

INSPECTION REPORT

Therfield First School

Royston

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 117153

Inspection Number: 187257

Headteacher: Mrs R Irvin

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy
16173

Dates of inspection: 20 - 22 September 1999

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Information about the school

Type of school	First School
Type of control	Community
Age range of pupils	4 - 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	The Causeway Therfield Royston Hertfordshire SG8 9PP
Telephone number:	01763 287284
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Bradshaw and Rev Morgan
Date of the previous inspection:	11 - 14 March 1996

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Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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Mr M Cunningham Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs C Richardson Team Inspector	English Design and Technology History Geography Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics because of the effective provision made for them.
- All pupils make good progress in information technology and pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in history, geography and music.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and their attitudes and relationships good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and provision for moral development is very good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' work are good.
- Partnership with parents is very good and enrichment through links with the community is excellent.
- The support, guidance and welfare of pupils are good.
- The school has a good number of support staff.
- Financial planning, control and administration are good.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. A small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory and the liaison between part-time teachers is not sufficiently rigorous.
- II. The quality of teaching and of the curriculum is insufficiently monitored.
- III. The allocation of managerial roles and responsibilities has yet to be agreed and implemented.
- IV. Staff development is not properly arranged and formal appraisal of teachers is not in place.
- V. The use of accommodation does not give priority to pupils of school age.
- VI. Curricular planning is inconsistent throughout the school.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection in 1996. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing most of the key issues. Standards in science have improved and strategic planning is in place for the longer term. However, work still needs to be finished on the curriculum and in the allocation of roles and responsibilities. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

Standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on the latest National Curriculum tests for which there is comparative data are usually reported. As only a few pupils were tested results are not published nor are comparisons made as small numbers make comparisons unreliable.

In the 1999 national tests, for which comparative data is not yet available, pupils achieved almost an equal balance in English of Level 2 and Level 3, Level 2 being the nationally expected level for pupils of this age. A small proportion of pupils did not achieve the expected level. In

mathematics most pupils attained Level 2 and in science assessments all achieved Level 2 and a small proportion achieved higher. These results are overall higher than is reflected in the judgements of this inspection, which places pupils' attainments as broadly in line with expectation by the age of seven in these subjects. The number of pupils in each year group is small, however, and there is variation in size of the group from year to year. Results from such small groups are subject to significant variations and must be treated with some caution, as one pupil can easily account for a large percentage of the whole.

Nine-year-olds attain standards typical for their age in English, mathematics, and science. Pupils across the school reach standards in religious education which are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in information technology are broadly in line with national expectations at both key stages.

· QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	· Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 9 years
English	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	None seen
Information technology		Good	Good
Religious education		None seen	Satisfactory
Other subjects	None seen	Satisfactory in physical education	Satisfactory in physical education and good in history

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with strengths in the teaching of literacy in Key Stage 1, the teaching of history at Key Stage 2 and the teaching of information technology at both key stages. In all, 47 per cent of the teaching was good, 43 per cent satisfactory and 10 per cent less than satisfactory. The teaching of English at Key Stage 1 was good. In English at Key Stage 2 and mathematics and physical education at both key stages the teaching was sound. In information technology the teaching was good throughout. In religious education the only teaching seen, at Key Stage 2, was satisfactory. In the other subjects not enough teaching was seen to make a judgement on it other than in history at Key Stage 2 where the teaching was good.

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

· OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour is very good and impacts very well on the school as a community.
Attendance	Satisfactory.
Ethos*	A sound ethos reflects a commitment to the further raising of standards.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory, though the monitoring of the work of the school is unsatisfactory. Work remains to be completed on the allocation

of roles and responsibilities to subject co-ordinators.

Curriculum	A sound curriculum is in place. The practice is ahead of policy, however, and there remains work to be completed on drawing together the overall planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Effective provision is made for these pupils and consequently they make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, with particular strengths in the provision for pupils' moral development, which is very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is generally satisfactory though there is an overall lack of subject expertise, much being made up by experience. Resources are sound in quantity and quality. Accommodation is satisfactory.
Value for money	Satisfactory value for money is provided even though the use of the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

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

· THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the School:	What some parents are not happy about:
VII. the sense of wider community; VIII. children want to go to school; IX. detailed reports which recognise the individuality of children and their attainments; X. parents trust the school.	XI. Too little monitoring of standards.

The inspection judgements concur with the parents' views of the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The headteacher, governing body and staff should take the following action.

- i Improve the unsatisfactory teaching by:
 - XII. agreeing and implementing systems to monitor the quality of all the teaching and the curriculum;
 - XIII. improving liaison between part-time teachers;
 - XIV. improving the use of time in les sons.(paragraphs 63 and 34)
- ii Speed up the review, allocation and implementation of the roles of subject co-ordinators and make use of them to improve curricular planning, the quality of teaching and the analysis of standards.
(paragraphs 63 and 69)
- iii Implement formal appraisal of teachers as identified in the school development plan for 1999 – 2000, and bring into use a system for staff development linked closely with the allocated roles of subject co-ordinators.
(paragraph 71)
- iv Give urgent priority to the use of the whole school accommodation for pupils of school age.
(paragraphs 64 and 77)

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

- XV. there is no governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs ;
(paragraph 67)
- XVI. insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils under the age of five to participate in structured play.
(paragraph 88)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 Therfield First School is a very small village school for pupils aged 4 to 9 years. The school is situated in a rural area of Hertfordshire and draws pupils from the village of Therfield, the neighbouring hamlet of Kelshall and the nearby small town of Royston. The intake of pupils is of the full socio-economic range whereas at the time of the last inspection it was skewed towards the higher end. It is a community where the number of adults with further education is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

2 Forty pupils attend full time of which 22 are boys and 18 are girls. Three pupils who are under the age of five attend part-time until the school judges they are ready for full-time education during the academic year that they become five. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly typical of children of their age. This is a change in circumstance since the last inspection when attainment on entry was judged to be higher. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average. There are no statements of special educational need.

3 The school aims to develop pupils to the full through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum which provides equality of opportunity and active participation in the local community. The key priorities for the academic year 1999 - 2000 are focused on the curriculum and in particular numeracy and literacy. Other current objectives are to develop home and school agreements, to raise academic targets and to reintroduce appraisal for teachers.

4 The staffing establishment is complex because the headteacher is the only full-time member of staff. The basic organisation is that each of the two classes is taught by a team of two teachers who share the timetable. A part-time teacher of music works with the whole school.

5 Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	5	3	8

Due to the small number of pupils being assessed the National Curriculum results are not published. There is a risk that individual pupils could be identified.

• Attendance

Percentage of half days

		%
Authorised	School	4.9
Absence	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised	School	0.0
absence	National comparative data	0.5

• Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	0
Satisfactory or better	90
Less than satisfactory	10

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

· EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

· Attainment and progress

6 In the national tests and assessments made at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 pupils' performance was above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Teachers' assessments in science placed pupils at average overall. In the 1999 national tests, for which comparative data is not yet available, pupils achieved almost an equal balance in English of Level 2 and Level 3, Level 2 being the nationally expected level for pupils of this age. A small proportion of pupils did not achieve the expected level. In mathematics most pupils attained Level 2 and in science assessments all achieved Level 2 and a small proportion achieved higher.

7 Pupils' attainment in the 1998 tests compared with that of pupils in similar schools was above average in writing, close to the average in mathematics and below average in reading. These variations, along with those noted above, should be viewed with caution because of the small size of the group concerned, in which one pupil can account for a large percentage of the total.

8 Pupils' attainment as judged in the present inspection is broadly in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 1. The differences between these findings and the outcome of the most recent national tests are due to the different levels of pupils' attainment on entry to school in the year groups in question and also to the small size of these groups, which mean a high weighting to individual performance. There is no significant variation between the attainment of boys and girls.

9 Children's attainment on entry to the reception classes covers a wide range, though overall it is about typical for pupils of their age. Children under the age of five make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and attain the levels identified nationally for children of their age. In personal and social development children below the age of five are interested and responsive, enjoying the activities provided. They behave well and form good relationships. In language and mathematics children have a sound basic knowledge of words and numbers. They read simple books and follow the story line through reference to pictures and words. Children's skills of speaking and listening are effective and they listen attentively to adults and each other. They are not afraid to speak out in a small group or class.

10 In English, mathematics and science the attainment of this year's Year 2 pupils is typical for their age overall. The proportion of pupils working at the expected level or above is larger than the proportion who have not reached the appropriate level in a ratio of five to three. A very small proportion is on line to reach levels higher than normally expected. Standards in speaking and listening are higher than typically expected. Standards in mathematics and science are slightly higher than in English overall with more pupils working at a higher level.

11 By the age of nine the standards pupils attain are typical for their age in English, mathematics and science. At this key stage strengths are found in English and to a lesser degree in science. Of the overall proportions a slightly lower proportion of pupils is set to attain the higher levels than the lower levels, though the greater majority of pupils are soundly achieving typical standards for their age. Standards in speaking and listening are higher than typically expected of nine-year-olds.

