

INSPECTION REPORT

ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dagenham

LEA area: Barking

Unique reference number: 101239

Headteacher: Miss J M Ryan

Reporting inspector: Mr J Tyler
20506

Date of inspection: 18th September 2000

Inspection number: 225070

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Burnside Road Dagenham Essex
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C R Bendon
Date of previous inspection:	9 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Tyler	Registered inspector	Science Art Design and technology Physical education	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Susan Cash	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?
Robin Coulthard	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Equality of opportunity English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Susan Senior	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Information technology Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Vincent's Catholic Primary is an average size for schools of the same type. The 199 full-time pupils are organised into seven classes, and a new nursery will cater for a further 52 part-time children when it opens in January 2001. About 19 percent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average. The number of girls and boys is broadly balanced. Fifteen pupils speak English as an additional language, but all are beyond the early stages of language acquisition. There are 35 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, giving a proportion that is slightly below average. When pupils enter the school, the balance of attainment in literacy and numeracy is broadly average in relation to other local schools, but is well below in their personal, social and physical development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

By the end of the school, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. They achieve good standards in terms of their personal development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and is good in the majority of classes. The good leadership of the school has helped to bring about improvements since the last inspection so that the school, which previously had serious weaknesses, is now effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards in science that are above the national average.
- In the majority of classes, good teaching helps pupils to learn effectively.
- The school successfully fosters pupils' personal development, and particularly their social skills. They are courteous and confident.
- The systems for monitoring and supporting teaching have contributed significantly to improvements in the overall quality and the consistency with which pupils are taught.

What could be improved

- Too many pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, achieve less than they should in English and mathematics. The way that schemes of work are used prevents teachers from matching tasks accurately to pupils' needs.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations.
- The pace of lessons in a minority of classes is reduced when the teachers' management of behaviour is ineffective.
- Pupils with special educational needs sometimes receive less support than they require.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements since it was last inspected, in February 1998. Significant improvements have taken place in the quality of teaching and the way that the school's plans for its overall development. The curriculum for Reception pupils has improved and the new nursery is a further important step in raising the quality of provision for the Foundation Stage. The length of the school day has increased, and lesson timetables are more appropriate and followed with greater rigour. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress have been successfully simplified. The English curriculum was previously criticised for failing to set out clear expectations for each year group. The present scheme of work has addressed this issue successfully, but is used in such a way that it does not meet the needs of different groups of pupils. In English and mathematics, standards remain too low at the end of Key Stage 1. However, at the end of Key Stage 2, results have risen broadly in line with the national trend.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	E	C	B
mathematics	B	E*	C	B
science	B	E	A	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The results of the 2000 national tests for Year 6 pupils were similar to those for 1999. Taking into account pupils' skills in speaking and listening, standards in English overall are below national expectations. The work seen for mathematics confirms that standards are average by the end of the school. Attainment in the work seen for science is above average, with a particular strength in pupils' knowledge and average skills in investigative work. The school's targets for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or better in the Year 6 tests were exceeded in 1999 and 2000.

Results in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 2 pupils have been very low for several years. They remained low in 2000 and although all pupils attained Level 2, few achieved beyond the middle Level 2B. In the work seen, standards were below average in English and well below in mathematics. Teacher assessments and inspection findings show that standards in science are below national expectations. Overall, in Key Stage 1, standards are well below what they should be.

In the work seen across the school, standards were appropriate for the ages of the pupils in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Standards in information technology are below national expectations.

The majority of children in the present Reception class are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year, so long as they continue to make the good progress seen during the inspection.

In many classes, higher-attaining pupils achieve less than they should in English and mathematics. The same is true for lower attainers in English. The reason for this is that teachers are required to teach subject matter that is often at the wrong level for these pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and, in lessons, generally show a positive attitude to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall, but a small number of pupils find it difficult to conform to expectations. The school has yet to find fully effective strategies to support them.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults and take on increasing responsibilities through the school. They are courteous and confident.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is high because the school has firm criteria that it applies strictly. Some parents could support their children more by not taking holidays in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	to the end of Reception	to the end of Year 2	to the end of Year 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory or better in 91 per cent, at least good in 53 per cent and very good in nine per cent. Teaching was good in five classes. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate skills of planning, subject expertise, questioning and explaining. These are effective in all but two classes, where the unsatisfactory management of behaviour leads to a slow pace of learning in too many lessons. As pupils progress through the school the rate at which they learn varies, though the overall rate from beginning to end is satisfactory. The effectiveness with which literacy and numeracy skills are taught is reduced by the inflexible way that the schemes of work are used through most of the school. Teachers are prevented from setting work at appropriate levels for different groups of pupils. This leads to some pupils finding work too hard while, for others, it is at an easier level than they have previously attained.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a suitably broad, balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. However, the school's approach to the teaching of English and mathematics prevents teachers setting appropriate work for different groups of pupils. The provision for personal, social and health education is strong. The very strong links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer contribute significantly to attainment in Year 6. There are very few extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Targets in individual educational plans for children with special educational needs are reviewed on a regular basis, but are often imprecise and, in these cases, do not help teachers to plan appropriate work. Overall provision is therefore unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Social development is fostered well. Pupils are given a wide range of responsibilities and opportunities to build their confidence, and the youngest pupils have settled into school routines very quickly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes the necessary steps to ensure pupils welfare, health and safety. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are sound, but are not used effectively in planning. Pupils' personal development and attendance are monitored suitably. Information provided to parents helps pupils to make progress and the school is keen to have parents involved in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, sets a clear direction for the work of the school. Management tasks are delegated effectively, and all staff are committed to continued improvement. A commitment to high achievement for all pupils does not sufficiently pervade every aspect of the school's plans for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and is supportive in its monitoring of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Systems for monitoring and supporting teaching have helped teachers to improve their skills. The school evaluates its own performance and has set appropriate priorities for development. The action taken to raise standards sometimes contradicts the school's stated aims and policies.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of financial and other resources. Spending decisions are carefully considered to achieve best value. There are sufficient staff, resources and accommodation for the needs of the curriculum. The school has worked successfully to achieve a full complement of teachers for the first time in four years. The new nursery is a substantial improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Children like school and make good progress because of good teaching.</p> <p>Behaviour is good and children are encouraged to become mature and responsible.</p> <p>Children are expected to do their best.</p> <p>The school is well led and managed.</p>	<p>The range of activities outside lessons.</p> <p>The amount of homework.</p> <p>The way that the school works with parents and informs them of the children's progress.</p>

