

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OXHEY INFANTS SCHOOL**

Bushey, Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117157

Headteacher: Mrs R Alexander

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 26 February - 1 March 2001

Inspection number: 186278

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Aldenham Road Watford Herts
Postcode:	WD2 2NB
Telephone number:	01923 229731
Fax number:	As above
Appropriate authority:	Hertfordshire
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Stephen Hall
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	Attitudes, values and personal development
12870	Angela Jensen	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education Foundation Stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 162 pupils on roll, aged from four to seven years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average; and six pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average; and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread of attainment but the proportion of children demonstrating above average standards is a little higher than in most schools.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. It is forward looking and benefits from very effective leadership from the headteacher. The quality of teaching is mainly good, across the school, and is sometimes very good for five to seven year olds. As a consequence, pupils make good overall progress and have positive attitudes to learning. The school provides well for pupils' personal as well as academic development, and gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills, and provides a clear sense of direction for the school.
- The quality of teaching is usually good, and is never less than satisfactory.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in most subjects, including in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development, and very good provision for their moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community, and pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- Strong links are established with parents, and they have a high regard for the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- Most subject co-ordinators need to analyse pupils' standards more rigorously to identify strengths and weaknesses across the school.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The 1995 OFSTED inspection revealed a number of positive features about the school but also highlighted some important weaknesses. The school was inspected by her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) in 1997, to evaluate its progress in rectifying the weaknesses found in the earlier report. This inspection found that progress was unsatisfactory, and the school required special measures since it was providing an unacceptable standard of education. In 1998, the school was inspected for two days by HMI, who found the school had improved considerably and no longer required special measures. The inspection was particularly complimentary about the work of the recently appointed headteacher, but identified weaknesses in the work of governors. Overall, much had been achieved over a short period of time, but the school needed to enter a period of consolidation to sustain and develop the recent improvements.

The current inspection shows the school has maintained its impetus for improvement. The teaching is better than it was in 1998, when one fifth of all lessons were unsatisfactory; and the school has made excellent progress since its earlier inspections, in 1995 and 1997, when about half of the lessons demonstrated unsatisfactory teaching. The position has changed dramatically, and the quality of teaching is now a major strength of the school.

The 1998 inspection identified the need to continue to raise pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science; to continue to improve the accommodation and learning resources for children in reception; and to continue to produce policies and schemes of work to reflect the school's aims. The school has been successful in meeting all these requirements; and the governing body has developed its role and is now well informed. The last inspection also found the school needed to sustain and develop its methods for checking the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher's monitoring is rigorous and effective but there is scope to develop the monitoring roles of co-ordinators, most of whom are relatively new to their posts.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	A	A	A
Writing	A*	A*	A*	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A

Key	
in the highest 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that the 2000 test results were well above the national average, and well above the average results achieved by similar schools, in reading and mathematics. In writing, the 2000 results were in the highest five per cent nationally and were well above the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve well in these subjects, and demonstrate good standards, overall. Pupils also demonstrate standards which are above those expected nationally for seven year olds in science, art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education. Standards are satisfactory in information and communication technology and religious education. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in geography.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, throughout the school day.



Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks, and respect each other's opinions. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities they are given to use their own initiative and to take responsibility.
Attendance	The attendance rate is broadly in line with the national average, and is satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years (The Foundation Stage)	aged 5-7 years (Key Stage 1)
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed. In four out of every five lessons, the teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and was good and sometimes very good in Key Stage 1.

Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from effective teaching which takes good account of their learning needs, including for their personal, social and emotional development, and enables them to progress well.

In English, the teaching is mainly very good and is otherwise good in Key Stage 1. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy well and ensure that pupils make good progress in all aspects of English, including in speaking and listening. Teachers make effective links between reading and writing so that pupils learn, from their reading, many of the techniques they need to become successful writers. Mathematics teaching is good, overall, and is generally very good in Year 2. Teachers are making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy, and enable pupils to make good progress in their mathematical learning. The teaching is also good in science, history, physical education and music, and is reflected in the above average standards achieved by pupils in these subjects.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by very good relationships between pupils and teachers, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanations of tasks and effective use of questions to probe pupils' understanding. Teachers' planning is good and tasks reflect the needs of particular groups of individuals, including pupils with special educational needs and the more able.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad range of learning experiences for all pupils, including those who are in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well matched to pupils' needs. Sufficient time is allocated for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and this time is used well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for these pupils, and teachers are sensitive to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision for their moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community, and pupils' welfare is a high priority. The school has effective procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance and their personal development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills. She has high expectations and provides a clear sense of direction for the school. The headteacher has very good interpersonal skills and supports her staff well. She also develops very constructive relationships with parents and they hold her in high regard. The headteacher's strong commitment, energy and clear thinking contribute very significantly to the success of the school. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has made a good start and provides an effective role-model for her colleagues through her good teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The governors regularly visit the school to observe it in operation, are well informed and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and know the challenges it faces.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The results of statutory tests in English and mathematics, and of teacher assessments in science, are analysed carefully and appropriate targets are set for pupils' future standards. The headteacher observes and evaluates the quality of teaching, and provides valuable feedback to staff which benefits their professional development. The headteacher, staff and governors carefully evaluate the success of the school improvement plan, and ensure that appropriate priorities are identified for attention. Co-ordinators evaluate the quality of planning in their subjects, but most need to monitor pupils' standards through more rigorous work sampling, across the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully, and financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities identified in the good school improvement plan. Overall, the school makes good use of its resources.

The school applies the principles of best value effectively when using its financial resources.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe the school is very well led and managed.</li> <li>• They find the staff easy to talk to.</li> <li>• They believe there are high standards of teaching.</li> <li>• They believe that behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like to have more extra-curricular opportunities.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views and agree there are rather limited opportunities for pupils to take part in school clubs.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. On entry to the Foundation Stage, children's standards vary considerably, but the proportion who are quite well advanced in their learning is a little higher than in most schools. Children generally achieve well in reception, and this is particularly evident in their communication, language and literacy skills, in their mathematical development and in their scientific understanding of the world. They also make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Overall, the majority of children demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding which are a little above average on entry to Key Stage 1.
2. In Key Stage 1, the school's reading results in the statutory assessment tests (SATs) in 2000 were well above the national average and were also well above the average results achieved by similar schools. In writing, results were very high when compared to the national average, and were well above the average results for similar schools. Results in reading and writing improved significantly in 1998, and have remained at a very good level since that time. Inspection findings broadly mirror the test results, and show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their starting points at the beginning of the key stage. In a Year 2 cohort with a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in 2000, standards are currently above average, overall, in speaking and listening and in writing, and are well above average in reading. Pupils use spoken standard English correctly, become increasingly fluent and articulate and develop a good vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read confidently and well, using a range of appropriate methods to decode unfamiliar words. They interpret texts quickly as they read, demonstrating their understanding of mood and character, for example by changing their tone of voice appropriately when they read dialogue. Most Year 2 pupils write well for a suitable range of purposes and audiences; and the writing of the most able pupils is of a very high standard. Attainment has risen in English since the last inspection, in 1998, particularly in relation to pupils' writing skills.
3. In mathematics, the SATs results in 2000 were well above the national average and were also well above the average results achieved by similar schools. Inspection findings show that pupils achieve well in the subject, and that most demonstrate standards which are above those expected nationally at the end of the key stage. Standards in mathematics have risen since the 1998 inspection, when they were found to be satisfactory but needed to be improved further.
4. In science, all pupils reached the expected level for their age in the statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000. This result was very high in relation to the national average and the achievements of similar schools. The percentage that exceeded the expected standard (Level 2) was in line with the national average but was below the percentage achieved by similar schools. As a consequence, teachers have particularly focused on the progress made by more able pupils in the current educational year, to ensure that these pupils achieve standards which reflect their capabilities. Inspection findings show that all pupils are now achieving well in the subject, and their standards are mainly above average at the end of the key stage. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection in 1998, when they were judged to be satisfactory but needed to be improved further.

