

INSPECTION REPORT

THEYDON BOIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Theydon Bois, Epping

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115026

Headteacher: Mrs E Bonds

Reporting inspector: Kath Beck
10090

Dates of inspection: 17th-20th September 2001

Inspection number: 230743

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Orchard Drive
Theydon Bois
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Essex

Postcode: CM16 7DH

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Macpherson

Date of previous inspection: 3rd-4th November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10090	Kath Beck	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Information and Communication Technology	What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9619	Bob Miller	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?
7694	Martyn Richards	Team inspector	Science Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

6436	Alan Andrews	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	
1359	Lyne Lavender	Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Theydon Bois is a large primary school serving a suburban village on the northern fringe of Greater London. Most families live in favourable circumstances; relatively few of the children are eligible for free school meals. There are 317 on roll. 306 attend full-time and 11 children aged four attend the early entry class part-time. There are 45 more boys than girls. Few children come from ethnic minorities. Two children are at an early stage of learning English as a second language and this is more than in most schools. The number of children identified as having special educational needs, including those with a statement of particular needs for learning, behavioural or medical difficulties, is similar to other schools nationally. Many of the children enter school following some pre-school experience and with higher than average achievement in writing and reading. Prior to the inspection, there had been some disruption to teaching in the infants with staff illness and difficulties in recruiting teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Theydon Bois Primary is a good and effective school. The headteacher, governors and key staff work very well together to raise standards. In English, mathematics and science standards are very good at the end of Year 6. There are examples of very high standards in art and design technology. Overall teaching is good. In the early entry and mixed Year 5 and 6 classes, teaching is consistently good and often very good. Parents have a very high regard for the school and its work. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- High standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education at the end of Year 6.
- Very good leadership of the headteacher, governors and key staff promotes high standards.
- Very good teaching in English, mathematics, science and religious education in Years 5 and 6.
- Governors play a prominent role in the school's development and have excellent understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Monitoring of the school's performance and taking effective action to improve it.
- Strong links with the community and excellent cross-curricular links.

What could be improved

- Variations in the quality of teaching between classes from reception to Year 5.
- Narrow the gap between the achievements of girls and boys.
- Resources for the foundation stage.
- Teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching information and communication technology.
- Provision to promote more actively the positive aspects of social and ethnic harmony.
- The library accommodation.

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 very good progress in many aspects, including the key issues from the last inspection in November 1999. A dynamic and committed response to the key issues means standards have risen rapidly in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in the last two years. Long-term targets, to raise standards which exceed those set nationally, have been set. There is good provision to extend bright children. The school has received the Investors in People Award for its strong commitment to staff development and training. Some staff need to implement fully skills learned during training. The overall provision for children's spiritual, moral and social development is now good as teachers plan ways in which this can be fostered across the curriculum. However, not all assemblies contribute as well as they might to children's spiritual development. The pace and quality of teaching is better, but variations between some classes remain. Substantial financial support from the parents and other grants have been used efficiently to establish a computer suite. This, together with the appointment of a skilled information and communication technology coordinator, provides a secure foundation to raise standards in this subject. The school has made substantial progress in raising its status and developing strong links within the community. Parents are particularly pleased that staff morale has risen considerably; children's success is valued and that the buildings have been renovated to provide a better learning environment.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	A	A	C
Mathematics	C	A	B	C
Science	C	B	A	B

Key

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

*schools with less than 8% free school meals.

This table shows that results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in English and science in 2000 were high when compared to all schools. They were good in mathematics. Results were in line with those found in schools with children from similar backgrounds in English and mathematics and better in science. These grades are based on an average points' score calculated by adding up the points awarded to each child for each level of achievement¹, divided by the number of children taking the tests. While the number of children reaching the expected level of achievement was very good, the number reaching the higher levels was less than in other similar schools. This said, in 2001 two particularly able children reached very high standards similar to those found in secondary schools².

In 2000, results at the end of Year 2 were good in comparison to all schools in reading, writing and mathematics. They were average in writing and mathematics and a bit lower in reading when compared to similar schools. When analysing the 2000 results and average points' scores in detail, the school was very close to doing better than similar schools in all subjects. The school did not quite reach a better comparative grade in reading as fewer children reached higher levels of achievement. The trend in the school's results has been one of steady improvement over four years. The rate of improvement in the past two years has been much faster than in other schools. Targets set with the local authority for children's achievements in the national tests were exceeded in 2000 and 2001. Challenging targets for the number of children to reach the higher levels of achievement in 2002 have been set and are on course to be met.

Lesson observations and the scrutiny of the work from children in the present Year 6 indicate that standards are very good in English, mathematics, science, art, religious education and design and technology. They are good in religious education, history and geography. In music and information and communication technology they are similar to all schools. All children learn to swim the required 25 metres by the time they leave the school. In gymnastics, children's achievements are typical for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. At the end of Year 2 standards are good in English, mathematics, science, religious education and very good in art and design and technology. They are typical of those expected at age seven in geography, history, music and information and communication technology. Most children in the foundation stage are on course to do well and achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, especially in emotional, personal and social development³. Some children are expected to achieve at the early levels of the National Curriculum. A consistently high standard of teaching in the early entry class and the mixed age Year 5 and 6 classes mean children achieve very well. Progress varies in other classes where the quality of teaching ranges from sometimes unsatisfactory to very good.

1. Expected standard for the end of Year 2 is level 2. The higher standard is level 3. At the end of Year 6 the expected standard is level 4 and the higher than expected standard, level 5.

² Very high standard = level 6, normally expected between Years 7- 9 in the secondary school.

³ Expected levels of achievement for children at the end of the Reception Year. There are six areas of experience: communications, language and literacy, mathematics, emotional, personal and social development, creative and physical development, knowledge, understanding of the world.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children work hard and take pride in presenting their work well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Children respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour so there is often a purposeful atmosphere in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships. Older children carry out their responsibilities around the school in a mature and sensible manner.
Attendance	Very good.

Children are keen to learn, often listen attentively and participate well in lessons. The older children sustain their concentration for long periods of time and complete substantial amounts of work. Children collaborate well. The children in the early entry class often become absorbed in what they are doing. The school rightly takes a firm line on following up absences. This is why attendance is very good and has a significant impact on children's achievement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Early entry, Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

Overall, teaching is good. It is consistently very good in the early entry class and the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes. Some high quality teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 in art and English was observed. In other classes, the quality of teaching varied according to the subject being taught. The daily literacy and numeracy lessons are often taught well, although the pace of the mental arithmetic warm up is too slow in some classes. Strengths in teaching stem from very good teaching of basic skills and the presentation of imaginative tasks which challenge children's intellectual and creative effort. These inspire children to work hard and do their best. In some lessons, such as in physical education and music, tasks are not always planned sufficiently to ensure they are well matched to children's age or ability. Lessons sometimes lack a clear structure. In addition, expertise in information and communication technology, science and the foundation stage is not always sufficient to take children forward in their learning. Teachers are successful in taking much of the responsibility for planning the work of children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. With the effective support of learning support assistants, these children make good progress. In the very good lessons, teachers have very high expectations of what children can do and achieve. The youngest children make rapid progress in their emotional, personal and social development, often making important decisions about their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory in the foundation stage, good in the infants and very good in the juniors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Class teachers and learning support assistants take much of the responsibility for ensuring that children make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Children play a full part in all learning activities. Teachers follow advice well to ensure that the children make good progress in the acquisition of spoken and written English.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in social and cultural development, good in spiritual and satisfactory in moral development. Children have a clear sense of right and wrong, but provision needs to promote more actively the positive aspects of social and ethnic harmony.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Children's health and general welfare is catered for well. Procedures to monitor the academic performance of children are very good. This information needs to be used more effectively in some mixed age classes to ensure work meets all children's needs.
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Parents now hold the school in high regard. Parental involvement in the work of the school and contributions to children's learning at home is playing a significant role in raising standards. Especially in the juniors, the school offers a rich curriculum of practical and written tasks extended by a very good range of extra curricular activities. The foundation stage curriculum promotes children's independence, social, literacy and numeracy skills, but its implementation varies between classes. Group work, links with the community, residential visits and support for a Romanian orphanage do much to enhance children's social development. Children's personal well-being receives considerable attention. Very good procedures help teachers to track children's academic progress. These have yet to include effective ways to track children's personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Strong leadership by the headteacher in collaboration with governors and key staff is having a substantial impact on standards. The highly effective ethos promotes and values success which has raised the self-esteem of staff and children very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities extremely well. They contribute their expertise very effectively to benefit the staff and children.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. A considerable amount of data is analysed to judge the school's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Money is directed effectively to the school's priorities for raising achievement.

Overall staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school grounds are extensive. Recent renovations have significantly improved the learning environment. Some classrooms remain cramped and are much smaller than others in the school, which limits opportunities for children to move around the room and fetch resources. There is no space for staff to take children with behavioural difficulties to calm down or work away from the class. Accommodation for the library is unsatisfactory and limits research skills. Resources are poor in the foundation stage. There are significant strengths in the leadership. These stem from the headteacher's dynamic, determined and strong approach to raising standards, the increased skills and knowledge of the governors, their excellent knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the promotion of staff development and morale. Governors and staff promote the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant improvements to many aspects of to the school, including standards. • Leadership and management. • The strong sense of community. • Good teaching. • Good behaviour. • Children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their child's progress. • Closer working relationship with the school. • More activities outside of lessons. • The amount of homework set.