Twenty parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Inspectors agree that children like the school, behave well and that their personal development is good. The inspection also found that the school is soundly managed. Pupils make satisfactory progress from the beginning to the end of the school, though it varies from year to year and some pupils are held back from achieving their best. Homework increases reasonably as pupils get older, and supports their learning. The range of activities outside lessons is narrower than in most schools. The inspection found that parents are appropriately informed of their children's progress and that the school is keen to work with parents. The time allowed for discussing each pupil at formal meetings is short, but parents are welcome to speak with teachers at other times.

A few parents expressed concerns about disruptive behaviour in one class, or about the suitability of punishing a whole class for the misdemeanours of a few pupils. The inspection found that, in the two classes identified, the pace of learning was reduced because of ineffective behavioural management. The school is actively seeking ways of dealing with this, but the steps taken so far have not been fully effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 national assessments at the end of Year 6, standards were similar to the national averages in English and mathematics, and above average in the context of similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.) The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. The results for science were well above the national average and very high relative to similar schools, with the proportion reaching Level 5 being well above average. The results of the 2000 national tests were similar to those for 1999. Taking into account pupils' skills in speaking and listening and some aspects of writing, standards in English overall are below national expectations. The work seen for mathematics confirms that standards are average by the end of the school. Attainment in science is above average, with a particular strength in pupils' knowledge, and average skills in investigative work. The school's targets for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or better in the Year 6 tests were exceeded in 1999 and 2000.
2. Results in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 2 pupils have been very low or, at best, well below the national average, for several years. In relation to similar schools and to the balance of attainment on entry to the Reception class, standards are well below what they should be. They remained low in 2000 and although all pupils attained Level 2, few achieved beyond the middle Level 2B. In the work seen, standards were below average in English and well below in mathematics. Teacher assessments and inspection findings show that standards in science are below national expectations.
3. In the work seen across the school, standards were appropriate for the ages of the pupils in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Standards in information technology are below national expectations and pupils have too few opportunities to use computers.
4. The majority of children in the present Reception class are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year, so long as they continue to make the good progress seen during the inspection.
5. In many classes, higher-attaining pupils achieve less than they should in English and mathematics. The same is true for lower attainers in English. The reason for this is that teachers are required to teach subject matter that is often at the wrong level for these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils generally have a positive attitude to learning, particularly when good teaching motivates them. Some need frequent encouragement to work hard and stay on task. Pupils present their work neatly when given clear instructions about how to set out their work. Most children in the reception class had already settled well into school in the week of the inspection, which was only their first full week in school. They have quickly learned school conventions and are taking an interest in the tasks they are given.
7. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is usually good. Pupils have discussed and agreed class rules and are clear about what standards of behaviour are acceptable. They enjoy winning house points. The length of Golden Time means that the loss of a few minutes is not seen as a punishment by many. A small number of pupils find it difficult to behave and this disrupts lessons at times. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the last year. Pupils take good care of the school environment.
8. Most pupils with special educational needs show interest in lessons, behave well and take an active part. A very small minority in one class often behave disruptively. Although the school has sought advice and has clear procedures to deal with this, they are not fully effective.
9. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils are polite to each other and to visitors. They get on well together and report that there is very little bullying. Pupils from different ethnic groups play happily together. Pupils are given a considerable degree of responsibility, especially in Year 6, and they undertake their duties conscientiously. Prospective House Captains have to prepare a manifesto and are

then elected by their junior school peers. This is a good introduction to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Pupils make good progress in their personal development as they move through the school.

10. Levels of attendance are slightly above the average for the Borough and are broadly in line with the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is very high, largely because the school is strict about the reasons for absence it will authorise. Punctuality at the start of the day is satisfactory and lessons begin and end on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and is better than when the school was last inspected. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory or better in 91 per cent, at least good in 53 per cent and very good in nine per cent. Teaching was good in five classes. As pupils progress through the school the rate at which they learn varies, though the overall rate from beginning to end is satisfactory.

12. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate skills of planning, subject expertise, questioning and explaining. Most lessons are carefully planned, with a specific focus on what is going to be learned and detail to attention. At the start of many lessons, teachers share the learning objectives with the class and this helps pupils to concentrate on the purpose of the tasks that are set. Resources are prepared in advance so that time is not wasted during lessons. An exception to this is that the use of computers is not planned into enough lessons. Support staff know which pupils they will be helping and the particular approach that is needed. In many lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge enabled them to ask searching questions, give clear explanations and impart facts accurately. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher insisted that pupils use the correct vocabulary when discussing fractions and, in another lesson, younger pupils were given very clear guidance on how to move apparatus in a physical education.

13. These strengths are effective in all but two classes, where unsatisfactory management of behaviour leads to a slow pace of learning in too many lessons. In one class, a very small minority of pupils disrupts a significant number of lessons. Staff follow the school's approach to managing their behaviour, but this is not entirely effective and the teacher has to give so much attention to individuals that other pupils receive less support than they should. In the other class, explanations of tasks often take a long time and pupils become bored and restless. The teacher then responds by demanding attention in such a way that the pace is further slowed and so even the pupils who had previously been well behaved become restless too. The whole class is sometimes punished for the misbehaviour of a few pupils, and the majority resents this.

14. The effectiveness with which literacy and numeracy skills are taught is reduced by the inflexible use of the schemes of work used through most of the school. Teachers are prevented from setting work at appropriate levels for different groups of pupils. In some lessons, especially for mathematics in the lower half of the school, the lower attainers were challenged by the work set, but higher attainers were expected to reinforce ideas that they had already solidly grasped. In one English lesson, work was set without reference to what pupils had achieved previously and was at the wrong level for almost all of them. Similar problems arose in other English lessons for particular groups of pupils. It is not the teachers' planning that causes this weakness, but the way that teachers are told what to teach and the approach suggested by the schemes of work. The result, nevertheless, is that pupils are not receiving equal opportunities to learn at levels of challenge that are appropriate to their different needs.

15. During whole-class sessions teachers use a variety of ways to ensure that pupils with special educational needs can take a full part in discussions, such as providing additional explanations. In most classes, support assistants work effectively with small groups of pupils during independent work, but time is wasted during class discussions. The degree to which work matches pupils needs depends largely upon individual education plans, many of which are insufficiently precise. Consequently, pupils do not always acquire knowledge as effectively as they could. In Year 6, two pupils made good progress when learning basic skills because the work was closely matched to their needs.

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

16. The school offers a suitable broad, balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Most subjects have schemes of work that set out how knowledge and skills should develop over time. The schemes of work for English and mathematics do this effectively on the whole, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, they are used inflexibly and so prevent teachers setting appropriate work for different groups of pupils. They have helped to raise the achievement of lower attainers but not higher attainers. The curriculum includes plenty of opportunities for health education. In science, for example, pupils are taught about the need to keep teeth healthy and in design and technology to be hygienic when handling food.

17. There are close links with the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer aged eleven. These are of particular benefit to pupils in Year 6. They visit the school regularly to use specialist facilities, such as science laboratories, and take advantage of knowledgeable subject teaching. Their class teacher has further enhanced her own subject knowledge through this exchange. The secondary school staff feel that the link is of equal value to them, particularly because of the speed and ease with which pupils settle into Year 7.

18. Although the targets in individual educational plans for children with special educational needs are reviewed on a regular basis, they do not always lead to progress in skills. Where targets are precise, such as “To be able to spell *my, this, for, they, away*” pupils, teachers and support staff have a clear focus for improvement. Too often the target is vague, such as “To be able to read by the end of the term” or, “To consolidate knowledge.” These are not effective in guiding the teaching for that pupil, resulting in insufficient progress.

19. The school offers very few extra-curricular activities and so pupils have fewer opportunities to extend their learning than in most schools. It has been difficult to arrange activities after school over the last few years because of the unsettled staffing situation. The school has begun to explore the possibilities of other ways to provide curricular enrichment and extension.

20. Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is similar to that at the time of the last inspection, being satisfactory overall and good in terms of social development. The inspection confirms parents’ opinions that their children are helped to become mature and responsible. Through consistent reinforcement of expectations, the youngest pupils are helped to settle quickly into the Reception class and learn classroom routines. In each class, pupils are given a range of responsibilities that help to promote their self-confidence and initiative. In some lessons, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their initiative, for example through working in independent groups. The oldest pupils have particularly good opportunities to help in the school, such as helping the younger children at lunch times or leading a House. Good relationships are fostered between pupils so that they play and work well together.

21. A good aspect of moral development is that teachers and pupils agree classroom rules at the start of the year, so that pupils are fully aware of the expectations which the school has of their behaviour. However, these are not always consistently reinforced by teachers. Pupils are successfully encouraged to take care of their environment and give generously to a number of charities. Pupils’ cultural development is fostered through visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, for example to perform plays or read stories. Some pupils learn to play a musical instrument and have opportunities to perform in public.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

22. The good relationships that the majority of teachers have with their pupils, provide good personal support. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory level of care for its pupils, with good first aid provision and careful dismissal at the end of the day. It has recently increased the number of mid-day supervisors and is planning to employ more. They are currently receiving useful training. Adequate child protection procedures are in place and are under review so that improvements can be made. Health and safety provision is satisfactory, as is the monitoring and promoting of good attendance. This is similar provision to that found at the time of the last inspection.