5. Standards are above average, at the end of Key Stage 1, in art and design, design and technology, and history; and pupils achieve well in these subjects. Pupils' standards are a little above average in music and physical education in Year 2; and their standards are in line with those expected for pupils of similar ages in information and communication technology and in religious education. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' standards in geography.
6. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by boys and girls, by pupils from ethnic minorities or those who have English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. When account is taken of their starting points and of their individual learning needs, most achieve good results; and almost all reach the expected standards for pupils aged seven in the national tests in English and mathematics. The most able pupils also make good progress, sometimes achieving particularly high standards for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The 1998 inspection identified the need for more able pupils to achieve higher standards, and the school has successfully addressed this issue.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7. Children in the reception classes are secure and happy. They settle quickly into school routines, and they quickly develop confidence, to the point where, for example, they are able to address the assembled school when they share their work during special assemblies.
8. With very rare exceptions, pupils of all ages demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning, to school and to life in general. They come eagerly to school, and they greet lessons in all subjects with almost equal enthusiasm. They enjoy reading, and many read avidly, both at school and at home. In lessons, pupils concentrate well, take turns during discussions, but are always keen to join in, to have their say, or to raise questions of their own. They persevere with tasks, try hard to apply what they have learned or have been taught, and, for the most part, take great care with the presentation of their work. They apply themselves well, and they can be trusted to work at their tasks without direct supervision when this is appropriate. From their earliest years in school, pupils work sensibly together, willingly supporting one another and sharing resources. All pupils, regardless of ability or ethnic background, mix well together in the classroom and in the playground. Racist behaviour is extremely rare.
9. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They show respect for property, and they are polite and courteous to all adults in the school. For example, they greet staff and visitors politely, open doors and offer help. They have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They know the school rules for different activities very well, and they take care to abide by them. There have been no recent exclusions and inappropriate behaviour such as bullying is very rare indeed.
10. Relationships are very constructive, supportive and friendly. Pupils willingly share ideas and take care of one another, both in lessons and at play. Their caring attitudes are very evident in their work, for example when they reflect positively on the life and work of Florence Nightingale and how much her work meant to the soldiers in hospital at Scutari, or when they write, with great empathy, about the feelings of people affected by the Great Fire of London. Even the youngest children in reception respond with feeling to the 'miracles' of the natural world, as is evident in photographs taken when they visited a local farm and, among many other experiences, marvelled at the new life of a very recently hatched chicken.

11. Pupils of all ages respond very well to the opportunities they are given to use their own initiative and take responsibility. Older pupils take seriously their involvement in the school council, putting forward ideas, for example to improve the playground, which take into account the needs of all ages. Pupils in all classes are accustomed to taking messages, returning registers to the office and, as monitors, undertaking a variety of classroom duties. They take pride in carrying out their jobs efficiently. They can be relied upon to do their best to meet the targets set for them in their learning and, when asked, are skilled at evaluating their own performance. In the context of links with the wider world, the pupils enjoy thinking of, and organising, activities to raise funds for the many charities supported by the school at various times.
12. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and are valued members of the school community. They work hard to improve their work and to apply what they have already learned, and they relate well to all pupils and adults who work with them. In return, they receive the encouragement they need to succeed, and genuine respect and warmth from other pupils for their efforts, for example during 'sharing assemblies'. The very few pupils who have targets related to their behaviour make every effort to behave sensibly and to do what is expected of them.
13. Levels of attendance are satisfactory and there are very low levels of unauthorised absence. Registration procedures fully meet statutory requirements. Pupils arrive in good time and lessons start promptly.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed. In four out of every five lessons, the teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and was good and sometimes very good in Key Stage 1. The teaching has improved since the last inspection in 1998 when one fifth of all lessons were unsatisfactory; and the school has made excellent progress since its earlier inspections, in 1995 and 1997, when about half of the lessons demonstrated unsatisfactory teaching. Indeed, the high percentage of unsatisfactory lessons seen in 1997 contributed significantly to the judgement that the school was consequently providing an unacceptable standard of education for its pupils. The position is now changed dramatically, and the teaching is a major strength of the school.
15. Children in the reception classes benefit from good teaching which is well planned, using the Areas of Learning for the Foundation Stage. Teachers and learning support assistants know the children well and support them effectively according to their different needs. Assessment is used well to judge pupils' progress and achievements; and the teaching enables reception children to make good overall progress in their learning. The staff motivate children very well, and ensure that children have access to a wide range of appropriate learning opportunities; including for their personal, social and emotional development.
16. In English, the teaching is mainly very good and is otherwise good in Key Stage 1. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy well and ensure that pupils make good progress in all aspects of English. They make effective links between reading and writing so that pupils learn, from their reading, many of the strategies they need to become successful writers. English work is well planned, and tasks are matched to the learning needs of particular groups and individuals, including pupils with special educational needs, the more able, and those for whom English is an

additional language. Mathematics teaching is good overall, and is generally very good in Year 2. Teachers are making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy, and have established the recommended three-part lesson structure well. Good use is made of sessions at the end of lessons to evaluate pupils' learning, and teachers make good use of their assessments to plan future work in mathematics. Teaching is good in science, across Key Stage 1. Teachers introduce and reinforce scientific vocabulary well, and ensure that lessons are well planned as part of systematic programmes to develop pupils' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. The last inspection, in 1998, found that pupils generally made satisfactory progress in mathematics and science as a result of the teaching, but there were weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge in both subjects. Teachers are now well informed and their teaching is currently enabling pupils to make good progress in mathematics and science.

17. In history, physical education and music, the teaching is good, and in information and communication technology it is sound, overall. Too few lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology and geography to make judgements about teaching in these subjects. However, an analysis of pupils' work shows the teaching enables pupils to progress well in their learning in art and design and in design and technology.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers plan suitably matched work which directly addresses their individual needs and stages of development. Pupils are usually provided with suitable resources which help them to develop independence, for example on those occasions when they need to work without the direct supervision of the teacher. In many lessons, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, they benefit from the very good support offered by classroom assistants. These valuable members of staff are well briefed about what is expected in terms of pupils' responses to the tasks set, well trained in the various subject disciplines and content, and are therefore able to interact very constructively with groups of pupils and with individuals, enabling them to make good progress. Class teachers take particular care to make sure that pupils with special educational needs are included positively in all discussions, for example at the end of the literacy hour. The pupils are encouraged to take pride in their achievements, and their contributions to lessons are always valued. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are both precise and rigorous, with challenging but achievable targets. Teachers also provide suitably challenging work and resources for the more able pupils in their classes. The school receives no local authority support for pupils with English as an additional language, but teachers take great care to cater effectively for these pupils to meet their needs as well as possible.
19. Across the school, lessons are characterised by very good relationships between pupils and teachers, an orderly atmosphere in lessons, clear explanations of task and effective use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. Good use is made of homework to extend and reinforce what is learned in school. Basic skills are taught well, and teachers are very skilled in managing their pupils. Teachers' lesson planning is good, and clearly identifies what pupils are expected to learn. These expectations are appropriately shared with the pupils which helps them to recognise and evaluate their own achievements. The last inspection identified weaknesses in teachers' management of pupils and in the clarity of their learning intentions. Both these weaknesses have been very successfully addressed.

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

20. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified for improvement in the 1998 inspection. Curriculum provision for pre-Key Stage 1 pupils in terms of accommodation and resources has been addressed; and the school has developed policies and schemes of work to underpin planning and ensure that pupils' learning develops systematically.
21. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broad and balanced. In the reception classes the children are given a good range of appropriate opportunities, including for their personal, social and emotional development. The new curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is being implemented and is supported by thorough long, medium and short-term planning. The Key Stage 1 curriculum fully complies with the Curriculum 2000 requirements and is also supported through thorough, systematic planning. Sufficient time is allocated for developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy, and this time is used well. The curriculum ensures that pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, music, physical education, history, design and technology, art and design; and satisfactorily in religious education and information and communication technology.
22. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school plans well to ensure that the multi-cultural nature of society is reflected across the curriculum and uses events such as World Book Day to promote literature from many nationalities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, for the more able pupils and for those with English as an additional language is good. Support for pupils with learning difficulties associated with literacy is particularly effective. Teachers know their pupils well and targets in pupils' education plans reflect a broad range of needs with links to many subjects and also, where appropriate, to pupils' social, emotional physical and personal development and to behaviour. All pupils receive good support from their teachers and from support assistants, and the help and advice of outside specialists are drawn upon whenever necessary to serve the pupils' best interests. The headteacher monitors the progress of different groups of pupils such as those whose birthdays are late in the academic year.
23. The 1998 inspection identified the need for the school to develop policies and schemes of work, particularly to ensure that pupils' learning developed in a systematic way across the subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has policies for all subjects and has now established schemes of work which promote progression in pupils' learning across the curriculum.
24. There are a limited range of lunchtime/after-school clubs but the school intends to restart the choir next term. However, pupils benefit from good range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. These include a circus workshop, authors, musicians, religious leaders, a visit to an African village and to a farm. There is a sound policy for sex education and drugs education is taught appropriately through science.
25. The school has planned well to ensure that it has good links with the nursery and playgroups which children attend before coming to Oxhey Infants School. The visits made to them by reception class staff, and the visits made to the school by pupils before they start, ensure that teachers and children get to know each other and their needs are assessed. This helps pupils settle quickly into school life. The school maintains good links with the junior school. Subject co-ordinators meet with their



counterparts to discuss continuity in their curriculum subjects; and common teaching, learning and assessment policies have been formulated for both schools. Pupils visit the junior school for special events, and junior pupils participate in book week activities at the infant school. This familiarisation ensures pupils feel confident about their transition to the junior school.

