

INSPECTION REPORT

HARLINGTON LOWER SCHOOL

Westoning Road, Harlington, Dunstable, Beds, LU5
6PD

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109511

Headteacher: Mrs P A Storry

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: March 26th – 28th 2001

Inspection number: 182316

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Lower school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 9

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Westoning Road
Harlington
Dunstable
Bedfordshire

Postcode: LU5 6PD

Telephone number: 01525 752500

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Andrew Orriss

Date of previous inspection: January 22nd 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2220	Ian Nelson	Registered inspector	Science Art and design	What sort of school is it? The schools' results and achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What should the school do to improve further?
11229	Mike Freeman	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
25074	Joyce Cox	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs English	
14806	J M Stevens	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Religious Education	

25787	E S Morris	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Design and technology Music Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll	179 (smaller other primary schools)
Pupils eligible for free school meals	3.1% (below average)
Pupils speaking English as an additional language	0.0%
Pupils with special educational needs	12.8% (below average)

This is a lower school with pupils from 4 to 9 years of age situated in a large village in Bedfordshire. The school serves an area of mixed housing and around 9 per cent of the children attend from beyond the immediate area. Most pupils have had some pre-school experience through local playgroups and nurseries. There are very few ethnic minority pupils at the school. One pupil has a statement of special educational need and attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in which a warm and caring ethos and a good team spirit underpin its success. The head-teacher, senior management team and governors provide effective leadership based on a clear commitment to continuous improvement through constant self-evaluation. This results in the provision of a good, well-balanced education, and ensures that pupils are cared for well and that the needs of all pupils are assessed effectively and fully met. Teaching is good overall and results in good standards of attainment by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain good standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4.
- The school provides a good, well-structured and well-balanced education with a good range of learning experiences for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able.
- Links with parents, the information they receive about the school, and their contribution to the life and work of the school are very good.
- The school takes very good care of all its pupils and has very good procedures for monitoring and good for assessing how well they are doing.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The school is very well led and managed by the head-teacher, with good support from the whole staff team and the governors.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing at Key Stage 1 could be higher.
- Although teaching is good overall, some aspects of it could be further improved to raise it to the level of the best in the school more consistently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1996, just before the current head was appointed, and has shown good improvement since then. Improvements include, providing two computer suites and a more welcoming reception area. There are more classroom assistants who have helped the school to maintain, and in some subjects improve, standards achieved by pupils. The school has also tackled successfully the key issues from the last report. There are better systems for assessing pupils achievements and tracking the progress they make. Most teachers now identify clearly what pupils will learn in lessons although there is still room for improvement in some classes. The school has begun to identify and support more able pupils to help to raise their standards of achievement. Unauthorised absence levels are correctly reported in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	B	A	B	C
writing	A	C	C	E
mathematics	B	C	C	D

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

The table shows that, in last year's national tests for seven year olds, pupils attained standards which were above the national average in reading and in line with the national average in writing and mathematics. When compared with the standards in similar schools, based on the numbers of pupils qualifying for free school meals, standards were average in reading, well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. Although these results reflect a year group with a larger than usual number of its pupils identified as having special educational needs, the school has responded to them by implementing a writing action plan and identifying and supporting more able pupils in English, mathematics and science. The inspection findings are that the current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain better results this year. Standards in all subjects are above average by Year 4, except for physical education where too little was seen to be able to make secure judgements. At Key Stage 1 standards are judged to be currently above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and religious education and average in information and communication technology, geography, history and physical education. Standards on entry to school are broadly average and pupils make sound progress through the Foundation Stage, entering Year 1 with average standards of attainment. They make good progress at both key stages. Standards in the tests for seven year olds have fluctuated between average and well above average over recent years and fluctuations of this rate are not unusual in smaller schools. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are strengths at Key Stage 1, although standards in writing could be better. Overall standards achieved at Year 4 are a significant strength of the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They show great interest in their tasks and settle to them well. They take a pride in their work and present it well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave particularly well at lunchtimes, breaks and around the school. They are polite and well mannered. Occasionally some become so enthusiastic in lessons that they forget class rules about taking turns to speak.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and with the adults with whom they work in school. They share equipment and materials sensibly and undertake a range of responsibilities around school.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Twenty six per cent of the teaching seen during the inspection was very good, mainly at Year 4 and in the art and craft workshops. A further forty five per cent was good across the school and the other twenty nine per cent was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The quality of learning is mirrored by the teaching so that pupils make good progress overall which accelerates at Year 4. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good, with a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills, which shows in the good reading standards and grasp of numbers by most pupils and is beginning to raise standards of writing at Key Stage 1. Lessons are well prepared and teachers make effective use of resources so that pupils have all that they need for their tasks. They make sure that each pupil has work which is hard enough, and also enough support to be successful with it. In the best lessons teachers share the learning targets with pupils so they know exactly what they should have achieved by the end of the lesson. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, rather than good, teachers do not state as clearly what pupils will learn or share this information with them. Pupils therefore are less clear about their learning and less settled in class as a consequence. Numeracy homework has been very helpful in raising standards in mathematics. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching or learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good, well structured, planned and balanced education for all its pupils with a strong emphasis on meeting the needs of all pupils, whatever their abilities and aptitudes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school has very good systems in place for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school gives good opportunities for spiritual development through assemblies and lessons. It builds effectively upon the good moral and social foundation that pupils bring to the school from home and provides good opportunities to study art, music and literature from a wide range of cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff know their pupils well and have good procedures for tracking the progress they make at school.

The school is very successful at involving parents in their children's education in a variety of ways. These include good homework provision, constant dialogue with parents through homework diaries, having parents help in school, and excellent fund-raising and social activities of the Friends association.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head-teacher provides very good leadership and has a clear sense of direction. She is supported well by senior staff and the whole staff team, with a strong team spirit prevailing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a good knowledge of their school, fulfil their statutory duties effectively and show a keen interest in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school regularly analyses its own performance and sets targets for improvement based upon that analysis such as the action plan for writing.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school ensures that resources are well managed and allocated to its identified priorities.

The school has sufficient suitably qualified teachers and a good number of support staff who work well alongside teachers. Accommodation is now good thanks to recent refurbishments that include a new classroom and the creation of two computer suites. The playground is rather small for the numbers of pupils at the school. Resources for learning are good overall. The governors and senior staff have a clear understanding of the need to obtain the best quality resources for the price that they can afford rather than going for the cheapest deal on offer.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • Behaviour in school is good. • The teaching is good. • The school expects their children to work hard and try their best. • They are well informed on how their children are getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not think their children get the right amount of homework. • Some feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities after school.

The inspectors wholeheartedly endorse what the parents like about the school as all these issues are confirmed by their findings. The inspectors think that the school does provide sufficient homework for children and that the range of activities at lunchtimes and after school is appropriate for this type of school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Baseline assessment indicates that children enter school with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. During the Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress and are well prepared for the National Curriculum at Year 1. They are given a good grounding in literacy and numeracy with a strong emphasis on learning basic skills, including speaking and listening, and develop a good understanding of the world around them. Most pupils are on course to achieve the early learning goals expected by the age of five, with the higher attaining children likely to surpass them.

- 2 The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 showed standards to be above the national average in reading and in line with it in writing and mathematics. In comparison with schools with similar pupils, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were average in reading, well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. The group taking the tests, however, included a much higher proportion than normal of pupils with special educational needs. The class also suffered from having three different teachers in the year. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher than expected level 3 in reading was well above average. In writing it was above average and in mathematics the proportion was close to the national average. In teacher assessments in 2000 the pupils attained standards in speaking and listening which were very high, in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Over recent years, standards have fluctuated between well above the national average and in line with it. Such fluctuations are not uncommon in smaller schools and reflect the differences in the groups of pupils taking the tests each year. Over recent years there has been little difference in the standards attained between boys and girls. Teacher assessments in science in 2000 show pupils attaining below the national average. However the results of each element of science show standards ranging from very high (in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally) in the study of materials and their properties, to well below average in life and living processes, and average in experimental and investigative science and physical processes. The school has already begun tackling this discrepancy through a planned review of the way science is covered throughout the school. A new action plan is in place to raise the standards in writing, and the numeracy hour is already raising standards in mathematics. Pupils have been set individual targets in writing and are making good progress towards them.

- 3 At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be above average. The evidence of the current inspection shows that the current Year 2 pupils are set to attain above average standards in this year's national tests for seven year olds. Standards seen during the inspection show that pupils at Key Stage 1 are above average in English, mathematics, science, religious education, art and design and design and technology. In Information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography and physical education, standards are in line with those expected of the age. In music too few lessons were seen to make secure judgements on standards. Where work in music was seen it was of a good standard. Pupils in Year 4 are attaining above average standards in all subjects except physical education, where too little was seen to make clear judgements. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school and it accelerates in Year 4 because of the high proportion of very good teaching there. The more able

pupils make good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English and science.