23. The school has a sound behaviour policy and systems for monitoring individual pupil’s behaviour.

However, some teachers are not sufficiently positive in the way they address behaviour issues. Despite advice from outside agencies, the school has yet to find fully effective strategies for dealing with the small number of pupils whose behaviour disrupts learning. A few parents express concern that, in some lessons, the misdeeds of a few pupils lead to punishment for all. Inspectors observed that this led to some resentment on the part of the innocent and did not reinforce the concept of fairness that is encouraged through other teaching. The effective use of circle time to support pupils' personal development is inconsistent across the school. Where circle time is not well used, opportunities to support pupils' moral development are missed. The loss of a few minutes off the length of Golden Time does not seriously motivate pupils to do as they are asked. The use of house points, however, does motivate pupils, who are delighted when their house wins the trophy for the week.

24. The procedures for assessment are generally successful in indicating pupils' attainment. However, comparisons with the nationally expected levels of attainment are not sufficiently comprehensive. Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan further work and influence the development of the curriculum. In English and mathematics, for example, tasks are often set at a level prescribed by the scheme of work, without reference to what pupils have already achieved. The school's evaluation of assessments in Year 2 has identified rising standards for lower-attaining pupils. The analysis has not been sufficiently detailed to identify the cause of this success, nor to see how higher-attaining pupils might improve their performance. Differences in performance in the Year 6 assessments, between subjects and between aspects within subjects have also received insufficient attention in the school's evaluation of its own performance. There are sound procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Assessments are generally not analytical enough to identify the precise learning needs, and so targets for improvement are not focused clearly on the underlying causes of learning difficulties.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

25. The small proportion of parents who returned questionnaires or attended the meeting were positive in their views about the school, feeling that their children are very happy and make good progress. A few expressed concern about the behaviour of a small number of pupils and the way the school is addressing this. The school is actively seeking to improve the situation, but the steps taken so far have not been sufficiently effective.

26. The school keeps parents well informed about events, with weekly newsletters and a useful range of written information. Evening meetings are held to explain various aspects of the curriculum, including the literacy and numeracy initiatives and these are well attended. A good feature is the questionnaire that the school has sent to parents for the last two years, asking for their views on the school. Parents' comments have been considered and acted upon when possible. They were also consulted about the home-school agreement. Parents do not receive much regular information about what is being taught other than in religious education, when termly outlines of the topics to be covered are sent home. Annual reports about pupil's progress are now good, an improvement since the last inspection. In the core subjects especially, they give a clear picture of the progress the pupil has made and how they can improve. Parents are invited to meet the class teacher and look at their child's work on three occasions during the year. They also have ready access to staff, should the need arise.

27. Parents are invited to attend a number of school events during the year and many do so. Volunteers help, for example, on trips and with swimming. The parent teacher association has recently been disbanded. However, parents support sponsored events held to raise funds for the school. A majority of parents hear their children read regularly, which supports pupils' progress. The school has piloted family literacy and numeracy projects for parents of pupils in Year 1. It works closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and this helps to provide continuity of support between home and school. The school is working hard to involve parents in their children's education but this has yet to contribute to significant improvements in standards. Some parents could support their children more by not taking holidays in term time.

28. The school has maintained its good links with parents since the previous inspection, despite staffing problems and associated disruption.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

29. The headteacher thoroughly analysed the weaknesses that were highlighted in the previous inspection report, and has set in place thorough systems for improvement. Standards have varied from year to year, but overall they now reflect the national upward trend. Difficulties in recruiting teachers have persisted until the beginning of the current school year, and an analysis of last year's written work indicates that teaching has been unacceptably varied in its impact. All teachers now in post are permanent appointments, and, under the head's strong management, effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, there is a clear sense of commitment and willingness to succeed.

30. The school's mission statement and aims are deeply rooted in its Catholic foundation. The fundamental intention is that all pupils should 'live life to the full'. The school is committed to providing all pupils with appropriate opportunities for spiritual and social development and appropriate academic challenges. A commitment to high achievement for all pupils does not sufficiently pervade every aspect of the school's plans for development. Aims are not fully met, particularly in that work is often not always appropriate for pupils with different needs and the organisation of lessons sometimes reduces the effectiveness of support staff. Despite the good level of support available, therefore, pupils do not receive equal learning opportunities.

31. There is a rigorous system for monitoring teaching that has led to improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This responsibility forms an important part of the clearly defined roles of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the subject co-ordinators. They carefully monitor lesson planning and provide written feedback on the effectiveness of teaching. Pupils' written work is regularly monitored and teachers are set challenging targets, for example, for the quality of their marking. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for the formal management of teachers' performance. All staff are clearly aware of their responsibilities. Suitable training is provided for those with posts of responsibility and management tasks are delegated effectively. At present, because of the previous staffing difficulties, some subjects do not have subject co-ordinators and this is reducing the pace of improvements.