26. The school makes good use of local facilities to enrich the curriculum and has organised a variety of interesting visits to the local library, museum and film studios. There are close links with the Baptist Church, with the minister taking regular assemblies and the premises being used for Sunday school. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in local events, such as the re-establishment of a nearby orchard and the JC 2000 celebration performances; and this gives them a sense of their local community. Charity fundraising for both national and international causes raises their awareness of the wider world. The school has benefited from a generous donation of plants from a local nursery after the redevelopment of its grounds but other business links are limited.
27. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development, and very good provision for their moral, social and cultural development.
28. Acts of collective worship fully comply with statutory requirements and successfully foster pupils' spiritual development. 'Values' with spiritual, moral and social dimensions provide themes for assemblies each month, and are promoted in lessons, as well as in assemblies, through multi-faith stories, poems and songs. Work in religious education gives pupils good insights into values and beliefs, and enables them to reflect on their experiences in ways which develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. The school also has strong links with the local Baptist Church whose minister regularly leads assemblies. Work in English, history and personal, social and health education, in particular, encourages pupils to reflect on the feelings of others. For example, pupils are shown how to empathise with the noble aspirations of people such as Florence Nightingale, how to recognise and identify with different perspectives in events, and how to take account of others' experiences and feelings. In science, art and music, they are taught to respond to the beauty and to the miracles of the natural world, and they are encouraged and helped to capture the essence of such marvels in their own creative work.
29. The school has a very strong social and moral ethos. All staff provide good role models by valuing pupils' individual talents and personalities and by fostering good relationships. Pupils are involved in developing rules for various contexts and activities. For example, there are clear and simple rules for 'caring' and for 'talking and listening' as well as for behaviour in the classroom, in the playground and in the dining-room. Because they have been involved in drawing these up, pupils clearly feel a sense of ownership, and this is reflected in their very good behaviour. In lessons, pupils are taught to respect themselves and to consider, always, the impact of their behaviour on others. Teachers emphasise the importance of individual and collective responsibility, and co-operation and good behaviour are promoted through positive means. When the behaviour policy was reviewed recently, pupils as well as parents and staff contributed ideas, and their involvement was again sought when home-school agreements were drawn up to promote and support 'high standards of behaviour and self-discipline'. The school's policy on preventing and responding to bullying is very clear and is understood by pupils as well as by adults. Pupils' understanding of mankind's moral responsibility for the care of the environment is fostered very well. For example, children in the reception classes learn an early

lesson in conservation when they become involved in planting fruit trees to create an orchard in allotments near the school.

30. The promotion of pupils' social development is very good. In lessons, pupils are frequently encouraged to work in pairs and in small groups. Older pupils are encouraged to care for younger pupils in the playground, and opportunities for them to interact are also sought in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 write, then read stories to younger pupils, taking good account of the features that will appeal to them in books. Pupils in reception are encouraged to extend the hand of friendship far beyond their immediate world by exchanging letters with a little girl in China. Pupils in all years are taught to reflect on mankind's moral and social responsibility for others less fortunate than themselves by helping to raise funds for various charities and by filling shoe-boxes with Christmas gifts for children in Romania. Responsibility and 'leadership' are strongly promoted through the classroom duties and responsibilities given to pupils of all ages. As they grow older, pupils gradually assume wider responsibilities in the school as a whole, and pupils in Year 2 are involved in a very effective school council through which they assume collective responsibility for suggestions to improve the school, and for the care of others. For example, they were invited to suggest ideas for creating a 'happy' school and for developing the play areas.
31. Pupils' cultural development is also fostered very well. Through lessons, Book Weeks and 'Character days', through visits by staff from the Hertfordshire Schools' Library Service, and through the home-school reading partnership, pupils are taught to regard reading as a pleasure and books as sources of creativity and information. In geography, history and religious education, and in assemblies, pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and about the beliefs and traditions of many other cultures, both past and present. They are taught to understand and appreciate the art and music of significant artists and composers, and they benefit from workshops run by visiting artists, writers, musicians, dancers and theatre groups. Visits, for example to the National Gallery, to Gunnersbury Park and to Aklowa, an 'African village', support pupils' work well in art, history and geography, bringing the subjects to life. Pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural dimensions of society is promoted very effectively through visits and visitors, through the resources available in the school, and through community and outside links as well as through the National Curriculum. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into all activities and make valuable contributions to their peers' knowledge and understanding of other cultures. They talk about their own experiences and bring in artefacts and photographs to illustrate the points they are making, for example about religious customs or about different ways of life in other countries.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

32. The school has effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development. There has been good progress in this area since the last inspection in 1998 when the monitoring of learning was identified as a key point for action. Policies and procedures are clear and implemented consistently across the school. Assessment, monitoring and tracking of individual progress and target-setting are particular strengths in English and mathematics. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers use questions which are well matched to the needs and abilities of different pupils, and make ongoing observations to inform their planning and teaching. Assessment strategies are identified in medium-term planning and these are effectively used by teachers to focus their observations and interventions. Teachers

also evaluate their lesson plans to guide further planning. All lessons have very clear objectives which are shared with the pupils. These objectives, along with a clear reason for why the learning is important, provide measures for the pupils and staff to decide whether the intended learning has taken place. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used well for this purpose, and for the teacher to hear from the pupils what they found easy or difficult.

33. In the reception classes, the staff keep good assessment records for each child, which include valuable contributions by parents. Regular planned and informal assessments are made of children at work and play. Baseline assessment information is used to inform grouping and planning for the children in the reception classes. Baseline assessment information is also analysed carefully and used to track progress from reception through to the end of Year 2. This procedure is used systematically and effectively in English and mathematics. In these two subjects pupils have individual targets set which are regularly shared with parents and recorded for pupils in their books to help them know how to improve. In information and communication technology there is a clear, whole-school system for tracking pupils' progress; and in other subjects teachers keep useful notes based on their observations and informal assessments. Individual portfolios contain examples of English and mathematics work and are used to support the tracking of progress. Year 2 standard assessment results and papers are analysed carefully to inform future teaching and to help agree areas for school improvement. The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure that teachers have common interpretations of National Curriculum standards, and there are no significant discrepancies between teacher assessments and test results.
34. Marking is mainly of a good standard. It is positive, diagnostic, informative and linked to lesson objectives or individual targets where appropriate. However, in English, the sharp focus on these objectives and targets sometimes means that pupils receive no feedback on other significant areas requiring improvement in their writing.
35. The school is a caring community where children develop high self-esteem and flourish. Respect and kindness underpins the good support that it provides for all its pupils. Adults know the pupils well and all set a good example in their relationships with them. The school's focus on developing pupils' independence and self-confidence encourages the pupils to cope with all aspects of school life.
36. The school is very successful in promoting high standards of behaviour. Regular reviews of how the policy is working, involving all adults in the school, leads to a consistent approach to behaviour management. The school documents the very rare instances of poor behaviour or racism and takes care to ensure that pupils involved are listened to and have the opportunity to reflect on their actions. Support staff are well briefed to help those few pupils who find it harder to maintain these high standards. This integrated approach ensures that pupils know what is expected of them and helps them to develop very positive attitudes to learning.
37. The school strongly promotes the valuing of each child in all aspects of school life. Sensitive and well-targeted support is provided for those pupils with significant pastoral needs including those who are not living with their parents. Prompt and effective action is taken to address the very rare instances of racism and to emphasise that such behaviour is unacceptable.
38. Child protection issues and care of 'looked after' pupils are well handled. Staff have had appropriate training and there are clear guidelines for them to follow. The school

regularly monitors levels of attendance and follows up any pupils whose levels of absence may give cause for concern. Parents are appropriately requested not to take their children on holiday during term time.