- 4 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. They achieve average standards in literacy and numeracy because of the very effective class support and the high quality teaching by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The one pupil with a statement of educational need achieves well. Indeed, the statement is for a physical impairment and the pupil has made such good progress that he participates fully in all physical education lessons. A group of more able pupils has been identified and receives extra support to ensure that the pupils achieve as well as they are able to. They achieve well in mathematics and are beginning to do so in other subjects.
- 5 The literacy and numeracy hours have been established effectively and are based upon careful consideration of pupils' needs. This has led to additional time for writing as staff felt that insufficient time had been allocated to it, resulting in writing standards that did not match those of reading and speaking and listening at the end of Key Stage 1. The effective introduction of the numeracy hour has ensured that pupils have a good grasp of basic number rules.
- 6 Standards in speaking and listening are above average at both key stages. Pupils listen attentively so that teachers rarely need to repeat instructions. They are quickly absorbed by good literature and pay good attention in assemblies. When explaining their ideas pupils at both stages speak with confidence and clarity. From an early age their ideas and opinions are listened to sensitively; consequently they grow in their confidence and ability to express themselves verbally. Year 4 pupils were particularly impressive in talking with inspectors about their school and the work they do, even explaining that, although the children in the reception class play most of the time, they are still learning.
- 7 Standards in reading are above average at both key stages. The school places a very strong emphasis on teaching basic skills, and from the reception class children learn their letter sounds and how to tackle unknown words. As they move through the school they build upon these early skills, becoming avid and enthusiastic readers with a love of literature and a very good knowledge of books and authors. By Year 4 pupils use the library effectively for researching information. Pupils achieve well in reading at both key stages.
- 8 Standards of writing are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Year 4. The strong emphasis on correct letter formation in the reception class leads to a good standard of handwriting throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 an over reliance on diary writing means that pupils do not get enough opportunities to write in other styles and formats and so writing becomes a little tedious and uninteresting. Pupils could achieve more. At Year 4 pupils produce a lot of writing in a range of formats and styles including poetry and information writing across different subjects. Some of the higher attaining pupils achieve standards expected of eleven year olds.
- 9 In mathematics the seven-year-old pupils understand the language of number and have quick recall of number facts to twenty. They have a secure knowledge of shapes and their properties and measure accurately in centimetres. The nine-year-old pupils have a good grasp of numbers and measure accurately to millimetres. They apply their measuring skills effectively in other subjects like geography and design and technology. At both key stages pupils tackle mathematical problems and investigations effectively. Standards of achievement are good.

- 10 In science the strong emphasis on investigative work ensures that pupils are interested and enthusiastic and keen to learn at both key stages. Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of scientific terminology using words like, `transparent`, `translucent` and `opaque` to describe the materials they are studying. They undertake simple experiments to see if materials conduct electricity when investigating circuits. By Year 4 pupils are conducting experiments and investigations into rusting, testing the strength of materials used in carrier bags and separating solids and liquids. Pupils achieve good standards, especially in their practical work.
- 11 Standards of art and design, religious education and design and technology are above average throughout both key stages. The creative and imaginative structure of the timetable for part of one afternoon a week enables pupils to experience a wide range of art and craft techniques in small groups, supported by well-briefed and confident adults. Consequently pupils achieve high standards in their art and design work. In religious education they acquire a good knowledge and understanding of a range of world religions because teachers know the subject well and teach it confidently.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 The previous inspection report observed that attitudes to learning and overall behaviour were good; this still holds true. Pupils show good, positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They work diligently and co-operate well with each other. They listen attentively, take pride in their work and only suffer distraction occasionally when over enthusiastic pupils forget the rules about taking turns and call out in lessons.
- 13 Their behaviour is good. Pupils move around the school and playground in a calm, orderly and safe manner and behave well in lessons. They show good care for the school building, its environment and equipment. At lunchtime they queue quietly and sensibly for their meal, talk politely and quietly to those nearest to them and clear away properly when they have finished, making the midday meal a very calm and civilised occasion. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults; there is a notable absence of bullying, racism or other inappropriate behaviour and pupils care for and respect the values, beliefs and feelings of others. There have been no exclusions for some years and parents support fully the positive stance the school takes towards fostering and maintaining good behaviour.
- 14 The personal development of pupils is very good. Pupils display very good relationships, grasp initiatives and undertake personal responsibilities eagerly. They complete tasks, like being register monitor for example, very well. The older pupils care for and support the younger pupils very well. They are invariably polite and helpful to adults and are at ease with them. They are active in supporting local and national charities, like Help the Aged, the local Hospice and the local senior citizens' home.
- 15 Attendance is good and pupils arrive for lessons punctually; registers are securely stored, well monitored and comply with statutory requirements. The unauthorised absence figure for the year is now reported in the prospectus and the annual report of the governing body.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 16 Overall teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. In twenty six per cent of lessons teaching is very good, mainly at Year 4 and in art and

design. In a further forty five per cent it is good and in the remaining twenty nine per cent it is satisfactory. A scrutiny of pupils' work over the year so far suggests that good teaching is sustained over time. Consequently pupils learn well throughout the school, making good progress particularly in Year 4. The use of homework is good and the homework diaries that accompany it are used well to keep parents informed of how their children are progressing in school. At the time of the last inspection teaching was said to be good but with some shortcomings. This time there were no significant weaknesses so the quality of teaching has improved.

- 17 The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage (reception class) is satisfactory overall with some significant strengths. It is based upon a good understanding of young children and the requirements of the Foundation Stage. The Early Learning Goals for children are clearly understood and used to inform the planning. However some of the planning is not focused tightly enough on what pupils will learn. There is a strong focus on teaching basic skills and this was demonstrated in the teaching of the sounds made by letters and how to write them correctly when pupils took turns to add an initial letter to 'en' to give words like hen and pen. Good use is made of support staff and the teacher and classroom assistant form a very good teaching team. Another strength of the teaching is the way the teacher encourages higher attaining children to write their own words while the lower attaining children copy her writing. The play activities, however, lack structure so that some pupils lose interest and become aimless at times.
- 18 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and pupils make good progress in most aspects of most subjects. In the best lessons there is a strong focus on practical activities which motivate the pupils and keep them interested so that they concentrate well. For example in a science lesson in Year 1 pupils investigated how to make a ping pong ball move without touching it. This excited them and held their attention as they decided what equipment to use from a range on offer and set about their investigation. In the art carousel pupils were again motivated by the practical nature of the activities on offer and the range of resources available and produced some pleasing pictures and models as a result. Occasionally, however, pupils' enthusiasm bubbles over and they call out in their keenness to get involved. At times teachers find this difficult to handle and the pace of the lesson drops while they manage the behaviour and settle pupils. There is a strong emphasis on teaching basic skills in all subjects at Key Stage 1. Pupils were reminded about the importance of capital letters and full stops to show where sentences start and end in a literacy lesson for instance. Consequently writing in full sentences become almost second nature to pupils towards the end of the key stage. This emphasis on basic skills is also a significant factor in the good reading standards pupils achieve.
- 19 Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall with some significant strengths at Year 4. In the best teaching pupils are expected to work hard, behave well and achieve good standards, and they respond positively to these demands. Planning is very good, saying clearly what pupils will learn and how they will learn it. These learning targets are shared with the pupils so that they are in no doubt about what they should be learning and how they would know if they had succeeded. Very good questioning challenges pupils and encourages them to think through the issues they are studying. In geography, for example, Year 4 pupils were interested and inspired by the challenge to find particular places on a world map and in doing so learned proper geographical terms like Southern Hemisphere. In English the questioning encouraged them to refer to the text being studied to justify their views and opinions. Good subject knowledge leads to very confident direct teaching as when pupils learned about adjectival clauses in a literacy lesson. The marking of work helps pupils to understand

what they have done well and how to make it better. In science books, for example, comments from the teacher encourage the pupils to reflect on their work and there are replies from pupils to the teacher showing that they have taken on board what she said. Not all teaching at Key Stage 2 is of quite such a high standard. It never falls below satisfactory, but occasionally a teacher does not control the enthusiasm of a class sufficiently well and the pace of the lesson flags a little, as the teacher sometimes talks over the pupils some inevitably are distracted. Not all the marking and feedback to pupils about their work meets the high standards of the best seen. These are relative weaknesses however and rectifying them would further enhance the quality of the teaching and learning, raising satisfactory teaching to a good standard.

- 20 Some of the best teaching was seen in the art and craft carousel where an imaginative use of staff, time and resources led to high standards, very well motivated pupils and a real excitement for learning. The pupils themselves commented on how much they preferred this approach to learning than in lessons like numeracy and literacy. There is a strong focus in most teaching on meeting the needs of all pupils in a class, including those with special educational needs and the more able. Consequently the majority of pupils make good progress in their learning. This was clearly evident from the science work of pupils with special educational needs, which showed very good improvement over the year since September. The work started by being poorly presented and difficult to follow but, by the time of the inspection, it was neat, mainly correctly spelled and showed better understanding of the ideas being studied. Literacy and numeracy are effectively taught across the school, although the strong emphasis on reading which has led to such good standards detracted from the writing at Key Stage 1 last year resulting in only average attainment in the national tests for seven year olds. This imbalance is now being rectified through the implementation of the writing action plan, including allocating more time to writing. Numeracy teaching is having a positive effect on standards which are rising as a consequence. Both literacy and numeracy are used effectively in other subjects. For example in science there is an expectation that pupils will record their findings in their own words rather than simply completing spaces in worksheets. Pupils use their measuring skills effectively in geography and design and technology.
- 21 All teachers are aware of pupils with special educational needs in their classes and plan work specifically for the pupils' learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy because of the way in which pupils are placed in ability groups. The pupils receive very good support from the class assistants, who are well briefed and very efficient. All staff have copies of individual education plans and have regular meetings with the special needs co-ordinator so everyone involved is familiar with any specific need. All pupils have individual targets for literacy and these are very skilfully incorporated into teachers' lesson plans and into pupils' individual education plans. This results in all staff working together for the same aims and this accelerates progress and raises standards.

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

- 22 At the time of the last inspection the school was criticised for a lack of emphasis on pupils applying their knowledge and understanding in mathematics and science and for a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. These shortcomings have been successfully addressed. The provision for special educational needs was considered a strength last time and this high quality provision has been maintained since then.

Overall, therefore, the quality of education provided shows good improvement since the last inspection.