Inspectors fully support the parents' positive views. Inspectors found that the information given to parents about their child's academic progress is good, particularly in the annual reports. There is a close working relationship with parents which is being developed further through the provision of workshop evenings to help parents understand curriculum matters. The school has a clear policy that sets out the requirements if parents volunteer to help in school. It rightly states that parents should not help in their own child's class as this has proved problematic in the past. The amount of homework set is satisfactory and there is a very good range of activities outside lessons for children in the juniors.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards by the end of Year 6 are very good in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 2 and the reception year, they are good. Children in the foundation stage, in the early entry and reception classes, are on course to reach and exceed the early learning goals, especially in emotional, personal and social development. Some children are expected to begin work as set out in the early stages of the National Curriculum, especially in reading and mathematics. These standards reflect:
 - thorough implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
 - the varying quality of teaching between classes from reception to Year 5;
 - very good teaching in the early entry class and that of the oldest children in the school.Standards have risen rapidly since the last inspection when they were judged to be good.
2. Results of national tests in 2000 for children aged eleven were high in English and science and good in mathematics when compared to all schools. Results in English and mathematics were in line with those schools with children from similar backgrounds. They were better in science. Many children reached higher than expected levels of achievement. The school has made very good progress in raising the number of children reaching the higher levels of achievement as recommended in the previous inspection report. Unverified results in 2001 indicate that more children than before reached the higher levels of achievement, with some reaching very high standards normally expected in the secondary school in mathematics and science. This is because the school makes good provision for bright children and has much higher expectations of what children can achieve.
3. In 2000, results for children aged seven were good in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison to the national picture. When compared with schools in similar contexts, results were not as good in reading. They were average in writing and mathematics. Closer analysis indicates that the school was doing better than other schools in reading and better in writing and mathematics. Detailed analysis shows that 92% of the children reached the national standard in reading, 88% in writing and 98% in mathematics. While this is a large number of children, too many only just reached the appropriate standard for their age⁴. This is due to the higher number of children with special educational needs in that year group. Unverified results in 2001 indicate more children have reached higher standards. Lesson observations indicate that teachers do not always provide work of sufficient challenge for the older or bright children in the mixed age classes in the infants.

⁴ In Year 2, level 2, the expected standard is separated into 2c, 2b and 2a. Many achieved 2c and 2b. Higher standards are level 2a and level 3.

4. The school is putting considerable effort into analysing data to find reasons for its results and so improve standards. Children's progress is checked carefully and the information gained is used to plan programmes of work. The effective use of data by teachers varies from reception to Year 5. Specialist provision for bright children in Years 3 to 6 in literacy and numeracy is organised well. Children respond enthusiastically in these lessons which take place each week and make significant demands on their intellectual and creative efforts. Results have risen as more children are achieving higher standards of achievement.
5. There are more boys than girls in the school. Over the last four years, the girls have done much better than the boys in national tests at age eleven. While the school's analysis indicates that the gap between girls' and boys' achievements is closing, there is room for improvement to ensure children do as well as they can regardless of gender.
6. Children's speaking and listening skills are very good. Almost all children speak confidently and communicate meaning clearly. At seven, many offer opinions and express preferences and at eleven, most have developed a very good vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations that children listen attentively and so acquire new knowledge and skills quickly. Teachers use appropriate vocabulary for each subject and expect children to understand and use it accurately. For example in information and communication technology lessons, teachers refer to 'desktop', 'font', 'menu', 'open and close' and children know what the teachers mean.
7. Reading skills are good at age seven and very good by the age of eleven where a significant number of children are performing at a high level. Children read regularly at home and at school, which increases their rate of progress. Infant children read fluently although not always with expression to show their understanding. Older juniors read complex texts with understanding. Almost all children have acquired library and research skills although the present library facilities are unsatisfactory and impede their progress in developing further research skills and do little to enhance their appreciation of books.
8. Children's writing skills are good at age seven and eleven. Standards have improved, but not as quickly as in other subjects. Improvement in writing skills remains a priority for the school, especially for the brighter children. Observations of lessons especially for these children show promise of significant improvement. Spelling, handwriting and punctuation are often good. Work is neatly presented, but lacks imagination and more could be completed in the time available.
9. In mathematics, standards are good at age seven and very good at age eleven representing a significant improvement in all areas of mathematics since 1999. Younger children know different methods to calculate addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. This knowledge is built on so that by the age of eleven, children become competent mathematicians, confident in their ability to tackle new work. They enjoy stimulating challenges which allow them to apply their mathematical skills. Children's mental arithmetic skills develop more slowly as the initial 'warm up' part of the lesson is not fast enough. Some teachers talk for too long, giving children too little time to complete tasks.

10. Very good standards at age eleven in all aspects of science stem from high quality teaching in the mixed age Year 5 and 6 classes. They are enhanced by the school's involvement in the Eco-school project. Children are very well informed indeed about the importance of environmental protection, about habitats at risk, pollution and the problems associated with the disposal of rubbish. Good standards at age seven stem from thorough coverage of the curriculum. Inappropriate organisation of practical tasks in some Year 2 lessons inhibits children's progress in observational and practical work.
11. Standards in art and design and technology are very good at ages seven and eleven. There are some examples of very high quality work in pottery. Children are challenged to reach high standards as their work is sometimes linked to competitions within the community. For example, children made very good 'box gardens' and designed and made paper bags as part of their contribution to the local horticultural show. At age seven, children do well in religious education and standards are high at age eleven. This is because children cover substantial amounts of work and build their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.
12. In history and geography, standards are typical of the national picture for children aged seven and good at age eleven. This is because more time is given to these subjects in the juniors than in the infants. Visits to places of interest and displays of maps and objects make the subjects come alive for the children. Junior children cover the curriculum in greater depth. Standards in music are typical of the national picture for the same ages. Teachers do their best to ensure children enjoy singing and making music by using audio taped programmes of songs or radio programmes. This is because the school lacks sufficient expertise to raise children's skills in this subject. Some children receive specialist tuition in guitar, piano, flute, clarinet, recorders and trumpet and perform confidently during school assemblies.
13. Standards in information and communication technology are similar to those in other schools for children aged seven and eleven. However, the foundation has been set for a rapid rise in standards. This is due to:
 - the appointment of a skilled information and communication technology coordinator;
 - a newly established computer suite where children can be taught appropriate skills explicitly;
 - a planned programme of training, due to start in October 2001, for all staff to raise their confidence, skills and knowledge in teaching the subject.The challenge for the school is to ensure the subject is taught to a very high standard in all classes.
14. During the inspection inclement weather limited opportunities for observing physical education lessons. Standards are typical of the national picture at age seven and eleven in gymnastics. All children learn to swim the required 25 metres confidently. The school is very active within the area of sports and leagues, providing many opportunities for children to take part and extend their skills in athletics, cycling, tag rugby, tennis and cricket.

15. The percentage of children on the school's register for special educational needs is broadly in line with most other schools. It includes two children with statements of special educational need. The school has a part-time special educational needs co-ordinator and the provision is managed well. All the support is given within class lessons and relies heavily on the programmes of work provided by class teachers. The achievement of children with special educational needs is good, including those with statements of a particular special education need. Children's individual education plans are detailed and contain appropriate targets which teachers use effectively when planning tasks. The work of the learning support assistants is valuable in helping children to achieve their targets.
16. Children with English as an additional language make good progress in the acquisition of spoken and written skills and achieve success across the curriculum. Teachers follow advice well so that children can play a full part in lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Overall, there has been a significant improvement in children's values, attitudes and personal development, since the last inspection. Children in the foundation stage have very good attitudes to their learning. They settled quickly into school and know the routines. They listen very attentively to their teachers and respond well to questions and this helps them to learn new things quickly. They are eager to show their developing reading skills in whole class 'Big Book' sessions. Children in the early entry and reception classes are polite as they listen to their friends talking and patiently wait their turn. In group activities they concentrate for a considerable amount of time, completing puzzles or pictures which they take pride in doing well. Activities in the reception class are less challenging, but children maintain high standards of behaviour and cooperation.
18. Children in all year groups have good attitudes towards learning. They approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They respond positively to their teachers' questions, concentrate well and display high levels of perseverance when their tasks are difficult and challenging. This enables them to make good progress in their learning and take pride in presenting their work well. Parents are particularly pleased with the significant improvement in children's attitudes, where children want to do their best in all aspects of their life, as their achievements in and out of school are valued highly.
19. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the very good attendance figures and high levels of punctuality. This has a significant impact on their achievement. Children say they try to work hard and always make an effort to complete their work in time. This was confirmed in lesson observations. Most children participate fully and attentively in class discussions, keen to share their ideas and opinions with others. By the time the children reach Year 6, they are capable of communicating their ideas confidently and are tolerant and respectful of the opinions expressed by others. The youngest children in the school have good independent learning skills often choosing their own resources and organising aspects of their work.

20. Behaviour throughout the school is good as it was at the time of the last inspection. There has been only one incident of temporary exclusion in the past year. Teachers and support staff maintain very good relationships with the children. They have high expectations of behaviour to which the children respond well. Children with specific behavioural difficulties are managed and supported effectively, in accordance with their statement of educational needs. However, there is nowhere, other than the headteacher's room, for staff to take children with behavioural difficulties to calm down and limit disruption to other children's learning. Procedures ensuring the orderly movement of children around the school and very good behaviour in the dining hall are considered effective. The organisation of games activities in the playground at lunchtime is proving to be very successful in promoting children's social development and high standards of behaviour. Year 6 children show maturity and enjoy taking responsibility for supervising these activities with mid-day assistants. There is little reported bullying. Occasionally minor disputes occur and these are reported by parents and children as being quickly and efficiently dealt with by staff.
21. Children's personal development and their relationships with one another are very good and a significant improvement since the last inspection. Children respond warmly to visitors and co-operate very well when working in pairs and small groups. Year 6 children can be relied upon to carry out duties around the school sensibly, such as, answering the telephone and helping in assemblies. The older children do much to support the younger ones and this enhances their personal development. Their personal study skills are good. Children make important decisions about their work, especially in lessons such as history, where projects involve them in carrying out research from books and CD-Roms at home and school, over a period of time.
22. The school's attendance rate is well above the national average and has improved since the last inspection. There are hardly any unauthorised absences but those which do occur are due to parents taking extended holidays in school time. Authorised absences are mostly for medical reasons. Most children arrive on time and this ensures that the school day gets off to a prompt start. Lessons start and finish on time and registers meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Overall, teaching is good. It is satisfactory in the foundation stage and the infants and good in the juniors. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be generally satisfactory. In over half the lessons observed the teaching was good, very good or excellent.
24. A very high standard of teaching in the early entry class enables children to settle into school routines quickly and make rapid progress. Very good knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of children of this age means activities are imaginative and structured well so that children become confident and secure in their learning. Children in this class work in a colourful and stimulating environment with a good range of resources. These are easy for the children to reach and select.