12 Seven-year-olds use an effective range of strategies to read books and simple information. They write with due care and attention to correct letter formation and to the content and audience. They use their speaking and listening skills well: they speak out clearly and in a lively manner and have the capacity to engage a large audience. By the age of nine pupils are mostly using a cursive script, for example when they write poetry and letters. They read fluently and with understanding and can follow simple instructions with little adult assistance. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and explanations and are confident in contributions to discussions. The implementation of the daily literacy hour has promoted structure in pupils' writing and enlarged pupils' vocabulary to explain their work. Skills in grammar and spelling are better than they were and this is a measure of the school's success.

13 In mathematics seven-year-olds know a range of number facts and can satisfactorily use these to make simple calculations in addition and subtraction. By Year 4 pupils have developed a sound understanding of number and can apply it to their work in measurement and with shapes, when calculating the area of different shapes for example. The use of the national strategy for numeracy is in its infancy, though already pupils can explain simple calculations, recall number facts quickly and recognise patterns in the number system. Younger pupils begin to find odd and even numbers and older pupils work with hundreds, tens and units.

14 In science seven-year-olds observe closely and record their findings reporting in everyday language. Older pupils use scientific language to explain their experiments and they record the outcomes in a methodical way. Pupils have a fair knowledge of the different aspects of science. They explain why we need machines that move air, for example an electric fan, and they investigate light sources identifying natural and man-made light sources. Older pupils grow cress seeds under controlled conditions to show what is required for growth. They investigate magnets and begin to understand the need for a fair test.

15 Standards in information technology are satisfactory. Younger pupils know how to control images on the screen and they understand how to use the keyboard and computer mouse. Older pupils can draft directly to the screen and know how to amend the text. Pupils' skills of collecting data and producing information in different formats such as graphs and charts are less well developed than their word processing skills. The recent good progress made by pupils is due to the good teaching and the accessibility of the new resources though this has yet to raise standards even further.

16 In religious education pupils attain broadly in line with the Agreed Syllabus. Younger pupils can make comparisons between their lives and the lives of people from the Bible. They express their feelings and talk about friendships within a religious context. Older pupils have knowledge of other world faiths and begin to understand the differences between them. Pupils make sound progress in their studies as set out in the Agreed Syllabus.

17 Pupils make good progress in English at Key Stage 1 as a result of the structuring and implementation of the literacy hour and the good quality of the teaching. It is too early, however, for it yet to securely impact on attainment across all aspects of English. Progress at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory in reading, writing, speaking and listening. This reflects the qualities of the teaching in these aspects of the curriculum.

18 Progress in mathematics is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils improve in the speed and accuracy of computation and they get better at explaining how they have calculated an answer. Pupils extend their oral contributions and make gains in using mathematical language in increasing detail. On occasion, however, when the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory pupils make little progress.

19 In science, pupils' progress is also satisfactory across the school. This shows recent

improvement over the last two years and sound improvement from the time of the last inspection. Progress is similar in each aspect of science. This is due to the effort the school is making to provide structured opportunities for pupils to apply their scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils made too little progress in particular parts of the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1 owing to the unsatisfactory use of time by the teacher.

20 Pupils make sound progress in art, design and technology and physical education at both key stages. In geography, history and music satisfactory progress is made at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.

21 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mathematics and English especially in reading and writing. They make effective progress towards their targets and over time develop a good self-esteem. Progress in science is sound.

22 Parents report that they are happy with the standards pupils attain.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

23 Overall, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good throughout the school. This judgement reflects the findings of the previous inspection, when pupils were said to be "well motivated and enjoy their learning" and behaviour was said to be "generally good." These standards have been maintained and behaviour has improved. Parents are happy with the standards of behaviour and report that their children like coming to school. They feel that the school actively encourages positive and caring relationships.

24 Children who are under the age of five behave well. They have good attitudes to work and share toys and equipment, listen to adults and follow instructions very well. At play times they play alongside older pupils as though within a setting of a large family. At lunchtime pupils converse with others in a mature manner, enjoying the simple conversations and using appropriate table manners. When changing clothes for a physical education lesson they politely ask for help with the more difficult fastenings. Pupils fold their clothes and leave them tidily. Most have a certain independence, saying for example 'I can get changed all by my self'.

25 Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to learning. Pupils are interested in their work and are pleased to discuss it with visitors to their school. Most of the time they respond particularly well to interesting activities that motivate them to work with enthusiasm. They enjoy sharing books during the literacy hour and try hard to answer questions. They are interested and keen to learn. Pupils mostly settle quickly to lessons, listen to their teachers and get on with the tasks given to them. They are particularly responsive to challenging tasks, for example working out problems in mathematics. Most pupils are keen to join in with discussions. Teachers are skilled at either focusing questions or grouping pupils carefully in order to allow the younger, less confident, pupils to participate fully and ensure that the older or more confident pupils do not dominate class discussions. Pupils are learning to work independently whilst the teacher is working with a focus group in literacy lessons and find their own resources when asked to do so.

26 Behaviour in school is very good overall. Pupils of all ages clearly understand what is expected of them and this has a positive effect on their behaviour. Most pupils are establishing good work habits, which make a positive contribution to their standards of attainment and the quality of their learning. However, when they are required to sit and listen for a long time, or the pace of the lesson is slow, some pupils become restless and stop listening. This can have an adverse impact on their progress in the lesson. For the majority of the time, however, pupils behave consistently well in classrooms and around the school. The school is an orderly place.

For example, the entry to assembly is calm and controlled. There is noticeable respect for property and pupils take good care of the books and computer equipment they use. Pupils of all ages play well together in the playground and enjoy their games of football or climbing on the apparatus. There were no exclusions last year and the level of exclusions is static.

27 Pupils' relationships in the school are good and make a positive contribution to the ir personal development. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy. They relate well to their teachers and other adults working in the school. They are welcoming to visitors, to whom they are respectful and polite. In the classroom, they share activities well and co-operate with each other. Pupils in physical education lessons work well with each other and in history they work together well on their research. Pupils are encouraged to work and play collaboratively and enjoy the opportunity to play football together in a mixed team. Older pupils care well for younger ones. They look after them at lunchtime and in the playground. They are keen to point out in assembly that a younger child has earned his second certificate, for which he deserves additional praise.

28 Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils take on some responsibility around the school, for example bringing in the playground equipment, and have specified tasks, such as taking the registers to the office. There is a School Council, which is beginning to develop its role. Through lessons, assemblies and their work to support charities, pupils think about those who are less fortunate than themselves. They are establishing an understanding of their own personal development and are beginning to set targets for improvement in their academic work. The school has identified this as an area for further improvement in order to develop further the progress that pupils can make.

- **Attendance**

29 Attendance is satisfactory. Although there has been a fall in attendance from the time of the last inspection this is largely due to absence through sickness of a very small number of pupils. There is a high standard of punctuality at the beginning of the school day and parents report good attendance and time-keeping. The level of attendance and punctuality contributes well to pupils' attainment and progress.

- **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

- **Teaching**

30 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with strengths in the teaching of literacy in Key Stage 1, the teaching of history at Key Stage 2 and the teaching of information technology at both key stages. In all, 47 per cent of the teaching was good, 43 per cent satisfactory and 10 per cent less than satisfactory. The teaching of English at Key Stage 1 was good. In English at Key Stage 2 and mathematics and physical education at both key stages the teaching was sound. In information technology the teaching was good throughout. In religious education the only teaching seen, at Key Stage 2, was satisfactory. In the other subjects not enough teaching was seen to make a judgement on it other than in history at Key Stage 2 where the teaching was good.

31 The teaching of pupils under the age of five is satisfactory overall. Questions are used well to challenge pupils and to assess their understanding of ideas. The teaching is very well organised and purposeful. The methodology suits the younger pupils, for example in a physical education lesson when the nursery nurse encouraged, helped and joined in activities under the direction of the class teacher. Effective deployment of the nursery nurse enables the very

youngest pupils to participate in the daily lessons of literacy and numeracy, where they begin to learn the routines expected in these formal lessons.

32 The teaching of literacy at Key Stage 1 is good overall. Careful planning and the setting of challenging tasks inspire pupils to work hard and consequently achieve much in their lessons. Good deployment of non-teaching staff means that pupils have the opportunity to work in small groups with adult support. This develops pupils' skills of speaking and listening very well and impacts effectively on the gains they make in acquiring literacy skills. Expectations are high and innovative use of resources, for example puppets, engages pupils' interest. The teaching of literacy at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with some good aspects and occasional weaknesses. The teaching of better quality was characterised by detailed planning, suitable choice of text and good attention to the teaching of spelling and handwriting. Insufficient attention was given to the use of basic resources for the introductory sessions at Key Stage 2, for example through ensuring that all pupils could easily see the text to be shared by the whole class. The less than satisfactory teaching occurred when the management of group work was insufficiently strong, teachers did not give enough help when it was needed and pupils were allowed to chatter, paying too little attention to their work.

33 The teaching of a daily lesson of mathematics is satisfactory overall at both key stages. Sensible use is made of resources to aid the development of pupils' numeracy skills. An expectation that all pupils can succeed in mathematics is evident. Strengths lie mainly in the brisk introduction to lessons at both key stages, as when Year 4 pupils answered quick-fire questions by holding up appropriate number cards to display the answer. In a Year 1 lesson the good introduction was followed by the setting of a range of practical tasks matched well to pupils' levels of attainment. Sound use is made of key objectives assigned to particular year groups. Shortcomings included a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching from some part-time staff where planning and the use of time and resources was ineffective leading to a very short daily mathematics lesson.