39. Parents are complimentary about the induction their children have when joining the school and how it helps them settle securely into school routines. The contact teachers have with children before they start ensures that, where necessary, appropriate support can be planned for particular medical, pastoral or educational needs. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their feelings and these make a positive contribution to their personal and social development. Other aspects of health education, such as sex education and drugs awareness, are covered mainly in science lessons and are satisfactorily addressed.
40. Appropriate regard is given to matters of health and safety with regular inspections of the buildings and grounds, and guidelines for promoting safe practice in lessons such as physical education. Pupils also benefit from occasional visiting speakers to raise their awareness of road and fire safety. The buildings and grounds are clean and well maintained, and provide a safe and secure environment for pupils.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. The school has established a very strong partnership with parents through keeping them well informed about all aspects of school life and listening carefully to their views. Documentation about the school is consistently informative, friendly and well presented. The school's expectations about behaviour, homework and parental support are models of clarity, and this helps parents feel confident about the contribution they can make to their children's education.
42. The headteacher and staff have an open and welcoming relationship with parents; and concerns are shared and discussed sympathetically. Parents know that the staff will alert them to any particular problems their children may be having in school and suggest ways to help overcome them. They have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress with teachers each term when a brief report and three targets for improvement are shared with them. This good practice ensures that parents are well informed about how they can best support their children's learning or development at home. Annual written reports give clear indications of learning and progress as well as perceptive indications of personal and social development. Targets for improvement and children's own assessments of their strengths and weaknesses help complete a rounded evaluation on progress.
43. The school works very hard to keep parents informed about the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy sessions are held regularly to explain how these subjects are taught; and workshops on other aspects of the curriculum, such as art or the Foundation Stage, are organised from time to time, often linking in with particular school initiatives. Parents are also given curriculum summaries for the work to be covered each term. Each week the school encourages parents to come into the classroom for a brief pre-school session on handwriting. This is well attended and popular with parents as it gives children the chance to demonstrate their skills, and is an additional opportunity for informal contact with the staff. As a consequence of this comprehensive approach, parents feel well informed about what is taught. This knowledge gives them the confidence to help their children at home and to offer to help in classes. The school regularly consults parents about the most convenient timing for meetings in school so that the majority can attend. When necessary, the

school ensures that important communications are available in the parents' own language.

44. The school has established positive links with the parents of children with special educational needs. Parents are informed of their child's needs when these are first identified, and are subsequently involved when the child's progress is reviewed and when new targets are set.
45. The school is particularly good at seeking parents' views about all aspects of school life. As well as consulting them about reviews of school policies, such as the behaviour policy, it sends out a questionnaire each year, to seek parents' opinions on what the school provides and suggestions for improvements. The results of this survey are reported back to the parents, and the school takes full account of ideas for improvement. This good practice gives parents a sense of ownership and commitment to the school. For their part, parents are very supportive of the school. Many help in classes, knowing that the school will welcome their help whenever they can spare the time. The flourishing parents' association runs well supported events to raise funds for specific projects for improving the school resources or environment. Parents are also happy to share their expertise by talking about their jobs and skills to enrich the curriculum.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

46. The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills. She has high expectations and provides a clear sense of direction for the school. She promotes teamwork among staff and has created a shared commitment to school improvement. The headteacher analyses the results of statutory assessments very carefully, studies teachers' planning and carries out regular classroom observations. She provides well-focused feedback to staff, and this benefits their professional development. The headteacher has responded very well to the requirement of the last inspection that monitoring procedures should continue to be implemented in order to assess the quality of teaching and learning. She has very good interpersonal skills and supports her staff well. She also develops very constructive relationships with parents, and they hold her in high regard. All of the parents' questionnaire returns were positive about leadership and management, and the headteacher was identified as a strength of the school during the pre-inspection parents' meeting. Her strong commitment, energy and clear thinking contribute very significantly to the success of the school.
47. The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work. The results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly, and governors regularly visit the school to observe it in operation. The governors with particular responsibility for literacy, numeracy and provision for pupils with special educational needs are all well informed; and the chair of governors has fortnightly meetings with the headteacher which focus clearly on pertinent issues. Overall, the governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and know the challenges it faces. The governing body has developed its role well since the last inspection, when it needed to monitor the school's achievements more rigorously.
48. The school improvement plan has been formulated through very effective leadership by the headteacher, with appropriate staff and governor involvement. It is well

- organised, with a clear vision statement which emphasises the school's commitment to high standards. Careful evaluations of work in the previous year help to inform future planning, which extends until 2003. Detailed action plans are formulated for the current year, and these identify those responsible for individual initiatives, and how the initiatives will be undertaken, resourced and evaluated. The plan identifies relevant priorities and is making a valuable contribution to school improvement.
49. The day-to-day management of the school is very good, and benefits from effective secretarial support. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school.
  50. The deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2000, and provides a good role model for her colleagues through her very effective teaching. A significant proportion of teachers have taken on responsibility for co-ordinating subjects from the beginning of the current educational year, and are still developing their roles. All co-ordinators have a sound overview of teachers' planning in their subjects, and provide useful guidance for their colleagues when it is requested. The well-established mathematics co-ordinator has observed numeracy lessons, across the school, and there are appropriate plans to provide opportunities for the recently appointed co-ordinators for English and science to monitor teaching in their subjects. Most co-ordinators have studied samples of pupils' work in their subjects and some have recorded their findings. However, their analysis often lacks the focus and rigour required to enable them to identify, with sufficient precision, the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' standards and progress. The headteacher and staff appropriately recognise that this is an area for development in the work of established as well as recently appointed co-ordinators.
  51. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are effective. The special needs co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for her role, but has worked hard, and quickly, to familiarise herself with well established procedures and practices. In particular, she has gained a clear understanding of the needs of class teachers and support staff in relation to their work with these pupils, and of the full range of special educational needs represented by the pupils on the special educational needs register. She has benefited from the experience, expertise and support of the headteacher as she has learned about her role, and they work well together as a team. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place, and professional contacts with outside agencies and specialists are constructive and helpful. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is monitored very closely, and pupils are moved to different stages of the special educational needs register, and set new targets, in the light of the progress they make. In order to ensure that pupils are well prepared for changes of school, the special educational needs co-ordinator has established professional links with staff in partner nursery schools and in the main junior school to which pupils transfer.
  52. The school has a good policy for equal opportunities which is very effectively put into practice by all adults in the school. The headteacher is rigorous in her monitoring of progress of all the different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language; and governors are briefed to monitor groups of pupils when they make visits to the school. This good practice ensures that the aim of educational inclusion is fully met.
  53. The administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher and school secretary. Spending is also carefully monitored by the finance committee. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the initiatives in the school improvement plan which are properly costed. The governors debate expenditure rigorously in order

to obtain value for money, for example, by comparing the school's expenditure on specific elements of their provision with the expenditure of other schools.

54. Overall, the school makes good use of its resources. It is very well led by the headteacher, and the governors are effective. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, and is mainly good. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in most subjects, and their attitudes to learning are very positive. When these achievements are considered, along with annual expenditure, the school provides good value for money.
55. There are sufficient teachers, and the staff have the expertise and experience to cover the age range and ability of the pupils. They have secure subject knowledge, across the National Curriculum and in religious education, and are particularly well informed in English, mathematics and science. The school benefits from very effective learning support assistants in classrooms. They are well-briefed by teachers, develop very good relationships with pupils and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. There are good induction procedures for staff and the school has adopted an appropriate policy for performance management.
56. The accommodation is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff, and has a beneficial effect on the overall quality of education provided by the school. Classrooms are of at least satisfactory size, and teachers take care to enrich the environment with attractive displays of pupils' work. Resources for learning are sound, overall. The last inspection, in 1998, found that the accommodation and resources for reception children were unsatisfactory and this restricted progress. The space has been enlarged and now allows an appropriate range of learning resources to be readily available to children, who now progress well.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

57. Co-ordinators need to improve their monitoring of subjects by analysing samples of work, from across the school, with increased rigour in order to:
  - (a) identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' standards and progress; and
  - (b) to target areas for improvement.