32. Governors are very supportive, well informed about all developments and they fulfil their duties well. They have shown great commitment to the establishment of a nursery, which is shortly to open. Governors are well qualified for their roles and engage in the regular training that is provided locally. Individual governors make regular visits to the school to gain overviews on specific aspects, and then report their findings to the full governing body. The school's priorities for development are relevant and timely and are set within a strong vision for the future, though governors sometimes underplay their role in setting overall policy. For example, they rely too heavily on the headteacher to draw up the school development plan for their approval. Some of the present provision needs more objective analysis if improvements in writing and mathematics are to be achieved.

33. Financial planning is good. The use of funding is closely related to educational priorities. There are good systems for monitoring expenditure. Administration and financial management make efficient use of computers. All grants are scrupulously used for their intended purpose. The school seeks best value for money in all its expenditure.

34. There is a good system for the induction of new staff. Newly qualified teachers each have an experienced mentor. A good level of in-service training is provided and after staff have attended training they share the benefits with colleagues. There is a good provision of classroom support staff. Lunchtime supervisors receive regular training and they and the kitchen staff make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school and to the welfare of pupils. The school office is efficiently run and the premises are very well maintained. The accommodation is satisfactory in size and in good decorative order, and it provides a stimulating environment for learning. The new nursery building is due to open in January 2001 and will considerably improve and extend provision for the Foundation Stage. Resources for learning are satisfactory. There is a good supply of books for English and a well-stocked library. There are firm plans for the provision of a computer suite in the near future to remedy the inadequate opportunities that pupils have at present for using information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

35. The school should now:

- plan more effectively so that pupils of all abilities are equally challenged in English and mathematics;
(see paragraph 14, 16)
- make better use of computers;
(see paragraph 12, 64)
- provide more effective support for teachers in whose classes the management of behaviour is unsatisfactory;
(see paragraph 13, 23)
- improve provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - identifying their needs more precisely;
 - planning to meet their needs in all lessons;
 - ensuring that the time available with support staff is used fully.
(see paragraph 15, 18, 24)

36. In addition to the action points above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- assessment information is not always used effectively to plan further work and influence the development of the curriculum;
(see paragraph 24)
- parents do not receive much regular information about what is being taught;
(see paragraph 26)
- some subjects do not have subject co-ordinators;
(see paragraph 31)
- governors sometimes underplay their role in setting overall policy.
(see paragraph 32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

36

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9	44	38	9	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

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	199
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9
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
	1999	15	19	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	13	11	15
	Total	20	18	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (61)	53 (55)	68 (76)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	11	11
	Girls	12	15	16
	Total	19	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (64)	76 (79)	79 (85)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	16	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	12
	Girls	12	10	15
	Total	20	19	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (53)	68 (30)	96 (47)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	19	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (57)	68 (53)	71 (60)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (69)

Figures in parentheses refer to the previous reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	14
Black – other	7
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	135
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	1
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)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	481,670
Total expenditure	470,713
Expenditure per pupil	2,308
Balance brought forward from previous year	43,297
Balance carried forward to next year*	54,254

** The majority of this was set aside for the new nursery.*

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	156
Number of questionnaires returned	20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	25	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	35	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	35	20	5	0
The teaching is good.	55	40	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	40	20	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	25	15	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	25	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	45	25	25	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	60	20	5	5	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	20	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	15	40	10	10

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

37. During the inspection it was not possible to see enough lessons taught in all subjects to be able to make valid judgements about every aspect of learning and provision.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. The school carries out assessments each year soon after children enter the Reception class. On entry, the balance of attainment in literacy and numeracy is broadly average in relation to other local schools, but is well below in their personal, social and physical development. The quality of learning seen during the inspection indicates that the majority of children will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year and a number will progress beyond them. The children had been in school less than one week when the inspection started. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good, and this is a marked improvement since the last inspection.

39. Teaching is good overall. The teacher reinforces classroom routines very effectively and children are already confident and ready to take part in most activities, with enjoyment. Children gradually develop personal, social and physical skills through play and structured activities, indoors and out. They form positive relationships with one another, follow instructions and behave well in class and around the school. The teacher successfully insists that children are independent in dressing and the provision of a full-length mirror to check appearance makes this fun.

40. Good teaching, which includes detailed planning and the appropriate use of the nursery nurse's time and experience, supports the development of communication skills. In one lesson, the teacher used positive encouragement and a lively delivery of the text to involve all the children in acting out movements and chanting repetitive phrases from a story. Clear demonstrations of the way in which sounds are formed by the mouth and consistent practice ensure that the children make the appropriate sound for the letter being taught. Children join in with songs and nursery rhymes but their ability to talk about their learning is underdeveloped at this early stage. A few children write their name although the letter formation and orientation is not always correct.

41. The teacher makes good use of incidental teaching opportunities, such as counting the milk, to reinforce and extend the children's mathematical skills. Sound teaching through nursery rhymes and finger counting games enables a few children to practise their existing knowledge of numbers. Others begin to learn the sequence of numbers to count to five. The children concentrate less well in counting activities than in literacy even though the teacher makes them just as much fun.

