in conversational skills and in the quality and use of vocabulary. Some have little knowledge of books. In response to the teaching, which is nearly always good or very good, children of all abilities make good progress over the year. However, at the end of the Reception Year not all have reached the standards expected nationally for children of this age. The teachers provide an environment designed to foster language and literacy skills. Children are encouraged to listen attentively and to apply knowledge learned in one context to another. They contribute to discussions and are given time to answer; their ideas and opinions are valued. Opportunities for speaking and listening are fostered through the provision of role play areas, creative work and plenary sessions when children are given the chance to describe what they have done to others. Children are taught the skills necessary for reading and writing in a structured way. They recognise, use and write single letter sounds in writing or in games, and more able pupils recognise the importance of vowels and use blends of letters. Children write confidently, forming their letters clearly and demarcating letters into words. Many can spell a few core words correctly and can read their written work back to an adult. They enjoy stories and can be seen reading books in the book corner. Parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's learning and most help by sharing books, contributing to a reading diary and supporting the teachers in other areas of literacy. Good reading records are kept and this contributes well to the progress made by the children.

Mathematics

71. Children's attainment is below that expected nationally on entry to school, but most make good progress and reach the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching is good. Children learn to recognise and write numbers to ten or above, to count reliably, to measure through

a variety of activities such as making donkeys' ears for a headband, comparing heights and cooking. They become familiar with coins and use their knowledge well when, for example, they 'pay' for entry to the class 'toy museum'. They have an appropriate understanding of mathematical words such as 'before' and 'after', 'tall' and 'taller' and 'long' and 'short'. Occasionally there is an over emphasis on written recording at the expense of the practical and problem solving activities that form the sound basis for future understanding. However, the teachers' developing subject knowledge, their commitment to the children and their high expectations make a positive contribution to attainment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. On entry to school some children's knowledge and understanding of the world is limited, but good teaching and provision enable many to progress and reach the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. Children apply learning from one 'subject' to another such as when they followed signs around the garden in the manner of 'Rosie's Walk', an early map-making exercise. Activities are often imaginative, exciting and motivating, fostering progress and ensuring good behaviour. For instance the children were involved in setting up their own toy museum following a visit to the local museum to look at old toys. Children made progress in all six areas of learning through their participation in this activity. They studied, discussed and drew toys they had previously categorised as being 'old', 'very old', or 'new', they acted as museum attendants, took turns and co-operated well with one another.

73. Children are made aware of chronology through discussion about themselves as babies and through thinking about their grandparents, and although no specific science was seen, there was evidence of work on materials. Children help to care for rabbits and goldfish. A computer is used to support learning, and children demonstrated impressive computer skills in a lesson in the school's computer suite when they were encouraged to experiment. The quality of their work was the result of very good teaching over an extended period of time.

Creative development

74. The nature of the accommodation makes it necessary for most creative work to take place in the third classroom of the unit which is shared by both classes. Children need to be supervised there and cannot choose to paint, use building or modelling materials, or to experiment with sand or water in their classes as a normal part of everyday classroom activities. The hard standing area outside the classes is small and, although some materials are used outside in good weather, in the inspection week rain made this impossible. Very little creative work was seen. As a result, children, particularly those attending on a part-time basis, are not being offered the full range of experiences as specified in the Foundation Stage curriculum. These children are unlikely to reach the expected standard in creative development by the end of the Reception year. Children said rhymes and sang songs with enthusiasm, on one occasion accompanied by a guitar. This attention to music represents an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is sound in this aspect.

Physical Development

75. Children have access to a large safe grassed area and have the sole use of excellent large climbing equipment and bicycles, which during the inspection were used at playtimes and dinner times when the weather allowed. The children used the apparatus carefully and confidently. The outside space is not used as an extension to the classroom, as it should be. This is partly due to the restricted area of hard standing and partly because the curriculum for these children is still being developed. Children move around the room confidently. They make satisfactory progress in the development of manipulative skills and use pencils, crayons and scissors capably. Provision for structured physical development is less well developed than that in other areas and many pupils will not reach the nationally specified standard by the end of the

Reception year. Teaching was good in the one physical education lesson seen. The teacher demonstrated good knowledge of the subject and had high expectations for both performance and behaviour.