(see paragraphs 50, 77, 88, 93, 98, 102, 107, 118, 121)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	57	20	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	162
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
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**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	31	31	62

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	30	31
	Girls	31	31	31
	Total	62	61	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	98 (98)	100 (98)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	31
	Girls	31	31	31
	Total	62	62	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (98)	100 (98)	100 (98)
	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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	99
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2001
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	£
Total income	320,832
Total expenditure	322,740
Expenditure per pupil	1,845
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,073
Balance carried forward to next year	11,165

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	162
Number of questionnaires returned	100

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	26	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	2	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	48	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	50	6	3	4
The teaching is good.	70	28	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	43	4	1	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	18	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	27	3	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	59	33	3	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	44	16	1	8

## **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**

58. Children start school in September or January depending on their birthday. Many of the youngest children start part time. At the time of the inspection there were 55 children in the two reception classes, virtually all attending full time. Baseline assessments show a broad range of attainment on entry but the proportion demonstrating above average standards is a little higher than in most schools.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

59. Teachers and the learning assistants know the children well and support them effectively according to their different needs. Staff carefully monitor and track the children's personal development. A good range of learning experiences are offered to develop personal, social and emotional skills. Children learn to build constructive relationships with one another through a variety of inside and outside play opportunities. They work well co-operatively, for example, when working with a partner on the computer, sharing a book or playing number bingo in a small group. Staff use praise and encouragement well and the children respond positively to their tasks. They show a keen interest in what they are doing and try hard. There are consistently high expectations of behaviour and children learn classroom routines quickly, for example putting resources away and gathering on the carpet. Children develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

60. Children of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, generally make good progress. They are given a secure foundation in initial literacy skills, gain confidence and control in speaking and listening, and are well prepared for the early stages of the National Curriculum.
61. All the children enjoy stories, follow the direction of print on the page easily when they share texts with their teachers, and join in enthusiastically when they are able to do so. When discussing the story of 'Titch', they show good understanding of the story line and the language, and most can recognise some key words on sight. All can read their own names, and can recognise many letters by their shape and sound in a variety of contexts. A few higher attaining children already read simple texts independently and expressively.
62. All children are making good progress in their handwriting. All can form at least some letters accurately during handwriting practice, and all are developing good control and increasing dexterity when they follow or reproduce linked patterns. Most children can already suggest ways of building simple words, drawing on their knowledge of letter sounds, and some are already confident enough to compose sentences for their teachers to scribe. They are learning to communicate their ideas in writing, and their independent writing, although as yet 'emergent', already bears many of the characteristics of conventional script. Most children form at least some letters accurately, their writing follows a left to right direction across the page, and certain sounds are represented accurately using conventional spelling patterns. It is clear, from the care that they take, that the children enjoy writing. However, there are times when some children who are beginning to write independently do not have access to

appropriate resources to help them in their endeavours. For example, all children are encouraged to rely heavily on their recall of letter sounds when trying to build words and sentences to record their ideas. For those children whose strength lies more in visual memory than in the auditory domain, this strategy alone is not always appropriate; such children would also benefit from appropriate access to written sources of unfamiliar or 'new' words related to the content of their writing, just as they are already 'shown' the key words to literacy.

### **Mathematical development**

63. Analysis of work and observations in lessons shows that children usually make good progress in their mathematical development. Many will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals by the time they begin Year 1. Many children are already confident in using numbers from one to ten and some can already count in tens. They show an enthusiasm for numbers and are very responsive and attentive in whole-class oral sessions. They enjoy counting and using number fans to show their answers to simple addition or subtraction problems. They can name simple two-dimensional shapes and use positional language correctly. There are appropriate opportunities for all children to learn through practical tasks, for example through using sand and water, physical activities outside, games and construction kits. Early number and shape work is also reinforced by activities using a computer.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

64. Children in reception make good progress in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding of the world. Effective teaching enables them to develop their observational skills by looking carefully at the appearance of a range of different flowering plants and describe their similarities and differences. They learn about roots, stems, leaves and flowers of plants, make good use of the magnifying glasses and appreciate the wonder of the natural world. Children also achieve well when building models with construction kits, and have used recycled materials skilfully to create model buildings and trees to illustrate their interpretation of a favourite story. They benefit from looking at different musical instruments and are able to choose materials from a range of appropriate resources to create their own model instruments.
65. Children make sound progress in developing an understanding of the wider world in which they live. They learn to use simple geographical terms, including words to determine position and direction, when they follow a route around the school and its immediate site. They are beginning to be aware of some of the differences between pictures and plans, and most children incorporate some of the conventions of plans when they draw the features they have seen and the spaces used for different purposes in the school. They develop a sound understanding of change, for example, when they observe photographs of the same rural location in the four seasons of the year. On visits within the locality outside school, they learn about farming and about the use of land for allotments. They receive an early lesson in conservation and food production when they become involved in planting fruit trees in the allotments. Through their links with a family in China, the children are beginning to learn about life in another country and to appreciate similarities and differences between different cultures.
66. There were no opportunities during the inspection to make direct observations of activities which contribute to children's knowledge and understanding of 'past and present'. However, evidence from planning, from classroom displays and from

photographic records shows that children experience a relevant early years curriculum and are taught appropriate terms, knowledge and skills to enable them to acquire a suitable foundation for the later study of history. For example, they use language associated with the passage of time, through changing dates and by recalling the immediate past, and they study toys, comparing those available today with those used by their parents and grandparents, and noting significant similarities and differences.

67. Children in reception have a secure beginning to religious education. They have learnt about Christian traditions and festivals and have a photographic record of a nativity play re-enacted on a farm visit. They have reflected and recorded work on people that are important to them and compared some features of their own lives, for example homes and food, with those of children when Jesus Christ was living 2000 years ago.
68. Children begin to use the 'mouse' on a computer to play games and control movement. They use the keyboard on a computer and tape recorder controls with increasing confidence and accuracy. With some assistance, they are learning to write their names on a keyboard, and can change the font type and size. They are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals for information and communication technology by the end of the reception year.

### **Physical development**

69. Children in the reception classes have outside play in an enclosed area with access to large equipment, including a climbing frame. They also have regular physical education lessons in the hall. Children show developing confidence, control and co-ordination in all their movements including using bean bags and rubber rings. They show an awareness of space when moving around the hall and avoid bumping into other children even when carrying or balancing small pieces of equipment.

### **Creative development**

70. Teachers provide children with a wide range of activities to promote their creative development. These motivate the children strongly and enable them to make good progress. The children achieve well when learning to mix their own paint colours, and know that adding black or white to primary colours makes them darker or lighter. They create bold and expressive paintings of their favourite toys, and achieve well in collage work and when making simple wax-resist pictures. Children's creative development is also promoted effectively when they role play and use small-world toys. Reception children learn a good range of simple songs, and generally sing confidently and well. They begin to make patterns with sound, using musical instruments, and can recognise and can clap their hands to a simple rhythm.

## **ENGLISH**

71. The school's results in the national tests in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 were well above the national average and well above the results achieved by similar schools. In writing, results were very high when compared with the national average, and were well above the average results for similar schools. Results in the reading tests improved dramatically in 1998 and have remained high for the past three years. In 2000, almost half the pupils in Year 2 achieved Level 3 in reading, demonstrating achievement which is higher than that expected for pupils of their age, while a few

pupils did even better and achieved Level 4 which is the standard normally expected for Year 6 pupils. Attainment in writing, in common with trends nationally, is slightly lower than in reading. Even so, almost a quarter of the pupils attained Level 3, and none fell below Level 2 which is the expected standard for their age. As with reading, the school's results improved significantly in 1998 and have remained at a very good level since that time.