34 A mark of the teaching overall is the good relationships built up with pupils and the good quality and effective use of day-to-day assessment. Methods and organisation are generally good and serve the wide range of ages in each class very well. The use of learning objectives in planning gives a clear focus to lessons in literacy and numeracy. Teaching of good quality in history at Key Stage 2 shares learning objectives with pupils, thus giving a very clear focus to their research on the Romans. Learning objectives are less well used in other lessons. In information technology both classes deploy parents and other adults very well to give pupils individual tuition, as when eight-year-olds used the Internet to find the story of Romulus and Remus.

35 Standards of teaching have remained broadly similar since the time of the last inspection, though shortcomings identified at that time have not been completely addressed and as a result ten per cent of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The teaching of science has improved to a degree, though shortcomings remain in the use of time and in the lack of briskness at the beginning of lessons. Some unsatisfactory teaching in physical education at Key Stage 1 and in the literacy hour at Key Stage 2 also shows insufficient rigour in the use of time. For example, some of the part-time teachers often paid insufficient attention to the time and consequently often overran the timetabled slot. A further constraint on the teaching by the part-time staff at Key Stage 2 is the insufficient sharing of records and of pupils' recorded work.

36 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to make good progress towards their targets and to grow in confidence. There are regular times when these pupils have individual support, but most support is given to small groups in lessons. For example, a group of pupils read together and carry out their writing task in a literacy lesson. Teachers plan work carefully and take account of the targets of pupils in planning the group's

work. Teachers, the special needs co-ordinator and the classroom support staff review targets and programmes regularly.

• **The Curriculum and Assessment**

37 The curriculum for the under fives is sound. It is broad and balanced. The skilful integration of the areas of learning provides effective experiences for pupils of this age. The curriculum provision is well organised and planned and provides the basis for the transfer to the more formal National Curriculum. The deployment of the nursery nurse is paramount in offering the younger pupils appropriate experiences.

38 The school provides a sound curriculum that is both broad and balanced. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, with the addition of French for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and swimming for all pupils. Pupils of all ages and capabilities benefit from a curriculum that meets their social, intellectual, physical and personal needs well. The content and organisation of the curriculum ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and there are schemes in place for sex education and health and drugs awareness. These are implemented satisfactorily throughout the school and support pupils' personal development effectively. The local education authority is monitoring the development of the Literacy Strategy carefully and the school is currently introducing the Numeracy Strategy. It has made good use of the national planning documents to cater appropriately for the range of ages and attainments within each class.

39 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they enjoy full access to the breadth of the curriculum. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are met successfully by the special needs co-ordinator, who keeps detailed records. Targets are reviewed regularly and programmes amended, where appropriate. Individual education plans are clear and suitable so that they can be incorporated effectively into teachers' planning.

40 A key issue from the last inspection was that the school should put in place whole school curricular planning. Although a start has been made, this is not yet complete. There are plans which show when topics in history and geography, which are then linked to art, design technology and music, are to be taught. Staff know what is to be covered each term, but there is no overall plan to give specific details about what is to be taught and how this will happen to ensure that the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are covered appropriately. The lack of a whole-school approach to planning is a disadvantage when the school has several part-time members of staff. There are policies and schemes of work for most subjects but many of these are due for review. The need for such review is identified in the current school development plan. New policies have been produced this year for some subjects, including English and science. The four-year curricular programme is specifically designed to ensure that work is appropriate for the mixed-age classes and identifies the correct level of key skills for each age group. The school aims to offer a broadly similar set of opportunities to all pupils. There is, however, a weakness in daily plans. Whilst these give a broad linkage to the National Curriculum or Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, they are not always specific about what precisely pupils are expected to learn in the lesson.

41 There is good communication with the local first and middle schools and the nursery that some young children attend. Opportunities for careful induction into the school and for transition to middle school are provided. This helps to ensure that pupils move with confidence to the next stage of their education.

42 The curriculum is enriched in several ways. There are after-school clubs and the school

takes part in sporting competitions with other schools. There is a very good range of visits to museums and places of interest and the school has many visitors who share their own interests, work and expertise with the pupils. The school gives pupils valuable opportunities to extend their learning and develop their sense of place in the world.

43 Overall assessment procedures are good. The arrangements for the administration of formal tests during the year, including assessment of pupils entering the school, are effective. The school keeps useful records of the achievements of children under five in the various areas of learning. The information gained from statutory assessments and other formal tests over the years is used well to identify areas of weakness and raise standards. The school has used this information to set targets for the year and is monitoring progress towards these carefully.

44 Teachers use day-to-day assessment effectively in lessons to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Assessment of more able pupils and those with special educational needs is carried out effectively. These pupils are identified at a young age and action is taken to clarify their needs if teachers have concerns.

45 The school maintains a useful selection of annotated samples of pupils' work and staff keep helpful reading records. Reports meet statutory requirements and include targets for pupils' future development. Pupils discuss these with the teacher at the start of the school year. The curriculum provided enables pupils to make satisfactory and often good progress.

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

46 The provision for the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils, including the under-fives, is good. High standards in these areas have been maintained since the last inspection. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and has improved since the last inspection. The provision overall has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and makes a valuable contribution to the quality of education provided. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the life of the school and are fully involved in the school activities. Parents believe that the school effectively promotes positive values and attitudes and this is endorsed by inspection judgements.

47 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Acts of collective worship are positive community experiences. They are well led and the pupils appreciate contributions made by the local vicar and minister. Assemblies are broadly Christian in character and the chosen themes encourage pupils to reflect on moral values and to share in the achievements of pupils in the school. The planned themes provide regular opportunities to consider the significance of religious celebrations and the meaning and purpose of life. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on music and paintings in assemblies and to think about the lives of children who live in countries where there is trauma after war. In religious education lessons, and on visits, pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. Lessons are often planned to provide pupils with an understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. For example, visits to the Field Study Centre or walks on the heath to see the Pasque flower encourage an insight into the beauties and wonders of nature. Teachers' enthusiasm and positive approach to literature and language, for example in the reading of stories and poetry, often generates a sense of wonder. This is less evident in science.

48 The school provides a clear framework of its values and expectations and this is the basis of the very good provision for pupils' moral development. The school aims to provide a supportive atmosphere for all its pupils and to encourage good behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. Around the school are sets of rules that have been negotiated between teachers and their pupils. Teachers offer guidance through careful, quiet discussion of any unacceptable behaviour. Assemblies celebrate pupils' achievements and this makes a valuable addition to the raising of self-esteem. Pupils are aware of the rewards and

sanctions within the school and value public acknowledgement of their success. Each pupil knows how many more stickers and stars are needed to earn a certificate and smiles are broad when any of these rewards for good work are given. The school has put in place several valuable initiatives since the last inspection, for example the 'achievement tree', which is linked to the new behaviour policy, and the 'golden books', which record good work.

49 Provision for social development is good. There is a sense of community in the school and pupils' relationships are positive and supportive. Pupils are encouraged to listen to others and older pupils value the work and contribution of the younger pupils. For example, in assemblies pupils show great interest in what others do and achieve. Pupils are encouraged to work well together in lessons and in teamwork in physical education, and contribute sensibly in assemblies. In history, the quality of co-operation has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils, as they share ideas and learn from each other when they work in mixed age groups on projects. They move around the building sensibly, taking care not to hurt one another. They are offered, and willingly accept, responsibilities around the school. Activities after school offer pupils the opportunity to develop their personal interests and pupils work well together to prepare for performances to parents and other friends of the school. Many visits are made to places of educational interest and there are frequent visitors to the school to talk about their jobs and interests. Parents welcome the regular contact with the church and the local village community.

50 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. A wide range of activities, in and out of school, provides pupils with an appreciation of their own cultural traditions. For example, visits to the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Field Study Centre are organised. The breadth of the curriculum in such areas as music enhances the subject, and concerts in school and in the area are well attended. Teachers make a particular effort to use the local environment, as well as places further afield. In history, pupils study the contribution made to the arts and the development of civilisation by people in past generations. Thinking ahead to the future, pupils look forward to contact with people from other areas on the Internet. Sporting activities, including competitions with other schools, are encouraged. Teachers give pupils a wide range of opportunities to study their own and other cultural traditions. Pupils visit such places as the African village and share in Chinese New Year festivities. Displays around the school and an interesting collection of photographs highlight many of the events and connections.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

51 The school has an effective culture of support, care and guidance which is of good quality and satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good and those for monitoring attendance are sound. Small class sizes encourage close relationships between pupils and this, together with a complement of energetic teaching and support staff, ensures that the school's aim of providing a happy and stimulating environment is well achieved. Boys and girls are both treated, and treat one another, in a friendly and respectful manner. Pupils' personal development is mainly handled through careful, sensitive observation of their behaviour in class and elsewhere and their academic progress is well monitored through frequent personal contact and assessments. Detailed annual reports provide parents with a formal indication of their children's attainments and parents say that they are very pleased with these individualised reports.