42. Planning, which has improved since the last inspection, covers all the areas of learning for the Early Learning Goals so that children gain broad experience. They listen and respond to the teacher's instructions when exercising their bodies in the hall; they try to copy their name from a card or take part in a counting game on the computer. Role-play and painting opportunities are provided for creative development.

43. All Reception children join the school from neighbouring playgroups and nurseries in a single intake, which begins in September with full time attendance. An important new development at the school since the last inspection is the provision of a nursery, which will open in January 2001. A Foundation Stage co-ordinator has been appointed to supervise the nursery and oversee future developments.

ENGLISH

44. Standards in English by the end of the school have improved since the previous inspection, especially in reading. In the 1999 tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English were in line with the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher level was close to the national average. There was little difference in the performance of girls and boys. Results fell in the years 1996 to 1998, contrary to the national trend, but in 1999 they regained the national level. In the 2000 tests, attainment was similar to the previous year, although only one pupil achieved the higher Level 5 in writing. Although pupils achieve average standards in the national assessments, which test reading and writing, standards in speaking are below expectations. Therefore,

overall attainment in English is below expectations. Pupils' achievements in relation to their capabilities vary between good and unsatisfactory within and between classes. Though they are satisfactory at the end of the school, they are unsatisfactory overall.

45. Results in the 1999 tests for reading and writing at the end of Year 2 were very low, both in national terms and when compared with similar schools. The trend from 1996 to 1999 is slightly downward. In 2000, results were similar, but with some improvement in reading. In Key Stage 1, standards remain lower than they should.

46. Pupils listen attentively to each other and the teacher in lessons, in circle time and in assemblies, but their speaking is below average in the careful use of correct English. However, Year 5 pupils read excerpts from a play with good attention to accuracy, pace and character, and had gained positively from recording dialogue in a previous lesson and listening to their own performances. In order to encourage them to listen carefully to classmates, teachers do not repeat pupils' oral answers. This misses a good opportunity for teaching and correcting grammar and pronunciation. During the inspection, pupils encountered fewer opportunities than is usual for speaking in class. Discussions and brainstorming were noticeably few. There are good opportunities to use drama as a stimulus for developing language. Year 1 effectively used mime to demonstrate 'grotesque' after hearing a poem about witches.

47. Reading throughout the school is in line with national expectations. Pupils read carefully and often with enthusiasm. Younger pupils learn to build up words by recognising letter patterns. They observe punctuation well and recognise dialogue. By Year 6, they can read expressively and at a good pace. A good range of reading books, which are part of the good provision of resources for English, enhances pupils' progress. Several older pupils named favourite authors and expressed firm tastes in literature. The school has a well-stocked library and older pupils are familiar with the cataloguing system, but few pupils made use of the school library for research during the inspection. Pupils use dictionaries in class and are aware of 'index', 'contents' and 'glossary'. By Year 6, pupils can skim read successfully to locate information quickly. Pupils routinely take home reading books and most read regularly to parents. There is beneficial contact with parents over reading, and the school runs useful courses to familiarise parents with ways of helping their children improve. Some pupils read books to inspectors that were insufficiently challenging.

48. Writing is acknowledged as an area for development throughout the school, and is at present a major focus for development. Younger pupils develop an awareness of the structure of sentences, and, by the end of Year 2, they understand the need for full stops and capital letters. Handwriting is regularly practised throughout the school, and pupils develop a good flowing style at an early stage. However, few pupils maintain consistently good standards of writing. Spelling and punctuation are often careless, despite teachers' instructions. Pupils tend to work slowly and the small volume of work that many produce reduces their progress. Written work is inadequately used in other subjects to consolidate and develop skills in literacy. There is too much copied writing, for example in history and geography. There is a general dearth of original factual writing.

49. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers conscientiously implement the scheme of work, using time as prescribed in the planning. They generally have a good understanding of what they teach. Resources are well organised and appropriate. Teachers are often enthusiastic and encourage positive attitudes amongst pupils, who are conscientious and co-operative to the limits of their abilities. There was only one example of poor behaviour in lessons observed. Support staff work conscientiously, as far as they are able, with the pupils who need their help. Marking is regular and follows a formula that is well known to pupils. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked as part of the initiative to raise standards. This sometimes leads to booster classes being formed to improve standards amongst targeted pupils. Information from assessment is too little used to modify tasks to suit the varied levels of ability in each class.

50. English is well organised, by the subject co-ordinator and the two members of the senior management team. There is purposeful and regular monitoring of teaching and assessment, and teachers are given targets and deadlines to help raise standards. The curriculum is similar to the National Literacy Strategy. The scheme of work introduces pupils systematically to a very good range of literature and

seeks to build a thorough knowledge of grammar and to stimulate imaginative and accurate writing. However, it is used inflexibly and tasks often fail to match the needs of pupils over the whole range of ability. Some tasks are inappropriate. For example, in a topic based on the use of the verb 'to be', the teacher was expected to have inappropriately advanced knowledge of linguistics and the work was well beyond the reach of most pupils. Seating arrangements restricted discussion in some lessons and made it difficult for pupils to see large texts intended for sharing as a class. In other lessons, there were too few opportunities for support staff to assist pupils, which reduced the progress made by these pupils. Computers are little used and pupils rarely use the re-drafting of work as an opportunity for improving its quality.