72. Inspection findings broadly mirror the pattern of high standards achieved by pupils in national tests in recent years. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the key stage in all aspects of their work in English. By the end of the key stage, all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs, achieve good standards in relation to their starting points. In the current Year 2 cohort, which has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in 2000, standards are above average overall in speaking and listening and in writing, and well above average in reading.
73. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above average. They use spoken Standard English correctly, become increasingly fluent and articulate, develop a good vocabulary, and learn to adapt their speech and vocabulary to suit various audiences and purposes. From a very young age, pupils read aloud clearly, audibly and with expression, often taking as much pleasure from the act of reading as from what they read. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils already read confidently and fluently, using an appropriate range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They observe the cues to phrasing and expression provided by punctuation. They interpret texts quickly as they read, demonstrating their understanding of mood and character, for example by changing their tone of voice appropriately when they read dialogue. They can explain their reading preferences well, often referring to characteristics of a particular author's style, and they know how to use the library and information books to find things out. Above all else, they have acquired a love of reading for its own sake. Most pupils in Year 2 write well for a suitable range of purposes in English and in other subjects. The stories, reports and eye-witness accounts written by the most able pupils immediately engage the reader and are of a very high standard for pupils of their age. There are also some sensitive and compelling poems with well-chosen vocabulary and very effective imagery. Most pupils have a well-developed general vocabulary and have acquired a good repertoire of technical and subject-specific terms. Most use full stops and capital letters accurately. Higher attaining pupils use speech marks, exclamation marks and question marks, and are beginning to use commas correctly. The written work of lower attaining pupils generally lacks the fluency and coherence of work by more able pupils, and is sometimes rather stilted. This is often because they do not perceive a piece of writing as a coherent whole, and have not mastered the use of a wide enough range of connectives to combine ideas effectively within complex sentences. In spelling, most pupils draw competently on their phonic knowledge and on patterns they have committed to memory. Almost all pupils are also capable of producing neat, legible and well-formed cursive handwriting. However, a few lower attaining pupils find it difficult to combine, simultaneously, the many skills needed to produce written work. As a result, their handwriting and the presentation of their written work are not always of the same high standard.
74. The results of national tests show that standards have continued to rise in English over the past few years. At the time of the last OFSTED report of 1995, and in subsequent HMI reports, the raising of standards has been a key issue for the school. The 1998 inspectors found pupils needed to undertake more writing and to improve their handwriting. Evidence from the current inspection strongly indicates that pupils

now achieve well in relation to their starting points. Opportunities have been created for pupils to produce extended writing in other subjects, as well as in English, and excellent examples of such work are evident, particularly in history. In response to further criticisms raised in the various reports: reading books are now well matched to pupils' abilities, and reading records are used to good effect to monitor pupils' developing skills; a cursive style of handwriting is introduced early, in the reception classes; and, all pupils regularly plan their written work or use very effective writing frames to support them in their endeavours.

75. The 1995 OFSTED report identified shortcomings in teaching in some English lessons. However, in the current inspection, the teaching in Key Stage 1 was mainly very good and otherwise good. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented successfully. All teachers and support staff demonstrate a good grasp of the requirements and of the underlying principles, and they are having a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. There is mutual respect between teacher and taught, and, as a result, pupils are keen to learn and to do their best. Common strengths of the teaching include: appropriately high expectations for individual pupils in terms of behaviour and attainment; good planning which makes clear what pupils are intended to learn; the rigorous pursuit of planned objectives; and very good skills in the organisation and management of pupils, tasks and resources. Teachers provide good role models as readers and writers. They make effective links between reading and writing so that pupils learn, from their reading, many of the skills and strategies they need to become successful writers. For the most part, group tasks are suitably different to make sure that independent work is matched to the learning needs of particular groups and individuals, including pupils with special educational needs, the more able, and those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Support staff are deployed well and give effective, focused attention to those pupils who need it.
76. Assessment in English has many strengths. All teachers are adept at questioning pupils effectively during discussions and during work in progress. They use pupils' responses to good effect to confirm understanding, indicate the next steps in pupils' learning, and to eradicate any misconceptions. All pupils have relevant individual targets for their written work, and teachers also identify targets for specific groups and for their classes. The progress and attainment of teaching groups and of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are rigorously tracked and monitored. The results of national tests, both statutory and non-statutory, are analysed carefully and any particular weaknesses identified in pupils' work are then addressed. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and of good quality. Strengths and weaknesses in relation to pupils' targets and to the specific objectives set for the work are brought to pupils' attention, and guidance for improvement given. Occasionally, however, in addressing these explicit targets, other, sometimes more important, points for development are overlooked. For example, marking does not always pay sufficient attention to pupils' use of grammar, to sentence structure, to the logical development and organisation of ideas, and to the overall coherence of pieces of writing.
77. The English co-ordinator is relatively new to her role. She has made a good start by leading training sessions for staff, developing resources, and sampling pupils' work. As yet, she has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms, although there is evidence of good quality monitoring of this kind by the headteacher. The work-sampling seen gives useful insights into teaching, but would usefully benefit from an increased focus on specific strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance.



78. The co-ordinator is conscientious and hard working, and is a good role model as a teacher of literacy. There is a good action plan for English which identifies relevant areas for development, and all staff are committed in their resolve to raise standards even further. Resources for English are adequate, of good quality, and reflect the multi-cultural dimension of society.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. Pupils in Year 2 generally achieve standards above those expected nationally in all areas of mathematics. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with attainment a little above average and they make good progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. The 2000 national test results were well above the national average and were also well above the average results of similar schools. Standards have clearly risen since the last inspection in 1998, when pupils' attainment was judged to be satisfactory but required further improvement. In 1998 there had already been improvement from the 1995 and 1997 inspections when pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics were unsatisfactory. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, and make good progress.
80. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value up to 100, and a few can solve problems with much larger numbers. They use measuring instruments accurately, for example when measuring and extending lines using a ruler. They can accurately identify simple fractions of shapes and whole numbers, and are building confidence in solving word problems involving fractions. They are able to check their results and use a variety of strategies to tackle a problem. Tasks which require pupils to choose and share strategies, including decisions about which number operation to use, are set regularly, and are a strength of the teaching. Pupils are very responsive in lessons and enjoy their mathematical learning.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall and is generally very good in Year 2. In the most successful lessons, pupils of all ability groups are challenged effectively, time is used very well, and the group activities contribute strongly to the achievement of the lesson objectives. The teachers are very secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they use effectively. Lessons have clear learning objectives and these are appropriately shared with the pupils. Teachers have good questioning skills and use a variety of strategies effectively to extend learning and check pupils' answers. These strategies include getting pupils to try answers on number fans, and individual whiteboards. The three-part lesson structure is well established, and sessions at the end of lessons are often used effectively for pupils to share what they found easy or difficult. This practice supports the school's effective assessment procedures and practice. Lessons are evaluated to inform future teaching, individual targets are set and shared with parents, and curricular targets to improve standards in each group are identified in the school improvement plan.
82. The co-ordinator is well informed and, supported by the headteacher, has contributed positively to the good standards in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. The monitoring and evaluation of standards and teaching are embedded practices in the school and also include self-evaluation by teachers to improve teaching further. The numeracy governor has observed lessons to keep the governing body informed. The school makes some use of information and communication technology to support mathematics but has correctly identified this as an area for further

improvement. Pupils use mathematics to help learning in other subjects, for example, when conducting traffic surveys in geography and when measuring in design and technology. Resources are well organised and in good order. Each classroom has effective displays to give the pupils information about areas of mathematics and also an interactive display where they can solve problems, for example involving money, weighing or number operations.