Personal Social and Emotional Development

76. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They respond well to the good teaching. Most will attain and some will exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Their good relationships with the staff, and the high expectations of these adults, mean that most children are well behaved, concentrate hard and develop independence. These factors are also fostered by the very good relationships evident between the adults and the emphasis on supporting and caring for each other. Staff know each child well, clearly enjoy being with them and take a pride in their success. Learning, although sometimes over structured is challenging and fun.

77. Provision for children under five is developing well and is based firmly on the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. It has improved since the previous inspection and it is continuing to improve. A policy identifies the setting of high standards and caring practices within a structured curriculum. Under the direction and with the full support of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, the early years staff are working hard to fulfil statutory requirements by attending courses, visiting other early years units and by planning carefully and thoughtfully. The planning and assessment of work is good. Staff plan opportunities to observe children in different situations to gain a true and realistic picture of their stage of development. Children's experiences, especially in numeracy, are sometimes too formal but care is being taken to enrich their experience in practical ways and to set tasks that encourage independence and problem solving. The accommodation makes it difficult for staff to give children opportunities to engage in all the aspects of play necessary for their development and the lack of suitable experiences in some areas and for some children is a concern.

ENGLISH

78. The results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average in both reading and writing. When compared with similar schools the results in reading were well below average and those for writing were very low, in that they were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have gone down, particularly in writing, over the last two years. The number of pupils attaining the higher level is also well below the national average. However, these National Curriculum tests should be seen in the context of the high number of pupils with special educational needs and the low attainment on entry to school. Whilst the tests indicate low attainment, the achievement of pupils of all abilities is at least satisfactory with good achievement by the pupils with special educational needs. This is as a result of the good teaching and the good support which these pupils receive. As a consequence of the progress which pupils make throughout the school, the results in English at the end of Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average for all schools and for similar schools. The number attaining the higher level was also in line with the national average. Standards have risen over the last four years and are improving more rapidly than schools nationally. Overall boys achieve higher standards than girls. The school achieved the target which it had set for itself in relation to attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

79. Standards in speaking and listening are low on entry but improve steadily throughout the school. By the age of seven standards are still somewhat below the national expectation but by the end of Key Stage 2 they are satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 most pupils listen attentively to stories and during the literacy hour. They show interest in characters and can recall the elements of a plot. They listen carefully in shared reading sessions and make good contributions to discussions about the story. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their speaking and listening skills and by Year 6 can collaborate with peers when

designing artefacts or can work with a partner in writing a story or play. At neither key stage were pupils heard to develop an argument or to give reasons for their views. There are few opportunities for speaking and listening in a structured situation and, although the school policy states that pupils should

have access to role play and drama, none was seen during the inspection. Although most pupils listen attentively in assemblies they were not seen to contribute. In most classes a short plenary session at the end of lessons gives pupils the chance to describe their experiences to others, but these times vary in quality and usefulness across the school; in many they are too short and are unplanned. In a very small proportion of lessons the teachers do not make sure that all pupils are listening when another pupil speaks, or when giving instructions themselves, and this adversely affects the learning of all pupils.

80. The quality of reading in Key Stage 1 is well below national expectations. However, when account is taken of the numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the low level of literacy on entry to the reception class, the progress made by pupils throughout the key stage is good. In the early stages pupils read from graded schemes. They share big books, following the text with attention, and know and use phonic patterns to break down unknown words. They clearly enjoy books and read with expression. In Key Stage 2 the quality of reading is in line with expectations. Pupils read for pleasure, as well as for information, with increasing skill and confidence. Even less able readers in Year 6 tackle quite challenging material. Pupils throughout the school learn about authors and illustrators and older ones use index and contents pages well to retrieve information. They understand how to use a glossary. The quality and quantity of reading materials are satisfactory in subjects other than English, but since the school has invested heavily in big books and in group readers, resources in English are very good. Other subjects make a contribution to pupils' reading skills but this is limited by the fact that they are not involved in personal research to any great extent. The stock in the library varies from being old and out of date, to good modern material supplemented by loans from the Essex library service.