- 23 The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for its pupils. The curriculum is well balanced and of good quality, giving full coverage of all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The Foundation Stage for children in the reception class has been well implemented. Statutory requirements are fully met. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in the opportunities for pupils to carry out investigational work in mathematics and science. The music curriculum has also been improved through the introduction of a suitable scheme of work that covers all aspects of the subject. The amount of time allocated to the teaching of each subject is appropriate and ensures that there is sufficient teaching time available each year to enable pupils to increase their skills and knowledge in all subjects. There are useful schemes of work in place for all subjects and teachers are using these effectively to plan worthwhile activities for their pupils. Subject co-ordinators monitor the planning to ensure that all aspects of their subjects are being taught in sufficient depth and at an appropriate level for the age and abilities of the pupils. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented. They are well planned and effectively taught throughout the school and contribute to the good standards of reading and pupils' good knowledge and mental recall of number facts. Governors have a statement regarding their policy on sex education and have, through the personal and health education policy, a drug awareness programme in place. Provision is satisfactory.
- 24 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All pupils receive an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs receive full access and entitlement to this curriculum and participate enthusiastically in all aspects of school life. Individual education plans are well written containing specific targets for pupils to achieve. The one pupil with a statement of special educational need receives full access to the National Curriculum, because of the very good support provided by the class assistant and the highly effective individual and small group support provided by the co-ordinator.
- 25 The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all its pupils. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school enabling them to benefit from the many learning and social opportunities provided. Pupils who are withdrawn from class lessons for additional support or instrumental lessons in music are carefully monitored to ensure they do not miss essential class work. The benefits they derive from this provision far outweigh any disadvantages. For example, some higher attaining pupils are withdrawn from lessons to give them more challenging work and help them make better progress. The project is in its early stages and it is too soon to judge clearly its impact on the standards these pupils achieve in the longer term, but there are indications, particularly at Year 4, of high achievement among the most able pupils.
- 26 The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory range of visits to places of interest, which are linked to pupils' work in class. Recent visits have been made to Bedford Museum, the local village and to a Synagogue. The many visitors to the school also give pupils opportunities to widen their understanding of the world around them. Theatre groups perform for pupils. For instance a recent performance of `The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe` was very well received and stimulated pupils' interest in both drama and literature. An Indian Dance Company fascinated pupils and was linked to their own work in dance. Year 2 pupils were seen during the inspection successfully devising their own dance movements to a traditional Indian tale. Other

regular visitors include the Fire Brigade, the road safety officer, the vicar and the local football club. The annual book week is very popular and is brought alive through visits from poets, some from other cultures, and a librarian from the public library. Grandparents are invited into school to talk to pupils about days gone by and make history lessons more relevant. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities are organised to extend pupils' learning and enjoyment. These include clubs organised and run by teachers for country dancing, computers, art and recorders. There is also a successful football club on Saturday mornings organised by parents.

- 27 There are good links with the local playgroup and the children visit the school to see school productions and concerts and the annual sports day. Strong links are also maintained with the local middle school and other lower schools. Teachers meeting regularly to discuss various aspects of the curriculum, and Year 4 pupils visit the middle school to ease their transition at the end of the school year. Pupils raise money for a variety of charities, currently Help the Aged, and are involved in helping local elderly people at Harvest Time and Christmas with cards and gifts. All of these help teach pupils the value of caring for others.
- 28 The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. All of these areas are well developed and permeate the life of the school. Great importance is put on teaching pupils correct attitudes and values which will stand them in good stead as they grow older and develop them into caring and valued members of society. Acts of collective worship fully meet statutory requirements. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was said to be sound. It is now good, showing a distinct improvement since that time, particularly in spiritual and cultural development.
- 29 Spiritual development is mainly fostered through assemblies and religious education lessons, but it is also developed through work in other subjects such as music, art and science. Pupils are encouraged to wonder at the beauty of the natural world and to be uplifted when listening to a particularly moving piece of music or viewing the work of a famous artist. Music played at the start of assemblies creates a calm and reverent atmosphere, which is conducive to quiet reflection. The thoughtful work of pupils in the styles of various artists is seen in many good quality displays around the school.
- 30 The provision for pupils' moral development is good and is actively supported by all members of the school community. Staff are good role models in their dealings with each other and pupils. Pupils are taught right from wrong from the moment they join the school and are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and the impact it can have on both adults and other pupils. School rules are prominently displayed and are readily understood by all. Pupils fully support the rewards and sanctions system and know that rules are for the benefit of everyone. Each class also negotiates its own set of rules, which, because of the pupils' involvement in their formulation, are relevant and kept by the vast majority. Pupils are trusted to behave sensibly and are, for example, allowed to use the library during breaks to practise on their musical instruments. They respond well to this trust and do not abuse it.
- 31 The high quality of the relationships in the school supports the pupils' social development well. Pupils willingly take responsibility and are provided with many opportunities to look after equipment and perform various jobs, both in class and around the school. For example, pupils in Year 4 set up the hall for daily assemblies and operate the sound system and the overhead projector in a professional and unobtrusive manner. Pupils of all ages also perform responsible tasks in class, such

as tidying up, giving out equipment and taking the register to the office. All of these planned opportunities help develop a sense of community in the pupils and they feel a useful and valued part of the school.

- 32 Cultural development is good. Pupils learn about their own and other faiths in assemblies and religious education, about artists and musicians from other countries and times in art and music lessons and about how different people live in geography lessons. For instance, pupils in Year 2 have been comparing life on the island of St. Lucia with their own lives in Harlington. Visiting dance and drama groups give pupils an insight into other cultures such as India. The school has a collection of interesting artefacts from around the world which fascinate the pupils, and stimulate their imaginations. Pupils learn about their own culture in history by studying local history as well as important people and events in British history, such as Florence Nightingale, the Great Fire of London and the cultural effects of invasions by Romans, Vikings, Celts, Normans and Anglo Saxons. Much of this work is appropriately linked to the history of the local village and its development through the ages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 33 The previous inspection report of 1996 noted the good standards of pastoral care, guidance and welfare provided by the school to its pupils. This has steadily improved, and a notable, tangible strength of the school is its very good, well-planned and well delivered care for the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. This is appreciated greatly by parents.
- 34 Child protection is well organised and very effective. The senior teacher is the nominated person for child protection in the school and most staff have received satisfactory child protection training. The school's personal, social and health education programme supports pupils effectively and contributes to their general personal development and understanding of the wider world. Support and guidance for pupils are very good and well structured. The school's procedures for encouraging and monitoring attendance are good. Pastoral care is centred on the individual class teacher who monitors and supports her pupils on a daily basis very effectively. The school is highly successful in following its policy of eliminating bullying and other inappropriate behaviour: this has resulted in a happy, well adjusted and well behaved body of pupils. The school's clear behaviour policy, allied to the home-school agreement and the overwhelmingly strong support of parents, contributes fully and very effectively to the elimination of bullying in the school. Pupils' personal development is well monitored because staff know their pupils well. Formal procedures for recording pupils' personal development, however, are not as systematic or rigorous as those for recording academic progress. First aid and fire safety measures are good. Several of the staff have formal and current first-aid qualifications and the school has a discrete, well organised First Aid room. The annual health and safety audit of the building and grounds is thorough and contributes effectively to maintaining the high standards of safety in the school.
- 35 Very good procedures are in place for assessing pupils with special educational needs and work is planned carefully to meet their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator is vigilant when recording the progress of pupils with special educational needs. There are good links with support agencies, such as the speech and language service, and the school ensures that pupils' needs are assessed regularly by the educational psychologist.

- 36 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Baseline assessment takes place for the Foundation stage pupils. Teachers are able to verify pupils' progress using a range of formal and informal assessment procedures. These include:
- Key Stage 1 national tests
 - The optional national tests at Years 3 and 4
 - Standardised tests in verbal and non verbal reasoning, spelling and reading
 - End of topic tests.
- The staff monitor assessment results very carefully, and analyse them rigorously so that they can predict the likely National Curriculum test results for future years. They make good use of the assessment information to plan relevant work for all pupils, identify individual learning needs and plan how best to meet them. In this way teachers identify pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils and provide additional support to enable them to achieve as well as they can.
- 37 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. The school has good, straightforward systems which enable teachers to compile the clear and meaningful annual reports to parents. The progress of different year groups, boys and girls, and different ability groups are all monitored to ensure that no-one's needs are overlooked when planning future work. Very specific targets are set for pupils at the beginning of each term and progress towards them is checked regularly.
- 38 A key issue in the previous inspection report was to take steps to develop further moderation and assessment practices to improve teachers' understanding of progression, understanding and skills in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This has been rectified and has been improved considerably.
- 39 The very good provision for pupils' welfare contributes effectively to their learning and development, providing a safe, secure and caring environment in which pupils' learning and personal development can flourish. This provision fully supports the school's stated aim to have a happy, hardworking school where pupils are safe at work and play.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 40 The previous report of 1996 praised the very good partnership with parents. This is still a notable strength of the school. The school has developed very good, productive relationships with parents and these are reflected in the many positive responses given by parents when interviewed or when completing the parents' questionnaire prior to this inspection. The responses indicate high levels of parental satisfaction with the school. Commendably, the school undertook its own survey of parents' views in 2000 and has acted effectively upon the findings to strengthen and develop its relationship with parents.
- 41 Parents receive good, clear, helpful and regular information from school, including regular informative newsletters and the annual report of the governing body and this is much appreciated by them. They receive well produced, clear and comprehensive annual reports on their child's progress and the termly parent-teacher meetings are well attended and very helpful for parents. Parents are highly supportive of the school and are encouraged to help in classrooms in such areas as reading, art and ICT, and with educational visits. About ten to fifteen parents provide this valued help on a regular basis. The art carousel, which takes place on Wednesday afternoons, could not function in its present format without the high levels of voluntary support which enables the pupils to achieve such high standards of work. Some parents help with

extra-curricular activities such as the Computer Club. The Friends of the School organisation is well supported and, by means of social events, raises substantial and useful funds for the school. The home-school agreement with parents has been well received. Parents welcome the openness of the school and appreciate the helpfulness and good accessibility of the staff; any problems or suggestions from parents are dealt with respectfully and quickly. Parents support their children's learning at home and the homework and reading diaries systems work well.

