

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Woodham Walter CE Primary School**

Maldon

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number: 115123

School Inspection Number: 67049

Headteacher: Mrs T. Pemberton

---

Reporting inspector: Mr G.D. Jones  
11816

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707319

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the appropriate authority must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. Every registered parent of a registered pupil at the school should receive a free copy of the summary of the report within ten working days of receipt of the summary by the appropriate authority. A charge not exceeding the cost of supply may be made by the appropriate authority for any other copies of the report and/or its summary provided to any person who asks for one.

The appropriate authority should make a copy of the report and the summary available for inspection by members of the public at such times and at such a place as may be reasonable

Any enquiries about this legislation should be addressed to the OFSTED Compliance Helpline  
Tel. 0171421 6567

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
Type of control:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Street, Woodham Walter Maldon Essex CM9 6RF
Telephone number:	01245 223264
Fax number:	01245 223264
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Lawton
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> November 1995

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Geoff Jones, RgI	Mathematics; Science; Information Technology; Music; Physical education.	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management; Efficiency; Special educational needs.
Mrs Jacqueline Darrington, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Equal opportunities.
Mrs Eva Wilson, Team inspector	English; Under fives; Design and technology; History; Geography; Religious education.	Curriculum and assessment; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Staffing, learning resources and accommodation.

The inspection contractor was:

Schoolhaus Ltd.  
Riverbank  
Station Road  
Old Ollerton  
Nr Newark  
Nottinghamshire  
NG22 9BN

01623 825542

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

### MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well
- Where the school has weaknesses
- How the school has improved since the last inspection
- Standards in subjects
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the school
- The parents' views of the school

### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

### INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1 - 4
- Key indicators

### PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

#### Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 5 - 10
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 11 - 14
- Attendance 15 - 17

#### Quality of education provided

- Teaching 18 - 22
- The curriculum and assessment 23 - 33
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 34 - 38
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 39 - 42
- Partnership with parents and the community 43 - 49

#### The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 50 - 57
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 58 - 65
- The efficiency of the school 66 - 71

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

<b>Areas of learning for children under five</b>	<b>72 - 78</b>
<b>English, mathematics and science</b>	<b>79 - 99</b>
<b>Other subjects or courses</b>	<b>100 - 136</b>

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

<b>Summary of inspection evidence</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Data and indicators</b>	<b>138</b>

## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The promotion of the pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning;
- Its encouragement of very positive relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and the staff;
- The high quality of information it provides for parents, the enrichment of the curriculum through outstanding links with the community and the high number of parents involved in children's learning;
- The good overall standard of teaching, including very good teaching in the Reception class;
- The very effective use of learning resources, the school's accommodation and links with the community;
- The highly efficient financial control of the budget and school administration.;
- The good overall progress made by children in the Reception class; the good progress made by pupils in both key stages in design and technology, history and physical education and the good progress made by Key Stage 2 pupils in science.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Relationships between the head teacher and some staff are strained and this is affecting morale and the smooth running of the school;
- II. Information about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and curriculum is not collected and analysed systematically enough to identify development priorities for the school..

**The school has considerably more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has continued the high involvement of the community and has encouraged a greater interaction between the Traveller community and all the families involved in the school. Policy statements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education have been written and reviewed and these now guide classroom practices. Good schemes of work in each curriculum subject have been adopted. These help to

ensure that all lesson plans conform to the same framework, that there is no unnecessary repetition of work and that pupils are enabled to make smooth progress as get older. Teachers' lesson planning has improved to include clearly identified learning objectives and work to match the needs of the pupils in the main core subjects. An effective whole school plan has been devised with the work planned for the pupils divided into units of work that link with each other and make curriculum planning manageable. The school has implemented processes so that initiatives in the development plan can be evaluated but the success criteria identified now need to be more closely linked with improvements in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

The needs of the youngest pupils in the school have been considered carefully in order to address this issue appropriately. The areas of learning that provide the necessary foundation for work on the National Curriculum are now firmly embedded in the curriculum. A rich variety of structured indoor and outdoor activities under the guidance of either the class teacher or the teaching assistant now provide very valuable learning experience and enable children to make good progress.

Teachers adopt a very positive approach to teaching the government's literacy and numeracy strategies. Pupils enjoy these lessons and are benefiting from the approach to teaching these curriculum areas by making good progress. Once the school solves its problems concerned with relationships, it is well placed to continue improving.

· **Standards in subjects**

A table showing the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests has been omitted because the small number of pupils in Year 6 makes it impossible to draw any valid conclusions from grades allocated to the above subjects. However, the inspection team judged standards at the end of Key Stage 2 to be satisfactory in English, mathematics, information technology and religious education. Standards achieved by the eleven-year-olds in science are good.

· **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Very good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very good	Satisfactory	Good
Science	N/a	Satisfactory	Very good
Information Technology	N/a	Good	None observed
Religious education	N/a	Satisfactory	None observed
Other subjects	Very good	Satisfactory	Good

There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. Nearly one in every twenty lessons was excellent and nearly one in every three was very good. One in every three lessons was good and the rest were satisfactory. The quality of teaching for the children who are under five is very good. In other classes, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good, although it was strongest in Key Stage 2.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. ‘Satisfactory’ means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.*

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good. Pupils are friendly towards each other and members of staff. Traveller pupils are very well integrated into the
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is low in comparison to other schools. Unauthorised absence is above national average due to the continuing erratic attendance of a few Traveller pupils. Punctuality is good.
Ethos*	The ethos is good. Pupils concentrate well and are interested in acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding. Good relationships between staff and pupils.
Leadership and management	The head teacher provides satisfactory leadership. Systems have been introduced which have enhanced the school's work. Some teachers have resisted change and the head teacher has approached the situation without adequate preparation. The governing body is very committed to the school and works hard on its behalf but as yet are not involved sufficiently in the strategic management of the school.
Curriculum	Curriculum is well planned. All subjects have effective schemes of work to guide planning and lessons are stimulating for pupils. Literacy and numeracy strategies have been adopted and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported in classrooms and have carefully constructed individual educational plans containing identified targets to improve their progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, reflecting an environment that is caring and secure. Significant contribution is made by staff and helpers who provide a consistently good example of positive attitude and considerate behaviour for pupils to emulate.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Teachers have overall good expertise. Teaching assistants give good support. School is well resourced. Accommodation is adequate but a very small school hall is unsatisfactory for physical education lessons.
Value for money	Good

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

**What most parents like about the school**

- III. The procedures for informing them of their children's progress;
- IV. The information provided about what is taught;
- V. Children enjoy coming to school;
- VI. The ease with which they can approach teachers with questions to do with their children;

**What some parents are not happy about**

- VII. The way the school handles complaints
- VIII. The way the school encourages pupils to
- IX. That the school does not achieve good

The inspection team agrees largely with the parents' views. Written reports are useful and of good quality and parents are informed adequately of curriculum details so they can help at home if they so wish. Children are happy in school and there is a good. Parents have the opportunity to see teachers everyday and many were observed talking to teachers at the end of the school day. A significant number of parents complain that they dislike the way the school handles complaints and feel dissatisfied about their treatment. The inspection team had no opportunity to see parents interacting with the head teacher.

The good range of extra-curricular activities provided by the staff and parents include dance, drama, rugby, cricket and crafts. Some of the clubs are popular and pupils take part enthusiastically. There is no evidence to indicate that the behaviour of the pupils is anything less than very good.

### · **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise standards further and ensure good progress for all pupils the head teacher, staff and governors should:

X. Develop teamwork between all adults concerned with the running of the school by:

XI. drawing up suggestions for plans of action before any major changes are made to the existing procedures in the school so that all personnel feel involved in making decisions;  
(51)

XII. involving the governing body more closely in the strategic management of the school; (55)

XIII. Improve the school development plan by:

XIV. ensuring that wherever possible the development priorities and associated success criteria are linked closely with improving pupils' standards of attainment;  
(52)

XV. analysing pupils' answers in the annual national tests, interviewing samples of pupils and monitoring samples of pupils' work to

ident  
ify  
wea  
ker  
area  
s in  
the  
curri  
culu  
m;  
(32)  
(52)

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- XVI. Ensure that all legal requirements are met; (57)
- XVII. Provide pupils with more opportunities for extended writing; (24)
- XVIII. Improve procedures for handling complaints from parents; (45)
- XIX. Record the reasons for judgements on pupils assessed work in the school portfolio to serve as references when making future judgements. (33)

## · INTRODUCTION

### · Characteristics of the school

1.The school serves the village of Woodham Walter which is situated close to the town of Maldon. The school has grown rapidly in size during the past three years and the number of pupils on the school roll has risen from 45 to its present number of 83 in that time. There are 17 pupils on the school roll who are entitled to free school meals. A site for travellers is situated in the school's catchment area and at present, there are thirteen Travellers' children on the school registers. Of these thirteen children ten attend the school on a regular basis and are still in the area served by the school. The special needs register comprises 21 per cent of the pupils attending the school who are mainly in Key Stage 2. In each cohort of pupils, there are either one or two pupils with special educational needs and this number often comprises a significant proportion of the very small cohorts of pupils in each year group. This often has a very marked statistical effect on the proportion of pupils attaining national expectations in the annual national tests for schools. To comply with legal requirements a small number of Travelling pupils are retained on the school's registers even though they are no longer in the area served by the school. This has adversely affected the school's attendance figures.

2.When the present head teacher was appointed in January 1998 all of the five teachers employed at the school were employed on a part time basis. This arrangement was changed in September 1998 and, in addition to the head teacher, there became one full time teacher and two part-time teachers enabling each of the three classes to have one main teacher.

3.The school's aims are to develop its pupils into caring, confident, enquiring and independent individuals. It also aims to provide a caring environment where children feel secure and be able to explore new skills and seek further knowledge. It intends to enable pupils to work well individually and as a member of a team. In addition the school aims to work with parents to achieve the best for its pupils and to provide an exciting and stimulating curriculum and to enable pupils to explore their own beliefs and to be tolerant of the beliefs of others.

4.The school's development priorities include the production of a teaching and learning policy and linking the in-service training of teachers with the school development plan. The school also intends to improve the teachers' expertise in information technology and to re-start the system for appraising teachers in the near future.

## Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	5 (6)	7 (3)	12 (9)
	(97)			

---

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

4. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (66)	100 (66)	100 (89)
	National	80 (75)	81 (80)	84 (83)

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (77)	100 (99)	100 (88)
	National	81 (80)	85(83)	86 (85)

#### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	7 (3)	2 (5)	9 (8)
		(97)		

4. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	3	5	6
	Girls	1	0	1
	Total	4	5	7
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	44 (75)	56 (87.5)	78 (100)
	National	65 (63)	59 (62)	69 (68)

4.

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	2	1	1
	Total	7	7	7
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	78 (75)	78 (75)	78 (100)
	National	65 (80)	65 (83)	72 (85)

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

4. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	11.4
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	1.7
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

4.

4. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	1
	Permanent	0

4. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	37.5
	Satisfactory or better	100.0
	Less than satisfactory	0

#### 4. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

#### 4. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### 4. **Attainment and progress**

5. When children are first admitted to the school initial assessments show that their attainment is below the level expected for their age. They make good progress as Reception children due to very effective teaching. By the time they are five children have reached the stage of being ready to commence work on the National Curriculum. Their levels of attainment have improved so that they are at least in line with what is expected for their age group with standards in literacy, creative and personal and social skills being higher than this. The Reception class teacher and learning support assistant work closely together in planning and assessing pupils' achievements.

6. Over the last three years, the results of the school's seven-year-olds fluctuate widely and this is due to the small number of pupils in the cohorts of pupils. Although there are no national averages available with which to compare the school's 1999 results the percentages of pupils achieving national expectations or higher have dropped considerably since the previous year. This, however, needs to be treated cautiously since the number of Year 2 pupils in the summer of 1999 was only eight. In addition, of these eight pupils two had special educational needs. The school's results in the 1998 annual national tests are well above the average for seven-year-olds in reading and writing and above average for mathematics. The percentages of pupils achieving higher than national expectations were well above average in reading and writing and close to the national average for mathematics. When these results are compared with schools of a similar kind the results are still well above average for reading and writing and above average for mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show that the proportion of pupils achieving national expectations or higher was very high in comparison with the national average and above average for the percentage of pupils achieving higher than national expectations.

7. The school's results in the 1998 annual national tests show that the percentage of pupils attaining national expectations in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was well below the national average. This was mainly due to the very small size of the cohort and the fact that one pupil was a non-attending Travelling child and another had a statement of special educational need. The school's results for mathematics were below average and those for science were close to the national average. The proportions of pupils attaining levels higher than national expectations were close to the national average in English and well above the national averages for mathematics and science. When these results were compared with those of schools serving pupils of similar backgrounds, they are well below average for English, mathematics and science. Although there are no national comparisons available for the school's results in 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving national expectations or higher is close to the result for 1998 in English and science but considerably lower in mathematics. Levels of attainment in all three main subjects were higher in 1996 than in both 1997 and 1998 with mathematics and science being well above national averages. In 1997 and 1998 the average levels of attainment were below national averages in English and mathematics and close to the averages in science. Again, these results need to be treated cautiously and no valid conclusions can be drawn because of the very small number of pupils in each of the Year 6 cohorts of pupils.

8. The findings of the inspection showed that Year 2 pupils are on course to meet national expectations by the end of the school year in writing and are better than the standards expected nationally in reading, speaking and listening. Pupils are encouraged to speak to the whole class and to listen carefully and to ask and answer questions. Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of early reading skills and use them effectively to understand unfamiliar words. They use simple dictionaries competently. Seven-year-old pupils structure their writing satisfactorily. They use correct punctuation but a range of connecting words and accurate spelling is not developed sufficiently. Pupils' standards in mathematics and science are also on course to meet national expectations by the end of the school year. They are beginning to remember quickly and accurately addition and subtraction facts to ten and to understand how to write numbers up to 100. In science pupils experiment to see what happens when different substances are heated and then allowed to cool. This has enabled them to know that some changes are irreversible once they are heated and cooled. They describe how forces can move

objects and know that by pushing or pulling objects, forces are applied. Pupils' standards of attainment in information technology are likely to meet national expectations by the end of the year. They have satisfactory mouse and keyboard skills and can generate their own draft writing on a computer screen before correcting and amending it themselves. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have a sound knowledge of a variety of Bible stories and have a satisfactory understanding of the backgrounds to some of these stories.

9. Inspection evidence shows that pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 overall have above average skills in speaking and listening. They use a wide vocabulary and have frequent opportunities for class discussions to build their confidence. Year 6 pupils' standards in reading meet national expectations and they read accurately and fluently. Their dictionary skills are good and their research skills are satisfactory. A home/school reading partnership positively supports pupils' progress and attainment made by a significant number of pupils. Pupils' levels of attainment in writing meet national expectations. They write successfully in a variety of forms such as factual, poetry and narrative, structuring these well and using a good range of vocabulary. In spite of this, their creative stories lack interest and feeling due to the insufficient development of characterisation. Standards in mathematics meet expectations nationally. Pupils have a sound knowledge of multiplication facts which enables them to calculate quickly and accurately. They understand simple fractions and can convert these to decimal numbers successfully. Pupils' standards in science also meet national expectations. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to construct a fair test and a good knowledge of life and living processes including a satisfactory knowledge of micro-organisms, the parts of a plant and muscles, joints and skeletons. Pupils' skills in information technology are meeting requirements nationally for their age. They store and retrieve work appropriately but they usually use information technology to type in previously written work instead of using computers to generate their writing at first hand. Pupils use computers to record the weather over a period of time. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils relate the Bible stories associated with the festivals of Christmas and Easter to their own lives. They mark important events in other major world faiths, by singing the Jewish New Year song entitled 'Rosh Hashanah' and making Diwali lamps to mark the Hindu Festival of Lights.

10. Progress made by children who are under five is good. Their knowledge and skills advance from being below average when they are admitted to the Reception class and by the time they move into Year 1 they have improved to such an extent that they are ready to start work confidently on the various National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. The good overall quality of teaching is unable to raise the overall standards of attainment to a level that is above national expectations because of the significant number of pupils with special educational needs in a very small cohort of pupils in each year group and the erratic attendance of a number of Traveller children. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and reading and satisfactory progress in writing. Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Drama lessons play a significant part in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Progress in writing is hampered by insufficient opportunities for pupils to use newly acquired skills in extended writing in subjects across the curriculum as well as in English. Handwriting is taught systematically but Key Stage 1 pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to produce neat and legible handwriting for progress to be anything more than sound. Satisfactory progress is made in mathematics and science in Key Stage 1. Satisfactory progress is made in mathematics and good progress is made in science in Key Stage 2. The good progress in Key Stage 2 science is due to a strong emphasis on investigations and experimentation that enables pupils to develop good scientific skills. Pupils make good progress in history, design and technology and physical education in both key stages and satisfactory progress in all other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and Travelling children make good progress.

#### **10. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

11. Pupils enjoy attending school and they mostly have a positive attitude towards learning, but there are a small number of pupils whose concentration span is below average and which causes them to lose interest. Pupils mostly work well both individually and collaboratively when required. Older pupils undertake some individual research on topic work.

12. Pupils are polite and very friendly, showing respect towards each other, all school staff and other adults. Traveller pupils are very well integrated into the school community. Behaviour overall is very good. One Key Stage 2 pupil was excluded for a period of three days for inappropriate behaviour and has recently returned to school. Respect for property is evident. Pupils understand the need for school rules, understand them and are involved in the drawing up of class rules. Other peoples' feelings and beliefs are honoured and pupils know right from wrong.

13. Older pupils help younger pupils both within each class and in specific areas of whole school responsibility such as at lunchtime when year 6 pupils assist and support very young pupils in family dining groups. Sound opportunities are provided for pupils to adopt roles of greater responsibility as they get older. The youngest pupils have responsibility for putting away resources and the return of registers to the school office, whilst year 6 pupils undertake a range of tasks such as the distribution of class registers, the giving out of lunchboxes and the creation of a school magazine.

14. Pupils respond well to the opportunities that the school provides for their social and personal development. Extra curricular activities enhance and extend provision and create sound opportunities for personal development. Pupils successfully fundraise by donation or sponsorship for a number of charities each year, such as UNICEF and National Children's Homes. Pupils have an opportunity to share in the selection of the school's charity support. Very good opportunities for growth in independence, personal development and experience in community living are provided for older pupils on residential visits.

#### 14. **Attendance**

15. Attendance guidelines and procedures are in place and are clearly outlined for parents including information on unauthorised absence and family holidays taken during the school term. Almost all pupils are punctual and there is a prompt and effective start to school sessions.

16. Pupils' attendance was 86.9 per cent in the year prior to the inspection, which was very low in comparison to other schools. The low figure is due mainly to Travelling children who have moved away from the local area but legally have to remain on the school's register for one year. Unauthorised absence was 1.7 per cent, which is above the national average and due to the continuing poor attendance of a few Traveller pupils. Attendance overall is satisfactory. However, the attendance and punctuality of the vast majority of pupils are good.

17. Recording of pupils' attendance and absence is accurate and in accordance with the prescribed system. An efficient and effective administration and liaison system in conjunction with regular scrutiny of the registers ensures rigorous overall monitoring of attendance.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### 17. **Teaching**

18. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching provided for children who are under five is very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. Nearly one in every twenty lessons was excellent and nearly one in every three was very good. One in every three lessons was good and the rest were satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

19. Examples of very good or excellent teaching have a number of factors in common. Firstly, the teachers have high expectations of the pupils that enable them to make good progress. This results in challenging activities that are realistic for the levels of attainment the pupils have reached but also ones that they can achieve. For example, children who are under five are asked to sit on a chair in front of the class and are asked to tell a story. The rest of the children in the class ask the story teller questions that exemplify the tale or request descriptions of people or objects involved. This enables the children to develop greater confidence in speaking and listening and links the use of adjectives or longer descriptions to their skills in writing. This results in good progress. Secondly, the teachers are continually seeking links with other areas of the

curriculum so that learning can be reinforced. For instance, in a very good Key Stage 2 science lesson the teacher skilfully reinforced the pupils' understanding of where muscles are attached to the bones in the arm by linking it with a design and technology activity. Pupils worked in pairs to construct a working model of the upper and lower bones in the arm using thick card and formed a hinge joint using a brass paper fastener. Their task was to attach woollen threads to the cardboard bones so that they simulated exactly the position of the muscles which enabled the lower bone to move upwards at the elbow. The pupils were allowed to make mistakes so that discussion with the teacher would make clear that a real arm could not work in that way. This had a very positive impact on the pupils' progress. Finally, lessons are very well planned so that the activities are very relevant to the needs of different groups of pupils. In a mixed age class of under five children, Reception and Year 1 pupils the tasks planned enabled all pupils to make good progress. Different pupils were either counting and recognising numbers to 20, counting forwards and backwards from a given number, recognising and naming squares and circles or recognising four different two-dimensional shapes. Throughout the lesson pupils were very well supported by the teacher or classroom assistant and resources were used very effectively to enable pupils to understand the concepts more easily.

20. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Literacy and numeracy lessons have been implemented according to national guidelines and this has enhanced pupils' learning. Of particular note is the good impact on progress made by regular mental mathematics sessions that improve the pupils' quick recall of number facts. Lesson planning is good and clearly identified learning intentions provide a very clear focus on what the teacher intends pupils to know, do or understand by the end of the lesson. This helps the teacher and classroom assistants to concentrate fully on the objectives of the lesson. Good relationships between class teachers and pupils are consistent throughout the school and almost all pupils are anxious to please their teacher. The pupils' behaviour is managed very successfully by teachers who use a positive approach, praising and encouraging them rather than blaming.