25. Curriculum and lesson planning for the early entry class is meticulous. This ensures full coverage of all the areas of learning and a wide range of activities which help children to learn in a way that is fun. For example, the teacher used a puppet to attract and maintain children's interest in learning to read from a 'Big Book'. The children helped the puppet to read the words and spotted his mistakes! As a result, children made rapid gains in literacy and phonic work. Mathematical games and explicit teaching of number formation support children's fast acquisition of numeracy skills. Children have a clear understanding of what they know and can do and can build on this. For example, children know how to operate a tape recorder and listen to a story. Sometimes they chose to listen to the story and follow it in a book. In this way they were building on their developing literacy skills. In turn, opportunities for children to show independence in their work promote confidence and enthusiasm for learning and establish good attitudes to school life.
26. There is a clear difference between the quality of teaching in the reception and early entry class. This has much to do with the lack of resources, organisation, unsatisfactory role-play activities and the dull environment. While expertise with children of this age is developing, there is still much work to do to ensure a consistent high standard of teaching throughout the foundation stage. Some of this will be addressed as the school's staff training and building programmes are implemented.
27. There were examples of very good teaching in English and excellent teaching in art in the infants. In the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes, teaching was consistently of a high quality. The features of high quality teaching were:
- imaginative, demanding tasks which challenge children to think hard about their learning;
 - very good questioning to deepen children's knowledge and understanding;
 - high expectations of what can be achieved in the time available;
 - well organised group work which enables children to learn well from each other;
 - a sense of fun and enjoyment in learning;
 - very good use of time and resources;
 - making learning relevant to everyday life;
 - bright children are challenged well and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
28. Overall basic skills in literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. They are taught very well towards the end of the juniors where the pace of learning increases rapidly. National initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been introduced effectively but there is still work to do in the foundation stage.

29. Many lessons in the infants and juniors have a clear structure. They often begin with reminders about previous work and how this links with new tasks to be undertaken. The purpose of each lesson is made clear to the children so that they are clear about what they have to do. Teachers have high expectations that children:
- will take care and pride over the presentation of their work;
 - behave well so that there is a positive working atmosphere;
 - listen carefully to take on new knowledge and skills;
 - work together cooperatively;
 - concentrate hard so that they cover a lot of work in the time and do their best.
- Children respond well to these demands and in art and design and technology particularly, present imaginative work of high quality.
30. During lessons, teachers often make the most of opportunities to find out how well the children are doing and give them clear advice about how they might improve their work or correct errors. In some classes this information is not always used well enough to plan work for the different age groups and abilities in the class, especially in mathematics.
31. The teaching of children with special educational needs is mainly good. Some is carried out by the special educational needs co-ordinator, but is mostly undertaken by class teachers who are often helped by learning support assistants. Activities are chosen carefully to reflect the needs of the children and to stimulate learning. Relationships are good and children are keen to please and to do well. Their self-esteem is maintained successfully and they are usually enthusiastic to complete their work.
32. Unsatisfactory lessons were observed in classes from reception to Year 5. The weaknesses resulted from:
- planning and classroom organisation taking too little account of the different age and abilities of children in some of the younger mixed age classes;
 - weak preparation of lessons. For example, no lesson plans for physical education;
 - lack of expertise in information and communication technology, music, physical education and the foundation stage;
 - low expectations of what children can do.
33. Some lessons, in mathematics, are unsatisfactory as children are involved in extended discussions that are over directed by the teacher and this unduly restricts opportunities for them to apply newly learned skills. In the younger classes, some teachers still make too much use of worksheets that limit the demand on children. These issues were pointed out at the time of the last inspection.
34. The school has a small number of children for whom English is an additional language. Two are at an early stage of learning English. Teachers are implementing advice they have received effectively to ensure that these children participate fully in all lessons.
35. Teachers use homework effectively to enhance children's progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. At the end of the juniors there is strong emphasis on developing children's research skills which prepares them well for secondary education.

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

36. The school provides a good curriculum for its children. All the required subjects of the National Curriculum are given due attention and they are often taught with a breadth and imagination which motivate the children to high achievement. The school is particularly effective in providing opportunities for children to learn from real, first-hand experiences as well as from books. There is a strong programme of study visits to relevant places of interest such as Capel Manor and the Ragged School at Mile End. Local people frequently visit the school to share their experiences and skills with the children. For example the Bishop of Barking and local ministers, contribute regularly to the religious education programme and the chair of governors helps with the arts programme.
37. The national initiatives for teaching literacy and numeracy have been introduced thoroughly and contribute to the good standards reached in those subjects. Provision for children's personal, social and health education is generally good. The school has detailed programmes of work in these areas. It has also developed a programme of lessons in citizenship through which children learn about community responsibility and democratic decision-making. These represent a marked improvement in provision since the last inspection.
38. Many parts of the curriculum in the school draw together learning from different subjects. Work in physical education for example, focusing on balance, applied and extended recent science lessons on forces. While the curriculum offers many small examples of fruitful links such as these, there are also major cross-curricular projects which have a strong impact throughout the school. One of these is the Eco-school project through which children learn about the importance of environmental protection, the management of waste and the need to conserve resources. Staff are actively seeking industrial sponsorship to develop wind and solar power sources for the school. It is hoped initially to supplement the school's energy supplies such as in heating the swimming pool. The Eco-school project draws together work in English, religious education, science, geography and art. Another very fruitful project is the continuous support, in collaboration with local church groups, of a small orphanage called Casa Hope in Romania. This project similarly brings together learning in religious education, English, geography and art. The cross-curricular links the school has built into its programme are an excellent feature of its provision.
39. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is planned meticulously and takes account of all the areas of learning. The planned curriculum is a very good one and allows children to take part in a wide range of activities to promote high standards in all areas of experience, especially emotional, personal and social development. Planning takes into account the need for activities in and out of the classroom. However, the implementation of the curriculum is not consistent across the foundation stage. This is because there is a lack of expertise in the teaching, lack of resources and limitations in access to the outside area for children in the reception class.

40. The school makes good provision for children with special educational needs. The school's procedures for identifying children with special educational needs are good and comply with the National Code of Practice. Emphasis is rightly placed on identifying such children as early as possible and the school liaises appropriately with outside agencies. Children's individual education plans are written well and include realistic targets for them to achieve.
41. Staff are very aware of the importance of ensuring that all the different groups of children represented in the school can benefit to the full from what it offers. Good written policies for equal opportunities and for multicultural education set out the school's approaches and guide teachers in their planning of work. The school has made substantial improvements in its provision for bright children. While the programme for these children still needs some refinement, to ensure work in all mixed-age classes suits the full range of the children, it nevertheless represents a very good improvement since the last inspection. Good provision is also made for children with disabilities and for the small number who are still at an early stage in learning English as an additional language.
42. All classroom activities and clubs cater both for girls and boys and children of both genders achieve well in the school. However, over the past four years the standards girls have reached by the end of Year 6 have been higher than those of the boys. This has been the case in all three core subjects, English, mathematics and science. The governors are aware of this issue, but not enough has been done to identify fully the reasons for this disparity and develop strategies to narrow the gap.
43. The school provides a very good range of out of school club activities, some of which cater for infant children as well as for older children. In addition to sports and games clubs, there are opportunities for children interested in crafts, including handwriting, pottery, gardening, computer work, ecology and French. Very good and productive links have been established with the local community and with a neighbouring "Beacon" secondary school to enhance learning. The school joins in with village events, for example, making imaginative scarecrows for the horticultural show, making a film on the history of Theydon Bois with the local history group and taking part in the Epping Forest Tree Strategy. Parents recognise and appreciate the extent of the school's engagement with its community. Very productive links with the secondary school are enriching the teaching of subjects, such as science and physical education.
44. The school's arrangements for promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have been very much improved since the last inspection when they were criticised for a lack of coordination and consistency. The school now has a policy for this area of its work which directs teachers' planning effectively. The new programme of work for personal, social and health education also contributes well. As a result arrangements for social and cultural development are now very good. For spiritual development they are good, while for moral development they are satisfactory.

45. Children have the chance, in several contexts, to experience humility, empathy or wonder. Older children reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes when they talk about the posters of quotations from Einstein displayed in their rooms and they think about the evils of prejudice during religious education lessons on Judaism. They were deeply moved when they looked at photographs of poverty in Romania. The youngest children painted, with delight, the flowers, insects and leaves they had found in their visit to Capel Manor. However, school assemblies do not contribute as much to spiritual development as they should. They still lack the sense of occasion noted at the time of the last inspection. They are not engaging enough to provoke deep or sincere reflection in the children.
46. Children refine their understanding of right and wrong as they grow through the school. In a range of lessons they learn about justice, fairness, honesty and service to others. While the school's overall provision is satisfactory, staff have not given sufficient attention to ensuring that children learn, in a planned way, about the importance of social and ethnic tolerance and harmony. There is a need to identify precisely the points in the teaching programme where this issue is addressed and to monitor its implementation. There should be clear written guidance to staff on the management of behaviour or comments with intolerant undertones. Detailed records of any such incidents created by adults or children are kept but governors should make an unambiguous statement of principle in their Prospectus.
47. Children's social development is promoted in many aspects of school life. They discuss the rules they feel should have currency in their classrooms. Older children undertake a range of school responsibilities such as answering the telephone at lunchtimes and helping the youngest children at playtimes. They collect for local and national charities and children run some fund raising events, such as Bring and Buy sales, independently. The whole school works with the community to support the Romanian orphans and children come to realise that their social responsibility extends into a wider world. The school's citizenship programme teaches them about the ways social organisations operate, but they have little opportunity to engage at a simple level in democratic procedures such as voting, representing others, running meetings, producing minutes and reporting back. A regular residential school journey gives Year 6 children the chance to experience social living outside the home.
48. A strong programme in art and literature underpins the school's very strong provision for cultural development. Children have learned about classic artists such as Kandinsky and modern illustrators such as Quentin Blake. Art lessons and displays during the inspection drew on Aboriginal and African cultures. Older children have become familiar with the life and times of Shakespeare and have completed work on "*Julius Caesar*". Good quality literature is always used for literacy lessons. Through the school's close links with its community, children also learn something of the cultural history of the village and capture this on film. Assemblies add to children's cultural experience when the work of different composers such as Dvorak is featured. At present, however, the music programme as a whole does not contribute as fully as it should to this aspect of children's growth.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The school cares well for its children. Teachers and support staff know their children well. Procedures for ensuring and maintaining children's welfare, health and safety are good and have improved since the last inspection. Children are supervised effectively and the staff know what to do when a child is ill or has an accident. The school works closely with outside agencies for the benefit of all children. The school nurse and School's Liaison Police Officer are regular visitors and contribute to the teaching of the curriculum. The catering officer talks to parents of children new to the school about healthy eating, particularly about providing nutritious contents in packed lunches.
50. Good child protection procedures ensure staff are aware of the procedures to be followed if a child is believed to be at risk. Effective procedures protect the health and safety of staff and children. Formal risk assessments of potential hazards in and around the school are undertaken regularly. Written reports are presented to governors and the local authority. The floor covering in the kitchen area needs improving to ensure it is a non-slip surface. While the school has made some adaptations to the premises to accommodate disabled people, ramps are required to comply fully with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
51. The school's procedures for promoting good discipline and behaviour are effective. Advice and support from the local authority behaviour management service has proved beneficial. The school's behaviour policy has recently been reviewed by the governing body and is implemented consistently by all staff. Rewards for high standards of behaviour and helpfulness are given. The children are very proud of the awards and enjoy explaining to visitors how they have won them. Sanctions, such as exclusion, are seen as a last resort. Children respond well to the high expectations that they will behave so that there is a positive working atmosphere in most lessons. The policy for behaviour does, however, need to be more widely circulated in future, to ensure full consultation especially with parents. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and mostly dealt with swiftly and effectively.
52. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent. There is a dedicated telephone line to enable parents and carers to report absences 24 hours a day. Office staff follow up all absences quickly. The services of the educational welfare officer are used appropriately to ensure high rates of attendance. Procedures for supporting children's personal development are generally good. Residential visits and lunch time tasks enable older children to develop a sense of responsibility within the school community. The curriculum programme for personal, social and health education is very good and supports learning about important aspects of everyday life. The formal recording and monitoring of children's personal development is inconsistent.