## SCIENCE

83. On entry to Key Stage 1, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils are a little above average. In the statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2000, all pupils reached the expected level for their age. This result was very high in relation to the national average and the achievements of similar schools. The percentage that exceeded the expected standard (Level 2) was in line with the national average but was below the percentage achieved by similar schools. As a consequence, teachers have particularly focused on the progress made by more able pupils in the current educational year, to ensure that these pupils achieve standards which reflect their capabilities. Inspection findings show that all pupils are now achieving well in the subject, and their standards are mainly above average at the end of the key stage.
84. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection in 1998, when they were judged to be satisfactory but needed to be improved further. The 1998 inspection also found that pupils' scientific enquiry skills were underdeveloped, but this is no longer the case.
85. In Year 1, pupils can recognise and name the main external parts of the human body and make good progress when learning about the skeleton. They are able to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and are developing their understanding about the human life cycle. Pupils can sort common materials into groups according to their basic properties of texture and appearance. They achieve well when learning that pushes and pulls are examples of forces, and carry out simple experiments to discover if objects roll more or less effectively on different surfaces. Pupils make good progress when learning about magnetism, and understand that some metal objects are attracted by magnets.
86. In Year 2, pupils are aware that a range of household appliances use electricity and are aware of the dangers of this power source. They can create simple electrical circuits using batteries, wires and bulbs; and most are able to interpret pictorial diagrams to decide whether circuits will function. Pupils achieve well when conducting experiments to discover which materials will allow light to pass through them and learning about the formation of shadows. Year 2 pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and the need for exercise. They understand that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes, and achieve well when conducting fair tests to discover the best trouser fabric for an active seven year old.
87. The quality of teaching in science is good, and results in pupils making good progress in their learning across Key Stage 1. Lessons are well planned and are part of coherent programmes to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way. Teachers clearly identify the purposes of lessons, and ensure that pupils are aware of what they are expected to learn. They have secure subject knowledge, and introduce and reinforce scientific vocabulary well. They cater effectively for the learning requirements of all pupils; and those with special

educational needs particularly benefit from the good support of well-informed classroom assistants. The most able pupils are generally challenged appropriately by their tasks: for example, in lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, these pupils were required to devise their own methods of recording the results of investigations, while others were provided with formats produced by their teachers. All teachers make good use of questions to probe pupils' understanding, organise their lessons well and have very constructive relationships with their classes. Pupils respond positively to the teaching, demonstrating very good attitudes and behaviour, across the key stage.

88. The science co-ordinator took on responsibility for the subject when she joined the school in September 2000. She has analysed the 2000 SATs results and, as a consequence, provided a beneficial inset day for her colleagues to raise their awareness of the needs of more able pupils in science. The co-ordinator has a sound overview of teachers' planning and has examined examples of pupils' work, from across the school. However, she appropriately recognises that there is scope to improve the quality of her work sampling by making it more rigorously focused on pupils' standards and progress. Resources for science are sound and are well organised.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. Pupils achieve well in art and design, their standards are mainly above those expected nationally at the end of the key stage. No specific judgements were made about art in the 1997 and 1998 inspection reports. However, the school has made good progress since the longer inspection, in 1995, when standards were average and some pupils underachieved.
90. In Year 1, pupils are able to mix their own paint colours confidently; and demonstrate good standards when creating bold paintings of the sky which reflect class discussions about Van Gogh's pictures. They achieve well in collage work, both in their abstract creations, using threaded beads, papers, feathers and card, and in their interpretations of flowers. They demonstrate above average standards when making three-dimensional sculptures of dragons as part of their work on the Chinese New Year, using paper and clay. They also create interesting pictures of dragons, using information and communication technology.
91. In Year 2, pupils achieve high standards when working with a visiting artist to create clay plaques; and achieve well when making paste-resist patterns on fabrics. Their paintings of fruit show good colour-mixing skills, and they make good progress when painting flowers from direct observation. They achieve well when creating interesting woven designs using hessian, and their collage pictures of fruits are vibrant.
92. Insufficient lessons were observed in art and design to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work shows they make good progress across the key stage, and teachers provide a wide range of learning opportunities in the subject. Teachers clearly have high expectations and plan their lessons effectively. The school makes good use of visits from a number of artists to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in the subject.
93. The art and design co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good overview of teachers' planning. However, she has no systematic procedures for monitoring pupils' standards in art and design, and recognises there is scope to improve this aspect of her co-ordination role. She is conscientious and has recently organised a very

successful art week at the school, which included an evening talk for parents from a visiting artist who had worked with the pupils. Resources for art are good, and are well organised.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. Pupils generally achieve well in design and technology, and their standards are above those expected for their age at the end of the key stage.
95. In Year 1, pupils make good progress when designing and making two-dimensional cardboard faces which can be changed by simple sliding mechanisms that move the eyes or mouth. They achieve well when designing and creating their own wrapping papers, and demonstrate sound standards when making clowns which have moving limbs, facilitated by split pins. In Year 2, pupils learn about different kinds of puppet design, and achieve well when making their own finger puppets. They demonstrate good skills when making model vehicles, using card and wood. They measure and cut the materials accurately, and know how to strengthen corners with cardboard triangles. They use hacksaws carefully and safely, and create models which reflect their well-considered designs.
96. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, the lesson seen in Year 2, when pupils worked on their model vehicles, was well taught. Teachers make effective use of the good scheme of work, provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, to plan their lessons; and pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject.
97. The last inspection, in 1998, made no judgements about design and technology. However, the 1995 inspection found that many pupils underachieved and both the 1995 and 1997 inspections identified the need for more systematic planning to secure the development of pupils' key skills in the subject. Overall, the school has made good progress in rectifying these weaknesses.
98. The co-ordinator took on responsibility for design and technology in September 2000. She has monitored teachers' planning to ensure that appropriate use is made of the scheme of work, but recognises she now needs to allocate time to analyse the standards achieved by pupils, across the school. Resources for design and technology are sound, and are well organised.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. No geography lessons were taught in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, and few examples of pupils' work were available for scrutiny because the school's planning for the subject does not include a significant focus on geography during the first half of the year. As a result, it is not possible to make secure judgements about the standards achieved in geography, or about the quality of teaching in the subject.
100. Discussions with staff, the scrutiny of planning and displays, and an examination of the few pieces of work produced do show, however, that pupils are given suitable opportunities to explore the school site and the school's immediate locality. For example, pupils in Year 1 draw up their own designs for the development of the outdoor play area, incorporating sensible suggestions for playground features and equipment which will improve play and learning facilities. They study different types of

houses in the area around the school, using appropriate technical terms such as 'bungalow', 'detached' and 'terraced' to describe them. They conducted a survey to find out how many pupils in the class lived in the different kinds of houses, and they used information and communication technology data-handling facilities to analyse and present their findings. In Year 2, pupils learn about the wider world when they use a world map to locate the countries of origin of many kinds of fruit and other foodstuffs eaten in this country. When they visit the 'African' village of Aklowa, (close to Stansted airport!), they develop a good understanding of some aspects of life in a different culture. For example, photographs taken in the village show the pupils wearing African dress, cooking peanuts, dancing a traditional wedding dance and learning the art of drumming and the meaning of the language of African drums. In the near future, the school intends to establish a live link with a real village in Africa using the internet. Pupils throughout the key stage follow with interest the adventures of 'Bertie Bear' as he journeys around the world.

101. The school is making use of helpful guidance published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in order to develop its scheme of work for geography. At the time of the last OFSTED inspection in 1995, resources were judged to be inadequate. Since that time, the school has augmented its resources, so that there are now maps and plans of different scales, including some aerial photographs. However, the atlases available for pupils in Year 1 are not very suitable for such young pupils, and the school intends to replace them in the near future. A further criticism was raised in the 1995 report, to the effect that too little emphasis was placed on the study of the locality. It is clear both from teachers' planning and from the samples of work seen, that the locality of the school is now a prominent focus for work in geography throughout the key stage.
102. The geography co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject and, as yet, has had little opportunity to develop a secure overview of teaching and learning across the school. She has monitored teachers' planning with a view to ensuring appropriate coverage of the Programmes of Study, but has not yet observed lessons or conducted suitably rigorous monitoring of pupils' work in order to reach secure judgements about standards and progress. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator is well qualified for her role and is enthusiastic about the subject. She has already co-ordinated the setting-up of an adventure trail in the playground, and she has identified several key areas for development in the subject, including the need for pupils in Year 2 to establish links with people who live in genuine 'contrasting localities'.

## **HISTORY**

103. Three history lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, and further evidence was gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work, from displays, from discussions with staff and pupils, and from teachers' planning. All available evidence shows that pupils thoroughly enjoy history, and that they attain standards which are above average by the end of Key Stage 1. They use various sources to good effect to find out about the past, have a good understanding of chronology for their age, ask as well as answer historical questions, and demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of differences between 'then' and 'now'. They are particularly skilled at adopting the role and perspective of historians in relation to the topics they study, and there is also some excellent writing in which they adopt the perspectives of people caught up in particularly dramatic historical events. So captivated and involved are some pupils that they follow up their studies, independently and at home, for the sheer love of it.