- 42 The school has very good links with those parents who have children with special educational needs. Parents receive notification of their children's needs and are kept informed from stage one of the Code of Practice. Regular meetings are held to ensure that parents are aware of all aspects of their children's needs. For example, individual education plans are shared with parents, which increases their capacity to help at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 43 Overall leadership and management of the school are good. The strong leadership and management identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, despite staff changes. The head-teacher has a very clear sense of direction for the school and shares this effectively with the senior management team and the whole staff to create a strong team spirit throughout the school. Consequently the school's aims, with their focus on creating a caring, happy, hardworking, and safe environment in which to teach basic skills within a well-balanced and broad education, underpin all aspects of school life. The school promotes the inclusion of all pupils in what it offers and regularly analyses standards and progress to make sure that none are overlooked and that lessons meet the needs of all ages and abilities. It is a school with a clear commitment to continuous improvement. This is demonstrated through the school development plan which identifies clear priorities based upon systematic self reviews. For example the school has identified as priorities:

- the development of writing, mathematics and science
- developing the marking of pupils' work and
- helping pupils to self evaluate against their targets.

Having identified these priorities the school has already put in place a comprehensive action plan to improve writing and a system to give extra support to more able pupils. Both of these initiatives are already having a positive impact on the standards being achieved by pupils. Each subject has its own development plan showing priorities within it. These are of good quality overall. Clear systems for performance management are based upon effective monitoring of standards, teaching and learning. All co-ordinators have a clear role in this monitoring and fulfil it well.

- 44 There is very good management and administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher is hard working and dedicated to ensuring that all pupils with special educational needs achieve their full potential. The co-ordinator understands pupils' special requirements very well. The paperwork complies fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs and is completed conscientiously and meticulously. The co-ordinator has very regular meetings with all the staff to discuss pupils' achievements and special needs.

- 45 The governor for special needs is fully involved and visits the school regularly to monitor the special needs provision. There are regular reports to the governing body on the progress and effects of the special needs provision and pupils with special educational needs are discussed at every governing body meeting. Learning

resources for pupils with special educational needs, which are predominately for reading and writing, are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Finance for special educational needs is budgeted well and set against clearly demarcated priorities. Additional funding is targeted carefully on those for whom it is intended, for example pupils receiving additional support in literacy.

- 46 The governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They know their school well and understand their roles and responsibilities. They undertake their duties enthusiastically and take an active role in monitoring standards within the school. They have a clear role in devising the school development plan and planning the budget to meet the priorities within it. They keep a careful eye on spending and know how to ensure they get the best value at the best price in their spending. They define good value for money in terms of how effectively spending helps to raise standards although they do not have formal systems in place to measure this yet. They are fully aware of how well the school is doing and understand the information provided about national test results and what this means for the school. They use this information to help in setting targets for improvement. A regular programme of visits, plus any informal ones they can fit in, ensure that they are fully informed about how well the school is working on a day-to-day basis as well as on a more strategic, long-term basis. They regularly meet with subject co-ordinators to keep themselves informed on specific subject issues and are generally well informed. Individual governors take responsibility for particular subjects and work closely with the co-ordinators to monitor the provision. They visit regularly to see pupils at work and meet with co-ordinators to discuss any issues regarding their subject and possible future initiatives. Their involvement is much appreciated and enables them to have a secure knowledge of the impact of any developments on the standards attained by the pupils.
- 47 Financial planning is good and specific grants are used for their designated purpose. The school benefits from generous donations from the parent teacher association which help to enhance the budget and provide extra resources. Day to day financial management is good and the school clerk makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. Given that pupils enter the school with average attainment and leave above average at Year 4, because good leadership and management ensure a broad and balanced education for all pupils is delivered through good teaching, the school is providing good value for money.
- 48 The school has enough suitably qualified teachers and a good number of support staff. Volunteers work in school on a regular basis and are used effectively in a range of ways to enhance pupils' learning, in art for example. Staff induction and procedures for identifying and meeting training needs are effective. The accommodation was said to be well used but cramped at the time of the last inspection. It has been improved well since then, through building and refurbishment work, to provide plenty of space which is well used. It is well maintained and kept very clean and tidy which encourages high standards of tidiness among the pupils. The creation of two computer suites is an improvement since last time and these are effectively used although they are too new to have had a major impact on standards yet. The school has very good resources for information and communication technology. Resources for English, design and technology, art and design and physical education are good. Those for other subjects and the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The quality and range of art and design resources make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by pupils in these areas.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49 In order to improve standards and progress even further the school should:

Raise the standards of writing at Key Stage 1 to match those of reading and speaking and listening by:

- * Implementing the school's writing action plan and providing a wider, more exciting and imaginative range of writing opportunities for all pupils. (Paragraphs 2, 5, 8, 20, 58, 60, 63) (This issue has been identified as a priority by the school which has developed an action plan already).
- Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good, improve its quality by ensuring that: all lesson plans say quite clearly and specifically what pupils will learn in the lesson, sharing those learning targets with the pupils and helping them to consider how effectively they have met them by the end of the lesson. (Paragraphs 17, 51, 54, 65)
- All marking of work and feedback in lessons is as good as the best in the school, by telling pupils regularly and consistently what is good about their work and how to make it better. (Paragraphs 19, 76, 108)
- All teachers apply consistent behaviour management strategies to prevent over enthusiastic pupils from calling out and becoming restless and unsettled, and adopt some of the more imaginative and creative teaching methods already used in school. (Paragraphs 12, 18, 19, 69, 76, 95)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	26	45	29	-	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	168
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	18

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	13
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	24	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	81 (97)	96 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	139
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	199/00
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	£
Total income	309,102
Total expenditure	289,026
Expenditure per pupil	1,865
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,076
Balance carried forward to next year	36,940

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	168
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	47	1	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	43	13	3	1
The teaching is good.	64	32	0	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	51	3	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	32	8	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	30	5	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	36	3	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	42	14	3	5

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50 The school has maintained the sound quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage that was observed at the time of the previous inspection. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are five with a range of social and early learning skills. For most children these are in line with those usually found in children of this age. Baseline assessment also indicates that attainment, while broadly average overall, is below the county average in some areas. Inspection findings are that, by the age of five, the children are above average in their personal and social development and in their speaking and listening skills. Other skills, including literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world, are average.

51 The reception class provides a stimulating learning environment where the children feel happy, confident and secure. During the inspection, the twenty-five children in the reception class were working together appropriately and have settled well into their class routines. The teacher has worked very hard to plan the curriculum in accordance with the requirements of the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Children learn through appropriate teacher-directed activities and play opportunities. However, play opportunities are not always sufficiently structured or purposeful and some children are occupied rather than learning during these sessions, which can become quite noisy. Links with parents and carers are very good and their contribution to the children's learning is invaluable. There are home visits prior to admission, and parents support children's early education very effectively and are appreciative of this close involvement. There are appropriate assessment procedures for tracking children's progress and all staff make relevant comments about each child's progress. Parents provide very useful information about children's achievements prior to entry, and records of children who have attended pre-school provision are shared. All these records are used successfully to plan the next steps in learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved in terms of staffing since the last inspection. There are now two classroom assistants in addition to the teacher and this allows children to learn more effectively in smaller groups.

Personal, social and emotional development.

52 By the time children leave the Foundation Stage, their personal, social and emotional development is above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. This demonstrates good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching, as children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Children respond very positively to their experiences at school, forming amicable relationships with their peers and attending well to their teachers. Children are encouraged, at specified times, to choose activities for themselves and to take turns and to share toys and equipment. They co-operate well in pairs and small groups. For instance, they share duplo without fussing and they help each other to fasten aprons when painting. Adults are good role models, listening with genuine interest to what children have to say and speaking with courtesy and consideration. Children are encouraged to be polite in return, saying "please" and "thank you " when they receive help. Staff also promote children's personal development very effectively by ensuring that the

equipment and resources that the children use are easily accessible to them, which helps them to become increasingly independent.

Communication, language and literacy.

- 53 Attainment is in line with the national goals in communication, language and literacy for five-year-olds, with strengths in speaking and listening. The children's use of spoken English is good and the majority of them speak in clear, well-formed sentences. The children listen to stories attentively and readily share books with each other and with adults. The staff use talk to good effect in all the areas of learning and are good listeners. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Children handle books appropriately and with confidence. Many of the children are beginning to pick out separate words in the text and identify rhyming words such as "hat" "cat" and "rat." Children take books home to share with their parents and this involvement has a noticeable impact on attainment. Writing is incorporated into many activities; for example higher attaining children write their names unaided on their fruit paintings. Most write their names unaided and those who can't copy from their name card or the teacher's writing. Higher attaining children have a good understanding of initial letters and identify rhyming words. Work sampling indicates that, by the end of the reception year, higher attaining children write well-structured short sentences with an appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. Letter formation is good, with most letters correctly formed and fairly even. The teaching of communication, language and literacy has many strengths. Adults are skilled at encouraging discussion in class and in group lessons. Elements of the Literacy Framework are used well by the teacher and a good understanding of phonics is developed through skilful teaching. As a result of this good teaching, children can identify many initial sounds and rhyming words.

Mathematical development.