53. The school's assessment and record keeping systems are good and they have improved considerably since the last inspection. Children's progress is monitored closely from the time they start school until they leave. Realistic targets are set for their performance and standards are rising as a result. Very clear procedures have been set down for assessing literacy and numeracy. There are termly and annual tests in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in science is also checked regularly. Results are fed into a computer program for analysis to raise standards. The information gained is used to plan new work matched to differing abilities especially in the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 classes. The information is not used as well in other mixed age classes. Since the last inspection, some teachers have become more skilled in making accurate assessments and have a greater understanding of each child's progress. This makes it possible for clear targets for improvement to be set for each child and the school as a whole. Informal assessments at the end of units of work enable teachers to evaluate their own effectiveness and to make alterations to lesson plans where appropriate.
54. At present the school is unable to give a full explanation of the reasons why girls have outperformed boys in the core subjects over the past three years. New computer software has recently been brought into use that will help the school to keep track of trends in the different levels of attainment of girls and boys. In addition, the school is reviewing its teaching strategies to ensure boys' achievements are raised but not at the expense of that of the girls. This is to build on the successful work done so far which has enabled boys to become more positive in their attitudes towards learning.
55. Teachers keep detailed records of what each child has achieved in most subjects and pass these on to the teacher for the following year to enhance continuity in learning. In addition, samples of work are collected annually in English, mathematics and science and placed in each child's folder to record their progress. Staff use this evidence effectively to compare progress made by children from year to year. The school assessment leader makes sure that the systems are implemented fully and work successfully. Recent in-service training has helped teachers to interpret national test data and understand the meaning of results in their own school so that they can change their practice accordingly to benefit children. Work is marked regularly and kept up to date. Helpful comments tell children where they have done well and what they should do next to improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Parents hold the school in high regard. They are happy with the quality of education the school provides and the standards achieved. They are particularly pleased with:
- the positive change in children's attitudes towards their learning;
 - the value given by staff to all kinds of achievement;
 - the rise in staff morale;
 - alterations to the buildings.
- They are right to believe that their children make good progress and behave well. Parents agree that the staff and headteacher are approachable and accessible and are confident that any concerns they have will be listened to and acted upon. The inspection findings do not confirm the view of a minority number of parents that the school does not work closely with them or that they are not kept well informed about how their child is getting on at school. The school works closely with parents and is continuing to develop this through the provision of curriculum workshops. The school's policy for parents helping in school is good. It makes clear to parents that they must maintain confidentiality and avoid working in their own child's class.
57. The partnership between the school and parents is good overall. The school is developing a "Partnership in Education" policy to ensure that parents are involved more fully with their child's education. The Parent Teacher Association is very active and in the most recent financial year raised some £7,000 through fund raising events that are very well supported. This money has gone towards the refurbishment of the information and communication technology suite in order to raise standards in that subject.
58. Some parents help on school trips, whilst others help with swimming lessons and help listen to children read. These parents are supplemented by a good number of local residents who come into school to perform a number of tasks including helping with history lessons and library skills. The vast majority of parents give very good support at home with their child's work and make a significant contribution to their education, which has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
59. The information the school provides for parents is good. Communications include regular letters from the headteacher outlining important dates and curriculum information. Workshops are held to supplement this information to ensure parents' understanding of important educational issues and developments. Notice-boards are strategically placed and contain up to date information about forthcoming school events. The governors produce a report each term for parents, on the progress of the school action plan, as well as a detailed annual report and school prospectus, all of which meet legal requirements. End of year progress reports contain detailed information for parents about their child's progress and there is good provision for parents to discuss the content of these reports with their child's teacher.
60. The school liaises regularly with parents of children with special educational needs. They are consulted about any concerns and are kept informed about their child's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. At the time of the last inspection, the school was judged to be strongly led by the headteacher who provided a clear educational direction for the school and had developed and maintained a strong commitment across the staff to improve the quality of education. This continues to be the case. The priorities to raise standards in all subjects, but especially in writing and information and communication technology at age eleven, are particularly appropriate. The school is taking rigorous action to bring this about.
62. The school has undergone considerable change in the last two years. The deputy headteacher left and two senior teachers now lead management teams and form part of the senior management. The governors and coordinators have raised their skills substantially so that leadership is now very good. Some governors have studied and achieved a nationally recognised qualification in school governance. The interests of the children come first. The school is held in high regard by parents and members of the community. The strengths in the leadership stem from a dynamic, determined and strong approach to teamwork, successful implementation of national initiatives, a continued drive to raise standards and quality of children's work. Children's successes are valued highly.
63. The governors, with the strong encouragement of the headteacher and senior staff, now play an excellent and prominent role in shaping the direction of the school. The headteacher has effectively raised the skills of governors and staff in working together to develop the very good strategic and development plans. Governors knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school are exceptional stemming from this close, consultative working relationship with the headteacher and staff. In turn, this strong cooperative working relationship is one of the main reasons for the school's success. Targets for improvement in the school's performance are challenging and everyone is determined to work together to achieve them. There is a very clear shared educational direction for the school, which enables children to do their very best at all times and achieve high standards. Parents value the expectation that children will work hard and develop mature attitudes to learning.
64. Day to day management of the school is very good. Responsibilities have been delegated very well to governors, subject leaders and office staff. This enables everyone to play an important role in the school's development. Staff and governors are proud of the atmosphere and environment in which the children now work. The school's ethos where success in each subject, plus sporting, artistic and social skills, is valued highly and is reflected in its daily life, the very good relationships and provision for equal opportunities.
65. The headteacher places strong emphasis on the importance of monitoring, evaluating, developing and improving the quality of teaching. The headteacher and some subject leaders have undertaken a programme of formal observation of lessons with feedback to teachers that includes targets for improvement. This has been particularly important because of the changes in staff over the last two years. The programme has proved successful in promoting staff confidence and raising their morale. There is still work to do, building on the teachers' determination to do well, to raise teachers' skills so that all teaching is at least good quality.

66. The subject leaders are enthusiastic and keen to raise standards although some are relatively new to their responsibilities. The coordinators for art, design and technology, religious education, information and communication technology, foundation stage and infants, have been particularly influential and successful in achieving higher standards and an improved quality of education in their subject. They have supported teachers in raising their skills and monitored standards by looking at other teachers' planning and children's work.
67. The school's approach to the teaching and management of children with special educational needs is good. It is very good for those with statements of special educational needs. The children are supported with skill and sensitivity. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced in teaching children with learning difficulties. She liaises closely with the link governor who oversees the provision within the school. Similarly the school's approach to children with English as an additional language enables them to reach good standards.
68. The school is well staffed with qualified teachers, although a number of them have not been in post long. Since the previous inspection the number of learning support assistants has been increased. They are shared across all classes and some give specific help to children with disabilities. They are used to good effect, mainly in supporting children with special educational needs. Their contribution to the general life of the school as well as to children's attainment and progress is substantial. Administrative staff help to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a daily basis and that visitors are welcomed in a friendly manner. The lunchtime supervisors make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school during the lunch break.
69. There are clear job descriptions and a system of performance management has been introduced successfully for teachers, learning support assistants and administrative staff. The school rightly gives high profile to staff training, which is linked to its overall development plan. As a result it has received the Investors in People Award. New staff are successfully inducted into the life of the school. There is a helpful staff handbook that was revised earlier this year to assist this process and enable consistency in approach.
70. The school is set in attractive grounds that offer considerable learning opportunities for the children. Accommodation is satisfactory and maintained well. An information and communication technology suite has been established successfully. A programme of refurbishment has enhanced the buildings, but some classrooms are cramped making it hard for children to move around the room and collect resources. In addition, access to the outside area for children in the reception class is limited. The library is housed in a rather gloomy corridor. It has no tables or chairs to enable children to browse or work quietly. It is not conducive to raising standards in research skills and improving attitudes towards books.
71. Resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in mathematics, science, religious education, art, design and technology, music and information and communication technology, although there is not enough software for foundation stage and infant children. Resources are satisfactory for history, geography, physical education and special educational needs. Resource provision for the foundation stage is impoverished and hinders the progress children make.