81. Standards of writing seen during the inspection were below expectations in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. By Year 2 most pupils can write simple sentences with confidence and are beginning to use full stops and capital letters. They can communicate their ideas using appropriate vocabulary. More able pupils can sustain a story over several sessions and write at reasonable length. These pupils use more interesting vocabulary and turns of phrase, are aware of more sophisticated punctuation and are taught to consider the use of adjectives to enliven their work. They are beginning to study text critically in order to improve it. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils develop these skills, and in an exciting lesson on fairgrounds, a Year 4 and 5 class used them to write some very good poetry. By Year 6 pupils learn to plan, draft and revise their work and use these skills appropriately in other subjects, most notably in history. They can pick out the main points of a story and are aware of the importance of sequence, vocabulary and the correct use of tenses. Pupils throughout the school are given a good range of reasons for writing, with an appropriate balance being maintained between comprehension and grammar exercises and more imaginative work. All pupils learn spellings on a regular basis; these are tailored to individual need. Standards in spelling are satisfactory overall, in both key stages. Standards in handwriting are unsatisfactory. Although a commercial scheme is used by the school and handwriting is practised regularly, some books are untidy and, at both key stages, work is often poorly presented.

82. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and it is often good or very good. Together with the good support given to pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, it makes a positive impact on learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, plan lessons carefully, have clear aims and high expectations for their pupils. In good lessons teachers share their expectations with the pupils who respond by collaborating with one another, maintaining a high level of concentration and working hard. Teaching is less good when aims are not specific, where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure and where they do not ensure that pupils listen. The quality of marking is inconsistent and it seldom results in an improvement in learning.

83. Pupils generally have a good attitude to their work, and clearly enjoy it. In some cases they collaborate well, working successfully in pairs or small groups and can be heard discussing their work to

help one another. Pupils behave well in lessons and rarely become restless unless the pace of the lesson flags.

84. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully and teachers have received appropriate training. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. Through an analysis of test results she has identified the need to improve spelling, handwriting and extended writing. Improvements in these areas should help to raise standards in the National Curriculum tests. She has written a useful policy, sees planning every half-term and has had opportunities to spend time in classes to monitor the quality of teaching in literacy. In response to a key issue in the last inspection report there is now a portfolio of levelled pupils' written work for reference purposes. The library is not used appropriately as an area for investigation and research. During the inspection it was not used at all.

85. Formal assessments are carried out satisfactorily and reading diaries track pupils' day to day progress. Older pupils maintain their own record of books they have read. Individual targets in literacy are set by teachers and pupils together, and these are shared with parents. Although these are sometimes too general to be achievable, this is a good beginning to self assessment so that pupils know how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve. The use of assessment to inform daily teaching is less well developed.

MATHEMATICS

86. When compared with all schools and with similar schools, the results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests were well below average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below average in Key Stage 1 and well below average in Key Stage 2. Despite these results the targets set by the school for the year 2000 tests were significantly exceeded. In Key Stage 1 there was no difference between the results of boys and girls. In Key Stage 2 the boys performed much better than the girls.

87. At the time of the last inspection the results in Key Stage 1 were above the national average, but have consistently been below since. In Key Stage 2 the results were below the national average at the time of the last inspection; this trend has continued since, except in 1998 when the results were better than average. All of these results have to be seen in the context of the well above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils progress well and the achievement of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory and, in many cases good.

88. The inspection findings are that at both key stages the pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the national expectation, although it is close to it. In both key stages the pupils conduct investigations and carry out practical work in a satisfactory manner, and they generally have a sound understanding of the mathematical content of lessons. They are developing a range of strategies they use to calculate in their heads, and many can satisfactorily explain their methods.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can recognise coins and know their values. They can name a range of two-dimensional shapes, measure everyday classroom objects to the nearest centimetre and recognise repeating patterns. They recognise odd and even numbers, count on and back in 2s, 5s and 10s and can draw simple block graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can multiply and divide by multiples of 10 and draw bar line graphs. They can measure angles to the nearest degree, classify different types of triangle and identify acute and obtuse angles. They can collect relevant information to solve problems and express relationships in words. They know multiplication tables, can relate simple problems in fractions to division, and some can convert improper fractions to mixed numbers.

90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, with nearly half of the lessons observed good or very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The teachers generally have a secure knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. Planning is usually effective, with clear indications of what the pupils will learn. In most lessons the pupils are well managed and teachers ensure an appropriate balance between teacher-directed and practical activities. As a consequence the quality of learning is good overall, and the pupils make appropriate progress in lessons. Support staff and parents are well used in lessons, which helps pupils with special educational needs to make sound progress.

91. In the best lessons teachers share with pupils what they will be learning, as in a lesson about fractions for Years 3 and 4. As a result, the pupils are clear about what they have to achieve to be successful. Good use of questions to which there is a range of possible answers and starting points with numerous outcomes were observed at times. These approaches allowed the teachers to match the work to the abilities of the pupils well. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4 they were asked “Tell me two numbers which differ by 15”. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils’ thinking was challenged when they were asked “How do you know?” and “Does that always happen?”