52 An attendance and behaviour policy which includes actions to be taken should any instances of bullying occur gives appropriate formality to practice in these areas. The headteacher and secretary together with the education welfare officer of the local education authority closely monitor attendance and parents are very clear about the procedures to be followed. One instance of bullying was identified recently and parents report that it was dealt with

extremely promptly and sensibly. The few instances of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with firmly and sensitively and in ways which provide clear guidance for those pupils involved. A School Council is at a very early stage of formation and this is an example of the ways in which the school gives confidence to pupils. Parents report that they are generally satisfied with levels of homework, the values promoted by the school and the standard of behaviour achieved. The child protection policy is sound and the school has a named person to take responsibility for this aspect. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow.

53 Good support is available for pupils with special educational needs and the school works well with other agencies, which is of benefit to the pupils and their families. The level of pastoral support for pupils with special educational needs is good.

54 Health and safety are well catered for. A sound policy pays attention to all relevant aspects of pupils' well-being and includes sound procedures for educational visits. A person with first aid qualification is available throughout the day and other members of staff have received training in emergency first aid. The headteacher carries out assessments of risk, though other people have not yet been appropriately involved. For example, the cleaner in charge has not received training in health and safety. This places an extra burden on the headteacher's already high workload. Systems for reporting accidents are sound and parents are extremely satisfied with the care given to any pupil involved in an accident. The school is currently working on a policy for sex education.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

55 Partnership with parents and the community is very good overall. A good range of effective information is given to parents and they report their great satisfaction with the regular newsletters and information about their children's progress. Parents also report that they are always welcomed into the school and are able to speak to staff about any concerns that may arise.

56 Parents have much involvement in their children's learning through a range of channels. The use of diaries between staff and parents enables parents to give good support to the children's developing skills in reading and their love of books. A significant number of well-qualified adults give invaluable support to the teaching and learning in school. Of particular note is the help given in information technology, enabling pupils to have individual help and training and a good level of access to the technology. Parents are involved in providing a greater breadth to the curriculum through the provision of after school clubs and the teaching of French.

57 The Friends of Therfield School are an energetic group of people from the community who organise social and fund-raising events which collect large sums of money for the school. Support is also given in the form of proficient help in such areas as building. The association makes a fine contribution to the work of the school.

58 The life of the school is particularly well served by its excellent links with the community. Links on curricular matters and professional development arise from the close relationship with other schools in the area. The school fosters good contributions from pupils to the life of the locality, for example concerts, plays and luncheons for senior citizens. Pupils are involved in a range of good works such as raising money for national charities. In addition the school organises a large number of educational visits to nearby museums, towns and other schools. The local church and chapel play important roles in the life of the school, through the personal involvement of the church ministers. The school has emerged as a key focal point to the village and all of these activities are well integrated into classroom work, and make an exceptional

contribution to the school's effectiveness and pupils' personal and academic development.

59 Parents are informed of any concerns the school may have about their children and parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved appropriately in the setting and review of targets. They are able to discuss their children's programme.

- **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

- **Leadership and management**

60 The school is capably led and managed. Under the energetic leadership of the fairly recently appointed headteacher the staff are beginning to work cohesively, though difficulties arise when teachers' priorities do not always match the needs of this school. For example, when staff are unavailable for staff meetings owing to work in other schools. An underlying concern is that the headteacher is the only full-time member of staff and the convening of meetings to further curricular and other aims is difficult to manage. Much hard work has been done by the headteacher to effect change but there is still considerable room for accelerated curricular improvement. Considerable responsibility is placed on the headteacher to plan for future developments and it is only lately that the weaknesses reported at the time of the last inspection have begun to be addressed. Past changes in headteacher and in the governing body have considerably hindered the process.

61 Of the key issues to be addressed from the last inspection standards in science have risen, and a long-term strategic plan has been agreed. A whole-school curricular plan is not in place and roles and responsibilities of staff, though reviewed in part, have not been formally and rigorously allocated.

62 The monitoring of the work of the school is in its infancy, though a sound strategy is in place to manage and monitor the numeracy strategy. Targets have been set for further improvements of standards. Support and teaching staff are aware of their roles with regard to the strategy for numeracy and the governing body is up to date with the requirements of the school's strategy and its role within this.

63 The role of curriculum co-ordinators is unclear. Although some work has taken place, there is a lack of impetus in making sure that all staff take on appropriate roles and work to enhance the quality of curricular leadership throughout the school. Not all staff have subject responsibility, and those who do have yet to undertake formal management and monitoring of their subjects. The work required of them is mostly ill-defined. This, together with what at times is a reluctance to embrace change on the part of some staff, means that consequently they are not as effective as they might be.

64 A good start has been made with a review of the school's aims, though the aims are not yet fully included in written policies. They reflect well the values for which the school stands. The excellent community links are consistent with the central aim of the school and to this degree the leadership has been very successful in enabling the school to be a focal part of the small village community. Focus on the curriculum has been less successful as much time has been spent this last year establishing and accommodating a private nursery on the school premises. Though this is much welcomed by the community work to meet the school's needs has been inappropriately delayed.

65 The school has produced a useful development plan, which realistically sets out the school's priorities and reflects national priorities. This together with a brief three-year strategic

plan sets clear objectives. The governing body is already aware that there is a need for more detailed planning in this.

66 A good working relationship exists between the headteacher and governing body, which works through a successful committee structure. The committees regularly meet to oversee aspects such as finance, and designated governors provide valued support, for example in respect of literacy and numeracy. The committees do not generally have delegated powers and refer decisions to be made to the whole governing body. This does not always make best use of time.

67 Governors meet their statutory duties with regard to pupils with special educational needs through a person to overview special educational needs has yet to be appointed. The headteacher is aware that an appointment should be made as soon as possible. The provision is managed efficiently and effectively.

68 There is a detailed policy for equal opportunities. Equality is achieved through personal and collective commitment of teaching and support staff, who have a clear understanding of principles and good procedures. The school complies with relevant legislation. An effective ethos is evident in the school and reflects clearly an aim to further improve standards and provide the best for its pupils. The school's capacity to improve is sound.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

69 The school is staffed with a team of four teachers including the headteacher. The staff is mostly appropriately qualified to teach within the primary age range, though one teacher is trained to work with older pupils. The range of subject expertise across the whole staff is narrow, however, with duplications of subjects and a heavy reliance on the headteacher for expertise in mathematics, for example. When account is taken of national strategies and significant changes in the staffing of the school, job descriptions are out of date and the document setting out the roles of the co-ordinators lacks focus and punch and is not satisfactory. The school has yet to take urgent action on these issues.

70 Suitable non-teaching support is deployed to each class, which impacts well upon the quality of education provided. The employment of a nursery nurse to work directly with pupils under the age of five has particular impact. Pupils with special educational needs are supported sensitively and well by experienced teachers and special needs support staff. There is some very effective additional voluntary support. Resources are satisfactory and the accommodation enables pupils to be supported effectively in the classroom or adjoining rooms.

71 The programme of staff development is unsatisfactory, being heavily reliant upon the goodwill of teaching staff and insufficiently linked to the school's priorities. Over time, appraisal has been allowed to lapse though its reintroduction is an objective of this year's work. The school has used its training for numeracy well, however, and has set up a daily mathematics lesson for all pupils which even at this early stage is raising the expectations teachers have of their pupils and the pace at which mental strategies are used and developed.

72 Considerable care, effort and resources have been invested, often with parental help, to improve the quality of the accommodation both internally and externally. The result is a satisfactory standard of accommodation. Part of the accommodation is inappropriately let to a private nursery, which reduces the accommodation available for the use of the pupils within the school. For example, it limits the space available in the hall and adversely affects the quality of provision in lessons in music and physical education. The school makes substantial use of its

immediate environment. This is richly resourced with play equipment, for example climbing apparatus of good quality.

73 The range and quality of resources are sufficient and of good quality. They are reasonably accessible though the inaccessibility of large equipment for physical education limits its use by pupils. In information technology there has been considerable recent investment and resources are good. The library is centrally situated and is beneficial to teaching and learning.

The efficiency of the school

74 The efficiency of the school is satisfactory overall. The key issue in the last inspection covering efficiency has been implemented and there are now long-term plans in the school development plan and the school is working on a new presentation of this document so that it includes more detail.

75 The school's financial planning is good. The governors are involved in the long-term strategic management of the school. They receive regular information about the finances of the school and are able to assess the cost-effectiveness of decisions made, for example on the improvements to the building and the purchase of more computers. The school has carefully kept within its budget and maintains a small amount for contingencies. Specific funds are used appropriately, for example on staff training to support such priority issues as literacy and numeracy, but there has been little money to spend on other staff training. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is managed well and directed appropriately towards meeting the needs of these pupils.