- 54 Towards the end of the reception year, a small number of higher attaining children achieve levels in mathematics which are above those of most five-year-olds. All the children achieve the early learning goals for this area. Skills and understanding are developed well through sorting, counting and matching activities. For instance, children learn to count and add the spots on two dice. Some children find the task of adding two objects quite challenging but persevere and achieve success. All children make good progress in extending their understanding of numbers through daily use and practice. For instance, they sing or say number songs and rhymes. Children use mathematical language with confidence and this is reinforced well in other activities. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher uses a good range of practical activities to promote children's mathematical development, but is not always clear as to what children will have learnt during a mathematics session. In one lesson, too many different activities were introduced which confused some children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

- 55 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developing well and they attain similar levels to most children of their age. Provision has improved in this area since the previous inspection and all children receive appropriate and interesting practical activities. Opportunities are provided for children to develop technological skills through their use of construction toys during play activities with both large and small apparatus. The children use the computer with confidence and many children can already control the mouse well and recognise many letters on the keyboard. Children are encouraged to learn using all their senses. For instance, they enjoy squeezing, smelling and tasting various fruits. Adults support children well in investigating their surroundings and encourage them to find things out for themselves. They learn about their locality by enjoying walks to look at seasonal changes, such as autumn leaves and winter snow. Children also learn about how they have changed

when three babies visit the class! All staff provide children with imaginative tasks and give them a wide range of learning experiences to develop their understanding of the world.

Physical development.

- 56 The provision to promote children's physical development is good. The school has purchased bright, appealing outdoor equipment which children enjoy using every day. The children make good use of the secure outdoor play area to develop their gross motor skills and to use space safely. They show good control and co-ordination when propelling wheeled vehicles and they use good avoidance techniques as they travel around the playground. The teaching of indoor physical development is good. Teacher's' planning says clearly what pupils will learn in lessons and staff join in the activities enthusiastically. Children enjoyed the physical education lesson seen. They were happy and enthusiastic and showed good progress in their throwing and catching skills.

Creative development.

- 57 Children's creative and artistic skills are developing appropriately for their age and are evident in the bright displays of work and in the confidence with which the children select materials. They attain levels in most areas of creative work which are typical for their age. They are encouraged to mix their own paints. Children use paints, crayons and pencils to good effect, and their free paintings show an abundance of brilliant colour and enjoyment. Musical expertise is developing appropriately. Children sing together tunefully, recite rhymes, and use appropriate actions to join in with taped songs. The teacher encourages the children to enjoy music and is a good role model with her own enthusiastic and tuneful singing. The children enjoy role-play activities and staff change the theme of the home corner regularly.

ENGLISH

- 58 The results of the 2000 tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, show that standards in reading are above the national average whilst those in writing are in line. In comparison with the average for similar schools, standards are in line in reading but well below in writing. Teacher assessments match the national tests and show that pupils also achieve well above average standards in speaking and listening. Over the last four years, attainment in reading and writing has fluctuated from well above to well below similar schools for both boys and girls. This variation is due to several factors. Firstly, there are a relatively small number of pupils taking the tests each year, which makes statistical analysis difficult. Secondly, the pupils taking the national tests in 2000 had several different teachers, which had an impact on writing standards. Finally, a larger than usual number of pupils with special educational needs took the tests in 2000.
- 59 Inspection evidence shows that Year 2 pupils attain standards in speaking and listening and reading which are above those of pupils of a similar age. Standards in writing are typical for seven-year-olds. The school has maintained the good standards in speaking and listening and reading indicated in the previous inspection. The school is very aware of the dip in writing standards and has put several very good incentives in place to improve last year's results. Year 4 pupils attain standards which are above those of other nine-year-olds. Older pupils read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding. Higher attaining pupils display an impressive interest in words and their meanings. All pupils have neat, legible handwriting. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and their attainment is in line with the national average in English.

- 60 The school has successfully implemented the literacy hour in all classes, which is based upon careful consideration of the pupils' needs. For instance, the school felt that pupils' writing attainment was suffering because some pupils had insufficient time to complete writing tasks in the literacy hour. It was sensibly decided to allocate additional time for writing and to set individual writing targets, and this has already improved writing standards. Within the literacy hour, due attention is given to reading and writing, and pupils are taught spelling structures, specific grammar vocabulary, and punctuation, which accelerates their progress in reading and writing.
- 61 By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above average and they make good progress. This is begun effectively in the reception class where children's opinions and ideas are listened to with sensitivity and interest by all staff during class discussions. In the Year 1 classes, pupils make good progress in developing and extending their speaking and listening skills when discussing texts during the literacy hour. Teachers are good role models with their own clear diction and expressive reading. Pupils respond very well to this good teaching by listening carefully and being keen to predict what might happen next. Pupils' confidence in speaking in front of the whole class is consolidated and developed even further when pupils in the Year 2 class have the opportunity to give oral explanations of their learning in many subjects. In all classes, pupils pay close attention to what the teacher is saying and reply to questions with thoughtful comment and detail. During the inspection, higher attaining pupils, in the Year 1/ 2 class read their stories about the contents of a metal box to fellow pupils confidently and coherently. Pupils in this class were also very sensible when listening to and criticising each other's work. They gave thoughtful and mature responses. Year 4 pupils attain standards which are above those normally seen. During a literacy lesson the whole class listened with obvious fascination and interest to the opening section of C.S.Lewis' novel, "The Magician's Nephew." They demonstrated that that are learning how authors create imaginary worlds, when they responded with accuracy and fluency to the teacher's very skilful questions about Lewis' distinctive style. Older pupils were very confident, coherent and sensible when discussing aspects of school life with the inspection team. They displayed a maturity beyond their years when they explained how children in the reception class learn to socialise and interact with each other, and what aspects of school life they would change if they were the headteacher!
- 62 Pupils' attainment in reading is above the national average and pupils make good progress. Reading is given a high priority and pupils in all classes demonstrate good attitudes towards books. Pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and know and use terms such as "author, blurb, illustrator and contents" correctly. The home/school partnership is a very successful feature. Parents receive very useful guidelines, clearly detailing the most appropriate ways to help their child. A focus on the teaching of the letter sounds raises attainment and accelerates progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the time that they are seven, the higher attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency, and can competently discuss the characters in a familiar story. Pupils develop a love of literature and in the Year 2 classes they discuss their favourite books and authors with obvious enjoyment. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of authors and stories. Consequently higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of a range of texts and can refer to passages in books to support ideas. Year 3 and 4 pupils continue to enjoy books and attain above average standards. They use the library for research purposes and many pupils read for sheer pleasure and enjoyment. A higher attaining pupil demonstrated very good recall and understanding of books when he discussed the Harry Potter novels with an inspector. Teachers read regularly to their classes from a good selection of fiction, poetry and information books, enthusing pupils with their own love of literature.

- 63 Year 2 pupils' attainment in writing is in line the national average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Year 4 pupils attain standards above those normally seen. The school is working very hard to raise pupils' achievement in writing to match the high standards in reading and speaking and listening. A writing action plan has been implemented and all pupils have individual literacy targets to raise attainment and accelerate progress. In addition, the English co-ordinator works with six higher attaining Year 2 pupils each week to ensure that they achieve their potential. These pupils have produced a very impressive version of the Shirley Hughes story, "A Midwinter Night's Dream." They confidently and very effectively use descriptive language to convey a vivid picture with words: "At the bottom, he found himself about to cross a bridge, which arched over a peculiar underground lake, inhabited by all kinds of water creatures." Children receive a good start to their writing in the reception class, where they are encouraged to write independently and to use their knowledge of phonics in their writing. This good achievement is extended in Year 1, where the higher attaining pupils write clear and logical sentences using capital letters and full stops. Pupils in Year 2 produce a suitable, though not extensive, range of work, which includes fiction, and poetry. Most of this work is of an average standard, and pupils take a real pride in presenting their work carefully. Work sampling indicates that "diary" writing can become tedious and repetitive for some pupils who are capable of writing in more interesting genres. Year 1 and 2 pupils learn to write interesting stories with good understanding of how to structure their writing with a beginning, middle and an end. Pupils in the Year 4 class produce an impressive amount of work, including poetry, report and information writing. Indeed, A small number of higher attaining pupils are already working at the level of an average eleven-year-old. Standards of spelling are average. They are good for the higher attaining pupils, and all pupils learn their weekly spellings conscientiously. Most pupils are confident when using spellings in their writing and good progress is maintained through their ability to check spellings with the teachers and in dictionaries. Handwriting is taught in all classes, and pupils' writing is neat and well formed. There is a consistent approach to this in all classes and teachers set a good example with their own neat, clear handwriting. There are some interesting examples of pupils using information technology skilfully to word-process their writing.
- 64 Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support with their English work. For instance, a Year 4 pupil has written an excellent story entitled "The Magic Sunglasses." This story is five chapters long and is be read to the reception class, thereby increasing the pupil's self esteem and confidence. The very sensitive and skilful support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator was a significant factor in this pupil's achievement.
- 65 The quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. The best teaching occurs in Year 4 and consequently some of these pupils achieve very high standards for their age. Teachers show confidence and good knowledge and understanding of English. Lessons are planned carefully to build on pupils' existing knowledge and experiences. All teachers make good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. They have high expectations of what pupils can do and work is usually planned for different needs. Pupils of all ability levels are given challenging and interesting work. Most teachers maintain a brisk lesson pace and keep pupils busy. This is particularly evident in the literacy hour lessons where pupils waste no time in settling to group activities after sharing a class discussion. Teachers intervene well to consolidate and advance literacy skills. A strong feature of teaching is the skilful use of praise and encouragement, which does a great deal to increase pupils' confidence in all aspects of English. The teachers value all pupils' contributions and there is often sensitive questioning of the least able

which includes them fully in discussions. The individual target setting in writing books has a significant impact on the pupils' progress in specific areas such as presentation and punctuation. Homework is used effectively to support what the pupils learn in literacy hours. Lessons, which are not so successful, lack clarity about precisely what pupils will learn in the lesson and in some cases the pace of the lesson is rather slow. Consequently pupils are not as clear as they could be about what they are meant to be learning and are not motivated to work as hard as they might. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. Arrangements for monitoring progress in literacy are good. Assessment of reading, writing and spelling is thorough and regular; difficulties are identified at an early stage so that extra support can be given. Good planning for the development of literacy skills is closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy. The school is very aware of the importance of practising reading and writing in other subjects and very effectively links literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum. For instance, pupils have used their developing literacy skills to good effect to describe life in other countries as part of their geography work.