21. Where there are a small number of less positive elements to lesson they are mainly centred around the timing of different sections of the lesson. At the end of Key Stage 1, for example, pupils are not allowed sufficient time to undertake writing activities during literacy lessons. In other lessons, not enough time is allowed for the important plenary session at the end and this reduces opportunities for pupils to revise or consolidate their learning. There is also a certain degree of insecurity amongst some teachers in their own personal expertise in information technology and this slows pupils' progress, particularly amongst the higher attaining pupils.

22. The specialist teaching in physical education enhances the pupils' progress. The knowledge of how to teach the subject and of how to organise lessons very effectively is very beneficial to pupils acquiring physical skills. The lessons proceed at a very brisk pace and the use of learning resources for pupils' learning is very good. Pupils are constantly being challenged and the plentiful resources available results in pupils being constantly active and gaining skills.

22.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

23. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality of the curriculum. Curricular provision is now broad and balanced for all of its pupils, including those who are under five. The curriculum is enhanced considerably by carefully planned visits, to such places as Colchester Castle, the good use of visitors, and of the school's environment. Such activities provide a meaningful setting for much of the pupils' learning and are a significant factor in enabling the school to achieve successfully, the all round development of its pupils.

24. Requirements to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious and sex education, as well as the curriculum for children under five are met fully. Sex and anti-drugs education is integrated well into a broader programme of science and health. The school's provision of literacy hour lessons is good and the strategies for teaching numeracy is satisfactory. The school has embraced both national strategies wholeheartedly and a sensible amount of time is allocated to both subjects. There is one significant exception: time is not set aside for pupils to apply newly acquired literacy skills in extended, free writing contexts. This has a detrimental effect on progress in writing and contributes to the fact, that pupils of both Key Stages 1 and 2 make no greater than satisfactory progress in increasing writing skills.

25. Teachers throughout the school encourage pupils to use their knowledge of one subject to bring meaning to another. Pupils use their writing skills soundly in the subjects of history, geography, religious education and science. Year 6 pupils put their information technology skills to good use in presenting work on the Romans to a high standard, and Year 2 pupils reinforce their dictionary skills profitably by using an information technology dictionary program. Again, in the study of history, pupils of Years 2 and 6 use their research skills beneficially to find out about Victorian times. Children, who are under five, transfer the skills gained in story time to enhance geographical mapping skills, and nurture their directional vocabulary in physical education lessons. The organisation of the under-five curriculum, around a theme, encourages effectively, such transference of skills across subjects.

26. Satisfactory provision is made to encourage the development of artistic skills through music, art and dance lessons. These are enriched by visits from artists of music and art who contribute stimulating experiences for pupils to enjoy and learn from. A good contribution is made to the English curriculum by a parent helper who provides good quality drama lessons and arranges theatre trips to major London shows. In further pursuit of the arts, pupils visit Chelmsford Theatre and are visited by a storyteller and poet.

27. The curriculum provided for children under five in the reception class is good. Proper account is taken of the appropriate areas of learning at the planning stage. Children are offered a wide range of motivating experiences through which they make good progress and develop essential skills and understanding in preparation for the National Curriculum.

28. The school has been successful in dealing with the curricular issues raised in the previous report. Curricular planning and delivery is more thorough in ensuring that pupils' learning follows a continuous and developmental route. This has been achieved through the implementation of well-structured schemes of work for all subjects, which guide teachers successfully about curricular content and the sequence of its delivery at the planning stage and ensure that lessons have a clear learning focus. Planning takes account of the content of the National Curriculum in a structured way. Long, medium and short-term planning is now satisfactory and helps to enhance the standards of attainment and progress. Short-term planning has improved greatly. Learning objectives are identified clearly, as are assessment criteria in weekly and daily plans. The only weakness is the omission of the facility to identify the learning objectives in the Literacy weekly planning format. Teachers share their expertise by planning together and this also contributes to ensuring that learning is built upon systematically. Upon completion, termly and weekly plans are monitored, by subject coordinators and the head teacher. As a result of such guidelines and procedures, continuity in learning has improved.

29. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities. Work is usually varied well to meet the different needs of pupils and grouping arrangements ensure that pupils make progress. The school makes good provision for its pupils with special educational needs and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The identification of pupils is carried out promptly and efficiently. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are supported effectively, within classroom lessons. Their needs are met well through planned activities, which are appropriate to their abilities and through individual education plans, which contain a comprehensive range of targets to enhance pupils' progress.

30. Provision for extra-curricular activities including sport is good. Members of staff and parents, show considerable commitment to providing a good range of opportunities for the pupils. Clubs take place after school. They include dance, drama, rugby, cricket and crafts. The clubs are popular and pupils take part enthusiastically. The activities are far reaching in promoting a good team spirit, self-esteem and a sense of achievement.

31. The school has addressed in part, the assessment issues identified in the previous report. As a result, there are satisfactory assessment and record keeping systems in place.

32. The results of national tests are analysed and recorded carefully. Records show, at a glance, pupils' attainment levels and progress made in English, mathematics and science. This information is used to set

individual learning targets. However, it is still not used as fully as it might be to identify whole school learning targets. Assessment criteria are identified in weekly plans and teachers make notes on pupils' attainment and progress across the subjects. They also evaluate lessons. Using the information gained from these two practices to inform future planning is at an early stage of development and has not yet had a positive impact on provision. Children are assessed when they enter school and the information gained is used to inform curricular provision and to group children. Good assessment practice is employed in tracking the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs.

33. Some significant samples of pupils' work are assessed and kept, year by year, to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Levels are assigned to the work and agreed by teachers across the school. This process strengthens teachers' awareness of national standards so that they are accurate in their judgements when assigning levels to pupils' work. However, the school still is not maximising this useful process by recording the reasons for teachers' judgements and using the information as a reference point for moderation and to demonstrate the school's curriculum in action.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

34. The provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good reflecting an environment that is caring and secure. A significant contribution is made by staff and helpers in the school: they provide a consistently good example of positive attitude and considerate behaviour for pupils to emulate. Since the previous inspection, the school has been successful in its measures to sustain the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Arrangements for collective acts of worship meet statutory requirements. Pupils successfully explore values and beliefs through assembly themes. These are carefully planned to cover a good range of topics such as caring for the environment and liberation. Assemblies include an appropriate time for worship and reflection, which is used well. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own experiences and those of others, based on such matters as freedom from fear and prejudice. A very good example of this was seen when pupils were in awe as the teacher told them a story of prejudice against appearance. Visits to the church to take part in services each term contribute positively to spiritual development. Across the curriculum pupils experience instances, when senses of amazement and wonder are evoked through exploration and discovery of knowledge and understanding. A very good example of this was the jubilant discovery of the youngest pupils, in a design technology lesson, that their cave door would actually open.

35. Moral development is good. It is enhanced by the close partnership between school and parents. Pupils are aware of, and understand, the principles that distinguish right from wrong. The development of moral values and understanding of personal rights and responsibilities is fostered well in specific lessons and across the curriculum. The school's three rights, which include the right for everyone to learn and to feel safe, are translated into class rules. Pupils are involved in this process and endeavour to keep the rules, which they make and display in their classrooms. Standards of behaviour and discipline are very good and promote effective learning. The school is a safe and orderly community in which pupils understand the behaviour expected of them: they are polite and show respect for each other for staff and for visitors. Behaviour is monitored well and a policy of rewards and sanctions is used effectively. There is no evidence of bullying.

36. Provision is good for the development of pupils' social skills. A strong sense of community, both within and beyond the school, promotes a positive and caring atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and relate well to each other and to adults. They develop a good sense of team responsibility and sportsman-like behaviour through competitive sport, such as the district athletics competitions and cluster rounders games. Extra curricular activities and residential visits make a good contribution to pupils' social development by encouraging them to work and play together. Older pupils take responsibility very well at lunch times by effectively looking after the younger ones, both during the meal and in the playground. Pupils become involved with the local community by singing carols to the elderly and taking part in a performance each year, which is staged in the village hall. Awareness of the needs of the wider community is fostered through pupils' involvement in donating money to their chosen charities. They are beginning to develop a good

understanding about how society functions, in the local and wider community.

38. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils gain an awareness of their own cultural traditions, through the support of an effective programme of visits linked to curricular studies of history, geography and art. Good examples include a visit to Colchester where pupils witnessed a Roman soldiers' debate and a visit to the Victorian exhibition at Colne Valley, where they compared their own classroom routines and customs with those of Victorian times. Pupils take part in the Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. They participate in the Chelmsford Music Festival and have recently enjoyed visits to the school by musicians, an artist, storyteller and poet. They become aware of the richness and diversity of other cultures as they study major world religions such as, Hinduism and Judaism. To mark the Jewish New Year they sing a song entitled Rosh Hashanah and make Divali lamps in celebration of the Hindu festival of lights. Key Stage 1 pupils learn about some of the cultural traditions of the Travelling Community through school-produced books containing photographs of the local Travellers' site and through jigsaws, large books and dictionaries based on the Traveller culture.

38.

#### **38. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

37. A caring learning environment is provided by the school for all its' pupils. Members of staff know their pupils well both academically and pastorally. There is good support from members of staff who have received training in first aid, midday, and administrative staff. The monitoring of academic progress is very sound whilst personal development is monitored more informally. Monitoring and assessment for pupils with special educational needs is good. Very good use is made of specialist education support services such as the Traveller education service. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are enabled full access to the curriculum. Parents are consulted regularly both informally and by taking part in regular review meetings. Provision and guidance for higher attaining pupils are good in English and mathematics and the school is aware that better provision needs to be made for the remainder of the curriculum. The school is aware of all its' pupils' needs and maintains regular and effective links with specialist services and support agencies.

38. The introduction of the comprehensive and whole school approach to discipline combined with the recently introduced home/school partnership agreement has been very effective and will enable the school to continue to build on its' already good standards of behaviour and to further encourage positive attitudes towards learning. Rigorous overall monitoring of attendance combined with clearly outlined attendance guidelines and procedures ensure that the punctuality and attendance of the vast majority of pupils is good.

39. Child protection procedures are in place and comply with the guidance provided by the Department for Education.

40. Arrangements for the promotion of the health and safety of pupils are satisfactory overall. Safe storage areas are provided for hazardous substances and equipment and the fire alarm, electrical and fire fighting equipment are regularly maintained. Emergency evacuation practice is carried out four times each year. Equipment is well maintained and in sound condition. Current arrangements for the storage of pupils' packed lunches are unsatisfactory but plans are in hand to provide appropriate storage. Satisfactory systems are in place for the regular monitoring and maintenance of the general health and safety requirements and standards of the school premises and grounds.