76 The teaching and non-teaching staff are deployed satisfactorily and they have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school makes good use of voluntary support to teach French to pupils in Year 3 and 4 and to give additional support of good quality to pupils with special educational needs. Parents give invaluable help with the teaching of information technology and reading. Parents and the people of Therfield are very supportive and organise a number of fund-raising events to provide extra resources for pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

77 Classroom resources are used effectively, especially books. The school makes good use of the local environment and the physical resources of the area, for example the quarry, the heath, museums and the swimming pool. Good use is made of the field and play area. The library is a pleasant area which gives scope for extending research on topics, but full use of this new resource is yet to be developed. The classrooms are of adequate size but only part of the hall is available for use with small groups and classes or for assemblies. The whole of the hall is not available for the use of the school because of the storage of nursery furniture in the morning and the use by the nursery in the afternoon. This leads to limitations on the range of activities that can safely be included in physical education lessons and makes it very difficult for anyone to work with groups or classes in the afternoon. Pupils, and staff, have difficulty in listening to each other and this adversely affects the quality of learning. The school has begun to re-consider the use of the space. The drawing up of timetables is affected to some extent by the limitations of the space available, which reduces efficiency. The whole of the space currently available to the school is required for the pupils. Overall use of the accommodation is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

78 School administration and financial control are good. Clear daily routines and procedures are understood and carried out effectively and efficiently. The few recommendations made when the school was audited in 1996 have been addressed and there has been no audit since then. The daily running of the school is smooth and the efficiency of the bursar ensures that the

headteacher, who has a heavy teaching commitment, is able to concentrate on teaching.

79 The efficiency of the school has improved overall since the last inspection, although the cost of educating pupils is above the average for small schools. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school and by the end of Year 4 is broadly typical for their age. Attainment in the national tests at Key Stage 1 over the last three years has been close to the national average in mathematics, above in writing and well above in reading. The quality of teaching is sound and pupils respond well, with good attitudes to work. There is good provision for pupils' moral, spiritual, and cultural development and a positive ethos in the school. The school continues to provide satisfactory value for money

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

80 The provision for children under the age of five is satisfactory. Children are admitted to the joined reception and Key Stage 1 class at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. At the discretion of the school they attend part-time until they are ready to begin full-time education. The size of year group is often very small and varies from year to year. At the time of inspection three children were under the age of five. Most children enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with those expected of children of their age, although a wide range is represented. Children make satisfactory progress and attain standards typical for their age in the identified areas of learning for children under the age of five.

81 Children's personal and social development is satisfactory. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Children play and work effectively together, as when they devise methods of measuring through group discussion. Children are confident and enthusiastic and keen to give of their best. At lunchtime children are mature in their manners and understanding of conventions. When changing for a lesson in physical education children on the whole require a degree of help but they know to leave their clothes folded and tidy. Children make sound progress in their personal and social development. They become more independent in remembering routines and they become more self-sufficient. Children's concentration improves and they are able to stay at one task for longer periods.

82 In language and literacy children's attainment is in line with that expected of their age. Children listen well and respond to questions with interest and enthusiasm. This was particularly evident in their work in physical education, where they listened attentively to distinct instructions and acted upon them. Children make lively contributions to discussion. They enjoy their reading and the most able children can recognise a fair number of key words. Children of a lower level of attainment read alongside an adult and copy the adults' intonation, giving interest and further enjoyment to their reading. Children know how to grip a pencil correctly and can form letters well, as when they record speech in a bubble as might be seen in a comic. Children make sound progress in developing their literacy skills. They get better at writing independently, as when higher attainers attempt to string lots of letters and words together, but forget to leave spaces. Their understanding of books and their use improves as they learn that books can be used to find information. Gains in children's skills of speaking and listening are made as they widen their vocabulary and learn that differing situations often require the use of more formal language.

83 Children's mathematical skills are typical for their age. They have a fair understanding of numbers to ten and can often count beyond this. Their recorded work is at times untidy as they begin to learn the formal procedures for recording numbers; for example, their numerals are not always formed correctly. Children can measure in non-standard units and can choose appropriate units to measure, for example, each other's height. Progress in the mathematical area of learning is satisfactory. Children develop their skills, applying their understanding of the number system to counting coins and sorting shapes by given criteria. Their skills at counting develop well and they gradually become less reliant on apparatus to help their accuracy.

84 In their knowledge and understanding of the world children achieve standards broadly in line with those expected of children of their age. Children have a good interest in the world about them. For example, they can name a range of wild and garden flowers and explain in simple terms how flowers grow from seeds. They can identify living and non-living things, as when they compare a snail to a clock. Satisfactory progress is made as children's knowledge of their local environment gets better and their understanding of the use of information technology develops. They say how they have grown from being a baby and that as they grow they become more

independent.

85 Children attain appropriate standards in their creative development. Children join in with simple rhymes and songs and have a good recall of the words and rhythms. Insufficient role-play and artwork were observed to make a judgement on the quality of children's imaginative progress, though in conversations children are lively and resourceful. They are developing simple techniques using paint and crayons.

86 In their physical development children also attain appropriate standards. They can cut and glue with a degree of precision, when for example, they cut along a curved line to make a booklet. Their control of crayons improves and they colour between given lines with increasing accuracy. Children can jump and land safely and can devise a very simple pattern of movements such as jumping in and out of a hoop. Progress is satisfactory overall though hindered by lack of sufficient space in the school hall for developing the skills of using space well and for running and skipping in a large group.

87 Children have a positive attitude to their learning and respond well to the opportunities created for them. The majority can sustain a task and concentrate for an appropriate amount of time. They share and co-operate very well. They work calmly and enjoy their work.

88 The teaching of each area of learning is sound. Good deployment of the nursery nurse enables the teaching of literacy and numeracy to implement national guidelines and at the same time allows work with a small group of children where the adult has a good understanding of the needs and attainments of these children. Lessons are well prepared and stimulating and plentiful resources challenge the children. The nursery nurse works effectively and takes good advantage of opportunities that arise, as in a daily mathematics lesson when children measured their length by using bricks and counting the overall number. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Teachers transfer their enthusiasm to the children, who are keen to investigate and proud of their findings. Adults make good use of praise and make clear the reasons why the child has gained success. Teachers use very good questioning to increase children's knowledge and vocabulary. The teaching of physical development is satisfactory overall but narrowed in part by the adverse impact of the accommodation. During the week of inspection no art or music lessons were observed. The teaching day is highly timetabled and during the inspection too little time was given to the children under the age of five to experiment and play in a structured manner. The teaching of personal development is sound and much emphasis is placed on good behaviour, a sense of self-worth and achievement. Day-to-day assessment is good.

89 The last inspection did not report on children under the age of five and therefore no judgement can be made about the progress that the school has made in its provision or in the standards attained.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

English

90 Results of the end of Key Stage 1 national tests in 1998 were above the national average in reading and well above in writing. In comparison with standards achieved in similar schools, pupils' performance was below average in reading and above average in writing. Such comparisons should be treated with caution, however, as the performance of only one or two pupils in a small school can have a disproportionate effect on overall results. Over three years,

1996 – 1998 the performance of pupils in reading and writing has been above average in writing and well above in reading. The results in 1999 in reading indicate that the level of attainment is at least in line with the national expectation, with a significant number achieving a higher level than this. In writing, speaking and listening, pupils achieve broadly in line with the national expectation. Variations in results are again largely due to the small size of some year groups and the number of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. Inspection judgement places pupils' attainment as broadly in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and nine with skills in speaking and listening being above this at both key stages.

91 Standards in speaking and listening are above national expectation at Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils listen attentively and confidently ask and answer questions. They participate well in discussions in class. For example, pupils explained the different endings to the story of Red Riding Hood. One proudly announced 'I've read a book illustrated by ...' Pupils are eager to add their contributions to discussions. A Year 3 pupil explained that 'the squirrel rocketing' in Ted Hughes' poem is 'like going up into space' and Year 4 pupils read their work out clearly and confidently, answering questions put by other pupils. Pupils are able to discuss stories and poems as a group, offer individual opinions and find evidence to explain their thinking.

92 At the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards in reading are broadly in line with national expectation. Some pupils attain a higher level, though this varies between year groups. Pupils have recently made good progress with reading skills in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy reading and they use pictorial clues to help them to read unknown words. Higher attaining pupils have a developing sight vocabulary and they make appropriate use of letter sounds to help them to read unfamiliar words. They read simple passages, showing understanding of what they read, and express opinions concerning events in stories and poems. Pupils throughout the school develop a range of strategies for coping with unfamiliar words and have the confidence to apply these effectively. Pupils read a wide variety of books and develop accuracy and fluency in reading. However, when they read a text together in the literacy hour, their reading is sometimes lacking in intonation and expression. Pupils from Year 1 know that print in bold or italics requires emphasis and that exclamation marks and other punctuation have to be taken into consideration when they are reading. Most pupils in Year 4 make inferences and deductions about the stories and can name their favourite authors. They explain their developing taste and preferences well. Pupils know how to use a contents list and index and older pupils use these well in their history and geography topics. The school receives good support from parents, who hear their children read regularly, and some are able to come into school to listen to pupils read on a regular basis. The home and school diary provides a welcome opportunity for a dialogue to arise between teacher and parent.

93 By the ages of seven and nine standards in writing are broadly typical for their age. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have recently made good progress and this is built upon soundly in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress as they move from "practice" writing to the writing of properly spaced words in sentences. By the end of Year 2 pupils write complete sentences and use capital letters and full stops correctly. Older pupils benefit from planning and redrafting their work and this helps them to extend their vocabulary and develop a sense of style. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are good examples of extended writing in the first and third person in English and history. Many pupils develop a broad and lively vocabulary. They understand how to construct a story and use a beginning, middle and end. Higher attaining pupils use commas and speech marks confidently. Some use paragraphs in their writing. Pupils begin to write in a legible joined script from an early age and there are regular, structured lessons to improve the quality of handwriting and presentation of work. This is another improvement since the last inspection. Spelling and punctuation are becoming more consistent and pupils benefit greatly from the careful learning of selected spellings each week.