92. Classroom control and management are generally good and this ensures that behaviour is good. This was the case, for example, in a very practical lesson for Years 4 and 5 where pupils were making cubes and other three-dimensional shapes from nets. Resources are often used well, as in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 where pupils used cards to show answers in a mental mathematics session. The use of these cards allowed all pupils to be involved, and allowed the teacher to assess the pupils’ skills as the lesson progressed. In a lesson for Years 1 and 2, good use was made of Christmas wrapping paper to help pupils understand repeating patterns.

93. While no unsatisfactory lessons were seen, some aspects of mathematics teaching could be improved further. Some of the younger pupils are allowed to make too much noise when they are working, and teachers do not share what pupils will learn with them often enough. Useful plenary sessions are held at the ends of lessons. These draw the lesson together well, but do not always refer to the learning intentions and are rarely used to clarify misconceptions. As a consequence some discussions are not tightly focused, and pupils do not always have a clear view of what they must do to be successful or how they could improve their work. Some of the pupils are not given the time they need to think things through, and some of the work provided does not challenge the more able pupils.

94. The pupils generally settle to work quickly, and work productively. They are keen to volunteer answers, and many are able to explain their thinking. Where the teachers challenge their thinking they show they are able to apply intellectual effort to their work and they pick up new ideas quickly.

95. The importance teachers place on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary and the opportunities for speaking and listening observed in all lessons ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to literacy. Other subjects are used appropriately to provide opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge. Information and communication technology makes a particularly significant contribution. This was observed in lessons in Key Stage 1 where pupils worked with simple programmable toys and devised repeating patterns. In Key Stage 2 they used Logo to move objects around the screen and to develop problem-solving ideas. Not only do these links allow the pupils to apply their skills they also improve their motivation.

96. A high priority is given to the teaching of numeracy, and teachers develop the pupils' mental skills successfully. Pupils are taught strategies and also given opportunities to develop their own methods. Leadership and management are good. The work of the subject co-ordinator has helped to improve the quality of teaching, and standards are rising as a result. She has given a strong lead in the introduction of

the National Numeracy Strategy, and has a good idea of what still needs to be improved. She has led in-service training for the staff, audited strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and provision of resources, and identified the key tasks needed to improve further the quality of teaching and raise standards. Assessment in mathematics is inconsistent; books are marked regularly, but there are few comments specific to the subject. This limits the extent to which the marking can help pupils to improve their work.

97. Since the last inspection there have been improvements to the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, and the younger pupils make better progress as a result. The standards attained in mathematics in Key Stage 2 have fallen slightly, as measured by both national tests and lesson observations. However, appropriate attention is now given to the use and application of mathematics, and more emphasis is given to data handling. The school has started to address the issue of monitoring and assessing pupils' progress, which was identified for further development in the last inspection.

SCIENCE

98. Since the last inspection standards have improved in Key Stage 1 and they have been maintained at Key Stage 2. Overall, the results in the 2000 teacher assessments for 7 year olds were very high but a below average proportion reached the higher level. The pupils' attainments were very high in all aspects of the subject, including experimental and investigative science. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average and also below average in comparison with similar schools. A relatively low proportion of pupils reached the higher level. However, over the last four years the school has raised standards at the end of Key Stage 2 more rapidly than the national trend. Over the last three years the boys have performed better than the girls in the end of Key Stage 2 tests, although the difference is less than that found in English and mathematics.

99. During the inspection the current Year 2 pupils were reaching standards above the national expectation and Year 6 pupils were working at levels in line with what is expected nationally. Pupils of all abilities, including the high proportion with special educational needs, achieve well in response to the good teaching. Attainment is particularly good in experimental and investigative science.

100. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages and, as a result, the pupils make appropriate progress. They enjoy their lessons and they are well behaved. This good teaching has also led to improved standards in Key Stage 1 but changes introduced by the co-ordinator have not yet had sufficient time to affect standards at the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 the teachers have good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. They use good teaching methods and they make effective use of other adults. In particular the good teaching provides the pupils with opportunities to learn effectively through first-hand experience and to think through ideas for themselves. For example, they examine everyday objects and sort and classify them, with some skill, according to whether they are transparent or opaque, placing the objects in hoops on the floor and commenting using scientific terminology. In one lesson the following discussion took place as the pupils examined a Christmas 'snowstorm' toy. 'Its transparent' said one pupil putting it in the appropriate set. 'No' said another 'if you look through *this way* its transparent but if you look through *this way* its opaque' [i.e. in the latter case he tried to look through the base]. In a lesson for the parallel class the teacher, without introducing 'transparent' and 'opaque' asked the pupils to talk about objects as they were passed around the class. This enabled the teacher to assess in some detail the extent of the pupils' existing knowledge. Again the Christmas 'snowstorm' figured. 'Its got water in it' said one pupil, this was generalised by another who talked about 'the liquid'. A third pupil said that it was like 'a magnifying glass'. Levels of thinking were even higher in the next part of the lesson, as one pupil at a time sorted the objects and the rest of the class was required to work out the criteria which had been used.

101. In Key Stage 2 the majority of the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, work is well planned and the management of the pupils is good. The teachers are skilful in assessing the pupils' current knowledge and using this as a starting point for further teaching. Pupils are taught to plan their work, hypothesise and to draw conclusions from their results. The pupils in the Years 5 and 6 classes have a sound understanding of forces, although there are some weaknesses in their knowledge of electricity. However, they use their knowledge about the latter well to make a 'quiz board' about the former. The pupils have very good opportunities to make decisions as they select apparatus and decide on questions for the 'quiz board'. An examination of previous work indicates that Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts. They also understand how to observe, investigate and experiment in a scientific manner. As they conduct investigations they skilfully examine similarities and differences, they decide whether tests are fair and they explain their results using correct scientific terms.

102. Work for the pupils in the other classes in Key Stage 2 has a number of good characteristics, although there is also some unsatisfactory teaching. The pupils are given interesting activities which evoke curiosity, intellectual effort and good levels of independence. As a result, the pupils develop a good understanding of how light behaves. Adults interact well with the pupils to assess their perspectives and misconceptions. Generally these ongoing assessments are used well to take the pupils' knowledge and understanding forward. However, in some cases opportunities are missed as the pupils are rushed to complete work. The most important factors in the unsatisfactory lessons seen are the lack of direct teaching and the fact that there was insufficient work for the pupils.

103. The teachers ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively to write up experiments, and to present data either in tabular or graphical form. Speaking and listening skills are practised through group discussions, and in reporting and explaining the results of experiments clearly to others. The pupils respond well and their literacy and numeracy skills are enhanced. Science also makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal and social development as the pupils work together cooperatively, and as the teachers encourage the pupils to think for themselves.

104. The subject is well managed by the headteacher who is the co-ordinator. She has observed teachers teaching science in Key Stage 2 and she has a very good knowledge of the quality of teaching and attainment throughout the school. Parents are kept well informed about the curriculum in science. There is effective planning and a good policy for the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

105. The quality of the pupils' work varies considerably from class to class in both key stages but overall they make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Attainment remains very much as it was at the time of the last inspection and standards are about those expected for the ages of the pupils. Only one art and design lesson was seen during the inspection, so judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, on the policy for art and design and on discussions with the co-ordinator for the subject.

106. Very good work was seen in a Reception and Year 1 class where pupils were taught to look carefully at an object before drawing, and were given the opportunity to experiment with bubble and potato printing. Pupils were given some independence in their choice of activity and in deciding on the size and colour of paper they used. In this lesson there were good links with history. In other Key Stage 1 classes there is evidence that pupils achieve sound standards as they print and do experiments with wax relief.

107. In Key Stage 2 pupils also print, producing attractive designs in the style of William Morris linked to their project on the Victorians. A year 3 and 4 class in the context of the Sydney Olympic games had produced some very good Aboriginal style paintings using quiet subtle colours. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 had studied movement in art, and had also copied paintings by well known artists, for example Stubbs and Kandinsky.

108. The school has recently installed a kiln, provided by the PTA, and as part of a millennium celebration, a potter visited school and worked with pupils to make individual decorated tiles which are to be mounted to make a tile wall. The designs are pleasant and the tiles well executed. However, there is no evidence of clay being used by pupils for experimental or for original imaginative work, and pupils have no opportunity to acquire appropriate skills in a purposeful way.

109. There is a policy for art and design but no scheme of work. This limits the extent to which different aspects of the subject are taught. For instance there is a lack of structure in the way that pupils learn to study the work of artists from different periods and cultures. The co-ordinator currently monitors coverage by talking to colleagues but does not see planning on a regular basis. There is no formal assessment. The quality and content of the art and design curriculum depends entirely on the interest of individual teachers.