#### **42. Partnership with parents and the community**

41. The school has a very effective and active partnership with its parents except a number of parents feel strongly that any complaints they may have are not dealt with sensitively. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the life of the school. School policies, such as the behaviour policy, have been drawn up with the involvement and partnership of parents who continue to be involved in the evaluation and monitoring procedures. The school prospectus is very detailed and informative on most aspects of school life and is supplemented with brochures for parents of new pupils with additional relevant information such as attendance guidelines and how to support pupils' learning. The expected standard of pupil behaviour is very clearly outlined for parents and is supported by the home/school agreement. Information on the curriculum is included

in general terms in the school prospectus and areas of the curriculum that have been studied are included in some detail in the annual pupil reports. No information is provided on topics to be studied each term which parents feel would be helpful in order to support pupils' learning. Regular and very informative letters and weekly newsletters are written in an easily accessible style and provide a brief outline of the week ahead for each class, both within the school day and for after school activities and events for pupils, parents and the community.

42. Very sound opportunities are provided for parental involvement in pupils' learning through the provision of information afternoons or evenings. These cover a range of subjects which have included the raising of parental awareness on road safety issues in order to support the road safety policy, sex education and transfer to secondary school. The home/school communication books for homework for each pupil are used regularly by staff and parents and there is a detailed, structured and progressive whole school approach to homework. Parents are generally satisfied with the amount and type of homework set.

43. Regular formal consultation evenings are provided throughout the year and informal contact with class teachers is encouraged. Pupil reports comply with statutory requirements, include targets, and are very detailed providing information on both strengths and weaknesses. Parents feel that one of the great strengths of the school is the good quality of teaching. Overall, the inspection team agrees with this view. However, some parents have indicated their dissatisfaction at senior management level in that the school's response to parents' concerns is not always forthcoming and that a strained atmosphere exists between some members of staff.

44. Parents are fully involved when pupils are identified as having special needs and have regular opportunities to discuss pupil progress, both formally and informally.

45. A very sound pre-school induction programme of half day visits for parents and pupils also provides parents with further information on how to support their child's learning during the early months at school, and which is further enhanced by regular visits to the school by the local nursery. Likewise parents are fully informed about secondary school transfer arrangements.

46. Parents are very supportive of school productions and events. A strength of the school is the significant number of parents who regularly assist voluntarily in supportive roles, both within the classroom and in providing expertise and leadership in some extra curricular activities. Similarly, excellent use is made of the school's local community expertise and generosity. For example pupils supported by the skills and resources of the community craft club are creating a school millennium quilt. The play area in the school grounds provides climbing and balancing equipment that is a joint area for school and community use, but used within the curriculum in addition to play and lunchtime. This was partly funded by a generous community donation. Professional coaches from Essex County Cricket Club provide training for Key Stage 2 pupils. Pupils and the school are very much part of their community, singing at local festivals, regularly contributing to the parish magazine and using the village hall for delivery of some of the physical education curriculum. Traveller pupils are very well integrated into the life of the school. Very good use is also made of local museums, visits to places of interest, visitors to the school such as a poet, a writer, an artist, a musician and the community policeman in order to enhance and extend curriculum provision.

47. The Parent Teacher Association raises very considerable amounts of money each year through a wide range of both social and fundraising activities and the results of these efforts which are well supported by parents are clearly evident in considerably enhanced provision and resources. Excellent use is also made of local business contacts through such arrangements as visits to farms and the part business funding of the purchase of computers.

#### 49. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

##### 49. **Leadership and management**

48. The head teacher provides satisfactory leadership overall and has introduced a number of systems which have improved the work of the school. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education now have

policies and schemes of work providing good guidance for planning and teaching procedures. Planning has also been enhanced by improvements in long and short term planning. The roles of teachers have been altered to include a greater responsibility for overseeing the work in different subjects. The changes have been beneficial and teachers agree they have enhanced the quality of their teaching.

49. During a meeting with the registered inspector parents reported disharmony in the school. They felt there was an atmosphere of non-co-operation with the head teacher by some of the teachers. The inspection team corroborates this view. The teachers have partly been at fault by resisting necessary changes that have improved the quality of education and the head teacher has not prepared the ground before major changes were made so that teachers understood the reasons. The difficulties experienced by teaching staff and the head teacher in working as a team has, as yet, not resulted in in-service training courses to explore a collegiate teamwork approach to making decisions. As soon as the present difficulties are over and the problems resolved the school can move forward and continue to improve its provision.

50. Since the previous inspection, the school development plan has also been improved. It sensibly covers a period of three years providing a long-term overview of the proposed developments. Success criteria linked with the various initiatives of the plan have been introduced to judge the success or otherwise of these. However, the success criteria are not linked sufficiently with pupils' standards of attainment. The school development plan has been formulated mainly as a result of staff's feelings rather than by gathering objective evidence to use as a basis for deciding priorities. However, the results of the English national tests have been examined and spelling has been targeted for improvement. The school is now beginning to use information for whole-school planning purposes in order to improve the curriculum. The pupils' answers in the annual mathematics tests for both key stages and in science for Key Stage 2 have been analysed but all practice papers which pupils take at the end of each school year have not been given the same treatment. As yet, objective evidence to identify weaker areas of the curriculum has not been used sufficiently to develop the curriculum further.

51. Subject co-ordinators monitor planning within the subjects for which they are responsible and produce annual reports to be presented to the rest of the staff in order to agree on the development of the subject for the following year. However, the suggestions for development are often not sufficiently backed by objective evidence.

52. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She works hard and oversees the work and progress of pupils with special educational needs. The pupils' individual educational plans contain clear, specific and measurable targets. The class teachers construct the plans for pupils on stage 2 and the special needs co-ordinator appropriately constructs the plans for any pupils on subsequent stages. Parents are invited to the termly reviews of their child's success at meeting the targets on the individual education plan.

53. The governing body is very committed to the school. They carry out a formal inspection regularly to ensure there are no health or safety hazards. Governors work in pairs to observe the curriculum in the classrooms and report back to full governing body meetings. They discuss the proposals for the school development plan priorities but modifications are rarely thought to be necessary. This indicates the governing body is not sufficiently involved in the strategic planning of the school. The progress of the initiatives in the school development plan is discussed at every meeting. Governors have agreed sensible long-term aims for the school, which include an expansion of the school into four classes, the provision of a new school hall and to raise levels of attainment.

54. The school's aims for the pupils are all met. Pupils are developed appropriately into caring, confident and independent learners. It provides an environment where children feel secure, encouraged to be tolerant of the beliefs of others and to explore their own beliefs. It works well with parents to achieve the best for its pupils and to provide an exciting and stimulating environment.

55. Legal requirements are met with one exception. The staff appraisal system has lapsed. The head teacher is aware of this and plans have been made to recommence the processes in the near future.

## 57. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

56.The teaching staff is appropriately qualified and has a good level of expertise to meet the demands of the National Curriculum as well as religious education and sex education. The education of pupils with special educational needs is catered for well. Additionally, teaching and support staff responsible for children who are under five have a very good level of expertise in early education.

57.The school provides well for training of support staff, through courses and in-service training. This has a positive effect on the quality of education being provided. The administration officer is highly qualified and very skilled in the business of office management and enables teaching, administration and the day-to-day life of the school to function effectively. The lunchtime staff are effective in their roles. They ensure that meal times are happy, well-organised occasions and that good discipline is maintained.

58.All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have specific job descriptions, which are considered to be realistic and manageable. Staff development has recently been centred around the current educational initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Hours while at the same time taking account of the school development plan for example the development of assessment practice and procedures. However, the statutory requirements of appraisal procedures have lapsed. The head teacher is aware of this and plans are in place to rectify it.

59.The school building and grounds provide adequate accommodation for the curriculum to be taught effectively apart from physical education where pupils' safety would be affected if lessons took place in the very small school hall. As a result physical education lessons are held out of doors, sometimes in unsuitable weather conditions. An example of this was seen during the inspection, when the school's youngest pupils were too cold to co-ordinate their movements. However, the existing hall is used well for television programmes, music and drama lessons as well as for dining at lunch times.

60.Out door areas provide for a wealth of pursuits such as pond dipping, observations of seasonal changes and activity, structured play, PE and art observations. There is a safe area for children who are under five to use large play equipment and a large wooden playhouse. The buildings are cleaned and maintained to a good standard. Displays of a good quality enhance the learning environment.

61.Learning resources are mainly good for the school's curriculum and range of pupils. Held centrally, but particularly in classrooms, the level of provision of books and equipment for the subjects across the curriculum is good. Books in classrooms are highly organised in such a way as to encourage profitably, independent reading skills. An exceptionally good example of this is in the Years 4, 5 and 6 classroom. Books for Literacy Hour lessons, including dictionaries and thesauruses are of a high quality and in good supply. Books are in good condition and those together with equipment are used well. Structured play equipment is good and provides young pupils with purposeful opportunities to develop and practise a range of skills and concepts.

62.The school makes very good use of Schools' Library Service to supplement resources. This has the added advantage of solving storage problems as space is at a premium. Since the previous inspection, two demountable classrooms have been installed which have large storage cupboards. This has led to big improvements in the organisation and access of resources. However, the school's first demountable classroom still has a lack of storage facilities. Co-ordinators have the responsibility for renewing and extending resources. The school environment and local community are used effectively in learning. Local people come in to speak to the pupils and share with them their expertise and experiences. This is of great value to the studies of history and geography. The school makes very good use of residential trips and visits to enhance, motivate and extend learning.

63.The library is adequately stocked. Books are checked and up-dated regularly. Information technology resources across the curriculum are good and are used well so that they support learning effectively. Good examples include the use of computers to support the Literacy Hour and history.

## 65. The efficiency of the school

64. The school's budget is well managed by the office manager who works efficiently to ensure that all invoices are reconciled with the various headings. The governors' finance committee monitors the budget regularly and effectively through printouts received from the local education authority. The administration of the school is effective and efficient. The latest auditor's report took place over four years ago and all of the minor recommendations have been addressed successfully. The financial planning of the school is good and the efficiency of the school's financial control and school administration is very good. The costs for the education support staff are very high compared with the national average but the school uses their high quality skills very wisely and the pupils' rate of progress benefits accordingly.

65. The special educational needs element of the school budget is used well and enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Resources are used efficiently to support the pupils and to identify their needs. The special needs co-ordinator manages the special needs budget efficiently. The education for children who are under five is planned and managed efficiently resulting in overall good progress.

66. Specialist teaching skills are used effectively. For example, the Reception class teacher has good skills in teaching physical education and these are used effectively for teaching Key Stage 2 pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed satisfactorily. They have good skills which are used well, especially in Key Stage 1 where their expertise at asking very appropriate questions is used advantageously.

67. The school building is used efficiently. The school hall is used for educational television, music, school meals, the family numeracy project and collective acts of worship. The school library is well stocked with books and is used effectively by classes for finding out information and for group work by Key Stage 2 pupils. The staff room is also efficiently and is used for a variety of purposes including a room for computers where five pairs of pupils can be supported with information technology activities and a room where the under five children are supported with social development. The school grounds have been developed very well and have a positive impact on pupils' progress. A pond is used for the study of animal and plant life and benefits the pupils' knowledge and understanding of science. An enclosed play area is used by children who are under five for physical play using tricycles and pedalled toy vehicles to improve their physical development.