MATHEMATICS

51. Standards in the 1999 national assessments were broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6 and above the average for similar schools. Results were similar in 2000, though with a slight reduction in the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. At the end of Year 2, results were well below national expectations and well below the average for similar schools. There was some improvement in the results for 2000, with all pupils achieving at least Level 2, of whom 71 percent reached the middle Level 2B. However, very few achieved Level 2A and none the higher Level 3. These results reflect the work seen in both key stages.

52. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning for lessons is precise and detailed. Pupils are told at the beginning of the lesson what they are expected to learn and this helps them to focus clearly. In mental and oral sessions at the start of lessons, teachers successfully use creative ways to introduce the children to the lesson focus, such as 'the yes/no game'. Question and answer sessions are used effectively to check understanding and ensure active participation in the direct-teaching part of the lesson. This helps to prepare pupils for the independent work, by practising the skills that will be needed. In most lessons the pace is brisk in the introductory activity but less so in the guided practice, though pupils remain involved in the majority of lessons. In one lesson, the teacher did not explain the tasks clearly enough and so pupils could not get on with the intended work. The slowed pace led to pupils fidgeting and moving their chairs. Teachers use a variety of strategies to motivate pupils and increase the pace during independent work. Some teachers successfully set an expectation of work to be completed or give a reminder of the amount of time left. In most lessons, teachers effectively mark work with pupils, check their understanding and provide extra support.

53. Pupils generally respond well to their teaching. However, a significant number of pupils from Years 1 to 4, are underachieving because they are working at levels that are inappropriate. For too many pupils, work is set at a level below that which they have already reached. The reason for this is not the teaching, but the scheme of work that teachers are bound to follow. Lower-attaining pupils are often challenged well, though sometimes receive too little support to cope with difficult new ideas. They have little time to reinforce what they have learned before moving on to the next stage. Higher and many middle-attaining pupils are often set work that they can already do, yet are expected to reinforce it a lot before moving on to something else that they have already achieved. Older pupils are working at more appropriate levels and achieve better standards.

54. The involvement of the subject co-ordinator in the monitoring and support of the subject has resulted in improvements in teaching since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, however, remain low. The school has used assessment information to identify the rise in standards for lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, but not to identify and improve provision for higher attainers.

SCIENCE

55. Attainment in the 1999 national assessments at the end of Year 6 was well above the national average, and very high in relation to similar schools. The results of the 2000 assessments remained high, with a significant proportion attaining the higher Level 5. In the work seen, pupils' knowledge was considerable, while their skills of scientific investigation were average. Overall, therefore, standards were above average and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The teacher assessments at

the end of Year 2 showed that standards were well below national expectations in 1999, and the assessments for 2000 and work seen during the inspection match this.

56. In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well in some classes and satisfactorily in others. In Key Stage 1, the pace is too slow overall, though it is satisfactory in some lessons. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in every lesson seen. Previously completed work shows that it is satisfactory overall, though with aspects that need improvement, especially in Key Stage 1. Teaching is especially successful in Year 6. Pupils benefit from regular lessons at the secondary school to which the majority transfer. Their teacher has also improved her own subject expertise through working alongside subject specialists and this helps her to plan challenging, interesting lessons. In a lesson about solubility, pupils were set high expectations of work and behaviour, and responded very positively. The teacher used the appropriate specialist vocabulary well and the lesson structure was very effective, with a mixture of class discussion and practical work in small groups. Teachers throughout the school have sound subject knowledge and this helps them to ask good questions and give clear explanations. Some Year 4 pupils, for example, gained a solid, accurate knowledge of the difference between transparent, translucent and opaque materials. They recalled the teacher's demonstration to help make informed judgements about the properties of materials.

57. Teachers have higher expectations in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, which is an important reason for standards being so different. Another important factor is that the school does not have a consistent approach to the investigative process. In classes where investigative skills are taught well, pupils also assimilate knowledge more readily and have greater understanding. In a lesson about teeth, pupils were given clear guidance about how to carry out research, work with a partner, use simple equipment and record their findings methodically. Their attainment last year was well below national expectations, but, in this lesson, they made good gains in knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level.

58. Pupils practise some numeracy skills such as using tables to record and sort their findings. Too little use is made of graphs to interpret and communicate findings. Pupils of all ages, but particularly older ones, are expected to write about their work and this supports their literacy development. However, they are too often allowed to misspell key words and to present poor handwriting. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.

ART

59. The work seen in art matches national expectations for the ages of the pupils, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils use a sound range of media and techniques including paint, crayon, collage, wax resist, gluing and dying. Skills, however, are not developed systematically through the school. Pupils in several classes, for example, explore primary colours at a similar level. Improving this aspect of the curriculum is a priority in the subject development plan. Some effective teaching was seen when Year 1 pupils drew self-portraits. They were taught how to observe the relative positions of facial features and draw them accurately. This approach, of teaching skills and praising high achievement, was successful and the finished portraits were very good. Some older pupils were asked to analyse a range of famous paintings and thought carefully about the stories being told through art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

60. Standards in the work seen were broadly similar to expectations for the ages of the pupils. Year 2 pupils, for example, made pictures of the sea with moving parts. They paid good attention to the finish of the product as well as to the working of the simple mechanism. By Year 6, pupils design and make sewn fabric pictures and follow a recipe to make bread. In a food technology lesson, Year 3 pupils tasted a range of commercially produced sandwiches to decide which factors made them attractive. Many of them were very mature in the way that they tasted even those ingredients that they knew they did not really like. This enabled them to evaluate factors such as texture, and to consider tastes such as 'sweet' and 'sour' rather than describing them as 'nice' or 'yuk'. The resources had been carefully chosen and were well used; indeed, not a crumb was left! Some activities during Golden Time, when pupils are rewarded for good work, are useful for extending work in design and technology. In one class last year,

for example, pupils greatly enjoyed designing and making cross-stitch pictures. Better use might be made of construction kits in some classes.

GEOGRAPHY

61. In the work seen, pupils attained the expected levels for their ages, as at the time of the last inspection. The local area is well used in Year 3, when pupils compare Dagenham Green and Flatford. This topic provides good opportunities to learn about aspects such as commerce and industry, and to develop further an understanding of maps. Written work is generally well presented but there is insufficient original writing by pupils. A good range of topics is covered and pupils study contrasting localities around the world. Most pupils carefully plotted graphs to compare the rainfall in Saint Lucia with London. In Year 6, pupils study moral aspects of geography, in topics such as pollution and environmental change. The new subject co-ordinator has begun to re-assess provision in geography so that new statutory requirements can be incorporated, and to involve the use of computers.

HISTORY

62. Standards in the work seen were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. For example, younger pupils extended their understanding of time by putting pictures of houses from different eras into a historical sequence. There is little writing but pupils label their drawings accurately. By the end of year 6, pupils have investigated aspects of Ancient Greek history and learned about archaeological procedures, such as those used in the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Teaching is thorough and enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding. In one lesson, the teacher significantly increased pupils' understanding of events in the Tudor Period by the effective use of probing questions. Higher attaining pupils achieve good standards of presentation and often skilfully illustrate their work. However, since all pupils carry out the same tasks, lower attaining pupils sometimes write without understanding or fail to complete tasks. The current scheme of work has a good range of contents but provides little opportunity for developing the skills of researching a topic and selecting information for presentation. There is insufficient original work for the subject to make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' literacy. Topics are brought to life for pupils by occasional visits, involving, for example, Victorian role-play and a 'Tudor Day'.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

63. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations across the school. They were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, but many other schools have moved forward more rapidly since then. The school lacks a subject co-ordinator for information and communication technology and the school development plan identifies information and communication technology as an area in need of development. The school has successfully increased and improved the computer resources and introduced a specific teaching time for each class. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise and extend skills and understand how to apply them to other areas of the curriculum. Little use is made of computers in mathematics and English lessons.

64. Year 6 pupils have more regular access to computers than the rest of the school because they benefit from the good link with a local secondary school which offers the weekly use of their information technology suite. Nevertheless, standards at the end of year 6 are below those expected for pupils of this age. In the lessons seen, explanations were clear and the pupils responded with interest. In Year 6, useful subject links were made with the history topic when accessing the Internet to find information about Victorian England.

MUSIC

65. There is no formal scheme of work but a satisfactory range of resources and materials is available for use in lessons. Older pupils use recorded radio broadcasts and accompanying pamphlets. In the two lessons seen, the broadcasts had been carefully chosen to suit the pupils' level of attainment. The teachers intervened to consolidate technical points and to keep the pupils' attention purposefully focused. One teacher successfully used her voice to encourage the pupils to sing better. Pupils enjoy singing and perform competently in assemblies, usually without accompaniment. They take part in musical events in

church and contribute to music festivals in the area. Lessons are provided for a small number of pupils on violin, keyboard and brass. There is at present no subject co-ordinator with appropriate musical knowledge and the school is unable to teach the full requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the school makes good use of governors and friends to accompany pupils for special occasions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

66. Pupils in three classes across both key stages were seen doing gymnastics and dance, and standards were in line with national expectations. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. As pupils enter the school with attainment that is below that seen in most local schools, they are achieving better than might be expected. Some older pupils showed inexperience in dance, but improved their rhythm and movement patterns during the lesson. They responded strongly to the well chosen music and tried hard to match the teacher's expectations. Younger pupils were seen practising moving in different ways. Some made particularly good progress learning to run, jump and land on both feet. In both gymnastic lessons, teachers taught pupils to move apparatus safely. In one of these lessons, groups were asked to practise floor activities while further apparatus was set out. They concentrated well, except for two pupils who climbed on the apparatus and were appropriately admonished. In the other lesson, pupils were expected to sit still while apparatus was set out, became bored and noisy, and a few misbehaved.

67. The curriculum for physical education offers pupils a good range of activities. This includes regular swimming, sailing in Year 5, and adventurous activities during the Year 6 residential trip. Extra-curricular activities are not offered at present and so pupils have fewer opportunities than in most schools. The school makes good use of its hall, the hard play area and a public field that is a short walk away. Recent training for teachers and improvements to the resources have helped in the development of the subject.