72. When last inspected financial planning and controls were found to be satisfactory. The most recent audit confirms this and its recommendations for improvement have been carried out. The skills of the school bursar, support from the local school's consortium and good use of computer technology help in the efficient management of the budget.
73. The school's income and expenditure are higher than in most schools. The money the school receives for specified purposes such as special needs education is correctly applied. The governors have a well-considered development plan which identifies annual priorities for spending, taking account of a long term strategic plan for the school's future. This careful procedure ensures that funds are directed to where they are most needed and that their use improves the quality of education and raises standards. Governors have given priority to providing a good number of teaching and support staff and the children benefit well from this. They also have a good three year programme for buildings maintenance and improvements.
74. This year's expenditure is planned marginally to exceed income. This is possible and appropriate because a considerable sum has been carried forward from previous years. Parents raise a substantial amount of money each year to benefit the children and have recently contributed to the establishment of the new information and communication technology room. In the near future, the school is hoping to attract grant aid to enable the school's poor library provision to be improved.
75. The governors work very effectively to secure the best value they can from the funds available to them. They show a strong determination to raise standards through their application of these funds and are keenly aware of how their school performs in comparison with other schools. They seek competitive tenders for major work and goods.
76. Taking into account the good teaching in the school, the good and rising standards achieved and the wide range of improvements secured since the last inspection, the school now gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. The headteacher, governors and staff should build on the many strengths of the school to:

(1) reduce the variation in the quality of teaching between some classes from reception to Year 5;

Paragraphs: 1, 3, 9, 10, 13, 17, 23 – 35, 65, 78, 81, 83, 84, 104, 112, 113, 142, 148, 156, 157.

(2) narrow the gap between the achievements of girls and boys;

Paragraphs: 5, 41, 54, 88, 98, 107, 141.

(3) increase the resources for the foundation stage;

Paragraphs: 26, 38, 71, 81, 84, 85, 134.

(4) raise teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching information and communication technology, music and physical education;

Paragraphs: 12, 13, 66, 86, 130, 133, 134, 142, 147, 148.

(5) ensure provision for moral education actively promotes the positive aspects of social and ethnic harmony;

Paragraphs: 43 – 46.

(6) improve the library accommodation.

Paragraphs: 70, 74, 92.

Minor :

A) review assembly provision so that it increases the contribution to children's spiritual development;

Paragraphs: 44.

B) enable all teachers to record and monitor children's personal development consistently.

Paragraphs: 29, 52.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	11	27	26	5	1	0
Percentage	5	15	35	36	7	1	0

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

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)	0	317
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	56

English as an additional language

	Nursery	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	Nursery	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	29	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	23	29
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	54	52	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (96)	88 (100)	98 (98)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	29	28
	Girls	29	29	28
	Total	55	58	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (98)	98 (98)	95 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	18	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	19	22
	Girls	16	15	15
	Total	38	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (88)	81 (80)	90 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	22
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	35	34	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (88)	81 (88)	90 (90)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	279
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2002
	£
Total income	628,512
Total expenditure	614,892
Expenditure per pupil	2,092
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,859
Balance carried forward to next year	35,479

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	317
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	43	9	8	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	41	10	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	59	0	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	42	19	5	2
The teaching is good.	35	52	7	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	45	31	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	35	7	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	44	6	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	17	51	28	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	66	31	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	7	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	40	28	2	6

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

78. Provision for children in the foundation stage has changed since the previous inspection. There are eleven children in the early entry class who attend for the morning only for one term. Another 17 are organised in a reception class and they attend full-time. Children receive a very good education in the early entry class. The standard of teaching is extremely high and children make very good progress. Many are on course to exceed the early learning goals in all the areas of learning and achieve the early stages of the National Curriculum by the end of the foundation stage. Progress in the reception class is slower where the teacher is developing expertise with this age group. Planning for the foundation curriculum is meticulous to enable all children to enjoy a wide range of appropriate and exciting learning experiences.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Teachers place great emphasis on this aspect of the curriculum. Children settle quickly into class routines and are confident in their learning environment. Children respect the adults who work with them and their classmates, listening carefully in discussions and waiting patiently for their turn to speak.
80. Whatever the activity, whether working alone or in groups, children can be relied on to take a pride in their work and try hard to do their best. Children who had only been in school for a short period of time prior to the inspection did their best to form their letters correctly and to draw and paint pictures of high quality. Children work independently and play cooperatively for extended periods of time. Parents value the high quality provision in the early entry class, where children grow and develop as independent young people at a rapid rate.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Very good progress is made in all aspects of literacy in the early entry class and satisfactory progress in the reception class. This is due to the varying quality of teaching. Many different approaches are used to develop children's speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. In the early entry class children take part in role-play, such as being a doctor or nurse. The teacher uses resources effectively to ensure role-play activities represent real life experiences. Children have doctors' and nurses' outfits and other relevant artefacts to make learning real. Many of these resources have been provided privately. However, the lack of resources in the reception class hinders the provision of similar high quality and well-structured role-play activities to extend children's vocabulary.

82. In the early entry class, children make decisions about some of their work. They choose when to listen to taped stories on headphones following the text from a book. They also enjoy spending time browsing through books recognising familiar words. Imaginative teaching strategies, such as using a puppet to capture children's interest and focus their attention on a story in a 'Big Book', helps them to learn to read quickly. In the reception class, basic reading skills are taught securely. However, there are fewer resources and little provision for children to sit and browse through books in a welcoming and attractive area. This slows children's progress in applying newly acquired reading skills. Children practice handwriting and learn to write their names and simple words legibly. Errors in letter formation are not always corrected sufficiently to enable fluent writing skills.

Mathematical development

83. Children do very well in mathematics in the early entry class. Progress is slower in the reception class. This has much to do with the expertise of the teacher and provision of resources. In both classes, children are taught well to write their numbers correctly, to count in sequence and recognise numbers from 1 to 10. Tasks in the reception class lack challenge to develop and extend children's matching, sorting and counting skills. Children know the names of colours, the names of shapes such as square, circle and triangle and some know larger numbers up to 100. However, tasks were not planned sufficiently to take this into account. The scrutiny of work shows some unnecessary use of worksheets that make few demands on children to take them forward in their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well. Role-play activities enable children to develop their understanding of visits to the doctor and the hospital. In the early entry class these activities are structured and resourced well and make children confident in their acquisition of speaking and listening and social skills. This is not the case in the reception class. Children know the parts of the body and talk about when they were babies and how they have changed over time. They are aware of the properties of different materials and talk freely about whether different items were rough, hard, smooth or bumpy. They enjoy experimenting with magnets to see which items stick to a magnet or not. In the reception class, computers are used effectively to consolidate children's knowledge of the names and sounds that letters make. A computer game taught children the effective use of the up and down, left and right keys on the keyboard to move a cartoon character around the screen. In religious education children have heard the stories of Moses, Noah and David and Goliath.

Physical development

85. At the time of the inspection, children were very new to the school and were learning routines such as dressing and undressing themselves and how to behave in the hall. Generally, children in both classes showed good control of their bodies when moving round the hall. However, spatial awareness is limited and children found it hard not to bump into each other. They work with enthusiasm, doing their best to please their teacher. The early entry class has a designated area outside the classroom and opportunities are taken to use the equipment fully. Children can ride tricycles sensibly around a road painted on the tarmac area. This area is rather small. There is a large grassed area but access to this is limited by the weather. At the present time the reception class does not have immediate access to an outside area but good plans are in hand to deal with this and to develop the outside area as an imaginative learning environment.

Creative development

86. Through drawing, painting and modelling with a range of materials, children are encouraged effectively to express their ideas. In the early entry class children explore colours by making abstract pictures using paints and recyclable materials which reflect the different shades of for example blue and red. In the reception class, children have learned to weave and interlock papers of different colours. Their pictures of autumn trees reflect detailed observation skills. In music, children sing number songs tunefully. They explore with enthusiasm the sounds different instruments make and play simple rhythms effectively. Expertise is limited in this area, but teachers use taped music appropriately to enhance children's learning in this subject.

ENGLISH

87. The previous inspection found standards to be above the national average for all schools as well as those in similar circumstances. However, it found that many children could achieve more in English, particularly in writing. During the last two years, overall standards have risen significantly, although writing skills are still developing more slowly than other areas of the curriculum. The school is paying particular attention to this and standards are expected to rise. Older, brighter children attend extension classes that focus on writing skills and early signs are that this is paying dividends.
88. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of work show children make good progress in Years 1 to 4 and very good progress in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is sometimes of a high standard. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress because the support they receive is targeted well. At the end of the infant stage, children's overall attainment is good and by age eleven it is very good. However, the gap between the performance of girls and boys is significant, particularly in the juniors, with girls doing much better than boys. The school is aware of this, but more needs to be done to close the gap.

89. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established and helping to raise standards. Class texts are chosen well and appeal to the children's interests. Teachers ensure that literacy skills are reinforced in other lessons. For example, in an infant lesson studying African art, children read part of a story about people in south-west Kenya. In another lesson about structures, older junior children were praised when they correctly used words such as '*rigid*', '*strong*' and '*compressed*'.
90. Children's speaking and listening skills are very good. Almost all children speak confidently and communicate meaning clearly. They listen attentively, answer questions sensibly and contribute well to class discussions, often using their own experiences to illustrate a particular point. Children are pleased to talk to visitors about their work. They explain what they are doing clearly and show pride in their achievements. By the age of seven, many children are able to offer opinions and express preferences. Examples were seen in a lesson based on a text about something special. Children named pets and toys and were able to give reasons for their choice. One child said a particular toy was special "*because mummy gave it to me*". Junior children often express ideas fluently. Their answers to questions show they have listened carefully to what is being asked. By the age of eleven, most have developed a very good vocabulary. For example, when studying a vase of lilies children used words such as '*delicate*', '*fragile*', '*reflective*', '*flexible*' and '*shimmering*'.
91. Children enjoy reading and listening to stories. Reading skills are good by the age of seven and very good by the age of eleven where a significant number of children are performing at a high level. Children read regularly at home and at school. Home school reading diaries are used effectively as a means of dialogue between parent, child and teacher. This encourages children to read and helps them to know how to improve. In the infants, children use letter sounds, illustrations and the context of the story to successfully work out new words. The importance of recognising and using letter sounds in reading development is strongly emphasised for children with special educational needs. For example, the special educational needs co-ordinator gets children to say particular words they have written and to try to identify the letter sounds they hear. Many infant children read with growing fluency and confidence, though with little expression. They show good understanding of main characters and story lines and have their own favourite stories and authors.
92. Junior children read a wide range of texts and many of them understand quite complex material. They predict story outcomes and brighter children sometimes use inference and deduction to read between the lines of a story. Many read fluently and with appropriate expression. Their knowledge of authors is often very good. Almost all children have essential library and research skills, although the school library is housed in a corridor and lacks basic facilities for them to browse and to work quietly. This impedes their progress in developing research skills and does little to enhance their appreciation of books.