68. Resources for learning are used well and enable the pupils to make sound progress. Computers are used effectively to develop the pupils' skills and across the subjects of the curriculum, particularly in history and the literacy hour. Books in classrooms are well organised and are used to encourage independent reading skills effectively. Structured play equipment is used effectively by young pupils to develop and practise a range of skills and concepts. The school makes very good use of Schools' Library Service to supplement resources. The school also makes very good use of residential trips and visits to promote independence in pupils and to provide a stimulus for learning.

69. The attainment of the pupils when they are first admitted to the school is below average. When pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 their levels of attainment meet national expectations. Progress made by pupils is good overall with good progress in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics and science. Good progress is also made in history and physical education. The cost per pupil is high compared with the national average. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils' attitudes towards their work and their personal relationships are very good. Their personal development is good. Taking all factors into account the school provides good value for money.



## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **71. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

70.Children start school in the September before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. They are admitted into the reception class, which provides for this age group as well as Year 1 pupils. At the time of the inspection, 11 children were under five. Profitable links with the local nursery form part of the school's good induction arrangements, which provide a pleasant and orderly introduction to school life for both children and their parents. The results of early assessment show that children enter school with levels of attainment below those expected nationally for this age group. The work is planned thoroughly to provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum within which all of the required areas of learning are addressed. As a result, children make good progress and by the time they are five, attain standards above those expected nationally in language and literacy, and in the development of creative, personal and social skills. They attain standards expected for their age group in mathematics, physical development and in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world.

71.Children's personal and social development is given high priority so that progress is good and attainment is above that expected by the time they are five. Although they have had only a few weeks in school, due to very skilful teaching strategies, children already know the classroom routines well and feel secure as part of the classroom community. They demonstrate very good attitudes to their work, are confident and keen to learn. They show independence by clearing up after activities and by undressing and dressing for physical education lessons, with only a little help. At snack times children take turns and share fairly: they patiently pass the milk around taking just the right amount. Great respect and concern is shown to pupils, building effectively their self-respect and self esteem. They take part profitably in religious and cultural events such as the Harvest and Christmas Festivals. Behaviour is very good. Anti-social behaviour is effectively discouraged through positive attitudes, the implementation of a few simple rules and the encouragement offered by staff for all forms of good behaviour. Great enjoyment is a feature of the concentrated effort that the school's youngest pupils bring to their tasks and activities.

72.Children make good progress and by the time they are five, attain standards in language and literacy, which are above those expected nationally apart from in writing where their attainment is consistent with the expected level. Children benefit greatly from very good teaching and well-structured literacy hour lessons when the use of language is promoted exceptionally well. As a result, children talk and role-play confidently and clearly in the classroom's old-fashioned toyshop and in the sand. Explanations and instructions are supported by inspirational teaching aids so that, children listen very carefully and are motivated and confident about asking and answering questions. A wide range of exciting materials and activities to foster reading and writing skills is prepared thoroughly by the class teacher. Consequently, children make a very good start with early reading skills and enjoy sharing books and being read to. They talk about the pictures and characters in books confidently, read simple texts and recognise some initial sounds. Almost all recognise and write their names. Children draw pictures, write symbols, some recognisable letters and words to represent their stories. The classroom assistant's close working partnership with the class teacher and exceptionally good skills have a very positive effect on the children's learning.

73.By the time they are five, children's attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations. In their few short weeks in school, children have made good progress, due to the class teacher's very good teaching in numeracy lessons. They practise skills successfully: skills such counting objects to ten, counting on from a given number and recognising the numerals. The teacher's very good use of mathematical language together with activities involving shapes result in children naming and describing the properties of shapes well. To reinforce the use of correct mathematical vocabulary and understanding of addition and subtraction, children sing a wide variety of rhymes and jingles such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'. Time is used very well in lessons and children benefit greatly from the good balance between teaching time and time to practise and consolidate their skills, through well thought out activities. Problem solving skills are developed well through the use of a wide variety of tasks across the curriculum, such as how to form shapes in physical educational lessons. A good number of parents give generously of their time to support lessons, contributing positively to children's progress and attainment.

74.The curriculum provides very well for developing a respectful awareness of the world around them so that, children make good progress and have a sound understanding of this area of learning. The good quality teaching allows children to be given appropriate opportunities to talk about their homes, families and experiences. They are encouraged to talk purposefully about the similarities and differences between old and new toys. Very good opportunities are provided for children to be aware of nature: they listen to the birds, observe seasonal changes and study pond life, thus systematically building recognition of features of living things, patterns and change. The school grounds, which include a pond, are used effectively for such work and so too is a neighbouring farm which children visit at lambing time. Materials are explored effectively and skills of cutting, gluing, joining and drawing are used satisfactorily for a variety of purposes such as making gingerbread men with moving limbs and caves with a hinged door to fit their toy care bears. They use computer skills soundly in several curricular areas and enjoy listening to taped stories.

75.In their physical development, children make good progress and attain standards that are expected nationally. Children develop a good sense of the space around them in routines and games, which involve fast and slow running. They move confidently and with increasing co-ordination. The very good use of a variety of small apparatus and frequent opportunities to use large wheeled vehicles and climbing frames contribute significantly to children's development of a wide range of body management skills and demonstrates high quality teaching. Children are given many opportunities to strengthen their fingers so that they use scissors, pencils, paint brushes and a good variety of construction toys well. Staff and parents are diligent about keeping children safe in movement lessons and when handling tools.

76.Through activities that include art, music, mime and imaginative play, children make good progress in creative development and attain standards above those expected nationally. Children persevere in mixing paint to get just the right shade of purple for their 'Where The Wild Things Are' monsters. The very good teaching of creative skills includes providing a rich variety of suitable activities so that children are motivated and sustain interest. Good examples of this include making small and capital letters with play dough, and creating a bear hunt from a variety of natural resources. They take part in singing lessons and show good rhythm and melody. They memorise the words soundly as they sing. Good opportunities are provided for children to listen to music and they use their imaginations well to mime nursery rhymes. They enthusiastically sing and perform action songs such as 'Alice the Camel'.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **78. English**

77.The 1998 National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 was consistent with the national average. When compared with similar schools pupils' performance was very low. Taken over time, the trend of pupils' attainment in English stays below the national average. It is too early in the year to have statutory comparative data for 1999, however comparisons of 1999 English results with the school's 1998 results, show a similar picture. Again, this is due to the very marked effect that a few pupils with special educational needs have on the overall result of a very small cohort of pupils. In addition, a significant number of pupils join the school at various stages in Key Stage 2, many of whom also have special educational needs.

78.The 1998 National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was well above average in reading and very high in comparison with the national average in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was well above average in reading and very high in comparison with the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools pupils' performance was well above average in reading and very high in writing. Taken over time, from 1996 – 1998 the trend of pupils' attainment in reading and writing remains above average. In recent years the proportion of pupils joining the school from outside the catchment area has a much larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Comparisons of 1999 reading and writing test results with the school's 1998 results show a lower proportion achieving national expectations. This is due to an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. It is also due, as in Key

Stage 2, to the distorting effect of percentage data in representing a small group of pupils' performances.

79. The present pupils' attainment levels in speaking and listening at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above those expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils listen attentively and speak clearly in lessons across the curriculum. They use a good range of vocabulary confidently due to the high priority which teachers give to language development. They have useful and agreeable discussions, building constructively on each other's points of view. Good examples include Class 3 pupils' discussion of the characteristics of play scripts; Class 2's discussion of their visit to the Colne Valley Victorian Museum, and Class 1's exploration of old and new toys. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to speak to the class audience, to listen with interest and ask and answer questions. A very good example of this was seen in Year 1 where pupils took turns to sit in the leader's chair and tell a story to the group audience. On such occasions, pupils interact exceptionally well. Drama lessons are good in promoting the skills of speaking and listening, and all pupils take part in an annual performance, which is held in the village hall. Preparations are underway to present two Christmas productions. Every pupil will be given the opportunity to take part in one of them.

80. The present pupils' attainment levels in reading at the end Key Stage 1 are above the national average and in Key Stage 2 they are in line with the national average. Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of phonic skills and use them well to make sense of unfamiliar words. Across Key Stage 1, pupils have a high level of interest in reading, discuss stories well and show a good understanding of their respective books. Book vocabulary is developing well: pupils use and understand the technical terms of author, title, contents page and index. They have good dictionary skills, which are reinforced purposefully through the use of informational technology skills. Throughout Key Stage 2, these skills are built upon steadily and pupils of all ability groups, including those with special educational needs, of whom there is a significant number, accomplish at least satisfactory and sometimes better reading levels. Year 6 pupils read with accuracy and fluency. They practise purposefully drawing information from their texts to support their points of view, both through shared reading sessions and by using comprehension exercises. They use book language well and describe simple features of the writer's craft interestingly. Dictionary skills are good and research skills are satisfactory. A home / school reading partnership positively supports the progress and attainment made by a significant number of pupils.

81. The present pupils' attainment levels in writing at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are consistent with the national average. Key Stage 1 pupils write for several purposes and audiences and structure their writing satisfactorily. Their use of correct sentence punctuation, a range of connectives and accurate spelling is underdeveloped. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write successfully in a wide range of forms such as factual, poetry and narrative. They structure the various forms of writing well and use a good range of vocabulary. In spite of this, their creative stories lack interest and feeling due to the insufficient development of characterisation. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and tasks are matched relevantly to their needs so that they make sound progress in accordance with their prior attainment.

82. Progress overall in both Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The good provision made in literacy hour lessons has a very positive effect on the progress made, by pupils of all ability groups, in building a range of skills across the English curriculum. During these lessons, pupils across the school make good progress: pupils of Year 1 in forming sentences; those of Year 2, 3 in building dictionary and sentence punctuation skills and pupils of Year 4, 5 and 6 in reading and writing in play script form. There is one significant drawback: time is not set aside for pupils to apply newly acquired skills in extended, free writing contexts. This has a detrimental effect on progress overall and contributes to the fact that pupils of both Key Stages 1 and 2 make no greater than satisfactory progress over time in building writing skills. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress over time in reading and those in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress. Over time, pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in speaking and listening. Drama lessons play a significant part in nurturing speaking and listening skills, and pupils benefit greatly from the support given by parent helpers both during lessons and in after school clubs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress over time. This is due to the good support given in well-structured literacy hour lessons and additional help from classroom assistants.