94 Pupils at Key Stage 1 have recently made good progress in all aspects of English though this has yet to impact on levels of attainment other than in speaking and listening where attainment is above that expected of seven-year-olds. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make at least satisfactory progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. There is clear evidence of progress in speaking and listening from the limited but enthusiastic responses of pupils in Year 1, to the activities in Key Stage 2, where pupils express their ideas about books and present "What am I?" puzzles in poetry lessons. Pupils progress from being able to recognise familiar words in Year 1 to reading with a good understanding of the text in Year 4. Pupils' writing shows clear improvement from the communication of meaning through simple words and phrases to writing for a range of purposes and with sustained ideas in Year 4.

95 The school has been effective in its planning for the literacy hour and the use of this time for teaching literacy skills. There are useful additional periods each week for the teaching of specific skills, for example spelling and handwriting. The development of pupils' literacy skills is supported well throughout the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and this is supported effectively by positive questioning by teachers in lessons. For example, pupils use contents lists to find out where specific information about the Romans may be found and convey this to others in their groups. In religious education in Key Stage 1, pupils discuss and write the story of Noah. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-focused support so that they can use their literacy skills to best effect. Information technology is used well to support spelling and other aspects of literacy.

96 Pupils have good, positive attitudes towards work. They sustain interest throughout the lesson but occasionally the time spent on the introductory activity is a little too long for them and they become restless. Most listen attentively and work together well when engaged in a group activity. When pupils read out their work or presented their ideas to the class, other pupils received them with respect and responded with appreciative comments.

97 The teaching of English is good overall at Key Stage 1 and sound at Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory or better in 90 per cent of lessons. In most lessons, the activities are carefully matched to the ages and attainments of the pupils. Work is planned well for the mixed-age groups and the choice of text is suitable for everyone. Teachers read stories and poems well and stimulate pupils' interest with a careful choice of interesting vocabulary. Support staff and parents are aware of their role in the lessons and the focus of the lesson is clear. Handwriting and spelling lessons are very well structured and the aims of the lesson are shared with the pupils. In the unsatisfactory teaching which occurs at Key Stage 2, too much time is spent on one section of the lesson and the change to group work is not managed well, so that pupils become noisy and restless. The teacher eventually settles everyone to his or her task, but time is wasted. Marking of work is consistent and there are some helpful comments to indicate to pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work.

98 There is a comprehensive policy for English and the daily hour of literacy makes a positive impact on the development of pupils' literacy skills. Procedures for formal assessment are in place and the school has analysed results to correctly identify priorities for action. Resources to support the teaching of English are good overall and include a useful selection of books for group reading. A suitable range of reading books is available in the classrooms and the newly sited library is satisfactorily stocked with a range of non-fiction books. The new library is accessible to all pupils and available for private study and research. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.

Mathematics

99 In the 1998 tests pupils' levels of attainments were above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and a good proportion of pupils achieved at a level higher than typically expected for their age. Pupils did much better in number than in other aspects of mathematics. In the 1999 national tests the majority of pupils achieved an appropriate level and a minority achieved higher. The number of pupils in each year group is small and varies from year to year. Great care therefore needs to be used when using statistical information; for example in 1999 one pupil represented nine per cent of the whole group of seven-year-olds.

100 The group of seven-year-old pupils due to take the national tests in 2000 are attaining a wider range of levels. Of eight pupils five are set to achieve the expected level though the remaining pupils are attaining below this. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainments show a good match with the test results. Overall standards have been maintained from the time of the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils of average attainment can use addition and subtraction within numbers to 20 and can apply their knowledge to solving simple problems. Higher attainers understand values of digits and sets of ten through their work using tens and units. They are able to say whether their answers are reasonable or if they may have made a mistake. A good proportion of pupils know multiplication facts of two, five and ten. Lower attainers can work with numbers to ten and use apparatus such as counters and reference charts to aid their accuracy in counting and the formation of numerals. They have yet to be able to handle higher numbers and work quickly using mental strategies. Pupils have a fair understanding of basic two-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties using mathematical terminology. Pupils collect data and present it in simple charts and graphs.

101 By the end of Year 4 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils know how to use the four rules of number. Higher attainers are good at applying these rules when solving problems, as when they use money to purchase more than one item. They work with large values of money and are mostly accurate in their computations. Lower attainers work with coins of low value but are able to complete simple shopping calculations well. Pupils of average levels can work with hundreds, tens and units with accurate representation of the place values involved. In work on shape pupils are able to find the perimeter of an equilateral triangle. They can halve numbers and shapes and find areas of irregular shapes. Lower attainers are less proficient in the use of measures and the understanding of shape. Pupils use good routines for setting out their work in a logical and self-explanatory fashion.

102 Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 1 pupils get better at writing and ordering numbers. They make gains in their computational skills such as counting in sets of two and five, building well upon their ability to find patterns in numbers. Pupils make suitable progress in sorting, naming and describing two-dimensional shapes and by Key Stage 2 use this knowledge to gain insight into three-dimensional shapes. In Key Stage 2 pupils draw on their understanding of measurement and make reasonable suggestions to use particular units to measure with. They read from increasingly complex charts and graphs to find information. Lower attainers often need adult help in recalling number facts appropriately but then use counting equipment well to aid their further practice. Pupils' skills at estimating develop well, as when older pupils measure the capacity of a milk bottle. Pupils extend and expand their oral contributions at both key stages; for example when younger pupils recite number rhymes and older pupils figure out how to calculate a series of increasingly difficult operations when they make simple algebraic statements. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra support available to them.

103 Pupils' attitudes are good overall. Pupils begin to evaluate their work and discuss findings and problems with others, as when they use apparatus to count to ten and take away a given

number. They co-operate well when playing mathematical games. Their concentration is good and they are able to work quietly and independently. Pupils use mathematical language confidently and respond readily to questions where they are required to apply their mathematical knowledge.

104 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality is wide ranging and includes good teaching from full-time staff but unsatisfactory teaching from some part-time staff at Key Stage 1. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory planning is too brief, time is used ineffectively and too little use is made of practical resources. The effect of this is that at times pupils do not have a full daily mathematics lesson. Sound teaching uses a sensible balance of direct teaching and it organises group work so that pupils can get on independently. The teaching of best quality includes effective explanation of methods which prepares pupils very well to tackle mathematical problems. Teachers listen well to pupils' ideas and take their thinking forward at a good pace. Overall planning is detailed with clear learning objectives and extension work for the more able. Approaches include exposition and discussion, which motivate pupils well. Good attention is given to the correct formation of numerals and the setting out of recorded work. Pupils are provided with homework, and regular testing of multiplication tables takes place. This impacts well on pupils' progress.

105 Sound use is made of numeracy in other subjects such as science, when, for example, pupils measure in different units. They collate a graph to show how much force is needed to pull weights along one metre over a variety of surfaces. Pupils apply their understanding of graphs when they collate information in their geographical studies of the weather. In physical education younger pupils count their steps within a sequence of movement and thereby practise counting to ten.

106 The school is implementing a daily mathematics lesson in line with the National Numeracy Strategy, though on occasion, because of the unsatisfactory use of time, lessons are too short for pupils to make appropriate progress. Planning is appropriate for the wide age and range of attainments within each class. Training has been used well to establish the daily lessons.

107 The subject is led appropriately. Good use has been made of the training for the daily mathematics lesson and the early signs are that the lessons are being implemented well. The existing policy is out of date and has yet to be brought in line with the practice emerging in the classrooms.

Science

108 There have been marked improvements since the last inspection in the standards that pupils attain by the ages of seven and nine. Attainments are broadly in line with expectations for pupils' ages and this judgement matches the outcomes of the overall teacher assessments in 1999. Assessments of individual aspects of the curriculum at the age of seven showed a degree of variation in 1998. For example, the proportions of pupils achieving Level 2 was very high, compared with the national average, in life and living processes and in materials and their properties; in physical processes pupils' results were above the national average but below the national average in experimental and investigative science. Pupils' performance was overall below average when compared to that of pupils in similar schools.

109 Their performance during this inspection shows that standards are rising because the school has used national guidelines to improve the curriculum and given a higher priority to pupils' investigative work. Pupils in Years 2 and 4 are into the second year of this improvement. Because of the small numbers of pupils being assessed, however, this inspection looked particularly at individual performance. Three-quarters of pupils at Year 4 are on target to achieve

the national expectation and the remaining quarter to achieve a lower level. By the end of Year 2 almost two-thirds of pupils are on target to meet the national expectation for their age. Pupils below the national expectation are already receiving support to speed up their progress.

110 Seven-year-olds draw well on their skills developed in mathematics to offer suggestions on how best to measure the height of a group of pupils. They worked in groups extremely well to share ideas and predict outcomes and they agreed on ways of recording their findings on a simple chart. Pupils write up experiments well, explaining what they think will happen and giving reasons why. They correctly sort living things and non-living things and know that living things need water and food to survive. They use the external environment to match creatures to a habitat and can explain how a snail might be found by a wall or a caterpillar may be found in their flower garden. Higher attainers can recall the life cycle of a butterfly and can label parts of a plant showing, for example, the petal and stem. Pupils of average attainment are able to describe properties of materials and describe samples of fabrics as 'transparent and stretchy' and 'bumpy, shiny, soft'. Lower attainers require support to recall and apply their knowledge.