- 66 There is good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, dedicated and committed to raising standards of attainment, particularly in writing. She makes an invaluable personal contribution to the subject. Support staff are actively involved in lessons and are well prepared. They make a useful contribution to the assessment of pupils' progress. Resources are good and information technology is used very well in all English lessons.

MATHEMATICS

- 67 Pupils in Year 2 attain standards above those expected for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. This judgement is based on the standards of work seen in the current Year 2 class. This is a similar judgement to that made in the last full inspection in 1996. Taking the last three years together, pupils' performance in mathematics tests has been above the national average, although in 2000 it was in line. When compared to similar schools in 2000 the attainment was below the average. The school did well to have ninety-six per cent of pupils reach the expected level. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 4 are attaining standards above those expected nationally for their age, with a good number of more able pupils attaining very well, especially in number work. There are no significant differences over time in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress. Many of them attain standards above expectations as can be seen from test results.
- 68 At the age of seven pupils understand the language of number, have a good knowledge of place value to at least a hundred and quickly recall addition and subtraction facts to twenty. They know the names and some of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes such as rectangles, pentagons, hexagons, cuboids, cylinders and spheres. For example, they know the number of sides, faces and corners. Pupils solve shopping problems to at least a pound and accurately measure given lengths in centimetres. They tell the time, using analogue and digital clocks, to the hour and the half hour. More able pupils work very confidently with numbers and can add three two-digit numbers to at least a hundred and multiply correctly by 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10. Pupils in Year 4 use a good range of mental strategies for adding and subtracting numbers to a hundred, and higher attaining pupils are confident with larger numbers to a thousand. They measure accurately in millimetres and find the perimeter of a regular shape by using a formula. In their investigative work pupils place numbers correctly on a Venn diagram according to specific criteria such as

multiples of three, four or five. This was clearly seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were able to put their own numbers in the appropriate set. More able pupils thoroughly enjoyed finding numbers as large as a million and placed them correctly. Numeracy skills are used and developed through work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils read temperature scales in geography and use measuring skills in their design and technology work. Only occasionally do pupils use information and communication technology to help them in their work, usually for data handling. This is an area which has been identified for further development by the school.

- 69 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and never less than satisfactory. The teaching of mathematics in Year 4 is a particular strength and pupils make very good progress. All teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy in their planning and teaching and this is having a positive impact on the rate at which pupils learn. The teaching of mental and oral mathematics is good especially when teachers use individual white boards for pupils to record and show their answers. This technique allows teachers to instantly assess the level of understanding of each pupil and to plan future work closely matched to the individual needs of them all. Individual work is carefully planned with different tasks for groups of pupils according to their prior attainment. This ensures that all pupils make good progress in the course of each lesson and are not given work that is too easy or too difficult. Pupils respond well to this and gain in confidence as the work, although challenging, is within their capabilities. The majority of teachers have good class management skills that enable them to create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and make good progress. When behaviour management is less effective pupils do not stay on task and the rate of their learning is reduced. Teachers are often enthusiastic about the subject and this makes pupils eager to learn. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 4 lesson on data handling where the teacher inspired the pupils with her obvious enjoyment of mathematics and they were immediately very keen to do as well as possible. The work produced in this lesson was of a particularly high quality and there was a palpable buzz of excitement as the pupils worked. All the pupils in this class were reluctant to stop work at the end of the lesson and were extremely proud of their achievements. Teachers display the lesson objectives on the board at the start of each lesson to help pupils focus on what they are expected to learn in the lesson and know when they have been successful. Pupils have a good attitude to mathematics and behave well in lessons. This has a positive effect on their learning, as they are able to work without interruption and concentrate well. Homework is set each week in all classes and is completed conscientiously by pupils. This homework is often imaginative and often involves games pupils can play alone or with their parents. The dialogue between home and school through the use of homework books is of great value in keeping parents informed about their child's progress. The homework also gives pupils more opportunities to consolidate their learning and try out new ideas.
- 70 The co-ordinator gives very good leadership in mathematics. She is very knowledgeable and her enthusiasm is infectious. Training sessions have been led by her, including demonstration lessons to share her expertise with colleagues. She closely monitors all aspects of the subject by looking at teachers' planning, observing lessons and looking at pupils' finished work. This enables her to identify any areas that need further development and to take the necessary action. Assessment procedures are good and tests are carefully analysed to find any aspects of mathematics that would benefit from more input and to help with planning future work. For example, data handling was recently identified as an area for development and the whole school has successfully concentrated on improving standards in this

aspect. Resources are good and are used effectively to help learning by being readily available thus ensuring that pupils have all the good quality equipment they require in each lesson.

SCIENCE.

- 71 Standards are judged to be above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at Year 4. The teacher assessments of seven year olds in 2000 showed standards at Key Stage 1 to be below the national average overall due to the larger than usual number of pupils with special educational needs in that group of pupils. They attained particularly poorly, well below average, on the element on life and living processes, and particularly well, in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, in their knowledge of materials and their properties. In their work on physical processes and science investigations they attained average standards. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain better results and the work in their books demonstrates above average attainment in those aspects they have studied. The Year 4 pupils also demonstrate good standards in science although no work was seen in life and living processes. This area is not studied until the Summer term so no judgements were possible on this element. Standards currently are better than when the school was last inspected. A particularly strong emphasis on investigative work throughout the school is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 72 Year 4 pupils know about the effects of the Earth orbiting the sun and rotating on its axis and how this produces seasons as well as day and night. The higher attaining pupils understand why the shape of the moon appears to change over time and draw diagrams to illustrate this. Pupils have a clear understanding of electric circuits, including serial and parallel circuits and draw clear circuit diagrams with the correct symbols in place. They undertake a wide range of investigations including testing the conditions that encourage materials to rust, separating solids that have become mixed with liquids through filtration and evaporation, testing the strengths of a variety carrier bags, and testing changes to materials that are reversible or irreversible. They are particularly good at using correct scientific terminology like 'viscous' to describe what happens to washing up liquid when it is put in the freezer for a while and explaining the meaning of the term to demonstrate their understanding. They record their findings in a variety of ways, effectively developing their numeracy and literacy skills through recording and presenting their findings. There is less evidence of them using information and communication technology in their science work.
- 73 Year 3 pupils identify types of force like pushing, pulling and twisting. They know that gravity is what pulls things towards the Earth and undertake investigations on dropping objects to check the effect of weight on the speed at which they fall, and on how to slow them down with parachutes. They experiment with different sizes of parachute to see what difference they make to the speed of the fall, and record their findings in a variety of ways. They investigate the strengths of different magnets and which materials are soluble and which form a suspension when mixed with water. They show a clear understanding of fair testing and why it is necessary. For example, in testing to see how long each type of material takes to dissolve, they know they must have the same quantities of each and the same amount of water for each test. They investigate soils from different areas, suspending samples in water and letting them settle to show the different layers of materials from densest to lightest. They are learning technical terms like 'solution' and 'suspension'.
- 74 Pupils at Year 2 investigate the lengths of shadows at different times of day and begin to understand how these relate to the position of the sun in the sky. They investigate

the properties of a range of materials and learn terms like `transparent`, `translucent` and `opaque`. They know how to make a simple circuit to make a bulb light up and undertake simple investigations on insulation and conductivity of materials. They record their findings neatly, with the lower attaining pupils relying more on diagrams than writing. There are strong links with literacy in the way pupils are expected to present their work without too much reliance on teacher-prepared worksheets and grids.

- 75 Year 1 pupils learn about healthy eating and identify types of food which are good for us and not so good. They consider materials in terms of their suitability for various uses like glass for windows, because it lets light in, and plastic for chairs.
- 76 Teaching is good overall. Teachers set high standards for pupils to achieve and they respond well to the challenging tasks they are given. Pupils are given real investigations to do and the skills with which to do them. Rarely are they given worksheets to complete. For example in a Year 1 class the task was to investigate ways of making a ping pong ball move without touching it directly. Pupils were given a range of equipment to choose from and after the initial discussion were expected to make sensible choices and undertake their own investigations. Consequently enthusiasm was high as pupils used straws to blow their ping pong balls about and then moved on to consider other ways of making them move, through simple paper fans for example. Excitement was high and pupils were well motivated, so that the teacher could take their learning forward getting them to consider the differences between working on smooth tables and rougher carpet areas. High attaining pupils very quickly understood the impact of friction on movement and the teacher gave extra guidance to lower attaining pupils to reinforce their understanding. Year 3 pupils built upon what they had learned earlier on the same topic by identifying high and low friction surfaces like ice which causes cars to skid and football boots which are studded to give extra grip. Different ways of recording their work were planned for pupils of different abilities so that each was suitably challenged and able to make good progress. Extra work was planned for any early finishers who had to identify which parts of a bicycle were high and low friction units and why they should be so. Pupils consequently wanted to finish their initial task quickly and correctly to move on to the extra one, which the higher attaining pupils did. Teachers' own scientific knowledge is good so that they confidently introduce their pupils to interesting and challenging ideas and correct scientific vocabulary. Just occasionally the pace of lessons drops and pupils spend too long on less scientific tasks like colouring in their work, or the teaching methods slow down the learning, as when the whole class work at the same pace on an investigation so that some become a little restless and unsettled. The analysis of pupils' work shows that, in the best teaching, pupils are told quite clearly what is good about their work and what they need to do next to make it even better. Dialogues between the teacher and pupils through short notes at the end of a task show that the teacher has offered clear guidance and that the pupils have done something about it. However not all marking is of the same high standard. Some books contain clear targets for pupils to achieve to help their learning to progress. For example, a lower attaining pupil is set the target of asking more questions in their investigations like 'what will happen if ?' Higher attaining pupils are challenged to 'help plan and set up experiments for your group'. The school has a system of extra lessons for more able pupils to ensure that they achieve the standards of which they are capable. In these ways and through the effective use of classroom support in some lessons, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able pupils at Year 4, are helped to make good progress and learn effectively.