85. Pupils' response to English work is very good. They are confident and demonstrate a positive attitude to learning. Across the school pupils listen well to their teachers' explanations and instructions and employ themselves very well to tasks: they work hard during lessons. Pupils relate very well to their teachers and to each other. They are secure about asking for help when necessary. Most pupils take a pride in presenting their work neatly. They are confident speakers and attentive listeners. Pupils of all ages and ability groups have a positive attitude to reading. Their appreciation of stories, from their own and other cultures, and the thought they put into their work, contribute well to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

83. Despite the school's below average Key Stage 2 results in the latest published annual national test results the quality of teaching is good overall with instances of very good teaching in classes 1 and 3. The groups of pupils taking the tests are very small and the presence of one or two pupils with special educational needs in each cohort in Key Stage 2 results in a marked lowering of the proportion of pupils attaining national expectations. The good quality of teaching has a significant effect on pupils' progress and attainment. Across the school, teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' English abilities. Year 1 pupils are expected to use directional vocabulary and sequence stories properly, Year 2 are expected to have good dictionary skills and know parts of speech and Year 6 pupils are expected to read and write in the form of a play script. A major strength of teaching across the school is the proficient use of a wide range of successful teaching methods and organisation to advance learning. Teachers provide very good lesson introductions, which reinforce previous learning, and lay the foundations on which to build. They share the learning intentions with pupils, involving them immediately. They use good demonstrations to extend meaning aptly; promote independent learning skills adeptly, and encourage the use of correct technical vocabulary expertly. They set motivating tasks to strengthen learning and skilfully intersperse tasks with guidance. Another strength is teachers' use of a good range of resources to support tasks effectively. On the whole, time is used well, as are classroom assistants and parent helpers, conveying to pupils that learning time is valuable for maximising progress. The exception to this was an over-lengthy reinforcing session at the end of a lesson in Year 2, 3, which overstretched its usefulness. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils, and teachers' skills of discipline and the resultant pupil behaviour are mostly very good. A good scheme of work guides planning and lessons are planned thoroughly, but the weekly planning format has no facility for identifying the learning objectives. The work planned caters for the needs of pupils of differing levels of attainment and different ages. Useful evaluations are made of lessons and pupils' attainments are recorded. However, the practice of using this information to inform future planning is only just beginning.

## 86. **Mathematics**

84. The school's results in the annual national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the percentage of pupils achieving national expectations was very high in comparison with the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching standards higher levels was close to the national average. When these results are compared with schools which serve pupils of a similar background the school's results are above average. Taken over the three years from 1996 to 1998 standards have been consistently higher than national averages.

85. The school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils achieving national expectations was below the national average. The percentage of pupils who achieved higher levels was well above the national average. When the school's end of Key Stage 2 results are compared with those from similar schools the school's result is well below average. Results have fluctuated from 1996 to 1998 and have been below national averages for the later two years of the time period. As the numbers of pupils in the cohort for each year group is small, the comparisons with other schools need to be treated with great caution.

86. The findings of the inspection show that at the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils' standards of attainment meet national expectations. They are beginning to recall addition and subtraction facts to ten and understand how to write numbers up to 100. Pupils identify halves and quarters in numbers and in shapes. They count successfully in twos and add tens and units. They use the mathematical names of two-dimensional shapes such as rectangles, squares, triangles and circles. Pupils are beginning to estimate and use metre lengths to measure distances and large objects.

87. Observations of lessons and an examination of pupils' work in mathematics shows that most pupils'

standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 also meet national expectations. They use their knowledge of place value to multiply numbers by ten and 100 quickly. Pupils have a sound knowledge of multiplication facts which enables them to calculate quickly and accurately. They understand simple fractions and can convert these to decimal numbers successfully. They convert measurements in millimetres and centimetres to metres and metres to kilometres competently and carry out computations involving these measurements. They find correctly the volumes of regular three-dimensional shapes by counting the number of cubes contained within them.

88. The pupils' response to mathematics lessons is good. Older pupils are particularly attentive and are eager to answer questions during class discussions. They enjoy mathematics lessons and are interested in the work set for them. At times, the pupils' noise level is too high when they are working, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1, and this does not encourage them to concentrate.

89. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. The targets on their individual educational plans are clear, specific and measurable. In Year 1 pupils make good progress through very effective teaching methods that match the work planned for them to their needs. These pupils are also well supported by the teaching assistant and the good matching of work to their needs has a good impact on their progress. The rate of progress slows in Year 2 and Year 3 where the organisation and timing of the different parts of the lessons is not of such high quality. On some occasions, pupils are not given sufficient time to finish the work planned for them and sometimes there is not enough time for the valuable plenary session at the end of the lesson. Progress made by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 is good overall. Lessons begin with interesting mental mathematics sessions that enable pupils to make quick progress in their knowledge and recall of number facts. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress through work which challenges and extends them. Overall the work planned for Key Stage 2 pupils is carefully matched to their differing needs and the continual assessments carried out by the class teacher as she supports different groups enables her to provide activities that meet their specific requirements.

90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 overall and good overall in Key Stage 2. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Although average attainment is no higher than satisfactory overall at the end of Key Stage 2 this is due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 and has no reflection on the quality of teaching. The organisation of lessons is generally satisfactory but sometimes teachers expect pupils to sit for too long listening to discussions and explanations and this results in restlessness and lack of concentration. This slows their progress. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning very effectively to assess the pupils' understanding and to match future work to their needs. For example, a teaching assistant supporting Key Stage 1 pupils asked skilfully phrased questions when working with them on recognising pentagons and hexagons enabling them to make progress within the lesson. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good throughout the school and this helps to maintain good discipline in the classrooms and to motivate the children. Teachers take every opportunity to improve the pupils' knowledge of number. For example, even whilst class 3 pupils line up and wait to leave the classroom for the daily act of worship they had to count backwards in fives starting from a variety of numbers to promote familiarity with quick calculations. The teacher of the older Key Stage 2 pupils has high expectations and the work planned enables good progress. Homework is set regularly and is connected with the content of lessons and therefore has a beneficial effect on pupils' progress.

### 93. **Science**

91. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 show that pupils' standards of attainment are very high in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels is also above the national average. The school's results in the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils achieving national expectations was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving levels of attainment higher than expected nationally was well above the national average.

92. The findings of the inspection show that pupils' standards of attainment meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. Year 2 pupils use their senses to explore and recognise similarities and differences in

materials. They classify a variety of materials according to their main constituent such as metal, glass, rubber, fabric, plastic, rope and wood. For example, they use the environment of the school to look for different materials and to examine and identify their uses. At the end of the key stage, pupils investigate and know what happens to materials when heated or cooled. They carry out experiments to see what happens when butter, chocolate, jam, bread and cheese are heated and then allowed to cool. This has enabled them to know that some changes are irreversible once they are heated and cooled. They describe how forces can move objects and know that by pushing or pulling objects, forces are applied. They know the names of the main external parts of the human body and have drawn eyes and teeth carefully to become familiar with the external structure. They are beginning to understand the idea of a fair scientific test by carrying out experiments on the growth of plants

93. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of the function of muscles in the body. They can name correctly animals that have no skeletons. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the planets of the solar system and their orbits. They know the effect of micro-organisms can be either beneficial or harmful and connect diseases with the harmful consequences. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to conduct a fair test. They know that by changing a single variable and keeping the rest constant will enable them to gauge its effect. For example, they devise successful experiments on the growth of yeast by varying the amount of sugar and keeping the amount of yeast, volume of water and temperature the same each time. They gauge the growth by collecting the carbon dioxide given off by the yeast in a balloon attached to the rim of a bottle and comparing the different amounts. They have a sound knowledge of the parts of a plant and of how they reproduce themselves.

94. The progress made by pupils is good overall. Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress in scientific knowledge and also in understanding how to construct scientific investigations and experiments. They are encouraged to make predictions of the outcomes of experiments and this helps them to apply their existing knowledge to different situations. For example, they predict which part of the classroom was the coldest and tested their hypotheses by timing how long it took for an ice cube to melt in different parts of the room. In so doing they are aware that the ice cubes have to be the same size for the test to be a fair one. Key Stage 2 pupils also learn much science through experimentation and this has a good effect on their progress. For instance, pupils were set the task of finding which one of two coins was fake. This necessitated them finding out the weights, whether they conducted electricity and the effect of heat on them. When they heated the coins one burned and the plastic cover broke away. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and volunteer parents and they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress through individual challenges that extend the original activities and supplement their knowledge, skills and understanding.

95. The pupils respond very positively to science lessons. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils listen very carefully to each other's contributions and are eager to continue the activities even when it is time to finish. They are eager to contribute their own ideas to class discussions and this has a good impact on their self-esteem. Older Key Stage 1 and younger Key Stage 2 pupils listen carefully to their teacher but occasionally pupils call out answers instead of putting their hands up. Key Stage 2 pupils generally take pleasure in science lessons. They are enthusiastic about finding out new scientific facts and acquire new skills with enjoyment.

96. The quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, particularly in Key Stage 2 where links are made with other National Curriculum subjects such as design and technology which enhances the pupils' understanding and improves their progress. The management of pupils' behaviour is good; teachers relate well to pupils and are firm when necessary. Resources for learning are used very effectively in Key Stage 2 to support pupils' learning. For example, when learning about bones and muscles Key Stage 2 pupils were able to use a full-size human skeleton, a good selection of relevant illustrated books and a large poster showing the arrangements of muscles in the human body. Materials to construct levers representing the bones of the arm and thread to represent the musculature were also available. Teachers use questioning effectively, particularly in the class for the oldest pupils, to assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and to enable pupils to build on their previous learning. This has a very good impact on pupils' progress. For instance, when pupils attached twine from the top of one bone to the bottom of another, skilful questioning enabled pupils to understand the physical impossibility of this arrangement and they were encouraged to think of alternatives in keeping with how real muscles are

attached. The teacher's knowledge of science in the Key Stage 2 class is very good and this enables her to link other subjects of the curriculum with science in order to foster understanding. Teachers have satisfactory expectations of pupils and the activities planned for them are in line with their needs.

99.  
**COURSES**

**OTHER SUBJECTS OR**

99. **Religious education**

97. Standards of attainment are consistent with the levels recommended in the Locally Agreed Syllabus at Key Stages 1 and 2 showing that the school has been successful in maintaining standards since the previous report.

98. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils have the expected knowledge of stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and appropriate knowledge of other major world faiths. Year 2, 3 pupils listen with rapt interest to the story of Moses being left, by his mother and sister, in a basket on the river. They show from their answers that they have sound background knowledge of some of the main features of Biblical relationships between the Hebrews and Egyptians. They use correct subject vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils explore profitably, meanings conveyed by such Bible stories of Ruth, and David and Goliath. They relate the stories associated with the festivals of Christmas and Easter, and the pattern of events of such celebrations as Christian weddings. They benefit from the good opportunities provided for them to visit the church each term and take part in the services. Pupils across the school, mark important events in other major world faiths, by singing the Jewish New Year song entitled 'Rosh Hashanah' and making Divali lamps to mark the Hindu Festival of Lights.