93. Children's writing skills are good at ages seven and eleven. Standards have improved, but not always at a fast enough pace, particularly with the older and brighter children. Improvement in writing skills is a priority within the school's development plan and teachers are working hard to achieve this. In the infants, most children's understanding of basic sentence structure, including the use of capital letters and full stops, is developing well. Children write for a range of purposes and show a good understanding of how to sequence events in the right order. Some stories include imaginative use of vocabulary. For example, when describing a holiday a child wrote, *"I played on a slithery slide. It was a beautiful day."*
94. Teachers and children give appropriate attention to spelling and work is usually presented neatly. However, writing sometimes lacks imagination and more could be accomplished in the time available. Junior children show a growing understanding of grammatical structure. Spelling is usually correct and many children use dictionaries competently. Work is set out well and handwriting is generally of a good standard. There are examples of creative thinking and imaginative use of vocabulary in some written work. When writing about the day he had his tonsils out, a Year 6 child wrote, *"I woke up feeling terrible, my throat was so sore! It felt as if there were a hundred needles inside and someone was skating along it with sharp, steel wheels."*
95. Older children have produced an impressive school newspaper which did well in a national competition. However, in class work children are not always as productive as they might be and their writing could be more imaginative. The recent formulation of an extension group for brighter children in Years 5 and 6 is showing promise of having a positive impact on raising the standard of writing skills.
96. The quality of teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and in two thirds of the lessons observed it was good or even better. This includes the specialist teaching of special educational needs. Teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where it is sometimes very good. All teachers show a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and share their subject knowledge effectively with children. Lesson plans set out clearly what children are to learn and how. Children have good attitudes towards the subject and behave really well. The best teaching stems from:
- good relationships and an expectation that children consistently do their best;
 - well chosen texts and activities which appeal to children and hold their interest;
 - good control and management which ensures that children stay on task;
 - reminders about previous work and how it links to what is to be done next;
 - effective questioning which challenges children's thinking and helps them to know how to improve their work;
 - good use of homework to enhance children's learning;
 - a sense of purpose which ensures that time is used productively.

97. An example of very good teaching was seen in a lesson with children from Years 5 and 6. The teacher used a text from '*David Copperfield*' successfully to help children develop the skill of summarising. Key words were identified quickly and children were challenged to think hard. They worked enthusiastically and their learning built very effectively on their previous knowledge and understanding. Time was used really well and the teacher had high expectations of what the children could accomplish. In addition, children had researched the life and writings of Charles Dickens as part of their homework. This raised their confidence and interest and helped make the lesson very productive.

MATHEMATICS

98. By the age of seven, children have made good progress in mathematics. This is continued and improved throughout the juniors. The pace of progress improves significantly in the mixed age Year 5 and 6 classes, where it is very good. The high standards in Year 6 have much to do with very good teaching and very positive attitudes of the children towards learning. In the most recent national tests, two children reached an exceptionally high standard, level 6, which is normally expected in secondary schools. Over the last four years, girls have done better than the boys. Elsewhere in the school, the quality of teaching is more variable and this is why progress is not as fast. Results have improved gradually over the last few years, although they fell slightly this year as there was a significant number of children with special educational needs. Children who need additional learning support make good progress, although they do not always reach the same standards as their classmates. The previous inspection judged standards in mathematics to be satisfactory but with some weaknesses in data handling and shape and measurement. Evidence now shows considerable improvement in all aspects of the subject.
99. In the juniors, in some lessons, a skilled part-time teacher teaches bright children in small groups and this is having a direct effect on raising standards. Class sizes are inevitably smaller and all children receive more attention. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported well by learning support assistants. This is one of the reasons why they make good progress. The National Numeracy Strategy has been conscientiously implemented and this too is raising standards. There is an imbalance in some lessons where the introduction to the main part is too long and mental and oral sessions are not short or sharp enough. Teachers rightly place great emphasis on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary and time for children to explain how they work out their answers. Every opportunity is taken to practise and reinforce numeracy skills across the curriculum.
100. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is beginning to improve now that the school has a computer suite in addition to machines in classrooms.

101. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants. By the age of seven, children read, count and write numbers to 100 and the brighter children understand the place value of digits used to make tens and unit sums. Teachers are enthusiastic which promotes children's positive attitudes. For example, in discussion, one interested child asked *"How do you write one less than zero?"* in her desire to know more. Early on in Year 2, children create and describe number patterns and recognise sequences which help them to do more difficult calculations later on. They know that subtraction is the opposite of addition and halving the inverse of doubling. Although many are counting on fingers at present, practice in calculating numbers in their heads speeds up the proficiency with which they work by the end of the year. Most recognise and use simple fractions learning about these by cutting a shape into two or four equal pieces. Children compare and measure objects and lines accurately using centimetres, draw flat shapes correctly and name three-dimensional ones such as pyramids, cylinders, cones and spheres appropriately.
102. Teaching is mainly good in the juniors. Very good lessons for the oldest children means they become competent mathematicians, confident in their ability to tackle new work. They enjoy stimulating challenges such as working out the cost of their own and their family's daily water consumption. In long multiplication, children use a range of numeracy skills well. These include, 'rounding', 'doubling', 'halving', 'approximating' and 'estimating'. Groups are prepared effectively for the accurate use of compasses and protractors in constructing angles and triangles to a given number of degrees. Teachers use a computerised toy which children programme to create intersections and pathways. This practical work is applied well to the more theoretical aspects of geometry. In grid work, children plot co-ordinates, draw two-dimensional shapes and rotate these in four ways correctly. Sometimes they use computers to reinforce such learning in symmetry but lack of confidence in using the computer programme made this more difficult. Databases are introduced early so that by Year 6 children can decide the best way to present the information, perhaps as a bar chart, line graph or scattergram.
103. Where teaching is of a high standard, children know exactly what is expected of them, behaviour is very good and they are keen to work. Teachers are good mathematicians, enthusiastic and good role models for children to follow. Lesson plans are thorough and build on previous learning. Learning support assistants are used effectively to support those who need more individual attention. There is a good balance of oral, practical and written work and lessons are taken at a brisk pace. Staff are skilled at using questions to check what has been learnt and to reinforce teaching points. Clear learning objectives and group work tasks are written on the board so that children know immediately what is to be taught.
104. Where teachers do not manage lessons quite as well, the pace is too slow, children do not always complete enough work in the time and often lose interest. In the infants, insufficient account is taken of the mixed ages, particularly at the beginning of mathematics lessons, when Year 1 children are often expected to calculate answers in their heads before they are ready. Worksheets too often replace practical work and are too difficult for them to complete.
105. Scrutiny of past work shows a consistently high standard of presentation with emphasis on neatness and legibility. The amount of work covered shows that most children make good progress from year to year. Helpful comments and praise encourage children to do even better and where to improve. Parents are very supportive and ensure that homework tasks are completed appropriately to enhance progress.

SCIENCE

106. Children make good progress throughout the school and standards have continued to rise since the last inspection. They are especially high in the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes, where children benefit from particularly good science teaching. National Curriculum tests confirm these high standards and show that improvements over the past four years have come at a faster rate than nationally. As a result, children coming to the end of Years 2 and 6 are doing much better than children of similar age in other schools and better also than in most schools with similar children to those at Theydon Bois. Virtually all children reach the expected level for their age and an unusually large proportion reach higher levels than that. Children with special educational needs progress well in science because teachers often set work well matched to their abilities and help is provided in the classroom when work is particularly challenging. Children learning English as an additional language also receive the help they need to progress well. Bright children generally do well, especially in the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes, because teachers plan extension work in which they meet a higher level of scientific challenge. This is a marked improvement over the position reported at the last inspection, when there was insufficient challenge for the more able.
107. In lessons, both girls and boys participate in the full range of science work. However, national tests show that, in recent years, the overall performance of boys, though good, is not as good as that of girls. While recognizing the issue, teachers have not yet examined fully the reasons behind this disparity, nor explored ways of accelerating boys' learning so their achievements come closer to those of the girls.
108. The children's science work covers all the required areas of study in the National Curriculum and they achieve well across the full breadth of the subject. By the end of Year 2, most children understand why some materials are suited to the making of clothes and umbrellas, while others are not, because they have tested a range of different materials in classroom experiments. They have tested the buoyancy of different objects and make sound predictions of which ones will float in water. They can explain the growth of plants from seed to flower, having grown cress seeds under different conditions. This enhanced their knowledge of why those kept dry died and others kept dark became sickly. The brighter children explain plant growth as a cycle confidently and relate this to animals' life cycles, such as that of the butterfly. They discuss well the experiments they have undertaken and predict, measure and record their results more capably than most children of this age.
109. By the time they reach eleven, carefully planned teaching has enabled children to build on these secure foundations of knowledge. They have learned about growth and development in mammals and understand the functions of the skeleton, the muscles and the respiratory system. They explain that materials may exist in liquid, solid or gaseous form and that certain materials change their form under given conditions. The brighter children realise that these changes can be related to the behaviour of minute particles of the materials. Children know the properties of sound having explored them through practical experiments. They constructed homemade earmuffs which they stuffed with a range of different insulating materials to test their efficiency. To do this they had to take into account many factors which might make their test unreliable. In particular they needed to decide how results were to be measured and recorded. This good teaching enables children to think hard and make important decisions about their work. It adds much to their personal and social development, confidence and self-esteem.