- 77 Pupils' science education is carefully planned over the years at the school to ensure that they cover all aspects of the National Curriculum and build upon work they have done earlier. There is a very strong emphasis on acquiring knowledge and understanding through practical investigative work rather than simply completing prescribed tasks and work sheets. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place as part of the school's commitment to improvement through self-evaluation and the co-ordinator has a strong leadership role and understanding of the main issues relating to the subject. She has identified a need to review and revise the scheme to ensure that revisiting topics in succeeding years does not lapse into repeating work at the same level, to raise levels of attainment in life and living processes and to audit resources and improve any areas where they are lacking. The development of a pond and wildlife area is expected to promote higher standards in life and living processes.

ART AND DESIGN

- 78 Standards in art and design are judged to be above average at both key stages. Standards have therefore been maintained at Key Stage 2 and improved at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. Pupils are introduced to a very good range of materials and techniques and produce a good standard of work. Year 4 pupils weave using shoe box weaving looms and make very good clay models. They make puppets involving both designing and constructing skills including the use of patterns and sewing to make cloaks. They produce well-constructed and coloured three-dimensional relief pictures from papier mache. Year 3 pupils produce pictures in the style of Archimboldo, overprinting a picture they have done in oil pastels. They make collages choosing a range of different types of materials to create the impressions they want to create. Year 2 pupils study the works of Mondrian and Pollock and work in the same style, producing striking pictures. They paint confidently and carefully, producing good quality results, and make very good pictures using a range of media to illustrate their pond study.
- 79 A strength of the subject is the sheer range and variety of media and activities that the pupils are able to use. Their art education is very broad and balanced. It includes the study of other artists from a range of cultures as well as opportunities to develop their own artistic skills and talents. The imaginative development of a 'carousel' arrangement one day a week, uses a lot of volunteers to supervise very small groups of pupils on a very wide variety of art and design activities. Another strength is the quality of displays which incorporate pupils' work, the work of famous artists that they have been studying and artefacts and pictures from the local authority's lending service, like the chairs display in the hall at the time of the inspection. Displays of this nature inspire the pupils to work hard and try their own ideas.
- 80 A third strength is the very good quality of the teaching which enables pupils to achieve such good results. Teachers are very knowledgeable about art and artists and teach techniques well. For example in printing, Year 3 pupils learned how to roll out the ink to the right consistency and apply it to the various tools they were using to print with. They were taught how to create particular effects and how the printing would enhance a picture they created earlier in different media. Consequently the pupils were very keen to try the techniques and took great care in deciding what to print with, applying the right amount of ink and in placing the inked tools in precisely the right places to create the impression they wanted. Year 4 pupils learned how to choose different textures of paper and apply them to create the impact they wanted on the surface of their three-dimensional relief pictures. They learned how to handle clay to make tiles and how to cut shapes and join clay to produce the desired effects. The teaching of basic skills was amply demonstrated during the carousel afternoon

with all the adults being well briefed and very confident with the activities they were supervising. Consequently the pupils were engrossed in their work, shared the materials and equipment sensibly and behaviour was very good. Teachers set high expectations of what pupils will achieve and create the conditions to enable them to do so by making very effective use of the resources that are available, including adults supporting lessons. This creative use of time and talent helps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, make very good progress in art and design.

- 81 Progress, teaching and learning in art and design are monitored through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. A good portfolio of pupils' work in different year groups has been created to demonstrate the standards achieved in each year and show the progress made through the school. This would be further enhanced if the pieces of work in it were annotated to say what National Curriculum level had been achieved and how much support had been given to the pupil completing the work. A collection of photographs of individual pupil's work, annotated in the same way, would also show clearly standards and progress without depriving pupils of their finished product.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 82 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. On this evidence and that of teachers' planning, pupils' design books and the many displays around the school, the standards attained by pupils aged seven and nine are judged to be above those expected nationally. This is a good improvement since the last full inspection in 1996, when standards were judged to be in line with expectations. All aspects are taught over time and, where appropriate, teachers make useful links to work in other subjects to make the designs more interesting and relevant to pupils. For example, the illuminated models made in Year 4 had good links to the work previously undertaken in science about electrical circuits. The pupils knew how to make a circuit but found that incorporating it into a model threw up a whole range of practical difficulties that they successfully overcame.
- 83 From an early age pupils learn the correct design and making processes. They use design sheets, appropriate for their age and ability, to set down their ideas and list the materials and equipment they need for making the product. When the product is finished all pupils evaluate their work and decide what went well and what could be improved. Pupils in Year 1 successfully cut and join a range of different materials when making a house linked to their history work about homes long ago. In Year 1/2 pupils make detailed designs for their finger and glove puppets and make paper patterns to use when cutting out their chosen material. They cut and join wood when making the chassis for their very attractive carnival float models and add wheels, knowing the difference between the construction of a fixed axle with a rotating wheel and a rotating axle with a fixed wheel. Year 2 pupils make very well designed and constructed cone puppets using a wide variety of materials which they use most effectively with a great deal of thought for the aesthetic effect of the finished product. They sew the clothes, using well-chosen and carefully measured material and stick on other features by using a glue gun under adult supervision. Their design sheets are of good quality and they work hard to overcome any difficulties which may arise during the making process. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 build on the skills they have learned and develop them further by producing good quality products that are attractive and functional. For example, in Year 3, when designing purses or wallets from cloth they consider the effectiveness of the materials as well as the needs of the person who will use the product. The illuminated models made by Year 4 pupils are of a particularly high quality with many interesting ideas successfully incorporated in their designs. All pupils were successful in putting their ideas into practice and were very proud of their efforts. Food technology is incorporated in the Wednesday afternoon art and craft carousel when pupils work in small groups with teachers, volunteer parents and classroom assistants. The group making apple crumble was highly motivated and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, using numeracy skills to measure the ingredients. Pupils with special educational needs, often well supported by teachers, classroom assistants, parents and classmates, also make good progress.
- 84 The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good and it was obvious by looking at pupils' designs and finished work in other classes that the teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers are well organised and prepare each lesson carefully, paying strict attention to any health and safety issues. They manage their pupils well and create a productive working atmosphere that helps pupils concentrate and learn effectively. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher kept her large class fully occupied and they worked with great enthusiasm and interest to produce models of a high quality of which they were justifiably proud. Planning of work by teachers is good

with all relevant skills to be taught clearly outlined. They plan work so that skills are developed successfully as pupils move through the school.

- 85 The management of design and technology is good and a well-planned curriculum successfully includes all aspects of the subject. Teachers have had many useful training sessions to improve their expertise and give them new ideas. This has proved most useful in raising standards, as they are confident in teaching the various skills required for pupils to have success in their work. Resources are good and the interesting and good quality range of different materials available for pupils to use makes them eager to learn.

GEOGRAPHY

- 86 It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection, so judgements are based upon a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils and staff. The work seen shows attainment to be in line with the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and beyond the expected levels by Year 4. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 87 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand the significance of maps. They draw plans of the classroom and build upon this experience, developing a local map with signs and symbols. They describe routes from and to given locations both within and beyond the school. They consider a world map and have studied St Lucia and a village in Bangla Desh, comparing them with their own locality.
- 88 By the age of nine, pupils are very confident with maps. They use co-ordinates and six figure grid references accurately. They know many symbols from Ordnance Survey maps and were keen to explain the difference between the symbols in discussions with inspectors. They show a keen interest in and a growing awareness of environmental issues and know about the effects of global warming on climate changes.
- 89 Where teaching was seen it was very good. A very well planned lesson made good use of clear world maps to locate places and introduce and reinforce the use of correct geographical vocabulary. Very effective use was made of the recent news story of the landing of the Mir space station two days previously as pupils were challenged to work out the precise landing spot. This ensured that pupils were interested and keen to work so that concentration was very good. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning that takes place in school as pupils are asked to find out about and locate interesting events around the world.
- 90 Geography lessons help pupils to refine the skills they learn in literacy lessons. For example pupils considered, in writing, the advantages and disadvantages of flooding a valley to form a reservoir as happened at Rutland Water in Leicestershire, or of allowing walking in the Peak District of Derbyshire.
- 91 Geography lessons are based upon a clear policy and scheme of work adapted from the national guidelines for the subject. These ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and that pupils progress systematically in their learning. The school makes effective use of the village for local field studies. ICT is used well to seek information from further afield through the World Wide Web when pupils find out about weather and climate around the world for example. The subject action plan outlines priorities for development and is linked closely to the whole-school development plan. However, it focuses on putting systems in place rather than on how those systems will raise standards of achievement. Standards of attainment and

the quality of teaching and learning are monitored regularly by the co-ordinator through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work on a systematic basis.