99. Progress overall is satisfactory in both Key Stages 1 and 2. The provision made in class lessons and at assemblies has, on the whole, a positive effect on the progress made by pupils of all ability groups. During lessons, the progress made by pupils is mainly satisfactory. This is the case in Year 2 when pupils make satisfactory progress in sequencing the events of Moses' life, due to the good story telling technique of the teacher and to the suitable reinforcing task. Year 3 pupils make less progress in extending their knowledge of Moses, due to the unsuitability of the task. Over time, pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and understanding in the required aspects of religious education. This includes pupils with special educational needs, who make sound progress with the support of their teachers and classroom assistants. Class lessons and school assemblies together, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

100. The pupils' response at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. Pupils are interested in the subject. They behave well and are attentive to their teacher and each other during the lesson introduction and class discussions. They move to their writing activities quietly and without fuss and settle well to their tasks. They help each other generously as they work. A good example of this was seen in Year 2, 3 when pupils helped each other with drawings. Pupils work hard during lessons. Most pupils take a pride in presenting their written work neatly and add interest by using careful illustrations. Pupils of all ages and ability groups have a respectful attitude to views and beliefs, which differ from their own. This is nurtured effectively in class discussions and at assemblies when a wide selection of issues is explored, such as liberation.

104. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Strengths of teaching include thorough planning in which the learning objectives are identified clearly. A good range of resources such as pictures, books, the Bible and artefacts is chosen carefully and has a positive effect on promoting the learning focus. Teaching is informed well by good subject knowledge and guided by a good, well-structured scheme of work. Story telling techniques are good and pupils' interest is held effectively. Features of teaching which detract from pupils' progress include unclear task instructions and unsuitable choice of task to reinforce and extend learning. This leads to confusion and frustration on the part of the pupils and misuse of time on the teacher's part: time is taken up in re-explaining the task to pupils individually, rather than extending understanding. Teachers evaluate lessons and make notes of pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment in religious education is at an early stage of development and has not yet had time to make a positive impact on provision.

101. The policy was written 1999 and is a good document with clear guidance for teachers to follow. However, as it is a Missions Mark of the school, to include a statement on spirituality within policies where possible and to make staff aware of what this means, the policy fails in this respect, as its only reference to spirituality is a heading for planning.

105.

### **Information technology**

102. Standards of attainment in information technology at the end of both key stages meet national expectations. It was not possible to observe any information technology lessons in Key Stage 2. However, judgements have been made resulting from an interview with a small number of pupils concerning their knowledge, skills and understanding and an examination of their work.

103. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils generate their own writing using information technology. They type in their ideas and amend these and correct spelling mistakes as they proceed. Their keyboard skills are satisfactory. They produce capital letters, spaces between words successfully and delete and backspace confidently. They use a computer mouse competently. They have sound skills in using a printer and know how to instruct the computer to operate the printer. They know how to load a CD-ROM and how to select the desired program. They sort and classify information and use computers competently to produce graphs of the results.

104. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can store and retrieve work appropriately. However, unlike Key Stage 1 pupils, they usually use information technology to type in previously written work instead of using computers to generate their writing at first hand. Pupils communicate data from the findings of investigations by producing computer-generated graphs. For example, pupils kept a diary of the number of times they used water for different purposes during the day, collated all the findings of the class on computers and produced a block graph of the results. They know how to use a 'logo' program to produce a variety of regular shapes using the angle and length directions very successfully. They embellish their written work very creatively using clip art or word art facilities. Pupils have used computers to record the weather over a period of time. They have had a number of good opportunities to use simulation packages to learn about life in different times and to explore the effects of altering variables. As yet, pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to use information technology to produce artwork or to compose music.

105. Pupils make sound progress in both key stages. When Key Stage 1 pupils make mistakes they are not told how to correct these but are encouraged to find out for themselves. This policy has a good effect on pupils' progress since the successful solution pupils identify is reinforced by the fact they have discovered it for themselves. The use of the staff room to house a small bank of computers also enhances the pupils' progress. Pupils can be taught in medium sized groups and the teaching becomes more efficient and effective. Volunteer adults support pupils of all levels of attainment well and have a positive impact on their progress.

106. Pupils enjoy working on computers. They work well in pairs when using information technology but occasionally one pupil in each pair tends to monopolise the computer until an adult intervenes. They work hard and concentrate fully when occupied in information technology activities. Pupils enjoy the success they obtain when using computers.

107. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but no judgement was made in Key Stage 2 because no lessons were observed. Some teachers do not have secure subject knowledge and this affects the progress of the higher attaining pupils. Praise is used effectively to encourage pupils to perform well and to give them the confidence to become independent in the use of word processing programs. The teacher assesses the work of pairs of pupils during the time they work together and offers advice and support for them to overcome any difficulties they encounter. Good liaison between teachers and volunteer helpers is very evident because there is a consistent approach to supporting pupils with information technology throughout the key stage. Resources are used well to enhance pupils' learning. For example, they are provided with a series of coloured pictures to use as a stimulus for writing a short story, the teacher uses the class computer to revise keyboard skills before the work starts and they then work in pairs on the five computers in the staff room. This enables over a third of the class to use computers simultaneously and because this enables adult support to be used efficiently pupils' progress is good.

111.

### **Art**

108. Pupils' standards of attainment in art are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils mix colours successfully and express their ideas and feelings successfully. They also use pastels competently to draw and mix colours in a satisfactory manner. They use a range of techniques to produce a variety of visual effects. For example, they weave different coloured strips of paper into a basket shape and fill these with representations of different fruits using pastels to shade and colour them. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use a range of techniques to produce different tones in their drawings. They use cross hatching successfully to show different depths of tone and also hard and soft pencils to produce shading in their work.

109. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Year 1 pupils are encouraged to be persistent in their efforts to obtain good results. They match colours by adding one colour to another using small amounts so that the desired shade is exactly right. This promotes high standards in the pupils and has a good effect on their progress. They are also encouraged to produce careful drawings and to be sufficiently concerned to make the outline shapes result in good representations of objects. For example, they accomplish good drawings for their age of frogs, bears and toy soldiers and produce good paintings of monsters. Year 2 pupils build on the experiences of those in Year 1 and continue to develop skills in colour mixing. They use pastels to experiment with primary colours and to mix different combinations to obtain a range of shades. Key Stage 2 pupils' satisfactory progress is based on a study of the work of different artists. For instance, they look closely at selected works by David Hockney and produce their own swimming pool paintings using his approach and style. They draw Victorian characters using sepia photographs as a guide and use his style of line drawing on which to base their work. These activities provide useful experiences for the pupils to develop their own art styles and skills. Pupils' colour mixing skills continue to develop and when they produce a new shade they store a patch and make notes on how the particular hue was obtained. This methodical approach has a good impact on their progress. Their paintings in the style of Rousseau continue to develop their repertoire of skills.

110. Pupils respond very well to art lessons. Year 1 pupils in particular take great care with their work and show tenacity in mixing colours to get exactly what they require. This requires perseverance and good encouragement from the class teacher and teaching assistant. Pupils concentrate fully on the task and derive much satisfaction from the success gained. Key Stage 2 pupils work quietly during the lesson but they do not take as much care with their paintings as they might to produce the quality which their efforts at colour mixing warrant. This is because the teacher tends to become anxious that work is not finished resulting in products which are not the quality that pupils are capable of producing.

111. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages. The quality of art teaching in Year 1 is good and although it was not possible to observe any art lessons in Year 2 the quantity and quality of work is not as good as in Year 1. The lesson planning in Year 1 has very clear and specific objectives. For example, pupils had to focus on mixing a particular shade of purple in order to paint pictures of monsters which illustrated a story they were currently reading. Pupils were encouraged to remain at the task until they had succeeded and encouragement, praise and advice were provided to support the pupils. This had a very good effect on the pupils' learning and resulting in the acquisition of a range of skills which included perseverance, colour mixing, vocabulary and brushwork. Very good management of the pupils' behaviour was evident due to

a very supportive and empathetic approach that maintained very good relationships. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is sound. Lessons are introduced well with useful reviews of what had been learned in the previous lesson. Although time targets are set to enable the pace of the lesson to be brisk this is often not conducive to the careful and painstaking work that results in quality work in art. Praise is used well to motivate pupils to take greater care and to raise their self-esteem. Lesson planning does not focus sufficiently on what specifically the teacher wants the pupils to have achieved by the end of the lesson.

115.

### **Design technology**

112. Standards in design technology at the end of both key stages are above those expected for pupils of a similar age and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. These inspection findings show an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

113. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in designing and making a cave with a door, which opens to allow a small, toy bear to pass through. They choose from a small selection of materials and use good cutting skills to make their models. In fruitful discussions with their teacher and classroom assistant they amend and improve their designs. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 make good progress in designing and making hand puppets and monster puppets with moving parts. They design their puppets well and list the materials they will need to make them. They evaluate usefully the finished results. Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils make good progress in designing and making space buggies. They work from a rectangular wooden frame, affix axles and wheels and ensure that the buggy meets the requirements to move and seat a person or an alien. They finish their models to a high level of quality. As they move through the school pupils steadily build the necessary skills of cutting, folding, gluing, sawing, joining and assembling. Learning has been enhanced for all pupils by the very good technology truck bought with funds donated generously by the Parent Teacher Association.

114. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They work diligently on the tasks, set for them and relate well to each other as they share materials. They are very pleased with their efforts and proud of the outcomes. Year 1 pupils show great joy in discovering that the cave doors open effectively and pupils of Years 4, 5, and 6 treasure their space buggies. They handle tools with care.

115. The quality of teaching is good overall. The curriculum is guided efficiently by a good scheme of work. Planning is thorough and learning objectives are clearly identified. However, in Years 2 and 3, too many objectives are set for each lesson. This leads to unrealistic expectations of pupils' work rate, and results in work being put to one side at crucial times during the lesson. Teachers use a wide variety of successful methods to promote the learning focus such as interspersing activity time with guidance to keep pupils moving forward in their learning as seen in Years 2 and 3 and providing exceptionally suitable tasks to reinforce the learning objectives as seen in Year 1. Teachers throughout the school make very good use of classroom assistants and parent helpers to support group activities: this has a very positive effect on pupils' progress and attainment. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and classrooms are secure, industrious environments. A good and suitable range of resources is provided from which pupils may choose, and tools and equipment are appropriate for the tasks.

119. **Geography**

116. Standards in geography at the end of both key stages are in line with that expected for pupils of a similar age and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils of Years 1 and 4, 5 and 6 make good progress in some study areas. These inspection findings show that the school has maintained standards in the subject since the previous inspection.

117. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in building early mapping skills. This is due to the very good explanations, and motivating activities provided by the class teacher. Pupils listen attentively to the story of Rosie's Walk and choose a selection of materials to create the route she followed and label it successfully. Years 2 and 3 pupils increase their skills of comparing physical features of different places satisfactorily. They recognise features that give places their character through the good use of holiday brochures. They are

beginning to locate hot and cold places using atlases, but a significant number of pupils find this difficult, owing to the task being focused too widely. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 make good progress in river studies, on account of good, reinforcing teaching methods and well thought out tasks. Year 4 pupils effectively identify significant features of a river journey; those in Year 5 make good diagrams of a river and its main features and Year 6 pupils identify and locate major British Rivers. Good comparisons are drawn between the routes of River Usk and the local, River Chelmer. Throughout the school, the high priority given by teachers to the promotion of correct geographical vocabulary results in pupils in both key stages building and using vocabulary well.

118. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They enjoy the various activities enormously and work hard to complete their tasks in the given time, even when they find the work difficult. They are keen to answer questions and are confident about asking for help when necessary. Pupils, from the youngest to the oldest relate well to each other as they work: older pupils relate maturely to one another. Behaviour is very good. Almost all pupils take a pride in presenting their work neatly.

119. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a positive effect on the progress and attainment made by pupils. The curriculum is guided effectively by a well-structured scheme of work. All lessons are planned thoroughly and have clear learning objectives. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give very good, clear explanations and instructions. The follow-up tasks set for pupils' range from being very motivational and supportive of the learning focus, to being too complicated, with the resultant effect of confusing the main learning points. Explanations and tasks are supported very well by a wide range of effective resources, which include river maps, holiday brochures and a wall frieze of directional language. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils and skilful discipline techniques promote high standards of behaviour and effective learning. Teachers evaluate lessons and make notes of pupils' significant learning. Such information is just beginning to be used to inform future planning. Good use is made of residential visits to contrast their own local area with that of the visit.

### 123. **History**

120. Standards of history are above those expected for pupils of a similar age, and pupils of all ability groups, including those with special educational needs make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. These inspection findings show that pupils' levels of attainment and progress have improved since the previous inspection.

125. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in recognising differences between past and present toys. Year 2 and 3 pupils make good progress in distinguishing between aspects of their own lives and those of children of the past. They compare their own and Victorian children's school experiences, and have a good understanding of how traditions and conditions have changed. This is due to the high level of motivation in teaching provision such as informative wall displays and artefacts and a visit to the Victorian Museum at Colne, where pupils enjoy first hand experiences. Pupils are aware of how the past is represented and use different sources, from which to draw information. Throughout Key Stage 2, this good start is carefully built upon, enabling pupils to make good progress. Pupils in Year 4, 5, 6 describe characteristic features of past societies and periods well, such as the Romans and Victorians. They draw information from a good range of sources including the school log book, and produce high quality, well-structured work to meet their teacher's high expectations. A good example of this is their very good topic work on the Romans, some of which is presented effectively using information technology skills. Their appreciation of knowledge of the past, representing their own and other cultures, and the thought they put into their work, contribute well to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

121. Pupils' response to their work is good overall and at times in Year 4, 5 and 6 is very good. They show interest and enthusiasm for the subject as a result of teachers' motivating provision, which includes trips to Colne as mentioned above, and to Colchester Castle where older pupils witnessed a Roman soldiers' debate. Pupils attend well and carry out tasks with a high level of commitment and concentration. They complete tasks in the given time and older pupils are reluctant to set aside their historical studies, at the end of the lesson. They present their work neatly and older pupils' topical studies are of a high presentational quality.

Relationships with teachers and other pupils are very good, effecting a busy, hard working environment, within which behaviour is very good.

122.The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in Year 6. This contributes strongly to pupils' good attitudes to their work and to the good progress, which they make. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' abilities as a result of which pupils produce work of a high quality, and use correct historical vocabulary both when speaking and writing. Very good questioning skills are used to elicit information and to extend understanding. Additionally, in Year 6 the teacher uses adept strategies to enable pupils to form questions about life in Victorian times. A good range of informative and motivational resources is used such as artefacts, pictures, books, toys and an overhead projector and visits to museums and castles. A good scheme of work guides the subject well, from which teachers plan effectively, identifying clear learning objectives for lessons. Teachers evaluate lessons and make notes of pupils' attainment and progress. Using this information to inform future planning is unsatisfactory and as a result slows pupils' progress. Teachers use time well on the whole and only occasionally in Y2, 3 misjudge the time required for tasks.

### 127. **Music**

123.Standards of attainment in music are satisfactory in both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils sing in tune with a satisfactory sense of pulse. However, they have difficulty in sustaining a steady pulse when clapping rhythms in small groups. Key Stage 2 pupils perform raps with an appropriate accent on the first beat in every bar. They sing songs in two parts maintaining their part against the other satisfactorily.

124.Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress in music. They develop a repertoire of songs which they sing from memory and are taught to improvise different musical patterns, which enables them to build a sense of rhythm. Younger pupils are taught successfully to recognise different moods of music by varying the speed and pitch to demonstrate different 'messages.' Key Stage 2 pupils also make satisfactory progress and listen to a variety of different genres of music and learn to distinguish between classical, jazz and folk music. They also develop satisfactory skills in recognising and identifying orchestral instruments and the families to which they belong. Resulting from occasions when they listen to a variety of music from a range of cultures they learn to identify the distinctive feeling which marks out, for example, music from African cultures. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise singing songs and develop an ability to sing in two parts and through developing skills in using ostinatos they build an ability to sing rounds in four parts. Pupils are provided with chances to use percussion instruments to compose music in response to a variety of stimuli. This enables them to develop an ability to create different musical effects using a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

125.Pupils throughout the school enjoy music lessons. They listen carefully to recorded music and respond enthusiastically to the activities planned. They concentrate well and listen to instructions carefully. A significant number of Key Stage 1 pupils are embarrassed at having to demonstrate their ideas in front of the rest of the class.

126.The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. One teacher takes most of the music lessons in the school and this promotes a continuity of approach within the school. Discipline within the lessons is good. Expectations of what pupils should do are satisfactory; they are asked to undertake tasks which are within their capabilities and progress proceeds at a steady rate. Sometimes there are too many different activities in one lesson for pupils to be able to make sufficient progress in the period. Lesson planning is good; there are clear learning objectives and teachers are clear about they intend pupils to have achieved by the end of the lesson. Assessment of pupils' achievements is not on going throughout the lessons and often opportunities are lost to provide them with advice on how to improve their performances.

### 131. **Physical education**

127.It was not possible to observe lessons covering all the elements of the school's physical education curriculum. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to observe a small number of games

sessions in both key stages and part of a Key Stage 1 class carrying out gymnastic activities. This showed that standards are good in both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils have a good sense of moving into spaces when running with other children in a confined space. They throw and catch bean bags competently and balance on physical education apparatus using a variety of body shapes. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils pass footballs accurately using both sides of their feet. They dribble a ball skilfully between obstacles keeping it under good control.

128. Pupils make good progress in both key stages in physical education, apart from times when young pupils have difficulty in catching a ball during very cold weather resulting from the lack of a school hall. Pupils benefit greatly from the teaching they receive from the specialist teacher on the staff of the school. They are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants in the various activities planned for them and this enables them to develop skills more easily. Although no swimming lessons were observed records of pupils' achievements show that at the end of Key Stage 2 almost all pupils can swim at least 25 metres unaided. The majority of pupils can swim much longer distances than this and the school has recently won a national swimming award for the greatest percentage of pupils to have gained distance certificates in swimming. This represents very good progress. Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in groups according to their levels of attainment. This ensures that they are given activities that match their needs and ensures good progress. The lack of a large enough hall in the school sometimes affects the pupils' progress during the lesson. For example, the weather is often too cold for very young pupils to make sufficient progress when the lesson has to be on the school field. This affects their dexterity and lowers their self-esteem when their hands are too numb to catch a ball successfully.

129. The pupils' response to physical education is very good. They enjoy the lessons and work hard throughout. They behave very well and show enthusiasm during the activities planned for them. They listen to instructions well and follow the safety advice given to them by the class teacher.

130. The quality of teaching is good. Subject knowledge of physical education is very good and the specialist teacher organises very useful activities which enable the pupils to make good progress. Teachers are dressed suitably for physical education lessons and this sets a good example for the pupils. Lessons always begin with an appropriate warm-up session which allows pupils' muscles to stretch and become more flexible in preparation for the lesson. Resources for learning are used very effectively to enable pupils to make progress. For developing kicking and passing skills, for example, there are enough footballs for each pair of pupils so that there are ample opportunities for pupils to practise. Grids are marked out on the grass for a variety of activities and there is a plentiful supply of cones to serve as obstacles around which pupils dribble. Management of pupils' behaviour is good, including the calm and firm encouragement given to a pupils with behavioural difficulties.

131. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory to cover all of the attainment targets in the National Curriculum programme of study for physical education. The hall is not large enough for a whole class to use it for gymnastics or dance. The school has to hire the village hall for one hour per week when the period of the year when dance is scheduled on the timetable and gymnastics has to be covered in the school hall of a larger school in the district. The school enthusiastically participates in competitive sports. It competes in a mini-rugby league for small schools, in a football tournament for schools in the area and in the district athletics meeting.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **136. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

132. The team consisted of three inspectors who spent a total of 7.5 days in the school. The inspection team:

- spent 32 hours and 55 minutes observing lessons, listening to pupils read and other inspection activities;
- attended a sample of registration sessions in the classrooms;
- attended collective acts of worship in the school hall;
- observed pupils' arrival and departure from school and break times;
- observed all teachers and support staff several times in lessons;
- held interviews with the head teacher, teaching and administrative staff;
- held a discussion with most governors;
- reviewed all the work of a representative sample of three pupils from each year group;
- held formal discussions with pupils, support staff and helpers.

138. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

**Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full- time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	83	0	17	16

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	3.63
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	22.59

**Education support staff**

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	50.8
Average class size:	27.3

· **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998 - 99
	£
Total Income	184657
Total Expenditure	176646
Expenditure per pupil	2760
Balance brought forward from previous year	8011
Balance carried forward to next year	8023

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 104

Number of questionnaires returned: 31

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	25 . 8	61 . 3	9.7	3 . 2	
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	26 . 7	63 . 3	6 . 7	3 . 3	
The school handles complaints from parents well	3 . 4	34 . 5	37 . 9	17 . 2	6 . 9
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	16 . 1	67 . 7	12 . 9	3 . 2	
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24 . 1	65 . 5	10 . 3		
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30 . 0	50 . 0	13 . 3	6 . 7	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	19 . 4	38 . 7	22 . 6	12 . 9	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	19 . 4	64 . 5	3 . 2	12 . 9	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	26 . 7	46 . 7	16 . 7	10 . 0	
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	19 . 4	38 . 7	29 . 0	12 . 9	
My child(ren) like(s) school	38 . 7	58 . 1	3 . 2		

The most significant weakness indicated by the above analysis is the dissatisfaction some parents have about the manner in which complaints are handled. Parents feel their concerns about children's problems in school are not given sufficient attention.