104. Pupils in Year 1 use photographs of museum exhibits well to reach an understanding of ways in which museum curators classify and display their exhibits. For example, they can explain that one display is of wooden toys from different periods, whilst another display consists entirely of Steiff teddy bears from different times. They apply what they have learned when it is their turn as 'curators' to classify toys assembled in the classroom, deciding, for example, to exhibit cars and stuffed toys in different categories, and ranking artefacts in each category according to their age or period. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a level of knowledge and understanding which is above average for their age when discussing the life and work of Florence Nightingale. They explain that while her death was reported in a newspaper of the time, the range of sources of information would be much more extensive today, incorporating film, television, radio and the World Wide Web, as well as very many printed sources. They formulate relevant historical questions to guide their own research into the life and times of Florence Nightingale, and they work quickly, skimming and scanning resources to find answers to their questions. In written work related to a study of the Great Fire of London, pupils in Year 2 not only demonstrate a thorough understanding of the building materials used and of the social and housing conditions which contributed to the rapid spread of the fire, but also convey vividly the emotions and reactions of people caught up in the events. In all their work, pupils in both years use relevant dates and technical terms when they discuss or write about historical events, and the older pupils are beginning to draw comparisons between different periods they have studied, showing a good grasp of chronology for their age.
105. All criticisms of history raised in the long OFSTED report of 1995 have been addressed. A scheme of work based on the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is now in place; older and more able pupils no longer underachieve, but are suitably challenged and are extremely well motivated; resources are used to good effect; and teachers develop pupils' enquiry skills well.
106. At the time of the 1995 inspection, some of the teaching of history was judged to have shortcomings. This is no longer the case. The teaching is now good overall, and is never less than satisfactory. Pupils' written work also provides strong evidence of effective teaching. All lessons are planned well; pupils are managed effectively and are given suitably different tasks and resources to match their individual capabilities; and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are catered for appropriately, and included in all activities and discussions. In both year groups, there is an appropriate balance of oral and recorded work, and lessons are used to good effect to promote social interaction through group work, and the development of independent research skills. Occasionally, the focus on historical learning objectives becomes obscured by an over-emphasis on writing skills, although it is quite clear from the wider range of evidence available that links between the two subjects of English and history are mutually supportive and worthwhile. Not least, a significant achievement of the teachers is that they communicate their own love of history to their pupils. Visits to Gunnersbury Park, for example to experience the daily routines of a Victorian day in Lord Rothschild's house, or to experience, through role play, life in the hospital at Scutari when Florence Nightingale was there, serve to bring history to life.
107. The history co-ordinator's enthusiasm for her subject is infectious, and appears to be shared by all staff. She has a very sound grasp of planning and provision for the subject across the school as a whole, although she has not yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in a systematic way. She is aware that a more rigorous sampling of pupils' work would be beneficial in order to develop a more informed and secure overview of standards and progression. Resources for history

are satisfactory, and the school also benefits by being able to draw on the collection of costumes and other artefacts available at the Wheathampstead resources library.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress and achieve standards expected nationally by the age of seven. These findings are similar to those when the school was inspected in 1995. The school, however, has made good progress since 1995 in ensuring that there is now no unsatisfactory teaching in the subject and that resources have been updated. Resource provision is sufficient to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000.
109. Pupils make satisfactory progress in using the mouse to control movements and give commands, to draw and design using a paint programme and to play word and number games. They are learning how to retrieve information from CD-ROMs, and are beginning to save and retrieve their work, learning how to access and name files. The teaching of specific skills and use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, supported by a scheme of work, ensure that pupils have an appropriate range of learning opportunities in the subject. Pupils' progress in Year 2 is assisted by specialist teaching by the co-ordinator, helping them to achieve the standard expected nationally for seven year olds. The school ensures that the use of information and communication technology is planned in all the required subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 are using a data-handling program to record a bar chart in mathematics and beginning to learn how to programme a robot. In Year 2 they are downloading information about vehicles and about Florence Nightingale to support their work in design and technology and history. Pupils enjoy information and communication technology. They are responsive and attentive in lessons, and co-operate well with partners when using the keyboard.
110. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and is occasionally good. The use of small screens to demonstrate skills to a whole class sometimes inhibits pupils' progress but the staff try to compensate by giving the pupils the opportunity to work in groups in the small computer suite, assisted by learning assistants or volunteer parents. Lesson objectives are very precise and shared well with the pupils so that they know how they are expected to progress. The learning is also usefully put into context so that the pupils also know why they are learning the particular skill. Teachers' planning is thorough and effective; and the scheme of work ensures that pupils' learning develops systematically over time. Pupils' progress in information and communication technology skills is tracked appropriately as they move through the school.
111. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good technical expertise and is well informed about the subject. She provides valued support to staff and helps them to find suitable programmes. The co-ordinator has given some training to staff and the new opportunities fund training for information and communication technology is planned for later in the year. The co-ordinator now needs to develop her monitoring role, particularly by evaluating the standards and progress made by the pupils more rigorously. This monitoring role was also identified as an area for improvement in the 1995 inspection.

## **MUSIC**

112. Pupils generally achieve well in music, and their standards are a little above those expected nationally at the end of the key stage.



113. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress when using percussion instruments to compose sound effects for a well-known story; and are able to combine long and short sounds, using untuned percussion, to fit in with a steady pulse. In Year 2, pupils make good progress when developing their musical vocabulary, and achieve well when learning to recognise changes of pitch. Pupils' singing skills are good, overall, across the key stage. They sing with clear diction and generally have secure control of pitch and dynamics. Pupils clearly enjoy their music lessons and singing in assembly. They behave very well and demonstrate positive attitudes.
114. No judgements were made about pupils' standards in music in the 1997 and 1998 inspections. However, they have improved since 1995, when they were found to be in line with those expected nationally.
115. The quality of teaching in music is mainly good. It is undertaken by class teachers and by a well-informed specialist music teacher who works with each class for a session every week. Only one lesson taught by a class teacher was observed, and it demonstrated satisfactory teaching. However, good teaching was observed by the music specialist, across the key stage, and it enabled pupils to make good progress in their learning. Singing skills are also promoted effectively by a parent helper and a learning support assistant during weekly whole-school sessions. Resources for music are satisfactory and are well organised.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

116. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in physical education are a little above national expectations. This is an improvement since the inspection in 1995 when they were broadly average. No judgements were made about standards in the subject in the inspections of 1997 and 1998. Other areas requiring improvement in the 1995 inspection have also been addressed; a scheme of work is now in place, and pupils are well controlled in all lessons.
117. In Key Stage 1, gymnastics and games lessons were seen. Pupils achieve well in these lessons and work enthusiastically. They enjoy their work and co-operate well with one another. By the age of seven, pupils show control and co-ordination when throwing and catching bean bags, and use apparatus effectively to practise and develop a sequence of movements. The quality of teaching is always of a good standard and is occasionally very good. Teachers make effective use of explanations, and ask pupils to observe the efforts of others to help them understand how to improve further. Learning support assistants provide skilled help, particularly with pupils with special educational needs. Learning objectives are always shared with the pupils, which is good practice. When teaching is very good, pupils are reminded about the objectives frequently and tasks are challenging but achievable. Lessons are well structured with appropriate warm up and cool down activities. Good attention is paid to health and safety in all lessons.
118. The newly appointed co-ordinator is beginning to review medium-term planning but her role requires improvement in monitoring and evaluating the standards of pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching. Resources are in good order, well organised and adequate to meet curriculum requirements. An after-school football club for girls and boys, and dancing at a local festival, enrich the school's physical education curriculum.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. From the scrutiny of work, the inspection found that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in religious education. At the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Religious education is taught regularly. However, because of timetabling arrangements, no lessons were seen during the inspection and there was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching.
120. Pride is taken in the presentation of work, and a variety of approaches are used to teach and record the subject. Each year group has produced an interesting booklet about life 2000 years ago as part of the JC 2000 festival. Pupils are expected to think for themselves and to make connections between the stories they hear and how it compares with their every day life. Understanding of a variety of faiths is taught through visits to places of worship, use of artefacts, books and visitors to the school. Resources are sufficient for the subject, are in good order and well organised.
121. Since the inspection in 1995 a scheme of work is now in place. This is used consistently and ensures that pupils receive a balanced religious education programme which takes account of progression through the school. Focuses for assessment are built into the scheme of work. These focuses are used satisfactorily by teachers, supported by observations, to assess pupils' progress in the subject and inform the writing of individual annual reports. The co-ordinator has ensured that planning corresponds to the locally agreed syllabus and provides valued support to colleagues. However, she needs to increase her awareness of pupils' standards and progress by analysing samples of work carefully, from across the school.