HISTORY

- 92 As it was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection, judgements are based upon a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils and staff. This evidence indicates that attainment matches the nationally expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in Key Stage 2 are good and above national expectations. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 93 At the age of seven, pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of the past. They are starting to recognise some of the different ways the past can be represented. For instance, in a lesson on communications in Year 2, pupils acquired knowledge and understanding of how the telephone had developed over the years since the pioneering days of Alexander Graham Bell. Pupils in the same year group had produced two good separate projects. In one, the History of Flight, pupils were able to explain how flight had developed since the early days to the days of Yuri Gagarin's and Neil Armstrong's exploits. In another, the History of Transport, pupils could understand how transport had developed through the early boats to the coming of the railways and to modern motor cars.
- 94 By the age of nine, pupils have built upon these early experiences through studying Ancient Egypt. They develop their knowledge about Pharaohs, the gods and tombs including Tutankhamen. In another study they describe life in Ancient Britain following the Celtic invasion. They explain about the forts and houses these people built and the jewellery the Celts made.
- 95 Too few lessons were seen to make definitive judgements about the quality of teaching. Where it was seen it was at least satisfactory and the quality of the pupils' work suggests that it is generally good at Key Stage 2. The teachers know their subject and plan their lessons well, saying clearly what pupils will learn. Occasionally a minority of pupils calls out an answer before putting up their hands and the teacher does not reinforce the accepted practice. Teachers are sensitive when pupils make mistakes and use these as learning opportunities. Effective use is made of the local village as when Year 3 pupils studied the housing in the village, recording evidence about the shape of roofs, windows, doors and chimneys. Pupils, who were given work according to their abilities, were able to date houses from the seventeenth century to the present day. One pupil knew the effect of the window tax on the number of windows.
- 96 The history policy and scheme of work are adapted from the national guidelines for the subject ensuring that the National Curriculum requirements are met and that pupils build systematically upon earlier learning. The co-ordinator monitors the medium term plans and looks at the books to see how well the pupils achieve. Informal assessments are made in Key Stage 1 and tests, half way through a topic, are carried out in Key Stage 2. The number of artefacts has been increased since the last inspection. Pupils have visited the County Record Office and museums where they were able to handle Egyptian and Anglo Saxon artefacts. They have also visited Verulamium and Hitchin museums. The mobile library from Luton visits the school, termly, to bring resources. An archaeologist visited the school to give the pupils hands on experience for Roman History. The school uses the internet, for example to find information on the census of Harlington. These initiatives help to bring

history alive for the pupils, to engage and hold their interest and therefore to raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 97 Few lessons were observed during the inspection in information and communication technology. However, evidence from pupils' work, from displays in the classrooms and discussions with pupils and teachers, show that attainment matches the nationally expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The last report stated that standards at Key Stage 1 were above national expectations, although the examples cited in the report suggest similar standards to those currently demonstrated by pupils at Key Stage 1. Standards in Key Stage 2 are above national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 98 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enter data into a computer and produce a graph. They are competent and confident in their basic skills such as using the mouse to move the cursor, retrieving a programme, entering the data and printing the results. There are strong links with other subjects. In English they use word processors to produce a sentence and some produce short stories. Pupils in Year 1 wrote profiles of themselves. Mathematics skills are reinforced through producing graphs and there are good links in art where pupils use the computer to draw in the style of Mondrian or Pollock. In these ways pupils use ICT effectively to develop their knowledge and understanding in other subjects while also improving their computer skills.
- 99 Pupils in Year 4 are very confident and knowledgeable in the use of a computer. They build effectively upon the Key Stage 1 work in word processing and the communication of information. Pupils seek information and work on simulations using appropriate CD Roms to enhance their learning. They build upon earlier work on data handling to produce and interpret a range of graphs and pie charts. Effective use is made of the World Wide Web as pupils send emails – many to local schools.
- 100 Where teaching was observed it was very good. The teaching was underpinned by very good subject knowledge and the confident and competent teaching inspired the pupils. Lessons plans say clearly what pupils will learn and how they will learn it. This ensures good standards, particularly at Year 4. For example, in one data handling lesson the pupils sorted objects into a tree diagram for which they made their own choices of category, including animals, transport, vegetables, shapes and fruit. The result was that by asking specific questions, pupils were able to manage and print out their tree diagram.
- 101 The subject is well led. The school bases its scheme of work on the national guidelines which ensures that pupils cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum in a systematic way, building upon earlier learning. All classrooms have at least one computer and most have two together with a colour printer. In addition there is a mini suite of six computers and one printer and a large suite of sixteen computers and five printers which has been created since the last inspection. The new suite has not been in use long enough to have had a significant impact on standards at the time of the inspection. However it is well used and enables all pupils to have plenty of access to good quality computers on a regular basis. All staff have had training and are confident with the subject. Assessment arrangements are good. Pupils have a skills list as part of their assessment which helps them to see where progress is made and extra work is needed. The school is well equipped and has continued to improve since the last inspection.

MUSIC

- 102 As only one music lesson was observed during the inspection the overall standards attained by pupils could not be securely judged. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced a published scheme of work which is of great benefit to non-specialist teachers and ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are taught at suitable levels to all pupils. Teachers' planning shows that the scheme is being used to advantage and this is a good improvement since the last inspection, when a lack of subject knowledge and expertise was noted.
- 103 Standards in the Year 1 lesson seen were as expected for the age of the pupils who correctly identify long and short notes played by a classmate and sing reasonably tunefully and with satisfactory diction. Pupils of all ages were heard singing in assemblies with good phrasing and expression. The singing of pupils in Years 3 and 4 in their rehearsal for the end-of-term concert was particularly good. All joined in enthusiastically to convey the dramatic mood of the story of Sweeney Todd the Barber. The twenty or so pupils in Years 3 and 4 who attend the lunchtime recorder clubs reach a high standard of performance for their age and the more advanced players can read standard notation and play accurately with due regard for rhythm. Thirty-five pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4 learn to play a pitched instrument such as the piano, keyboard, violin, brass or guitar. Teachers from the local authority music service provide this facility and the pupils who take the opportunity are most enthusiastic and reach a good standard of performance in a short space of time.
- 104 The many concerts held each year give pupils lots of opportunities to perform in public and to practice their growing skills. Recorder players accompany singers, instrumentalists play solo and group pieces and older pupils often perform a musical drama to entertain the appreciative audience. Music is played at the start and end of daily assemblies to introduce pupils to a wide range of music by many different composers from around the world.
- 105 The quality of teaching and learning, as can be judged from the standards attained in performances and the one lesson observed, is at least satisfactory. Teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the subject are being taught over time and that sufficient time is allocated to the subject to ensure such coverage.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 106 Standards attained in physical education are as expected for pupils aged seven. Only one lesson was seen in Years 3 and 4 so overall standards for pupils aged nine could not be securely assessed. It is impossible to compare standards with those found in the last inspection as only one aspect of the subject was observed this time. Teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the subject are taught and that physical education lessons are given an appropriate amount of curriculum time. Sometimes, however, the actual time for younger pupils to engage in the physical part of the lesson is shortened by the time it takes them to change into their kit.
- 107 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand the importance of correct warm up activities at the start of a lesson and learn about the beneficial effects of exercise on their bodies. In dance lessons they use space well and move effectively to the beat and mood of the music. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lesson when pupils devised their own movements to music linked to the theme of a traditional Indian tale. Pupils worked with great concentration and successfully produced sequences of movements to show how the princess cleaned the palace and the anger of the king and queen when

they found her. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 1/2 move in different directions making up sequences involving running, jumping and turning. They move at different levels using a variety of body parts but, in the lesson seen, they had few opportunities to develop and refine their movements to improve their performance. Pupils in Year 4 handle large balls well in small-sided games and have a good understanding of how to move and use space effectively to be in the correct position to receive a pass. They play with a good sense of sportsmanship and understand the need for rules.

- 108 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was mainly satisfactory, although one good lesson was observed. Teachers manage their pupils well and this has a good impact on learning as little time is wasted in organising activities. A brisk and appropriate warm up at the start of each lesson is followed by the main activity when pupils learn new skills. In some lessons teachers do not spend sufficient time giving pupils useful teaching points to help them improve their performance. Therefore, those pupils experiencing difficulty are not given enough guidance to help them master a new skill and their progress is limited. All pupils dress correctly for lessons and teachers fully address all health and safety issues.
- 109 The curriculum for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is enriched through a number of extra-curricular activities such as a Saturday morning football club, organised and run by parents, which has had a good measure of success in competitions. There is also a very popular country-dance club run by a teacher after school. The skills of one of the classroom assistants are utilised to the full by her involvement in lessons coaching pupils in short tennis and hockey. Resources for games are good and are used well by teachers to give pupils the correct equipment to help them learn effectively. The large apparatus in the school hall is not particularly suitable for a lower school and therefore is not used in gymnastics lessons. There is insufficient apparatus for younger pupils to develop their skills in climbing, jumping and moving at different levels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 110 Standards of attainment in religious education, including those of pupils who have special educational needs, are good at both key stages. They exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time pupils leave the school to go on to their middle school, they have a sound factual knowledge and good understanding of the significance of Christianity and other world religions. This shows an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were said to be in line with national expectations.
- 111 At age seven, pupils know about of the life of Jesus, including his birth, his feeding of the five thousand and his special friends – the disciples. During the week of the inspection, assemblies concentrated on Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter. Pupils also study other religions and made happy Divali cards and happy Hanukkah cards. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils learned about the events from Palm Sunday to Easter.
- 112 At Key Stage 2 pupils build on this good foundation. In one very good lesson, Year 3 pupils had to sequence the events of Holy Week. The more able had to write about the meaning of the cross to Christians, reinforcing skills learned in their literacy lessons. Pupils also wrote about Jesus, Jonah, Rama and Sita and religious festivals. By the age of nine, pupils have looked at the difficulty of making choices and studied examples from the sphere of religion as, for example, when St Alban changed places with a priest so that he could escape persecution. They consider the

implications of decisions people make, as when pupils thought about what they would do if they saw someone bullied or if they found money. They learn about the Easter story, considering it in the context of the Jewish religion. This work was followed up with a visit to St Albans where they were taken to both a synagogue and the cathedral to add extra interest to the topic.

- 113 Teaching is good overall although some of it is judged to be very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers make good use of questioning which encourages the pupils to think and remain interested in their discussions. Consequently pupils are well behaved and attentive. They have a good attitude, listen well and contribute confidently to the discussions. Teachers know the subject well and teach it confidently. Assemblies reinforce the pupils' understanding and make a good contribution to their progress in religious education. Good use is made of visits including ones to local churches and to the Buddhist Recoda in Milton Keynes. Local clergymen and speakers for charities are invited into the school.