110. A particular strength of the school's science programme is its involvement in the Eco-school project. Children are very well informed indeed about the importance of environmental protection, about habitats at risk and about pollution. They understand the problems associated with the disposal of rubbish, landfill sites and biodegradability. School waste is carefully recycled. Approaches have been made to local firms for sponsorship to develop on-site wind and solar generation units, to supplement the school's current energy supplies, such as in heating the school swimming pool. Early indications are that these approaches are likely to be successful. This is an exceptionally worthwhile initiative, pulling together a complex web of scientific ideas into a practical project which has a great impact on children's social, moral and environmental awareness.
111. Five science lessons were seen during the inspection, but only one of these was in the infants. Overall the quality of teaching in the subject is good and in the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes it is very good. This is because the very high expectations teachers have of their children elicit real intellectual effort and sustained concentration. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of the subject and this means they can identify with precision the tasks and questions which will move children's learning to its highest level. Lessons are imaginative, capturing and holding children's attention. Support is given to those with special needs and extension tasks are set for the more able. During the inspection, children in Years 5 and 6 were studying forces. They used, and bright children constructed for themselves, home made apparatus to find ways of measuring the force exerted on springs and elastic bands when increasing weights were suspended from them. They used Newton meters with different calibrations to make measurements and went on to compare these with mass measured in grams. The concepts of mass and force are difficult ones for children of this age and very good teaching resulted in much higher levels of children's understanding than would normally be expected.
112. Occasionally, teachers in the younger mixed-age classes do not adjust the work they set well enough to challenge both the older and the younger children in the class and this holds back their progress. Inappropriate organisation of resources makes it hard for children to learn as quickly as they might from the practical tasks set for them. In most lessons, opportunities to extend children's learning through the use of computers were missed. While the science programme offers many lively opportunities for practical experimentation, there are too few occasions when children are challenged to design simple experiments of their own.
113. Children throughout the school find science an exciting subject and look forward to their lessons. They recall experiments carried out in past years with unusual clarity and explain what they found out with great pleasure. They are keen to experiment and confident to press ahead with work even when uncertain of its outcomes. They work well together in small groups and handle apparatus safely. When work is not set at the right level for them they become restless and lose concentration, slowing the pace of learning.
114. A recently appointed teacher has brought a high level of specialist science expertise to the staff. His experience in the secondary sector enables him to make very good links with a local secondary school. Plans are in hand for children to visit the school to work in its laboratories, as they have in the past at a local pharmaceutical firm. Initiatives such as these and the Eco-school project broaden and enrich the very strong science programme in the school.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. Four lessons were seen during the period of the inspection, two each in the infants and juniors. Judgements were also informed by teachers' planning, interviews with the subject co-ordinators and a review of children's previous work. Sufficient time is given to this area of the curriculum and the programme of activities is lively and interesting. The co-ordinators have worked hard successfully to raise the profile of the subjects and an impressive amount of work is completed. Overall, children are now achieving well above the level expected for their age and some of the work is of a very high standard.
116. Children's learning, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is very good in lessons and over time. Throughout the school, children show imagination and increasing confidence when using and experimenting with different media. They generate a range of ideas and successfully plan the design and making of products, including those with moving parts. For example, children in Years 5 and 6 have made very effective sliding pictures and constructed model see-saws involving cam mechanisms. All children plan the order of their work and consider the materials and tools needed. Emphasis is rightly given to being aware of the purpose for which a product is made and many children are beginning to understand the importance of adapting and refining what they make in order to bring about improvements. Good links have been made with other subjects. For example, infant children have very successfully designed '*Joseph's coat of many colours*' and have made a range of three-dimensional mathematical shapes using paper. Children have also made a range of high quality products to exhibit in a local horticultural show, including some imaginative box gardens made essentially from paper, card and tissue. Simple forms have been produced on which children record their work, including any problems they have had and how they can make their product better. These are often completed with considerable thought and care.
117. Children in the infants and juniors often show very good skills in drawing, painting and colouring. This helps them successfully illustrate work across the curriculum. For example, children in Years 3 and 4 have produced very attractive drawings to illustrate their reading of '*The Hobbit*' in the literacy hour. Children's work also includes weaving, collage, printing and pottery. Much of it is of a high quality and shows a growing awareness of colour, texture, shape and size. The quality of the clay work is particularly pleasing. Children's interest and skill in this area of work is enriched by an after school pottery club run by members of the governing body.
118. As they move up through the school, children's observational skills improve and they show growing confidence in the ability to represent what they see and feel through pictures. Attractive pastel drawings inspired by work on the Caribbean by children in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate this. Children make careful choices about what materials should be used in collage and much of their work is pleasing. For example, infant children have used a range of materials to depict the seaside. Appropriate attention is given to the work of well known artists, such as Monet and Van Gogh. Children copy their styles effectively, such as when the older children produced their own versions of Picasso's '*Mother and Child*'. These studies help children to appreciate the wide variety of ways different artists represent their feelings and experiences.

119. Overall, the quality of teaching observed was very good. Lesson planning is often detailed and teachers ensure that appropriate resources are to hand. This helps see that time is used effectively. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and challenge children's creative thinking successfully. They share their enthusiasm with the children really well. Examples of this were seen in a junior lesson on structures and in an infant lesson on African art in which the teacher provided opportunities for the children to handle a range of artefacts from Africa. In both instances, children quickly became engrossed in the activities and some produced work of a very good quality. Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve and they ensure that skills are built up systematically. An example of this was seen in an excellent infant lesson that was part of a series of lessons about Aboriginal art. Children looked at examples of such art and made sketches of what they saw. They then took their favourite sketch and made a painting of it using sticks to produce a dot effect. The results were very pleasing. All children have very good attitudes towards their work and behave really well. They concentrate hard, remain on task and consistently do their best.
120. Displays around the school are often of a high standard. They effectively help build children's visual awareness and creative development.

GEOGRAPHY

121. In geography, two lessons were seen. In the infant lesson progress was good and at the end of the juniors it was very good. Scrutiny of lesson plans and displays and analysis of past and present work, show that achievements are typical of the national picture by age seven and better than in other schools at age eleven. Scrutiny of Year 2 geography topic books shows less recorded work than is normally seen for this age.
122. There are some good features in the provision for geography. The school makes effective use of its grounds and local environment for first hand practical learning, such as map reading. Fieldwork is undertaken on the annual school journey to Dorset and this helps to extend older children's understanding of how beaches are formed and eroded. The visit also provides the opportunity for work in mathematics and science. Much emphasis is put on ecology and the effects of human activity on the environment and on man's responsibilities in trying to stop further pollution and destruction. For example, during the inspection, there was an interesting display of geography and artwork on endangered coral reefs in the main hall. The school has developed strong links with a charity in Romania and letters and photographs as well as gift parcels are exchanged enabling children to understand what it is like in other countries.

123. Children in the infants find where they live on a street map of the local area. They understand some children in the class live nearby while others have to travel further to get home. Infant children study maps of Essex and Great Britain. Junior children move on to study maps of Europe and the world. Seaside resorts, such as Clacton on Sea, are pinpointed and follow up work in art, such as collages of beach scenes, reinforces the difference between one environment and another. In further studies of local geography, the oldest juniors were asked to find out the purpose, location and period of use of the local '*retreat*' where inner city people could visit the countryside. Literacy skills were used effectively to complete this task and bring about higher standards. Topic books show a good range of work, including learning about rivers in England and Egypt and studies of other countries, for example Dominica, to compare with home. Lower juniors used a CD-Rom effectively to research weather conditions around the world and noted their impact on events, activities and physical features.
124. Lessons are taught well and teachers plan interesting work to achieve a good balance between skills and knowledge. Effective links are made with other subjects such as history, science and art. Planning at the infant stage does not identify enough opportunities for Year 2 children to record their work or give more time to it in lessons. Group activities are organised well and children cooperate with each other in finding out and researching information. They work together effectively, assisting each other and exchanging information. The school is working towards an Eco-school award for its work on alternative sources of energy and recycling waste materials.

HISTORY

125. By the age of seven, children reach standards typical for their age. At age eleven progress is good and standards are above those expected nationally. Much interest is generated in the subject through good teaching, effective displays, visits to places of historical interest, speakers from the local community and visiting drama groups. Scrutiny of Year 2 history topic books shows less written work than is normally found for this age.
126. Infant children understand time passing and know something of their own cultural heritage. They know, from looking at old toys and comparing them with their own, that different materials were used for manufacturing then than those of today. In good links with geography, children look at old buildings in the village and compare them with modern day homes.

127. Children's good literacy skills and practical activities enhance learning in history. A colourful display about the Roman period contained the work of a lower junior child writing home as if he was a soldier on Hadrian's Wall, *"A fierce storm broke out making it harder to help our wounded comrades. Tents were blown away exposing injured men and it was impossible to keep things dry"*. This originated from a visit by actors who re-enacted the life and customs of 'Roman soldiers'. Older children know a lot about Egypt and its Pharaohs. An informative display illustrated in-depth studies of that period of history and included a very good illustration of the death mask of Tutankhamun, information on hieroglyphics and their translation, sphinxes and ancient gods. Effective links made with geography enhance learning about rivers, such as, the River Nile and its great importance to Egypt as the main source of water. The village of Theydon Bois itself is an excellent source of history and is used well by the school. Grandparents and other local people talk to children about their memories of life over fifty years ago, which make the subject come to life.
128. Teaching observed was good and tasks well matched to children's interests. Teachers go to great lengths to provide first-hand experiences or good reference material. Resources, such as information books, library topic loans, CD-Roms and historical objects enable children to carry out their own research. Video-tapes are sensibly used to show 'authentic' footage of the period and to stimulate discussion. Children are often fascinated by what they see. Effective questioning by class teachers, who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject, helps to keep children interested and focussed on the topic. Visits to places of interest such as to the Ragged School in Mile End are used effectively to bring history to life.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129. Good progress has been made in this subject since the last inspection. At that time it was identified as a key issue to consolidate and broaden the teaching of information and communication technology. The school has built on the rapid developments and implementation of a curriculum plan for the subject evident at that time. In the classes with the oldest children, teachers frequently include information and communication technology in art, history, geography and English lessons to enhance standards. A few children have reached very high standards in information and communication technology. They were involved in a national competition in which they were awarded a certificate of distinction for compiling and presenting a newspaper within a day.
130. The school has increased its provision for information and communication technology by establishing a computer suite with twelve computers. Teachers project pictures of their computer screen on to the wall so that they can instruct all children in information and communication skills explicitly. Children follow teachers' instructions immediately and apply new skills. In addition, the school has appointed a leading information and communication technology teacher as co-ordinator for the subject. This has helped to raise their knowledge in modelling and in control of systems. For example, Year 1 children were using a computer program to 'dress the teddy'. Children moved items of clothing around the computer screen to place them on a model of a teddy bear. They had to choose clothes to dress the bear in the correct sequence. The children persevered in operating the mouse carefully to place the items on the bear accurately. There is still work to do in training all teachers to enhance their expertise and ensure consistently high standards of teaching across the school. Training is planned to start in the near future.