111 Nine-year-old pupils know that a solid keeps its shape but that a liquid does not. They know that some solids can change to liquid. Pupils use scientific terminology well to discuss their experiments, as when they found out what would dissolve and how to separate solids and liquids. Pupils can measure force by using a Newton meter and record their findings in tabular form. They work with magnets and record simple facts using correct terminology such as 'magnetic' and 'force'. Attention to accuracy is shown through pupils' measuring of water in millilitres when experimenting with the growth of plants.

112 Pupils' progress is satisfactory at both key stages, though evidence from inspection shows that this level of progress has only recently been achieved. Younger pupils sequence pictures to show the growth of a plant. They develop their understanding of suitable conditions for growth, including warmth, and as they get older they build well upon this knowledge by measuring temperature in degrees centigrade. Pupils' skills of transferring their knowledge to other aspects of their work develop well. For example, pupils later investigate conduction and write 'We figured out how to keep our tea warm'. In the same way pupils get better at recording their scientific enquiries as when younger pupils listened and recorded what they heard such as the teacher's footsteps. Older pupils investigate musical instruments and record whether the vibration could be seen or felt. Their use of scientific vocabulary grows. By the age of nine pupils develop appropriate research skills, as when they find facts about spiders and millipedes and explain that spiders are not insects. Progress is evident in the complexity of work that pupils complete and in the gains in the content of scientific experiments. Their recording becomes better ordered and follows an increasingly logical format. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

113 Pupils use literacy skills very well in science. They set out their writing appropriately to record findings of experimental work and label diagrams legibly. They research to find further information about their work.

114 Attitudes and response to work at Key Stage 1 are good. Pupils collaborate well offering ideas to promote their investigative tasks. They form good relationships with adults and each other and can listen to each other's point of view. They have a desire to advance their scientific knowledge and skills and are keen to undertake experiments and use simple equipment, which they do with care. They become bored, however, when seated for a long time before their tasks are allocated. Attitudes could not be assessed at Key Stage 2 as no teaching was seen at that key stage.

115 The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1. Strengths in the teaching were the deployment of other adults to facilitate group work and the

sound relationships. Shortcomings arose because planning, though satisfactory on paper in practice gave insufficient attention to the use of time. This meant that the introduction was too long and consequently the group work and plenary sessions were cut considerably. Pupils made too little progress in discrete parts of this lesson. The tasks were not always well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment.

116 At the time of the last inspection a key issue was to increase the amount of investigative and experimental work, to develop curricular guidance and to use specialist support for the curriculum. The co-ordinator has appropriately based the curriculum on national guidance shaping it to fit the needs of the school. There is an appropriate focus to investigative work and good use is made of educational visits such as those to a garden centre, a field centre study at Astonbury and dipping nets in a pond to find small water creatures. In this the school has made sound progress. The focus on learning objectives has yet to be fully realised. Support from the local education authority has been forthcoming but the school has yet to monitor its teaching of the subject.

Information technology

117 By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, pupils' attainments match what is expected nationally. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the age of seven pupils are confident users of information technology such as computers and audiocassettes. They use a variety of computer programs, for example a simple program to create coloured pictures. They use games set up to practise and extend their spelling and vocabulary. Pupils have a good understanding of word-processing and explain simple processes with ease.

118 By the age of nine pupils identify advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet to locate information. They interrogate information to find particular aspects that interest them, as when they find out about the history of Rome. Older pupils make headway in using the computers independently. Pupils write text and know how to insert and delete words and punctuation marks.

119 Pupils at both key stages have recently made good progress thanks to the good quality of the teaching and the simple step-by-step approach to progression of skills linked with the good quality resources available for use. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Skills of using the keyboard improve and pupils get better at operating the mouse to control the cursor on the screen. They build upon the skills they have learned and consolidate new skills. They improve in using the mouse in conjunction with the keyboard. Pupils' skills of collecting data and producing information in different formats such as graphs and charts are less well developed than their word-processing skills. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

120 Attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils are keen to discuss their work and are confident enough to ask for help and quickly move on with their work. Pupils are careful with the equipment and often offer help and advice to other pupils less skilled than themselves such as when a pupil shows a friend how to move on to the next part of a spelling program.

121 The quality of teaching is good. It is rooted in sound knowledge and understanding that information technology is a tool for learning. Much direct teaching occurs and sufficient time is provided for pupils to use the computers. Other adults are employed very effectively in this. Teachers build upon pupils' individual skills acknowledging that many pupils have the use of computers and other technology at home.

122 The subject is led well by the headteacher. A clear step-by-step approach to the planning

of the curriculum and easy systems to record pupils' attainment enable teachers and other adults to very quickly know of pupils' strengths and what to teach next.

- **Religious Education**

123 By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the age of nine, pupils' attainments are broadly in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus.

124 By the age of seven pupils have a sound knowledge of major Christian festivals. They discuss Christmas, for example, in good detail and relate the story of the birth of Jesus recalling special people in the story. They can describe ceremonies such as christenings and know that they are special. Pupils are tolerant of one another and begin to understand that all are different and unique in their own way. They understand the need to show love and kindness to each other. Pupils describe their local church and know it is a place for prayer and 'to talk to Jesus'.

125 By the age of nine many pupils can give detailed accounts of some of the stories from the Bible, although lower attaining pupils are unable to do this. Higher attaining pupils recall in great detail not only the story but also the religious meaning and moral underpinning of particular stories. Pupils have knowledge of world faiths and their beliefs and lifestyle that is typical for their age. They can name a selection of religions and describe simple differences. For example, pupils can explain in simple terms about celebrations in the Sikh religion. They know that in the temple for example all are seated on the floor and that this represents a sense of equality. They know the story of Guru Nanuk and recall facts of his life and work.

126 Pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs make sound progress. They grow in understanding that people have differing points of view and beliefs. They develop greater knowledge of Christianity and other faiths and their ability to reflect and contribute to discussion improves. Pupils develop in their understanding that each religion has special artifacts and books. For example, younger pupils know that the Bible is important to Christians and older pupils gain in their knowledge of special books in relation to other world faiths.

127 Attitudes could not be assessed at Key Stage 1 as no teaching was seen. Pupils at Key Stage 2 listen well and are developing respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. They have a sense of awe for example in their role-play when the special book in the Sikh temple is revealed.

128 The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 2, was satisfactory. A range of quite complex concepts was presented through drama and good use was made of direct teaching about the Sikh religion. The lesson began late, however, owing to insufficient attention being given to timing. Good use is made of visiting speakers with first-hand knowledge of religions in different parts of the world.

129 The formal allocation of the role of co-ordinator has not taken place and consequently there is no monitoring of teaching or standards within the subject. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

- **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

- **Art and Design & technology**

130 Overall standards in art and design and technology are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils, including

those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, particularly in the design and making element of technology. During the week of inspection the teaching of these two subjects was not observed.

131 In Key Stage 1 pupils develop skills in cutting, sticking and drawing. They extend their skills and knowledge over time and apply these skills with a wider range of materials and in a greater variety of situations. They fix together different shapes and sizes of construction apparatus to make vehicles and other models. In art pupils sketch confidently from observations. They draw good likenesses of plants and fruit, for example, and in Year 2 draw good likenesses of fruit segments. Pupils make good use of pencil to create texture in their work. Drawings are extended into observational paintings, for example of an amaryllis, where striking shape and line together with the use of colour shows the plant to good effect. Gains are made in the quality and sensitivity of work as demonstrated through Chinese brush paintings of blossom, which is portrayed as light and airy in nature.

132 Pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate competent skills and techniques when they design and make a range of models associated with their project work. For example, in history pupils make Grecian pots, which they decorate appropriately, and in English they design magic boxes, which they line and fill with models of favourite objects. They write enthusiastically of these. Pupils make interesting puppets with jointed limbs and create interesting card shapes to frame their writing, for example sails on a Viking ship. They make three-dimensional cards with lift-up flaps, and present their projects in folders made from a selection of prints they have designed in art. Viking folders are fastened appropriately with hessian strips. In art pupils get better at painting detail and mixing colours, as in their pictures of harvest products showing ripe marrows and leeks. Charcoal sketches of the local church use line and shading well. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make gains in their ability to paint after the style of other artists. For example they paint in the style of Monet and create a sense of movement in their work. Texture is used to good advantage and pupils have a developing eye for detail.

133 Although the planned use of design technology and art in topic work encourages suitable activities to be set, the incremental development of skills and knowledge is not reliably planned. There is no one with formal responsibility for the subjects and this has an adverse effect on the development of the curriculum. Resources are adequate for the current curriculum. The rate of progress has been maintained since the last inspection.

History and Geography

134 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainments in geography and history match standards expected for their age. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, standards exceed those which might be expected for pupils of this age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress at Key Stage 1 in the development of their geographical and historical knowledge and skills. Progress at Key Stage 2 is good. Standards have been maintained in geography and have risen slightly in history since the last inspection. Only one lesson in history was observed; none in geography. Judgements are based on discussion with the co-ordinator and pupils and scrutiny of work, photographs, displays and planning.