110. The school is satisfactorily resourced. However, resources are stored in different places, and are neither well organised nor accessible. There are a few prints of paintings by famous artists on display in corridors but these are neither linked to areas being studied nor to each other. An arts week is held each summer term, and pupils are occasionally taken to visit galleries such as the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. There was no opportunity during the inspection to observe design and technology being taught in Key Stage 1. However, there was sufficient work in displays and photographs of previous work to indicate that the standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are as expected for their age. Pupils have designed and made sock puppets, which they use to act out the story they have been reading. Their cutting skills are limited but they make good use of colour in their designs. They have also used a range of construction kits, for instance to make up a necklace.

112. By the age of eleven pupils have developed their skills sufficiently to design and construct a zoetrope (a revolving cylinder in which the effect of movement is produced by pictures on the inner surface), working together in groups of six or seven. They measure accurately, saw the wood carefully and assemble the toy. They use tools carefully and stick to the time limits set. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make photograph frames. They measure and cut the sides of the frame, and then work independently to devise a way of making the frame stand. All pupils are successful in this and take pride in their finished work. Standards are appropriate for the age of the pupils.

113. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages, and consequently the pupils learn well and make good progress. Teachers manage classes skilfully and make good use of teaching assistants to support those who find the tasks more difficult. The teachers prepare resources well and make good links with other subjects, for instance with work on forces in science. They also reinforce numeracy skills well, by emphasising accuracy in the measurement of length and angles, for example in making the photograph frames. Pupils are motivated well by the good choice of activities, which they find interesting. They work

well together in groups, as for instance in constructing the zoetrope, where each contributes a particular skill. They remain fully occupied throughout this lesson and behave well.

114. Teachers' planning is linked well to the overall curriculum themes, but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to build the development of skills into the next stages of planning. The school has satisfactory resources for the subject. It has made good progress since the previous inspection, when standards were below average and there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to design and then to evaluate and modify their design. The development of the subject has been led well by the headteacher, who is acting as subject co-ordinator.

GEOGRAPHY

115. There were limited opportunities to observe geography being taught during the inspection because of the way the school has organised its curriculum. The majority of geography-based themes takes place in the summer term. From the work observed in class and the analysis of pupils' books, standards achieved by seven and eleven year olds are as expected for their age.

116. By the age of seven pupils recognise the different elements of an address and are able to describe their route to and from school. They can also describe some of the features of an environment different from their own, such as a coastal area. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 recognise the continents on a map of the world, and by the age of eleven they are able to use four and six figure grid references to locate places on a map. Pupils' attitudes are good. They are interested and behave well in lessons, and this contributes to their good progress throughout the school.

117. In most of the lessons seen teaching was good. Teachers plan lessons well, and good links are made with other subjects. For instance, in a lesson for Years 3 and 4, the teacher used the study of a recipe for a Victorian Christmas pudding to develop pupils' knowledge by asking them to identify the countries from which the ingredients came on a map of the world, having first produced all the ingredients from her shopping basket. This engaged the pupils' interest and led to good learning. When teaching had a weakness, the methods used did not ensure that pupils understood how to use co-ordinates because of the different systems used in the lesson, or because the worksheet used was not entirely appropriate to the task or to the individual needs of the pupils.

118. The school's planning for the new National Curriculum has not yet been completed, but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to ensure that teachers plan for the development of skills through its themes. The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning but does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in other classes directly. Overall standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

119. In Key Stage 1 attainment in history has improved since the last inspection and is now appropriate in relation to the age of the pupils. In Key Stage 2 the standards found during the last inspection have been maintained and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject is as expected for their age. Skills of interpretation and presentation are sound, although skills of historical enquiry are less well developed, and pupils have limited opportunities to think ideas through. Teachers sensibly reinforce historical concepts in other subjects such as English and art and design.

120. Planning documents show clearly how history is taught across both key stages through a two year programme of work. The curriculum is covered appropriately. At the time of the inspection classes in Key Stage 2 were not working on a history unit and it was possible to see only one class in the school being taught during the week. Evidence is therefore gathered from displays and from discussion with the co-ordinator.

121. In Key Stage 1 pupils were learning about the past from a study of old toys. A museum visit had been made and very good examples of toys from different periods were used well for pupils to look at and touch. These were categorised simply as 'very old', 'old', or 'new' by the younger pupils, and through establishing a simple time line by the older ones. This activity provided good opportunities for the pupils to learn and practise mathematical skills. Very good teaching was seen in this lesson where older pupils acted as mentors to younger ones. Pupils are beginning to understand how things change over time, in the use of different materials for clothing, for example.