131. At the present time, standards are similar to the national picture at age 7 and 11. At the age of 7, children are confident in their use of the keyboard and mouse. They move items around the screen, compile simple graphs using a database and draw imaginative pictures using the appropriate software. At age eleven, children can use spreadsheet, design posters, present their work imaginatively importing borders and clipart. Children know how to change the font size and colour of the text. Some older children used the computer to draw detailed pictures of leaves. They used a program effectively which enabled them to draw on their knowledge of symmetry in mathematics. Children know less about the use of information and communication technology in their daily lives. Some children know how to use a digital camera to record events around school.
132. At the present time, the school is establishing its Internet links and appropriate plans to develop them effectively and safely are in hand.
133. Teaching in information and communication technology varies according to the expertise of the teacher. The information and communication technology suite was newly established at the time of the inspection and not all teachers were confident in using the facility to best effect. Where teachers have high levels of expertise and confidence, teaching is good. They have high expectations of what children can achieve and encourage them to work independently. In the infants, teachers are less confident and their expectations of what children can do are low and this hinders children's progress. Teachers in the infants and juniors are planning for children to meet the full range of activities in the National Curriculum programme of study. This is supporting teachers in building children's information and communication technology skills year on year, although some tasks are uninspiring.
134. The co-ordinator has made a substantial contribution to the development of provision in information and communication technology since his appointment. Teachers are offered considerable support and advice to raise their skills. Resources are good although the amount of software for the foundation stage and infants is limited.
135. Lessons rightly focus on teaching basic skills as until these are established children are unable to explore the full potential of the computer software. Teachers are enthusiastic about the new suite and are looking forward to enhancing their skills. Teachers are aware of the importance of using the possibilities by information and communication technology in other subjects. This needs to be extended to all classes.
136. Objectives for lessons are clear and understood by the children. Children apply themselves well and work productively to extend their knowledge and understanding. Often children work in pairs cooperatively, sharing ideas and their knowledge. Teachers with expertise give clear explanations and demonstrations to the whole class and this enables children to make good gains in their learning and apply new skills immediately. Individual conversations consolidate and extend children's knowledge of the software they are using.
137. Some children use information and communication technology as part of their homework. Children's behaviour and attitudes to the subject are very good. They are excited by the good quality of the computer hardware and thrilled by their newfound success. Younger children become absorbed in what they are doing and learn quickly.

138. Parents raised substantial funds to provide this very good facility which is securing a sound foundation for a rapid rise in standards for all children. The school's financial planning acknowledges the need to replace and update information and communication technology equipment on a regular basis through a leasing agreement.

MUSIC

139. Children generally reach satisfactory levels of achievement in music. The composing and appraising aspects of the curriculum are weaker as singing receives more time than work with instruments. Music lessons are short in duration and sometimes previous lessons overrun which limits time for the subject. In assemblies, children sing hymns, accompanied by piano, tunefully. Children learning to play instruments such as the recorder, trumpet and piano, played classical pieces as children enter and leave the hall at assembly times. An example of this was the recorder group successfully playing a short piece from the '*New World Symphony*'.
140. In the one lesson seen at the infant stage teaching was effective and children made good progress in learning about loud and soft notes and quick and slow tempo. Some know the names of different percussion instruments and describe the sounds they make. All followed instructions well when playing, keeping to the beat and listening out for when it was their turn. In another activity, they explored how sounds can be made in different ways, through clapping their hands, tapping their feet, hitting their knees and clicking their tongues. Behaviour was exemplary.
141. In the majority of lessons observed in Years 3 to 5, children have positive attitudes and behave well. They particularly enjoy playing musical instruments. When composing tunes they improvise, although this tends to be limited to simple rhythms. Only a few can read music by sight and others have difficulty creating their own compositions without considerable practice. Most make an effort to sing new songs from a tape. Some children, mainly boys, make little progress when they lose concentration and behave inappropriately.
142. Not all teachers have expertise in music and rely heavily on commercially taped programmes. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory and teachers do their best to make lessons interesting. Their lack of subject knowledge has a direct influence on the standards children achieve. Able musicians, for instance, are not extended sufficiently. Lesson plans are very brief and there is no mention of how lessons will be developed to ensure that everyone makes the progress they should. To make lessons more meaningful some teachers make links with other areas of the curriculum such as history. In Years 3 and 4 children have been learning about songs and music in '*Britain since the 1930's*'. However, the music programme does not currently contribute as much as it should to children's cultural development.

143. A small number of children have individual music tuition during school time that is provided by visiting specialists. They play in school concerts and give public performances along with children in the choir and from the recorder clubs. During the inspection the choir practised daily in preparation for a performance in a local church. There are good links with other schools, including the local secondary school, and infant children attend area music festivals. Resources are continually being improved and now include a good range of African instruments. Every class has its own box of musical instruments in addition to other equipment held centrally.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. Poor weather during the inspection hindered the physical education programme and limited the number of lessons seen. However, it is clear from these lessons, from teachers' planning and from the awards and certificates the school wins, that the programme overall in this subject is a strong one. The school is one of only nineteen primary schools nationally to receive the Activemark Gold award of Sport England, in recognition of its outstanding programme of physical activities.
145. The school has its own swimming pool and all the children have the opportunity to learn to swim. It is rare for a child to leave the school unable to complete 25 metres and many children are already confident swimmers by the time they finish Year 2.
146. Standards of gymnastics are more variable, but are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. On the floor and on simple apparatus, the younger children have learned to repeat and refine a range of basic movements, showing good coordination and control. They explore jumping, turning, twisting and rolling. They evaluate their own movements and improve them through practice. The older children combine movements into more complex sequences, which they repeat and improve. They create such sequences both individually and in pairs. They are perceptive in their critiques of their own performances and those of others.
147. Teaching is mostly satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure children's skills build up systematically over time. Great care is taken over safety, especially when apparatus is in use. Teachers ensure that each lesson includes a good range of different types of activity, for example, individual work, paired or group work, in order to elicit maximum effort from the children. When a child performs particularly well, teachers make good use of this as an example for the others to discuss and evaluate.
148. This said, there are some areas of weakness. In particular, teachers sometimes lack sufficient knowledge of the subject to push the children ahead as well as they might. Sometimes children spend too much time sitting waiting their turn, or watching apparatus being set up. Occasionally, there is no adequate plan for a lesson in the event of bad weather disruption. In these lessons, children's progress is slowed.
149. Children enjoy their physical education lessons. They are prepared to work very hard, both physically and mentally, to improve their performance. They listen attentively to the teachers and always work with appropriate attention to safety. Older children are sometimes noisy in their enthusiasm and this means they are slower than they should be in responding to instructions.

150. The school is very active in area sports events and leagues. These provide opportunities to extend children's games experience into areas such as cycling, athletics, tag rugby and tennis, as well as the more usual sports of football, rounders and netball. The school has won the Sally Gunnell award for athletics and she visited to present the trophy. The school has links with its local cricket club. Cricketers will visit next summer to help coach children and some already attend junior cricket training at the club. The school has good links with a neighbouring secondary school and specialist staff visit periodically to help in teaching dance and tag rugby. In addition to these opportunities, the school offers a very good range of club activity in games and gymnastics.
151. Overall, the school provides a much richer range of physical education opportunity than is common in schools of its size and benefits especially from its collaboration with community groups and its local secondary school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. Religious Education makes a strong contribution to the school's curriculum and the standards children achieve are above the levels expected in the Locally-Agreed syllabus for the subject at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6 they are well above. The school, through the subject leader, has been closely involved in the formulation of this new syllabus and this has helped ensure a steady build-up of knowledge and understanding as the children move up the school. Standards are highest in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching of the subject leader sets a very strong example. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language also progress well in religious education because of the support they receive in lessons. Bright children do well because most of the lessons involve the exploration of social, moral and religious issues which can be addressed at several levels.
153. By the end of Year 2, most children understand that people are members of different groups, held together by family ties, shared hobbies or beliefs. They know that in all such groups certain objects, places or behaviour have a special importance. The work they have done on these topics has laid a very good foundation for understanding religions as distinct faith groups. They know that all religions have something to say about good and evil, reward and punishment and they can relate this to school rules, rewards and sanctions. Children know about the main festivals of the Christian calendar and about the importance Christians accord to baptism. They can tell some of the events of Jesus' life, as in the New Testament and in particular his care for children. They have also made an initial acquaintance with the founder figures and deities of other religions, such as Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism.

154. By the end of Year 6 a good structure of understanding has been built on this earlier work. Children:
- know that most faiths treasure sacred texts;
 - explain the structure and types of content of the Bible;
 - have an excellent appreciation of the shared early history of Judaism and Christianity as set out in the Old Testament;
 - know the early history of Israel and the covenants God made with the people;
 - understand the history of Judaism as a story of persecution, from the Exile through the siege of Masada, to the Diaspora and the creation of modern Israel;
 - know that most religions include initiation or membership rituals such as Bar Mitzvah, Baptism and Confirmation;
 - explain the significance of the writings, objects and symbols to be found in a church or synagogue.
155. The fact that children have a thorough knowledge of the working life and faith of an Anglican Bishop is explained by visits to the school by the Bishop of Barking. This is an example of the rich variety of learning opportunity provided in the school. Children visit local churches and a Hindu temple. Faith leaders from the local Christian community visit to explain their work to the children, as does a member of the local Jewish community. The school's active involvement in support of a small orphanage in Romania informs many aspects of their work in Religious Education – linking, for example, with studies of the Christian concept of love as set out in the parables. This is a community activity, in which the school joins with local churches to fund the venture.
156. The quality of religious education teaching in the school varies from the satisfactory to the excellent, depending to a large degree on the knowledge and confidence of each teacher. At its best, in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher showed very moving pictures of the types of environment Romanian orphans suffered and of the new home, Casa Hope, which had been set up for them. She explained how the small community of children had developed over the years, how they were becoming self-sufficient and seeking to set up a similar home to their own so other orphans might be helped. The teacher then discussed with the children their understanding of “neighbourliness” and “compassion”. She reminded them of the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Samaritans organization operating today. She extended the discussion to focus the children's minds on the notions of prejudice and charity. This was an excellent lesson, difficult abstract concepts were discussed and the children were intellectually challenged. The presentation was expressive and well-resourced by a teacher with excellent knowledge of the subject and the children were touched by the lesson they were learning. Excellent teaching like this, combined with intense concentration by the children produces high standards of learning.
157. Occasionally, in lessons which are otherwise satisfactory, teachers are less confident in the ideas being explored and the lessons lose direction. When this happens children lose concentration and their work suffers.
158. In most lessons however the children are very keen to contribute to discussions. They volunteer their own ideas, listen courteously to each other and work hard. Behaviour is very good and the children are sensitive and reverent in discussing issues of faith and belief.