135 Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their local area through different topics in both subjects. These are used to promote studies of various aspects of the school's locality. In geography, pupils develop skills in drawing maps and plans of the school site in Key Stage 1 and later build on these well in Key Stage 2. They recognise man-made features in the environment as they walk in the locality and recognise how weather affects the environment and lives of people. They look enthusiastically for the source of the River Thames and search with

interest for fossils in the quarry as part of their study of the area. In history, pupils study an appropriate range of time periods and have a good understanding of the sequence of time and the order of events. At Key Stage 1 pupils listen with interest to stories about famous people in the past, for example Queen Victoria. They visit Hitchin Museum, where they gleefully dress up as Victorian children, and later go to St Albans for studies of the Romans and the Fitzwilliam Museum to discover what the Ancient Greeks left us. Pupils draw sensitive pictures of Victorian life, of mines, railways and factories. The children in their pictures have sad faces and pupils write, "It was a horrible life, if you were poor."

136 Pupils consider what makes an attractive environment and they get better at expressing their own views about features of differing environments. Pupils develop progressively more sophisticated mapping skills and follow a route on a map. By Year 4 they read a wider range of symbols and find grid references and coordinates with greater consistency. Pupils develop a good understanding of weather and climate. Younger pupils make initial observations of weather and older pupils build on this when they record maximum and minimum temperatures at nine o'clock each day and create graphs of their findings of temperature, wind speed and rainfall. Pupils improve in their skills of comparing the main characteristics of different settlements, for example in Kenya and England. When studying particular eras pupils become more immersed in times past such as in a study of the Vikings when pupils write emotive sagas of their life and involvement in invasions and fighting.

137 Pupils respond well to the teaching at Key Stage 2. From the evidence of discussions with them, it is clear that pupils enjoy the subjects. Work and displays are well presented and pupils' writing is interesting and thoughtful. When pupils carry out their own experiments, for example on "how much water me and my family use to clean our teeth" the information presented is in their own words, not copied directly from books or printed from a computer. They make clear comments of their own sadness about the changing environment by drawing a series of scenes where the smile on the face of the sun gradually disappears amongst the smoke from factory chimneys as the town spreads into the countryside. Diagrams, maps and pictures are good. Pupils enjoy being historical detectives and finding out about the past and their locality. They work well together when they search for information and share books sensibly and comfortably. Pupils are developing their ability to search for information and use contents lists and an index well.

138 In the one history lesson seen at Key Stage 2, the teaching was good and the pupils were encouraged to work independently, with tasks which were appropriate for each year group and level of ability. Pupils contributed to group topic books and this gave the older pupils an opportunity to lead a group activity. Planning indicates that a broad range of geographical and historical skills is taught over the year.

139 Policies are due for revision next year. The school liaises well with local schools about the topics to be studied and the order in which they will be covered. This is good practice. School resources are adequate and are supplemented well by visits to museums or places of interest, which are included in each topic. There are good links with other subjects in the curriculum, for example with science, mathematics, design and technology and English and the school makes good use of resources, including worksheets from the museums. Visitors to the school also enhance pupils' learning in both subjects. The co-ordination of the subjects is haphazard and relies too heavily on people's goodwill rather than on a formal job description outlining accompanying responsibilities.

• **Music**

140 No lessons were observed, but judgements are made from observations of a music assembly, individual recorder playing, discussion with the co-ordinator and pupils, listening to audio-tapes, and a scrutiny of photographs and files.

141 The achievement of pupils in music has improved overall since the last inspection. Greater attention is now paid to providing pupils with opportunities to compose their own music. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and build on this to make good progress before they leave the school at the end of Year 4. They learn to work together in groups, to take turns and follow a conductor, and improve their ability to play and rest at the right time.

142 Pupils at Key Stage 1 quickly acquire a broad repertoire of songs, rhymes and action songs. They develop an awareness of tempo and pitch. By the end of Key Stage 1, they select instruments to represent a part of a story, recognising and naming a range of instruments. They listen carefully to ensure that they play and stop at the right time when accompanying the story "Peace at last!"

143 Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop an awareness of musical activities and use their feet and voices, as well as instruments, when following a graphic score for a 'Journey through the Galaxy' or a Kenyan safari. They compose their own tunes, creating interesting intervals with their instruments. They use a wide range of sounds and instruments in their work. The majority of pupils have some experience of reading musical notation or learning an instrument in school such as the piano or recorder. They use this knowledge well for themselves and to help others.

144 The singing of pupils in assemblies is tuneful, with clear diction. Pupils of all ages join in the singing and any actions enthusiastically, but do not lose the tone of their singing. Pupils play a range of tuned and untuned instruments to accompany their singing. They sing songs in two parts and hold their parts well. In assemblies, pupils listen thoughtfully to music played as they enter the hall.

145 In discussion pupils show good attitudes to music and engage readily in singing. From Class 1 pupils are keen to learn to play an instrument and all pupils in Class 2 either play one or more instruments, or have learned to play the recorder previously. Pupils who play in assembly and concerts take their responsibilities seriously and are proud to play such a visible, important part in the life of the school.

146 Insufficient teaching was seen to make a judgement. The teacher, who co-ordinates the subject for the school, takes all pupils for class music activities. She has provided the school with a good scheme of work. This is an improvement since the last inspection and ensures that all aspects of the music curriculum are covered over the year. Music is linked well with other subjects, especially history and geography. Resources are good, although the school has few multi-cultural instruments. Visitors bring music to the school, and pupils perform or are involved in musical activities in other schools, which enhances pupils' learning.

· **Physical education**

147 At Key Stage 1 pupils' progress, though sound overall, is very dependent upon the quality of teaching, which in three lessons with the same class but different teachers, ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress.

148 At Key Stage 1 pupils improve their jumping by paying attention to the way in which they land. They practise jumping over a small mat, remembering to bend their knees to lessen the impact. They build up a sequence of jumps as they move in and out of a hoop. Pupils' skills of throwing and rolling a hoop get better as they work with partners sending and receiving a hoop

over a short distance. Pupils gain in confidence and their control of the hoop improves. Pupils understand the need to rest after energetic work. Unsatisfactory progress was made in dance where pupils were unable to explore the mood of a piece of music and their work lacked poise and balance. This in part reflected the choice of material provided by the teacher and the methodology used. Overall pupils' progress in skills of running and dodging are barely satisfactory owing to the constricted space in which they have to work indoors.

149 Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. In an outside games lesson pupils were challenged physically and intellectually. Pupils' skills of running and dodging developed well and their capacity to work energetically improved. They became more accurate both in sending and receiving a netball. Pupils' confidence in water at both key stages improves quickly and many achieve a series of external awards for their swimming. By the age of nine a significant proportion of pupils have built very well upon their early skills in water and are able to swim a width of a swimming pool using breaststroke and crawl.

150 Pupils behave well and have sound attitudes to the subject. They listen to instructions and work effectively on their own and in pairs. They work carefully with regard to the safety of themselves and others in the restricted space available in the hall.

151 The quality of teaching is sound overall at both key stages. The best teaching followed a detailed lesson plan, which was part of a series of lessons building up to work on larger apparatus. Much attention was given to the safe use of space and the demands made upon pupils were challenging yet appropriate. Sufficient time was allowed for pupils to practise and improve their skills. Unsatisfactory teaching relied too heavily on the use of a radio programme, which was used inappropriately for the needs of the pupils. Lesson plans were too brief and the teacher was ill prepared to teach the basic steps of simple dances. There were major shortcomings in the use of time.

152 Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Though the use of space in the hall has been reviewed space remains very limited by both the storage of nursery and dining furniture and the letting of the hall to a private nursery. This impacts adversely on pupils' opportunities inside to run and skip and move quickly. The clear progress in skills identified at the time of the last report is no longer evident. A very newly revised policy has yet to be discussed with staff and the long-term curricular plan is very brief. The role of subject co-ordinator is unallocated and the monitoring of the use of a published scheme goes unattended.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

· Summary of inspection evidence

153 A team of three inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector, spent a combined total of six days in school. Prior to the inspection a range of documentation was analysed. On an initial visit the Registered Inspector met the headteacher, other staff and the governing body.

154 Further documentation was scrutinised during the inspection. The inspectors observed 30 lessons or parts of lessons. They also observed what happens at the beginning and end of each

school day. They listened to pupils read and examined samples of their work. They held discussions with pupils, the governing body, staff and parents. In total 33 hours and 10 minutes were spent in classes, discussion with pupils and evaluation of their work. Before the inspection a parents' meeting was held, which 20 parents attended, and 22 responses to the parental questionnaire were analysed.

155 Data and indicators

· PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y4	41.5	0	9	*

* Statistics are not entered in this section of the table, as there is a risk that individual pupils could be identified.

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y4)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

Education support staff (YR - Y4)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	40.5

Average class size:	20.7
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· FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year: 98/ 1999

	£
Total income	29,499

Total expenditure	27,100
Expenditure per pupils	2,956
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,886
Balance carried forward to next year	15,285

· **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	32
Number of questionnaires returned:	22

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	68	27	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my	77	23	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	36	64	0	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	27	59	0	14	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	50	41	0	9	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	64	36	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	45	45	0	10	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	55	45	0	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	68	27	5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	62	29	10	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	68	27	0	5	0