122. In the classes for Years 3 and 4 there are interesting displays of work on the Victorians combining artefacts, photographs and work from other subjects, for example art in the style of William Morris. Pupils had written a diary from Florence Nightingale's point of view when nursing in the Crimea, describing the conditions and commenting on their feelings. These displays are interesting and attractive and indicate good teaching. Pupils were able to discuss them sensibly and showed some understanding of the period.

123. Years 5 and 6 pupils were not studying history at the time of the inspection but they were using a historical text about the sinking of the Titanic as the basis for work in English, thus reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of the period. Pupils used reference books in the lesson but were not seen using information and communication technology or the reference library to access information. Recorded work in exercise books or on display reveals little opportunity for independent investigation.

124. The quality of teaching was good in the two lessons seen, one history and the other literacy using a historical text, and confirmed also by other sources of evidence. It contributes well to pupils' learning, their behaviour and their positive attitudes to the subject. Progress is generally satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers provide interesting contexts for pupils' learning and there is evidence of good cross-curricular links. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, have good questioning skills and, through interesting and lively presentation, attract and retain pupils' interest. They ensure that pupils are given work at an appropriate level for their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught.

125. The history policy is out of date and, appropriately, it is being rewritten in line with the revised National Curriculum. Teachers have begun to plan together and this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Assessments are now made at the end of each unit of work but there is no evidence that these are used well to help the teachers plan future lesson. There are satisfactory resources but storage is not well organised and there is limited accessibility.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1, but below what is expected at the end of Key Stage 2. The progress pupils make is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2.

127. Year 2 pupils can use information and communication technology to present their findings, including text and images. Some can change the font and print size when word processing. They make decisions when using a tiling program, creating a repeating pattern and using a simple paint package to produce

pictures in several colours. Their keyboard skills are sound, their mouse control is good, and they can use a simple task bar effectively.

128. Year 6 pupils can use a paint package to create pictures and posters, as shown in their work in connection with the Sydney Olympic Games. They can word-process, use an art program, and enter distances and angles to a program designed to control the movements of an object. Using this program some are learning to create simple procedures to draw squares, and patterns made from squares, more efficiently. They can enter data into a spreadsheet, and are learning to use spreadsheet formulae. However, even allowing for the fact that the inspection took place when these pupils had been in Year 6 for only one term, the work seen was not up to the expected standard.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and a quarter of the lessons seen were good. The strengths of the teaching include effective planning which clearly shows what pupils are to learn. However, this is rarely shared with pupils; consequently they have to rely on the teacher's assistance when stuck. When teachers provide support for pupils this is usually done well, and helps pupils to increase their skills and understanding. Some skilful questioning was observed, as in a lesson for Years 3 and 4 which focused on 'cutting and pasting' techniques, but in some other lessons teachers do not leave pupils enough time to explore problems for themselves, and some of the worksheets used limit the pupils' thinking and creativity.

130. In most lessons some of the pupils work on the computers and others in the adjacent library. This splitting of the class is often an effective way to increase pupils' understanding and skills, as was seen in a lesson for Years 1 and 2 when they created repeating patterns. On other occasions, however, the pupils who were not working with the computers were not sufficiently challenged, and were sometimes left to get on by themselves for too long. As a result, progress was limited, and learning and behaviour suffered.

131. The quality of learning is satisfactory overall, and sometimes good. Pupils' attitudes are good, and they work productively. They concentrate well, and pick up new ideas quickly. Their behaviour is generally good, except when they are kept waiting too long, whether by lengthy introductions from their teachers or by an unreliable printer.

132. The school has a suite of ten networked computers next to the library. These are well used to teach whole classes or groups of pupils. The classroom computers are nearing the end of their useful life, and are not used regularly. The teaching of information and communication technology provides some good opportunities to develop skills and understanding in numeracy. This was observed in Key Stage 1 where pupils worked with simple programmable toys and devised repeating patterns. In Key Stage 2 they used a computer program to direct objects around the screen and to develop problem-solving ideas. Similarly work in word-processing supports the pupils' developing skills of literacy.

133. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the last year. These have had a positive effect on standards at Key Stage 1 but they have not yet led to improved standards at Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection the school has set up the information and communication technology suite and increased the range of software. The quality of teaching has improved, mainly due to the increased amount of direct teaching taking place. However, because of changes to the National Curriculum, the existing scheme of work is now out of date.

MUSIC

134. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in Key Stage 1. However, infant pupils sing tunefully in assembly. They are also given good opportunities to appreciate the music of composers such as Beethoven and recognise some of the instruments being played.

135. The standards achieved by eleven year old pupils are as expected for their age and there is satisfactory progress throughout the key stage. The Year 6 pupils compose a short piece of music, working well together in a group, and represent it with a form of notation, which shows whether the pitch is high or low. A minority of higher attaining pupils use standard musical notation. They choose percussion instruments appropriate to the sound they want to make. They listen well to each other and are

able to offer helpful evaluations of the work of other groups. A minority of pupils show a good understanding of musical terms such as diminuendo and crescendo. The orchestra, composed of pupils from all junior year groups, showed high levels of motivation and performed very well in a lesson observed during the inspection.

136. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers manage pupils well, and have clear expectations of good behaviour in lessons. The pupils respond positively to this and relationships with the teachers are good. They check on what pupils are doing, for instance when they are working in groups composing a piece of music, and make suggestions which help pupils to improve. Sometimes, however, when music is timetabled for the end of the afternoon pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration, and this affects their learning.

137. The headteacher is acting as co-ordinator for the subject and has been effective in introducing an appropriate commercial scheme which teachers can follow. This makes a good contribution to the progress pupils make in lessons and throughout the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their interest and skills in music through the orchestra and choir, and in individual music lessons. They also have the opportunity to listen to visiting music groups, which extends their musical experience. They have some opportunities to hear music from other cultures, such as Indian dance music or African drumming, but these are somewhat limited. Overall standards have improved since the previous inspection, when they were generally below expectations and music was not taught regularly to all classes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. During the inspection it was possible to observe only games, dance and swimming, but the school's planned curriculum also includes gymnastics and athletics. There are opportunities for older pupils to take part in extra-curricular clubs for a range of games, including cricket, football and netball. The school also takes part successfully in inter-school competition in all these games.

139. In games the standards achieved by the oldest pupils in the school are as expected for their age. In a lesson for Years 5 and 6, the pupils practised their hockey skills in small games for which they themselves had devised the rules. They understand the need for rules and are developing a sense of fair play. In this lesson the teachers had clear expectations of pupils which led to them using the time well and learning satisfactorily. At the end of the session some of the pupils complained that it was not long enough! Both boys and girls make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4 they show a good awareness of the effects of exercise on the body, and they try hard to improve their performance when they are challenged by their teacher to make their hockey 'game' more difficult. In the only games lesson observed in Key Stage 1 pupils did not have sufficient opportunity to engage in strenuous activity, and little opportunity to develop their skills when engaged in a circuit of throwing, catching and dribbling activities.

140. In dance in Key Stage 1 pupils in a mixed-age reception and Year 1 class achieved above average standards. They showed good control of their movement in responding to music to portray episodes from the story 'Old Bear'. Pupils throughout the school have very good opportunities to develop dance skills with a visiting teacher, who is spending half a term in the school, accompanied by two musicians. The pupils rehearse different parts of a performance based on a circus. They respond well and with obvious enjoyment both to the music and the teacher, as they are required to adopt a range of roles as ringmaster, clowns, acrobats and percussionists. Over the period of half a term they make very good progress. In dance the standards achieved by eleven year olds are above those expected for their age. Pupils have good attitudes to physical education. They are usually fully involved in activities, and try hard to improve their

performance. They work well together in small games, and also co-operate well in getting out and putting away equipment.

141. All pupils in the school have the opportunity to swim in well-organised sessions at a local leisure centre. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils meet the National Curriculum expected standard to swim 25 metres, and all pupils have an understanding of water safety.

142. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and are able to provide good demonstrations, both of hockey skills and dance movements. They also use this knowledge well to evaluate what pupils are doing and to suggest improvements. They generally have high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour. Good use is also made of the specialist teachers in dance and swimming. These factors all contribute well to the pupils' learning and to the sound progress overall which they make.

143. The co-ordinator has only recently begun to monitor teachers' planning and has no opportunity to monitor teaching. The school has a satisfactory range of equipment for physical education. At present, storage arrangements are unsatisfactory. This weakness was also highlighted at the time of the previous inspection. There are plans to rectify it with forthcoming building works. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection.