

INSPECTION REPORT

DATCHWORTH (ALL SAINTS) JMI SCHOOL

Datchworth near Stevenage

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117430

Headteacher: Miss J Mary Willatt

Reporting inspector: Alan W Perks
18889

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th May 2000

Inspection number: 189053

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Church of England voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Hollybush Lane Datchworth Near Stevenage Hertfordshire |
| Postcode: | SG3 6RE |
| Telephone number: | 01438 812381 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr. Anthony Jackson |
| Date of previous inspection: | April 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Alan W Perks | Registered inspector | Science Information technology Modern Foreign Language / French | What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? |
| Elaine Parrish | Lay inspector | | How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Rod Braithwaite | Team inspector | English Physical education Equal opportunities | How well is the school led and managed? |
| Geraldine Lewenden | Team inspector | Design and technology Geography History Under fives Special educational needs | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| Peter Williman | Team inspector | Mathematics Art Music | How good are curricular opportunities offered to pupils? |

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Datchworth JMI (All Saints CE VA) School has a smaller than average pupil population of 137. It is situated in a quiet, rural Hertfordshire village, serving the village children and those from neighbouring parishes and local towns. The school benefits from a high level of parental support and most pupils come from a socially and economically advantaged environment. The average class size is twenty-three. All reception children have received some sort of pre-school education. The school's baseline assessments show that children entering the school at four years of age have skill levels that, overall, are slightly above average. There are twenty-two pupils on the school's own special educational needs register (16 per cent), two of whom have statements of special needs, which is below the national average. No pupils have English as a second language and less than one per cent has free-meal entitlement, which is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school has many good features and pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics, science and music by the end of both key stages. This is a result of the frequently good teaching of these subjects and the conscientious, effective leadership and management by the headteacher. The school continues to give satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides good teaching that helps pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics, science and music. Its provision for pupils with special educational needs has risen to a good level, enabling them to make good progress.
- It provides a high level of care for all, which results in almost all pupils showing very good attitudes to their work, and enabling them to successfully build strong relationships with each other, and with staff and other adults who help with their learning.
- The way in which it has formed strong links with parents and the local community has resulted from a determined and successful partnership of all members of the governing body, headteacher and staff.

What could be improved

- The information collected from monitoring of teaching and learning is not always used to best effect. Teachers' planning does not always offer a sufficient range of challenging work that meets the needs of all pupils.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator continues to be insufficiently developed. There are not enough opportunities for teachers to check the quality of teaching and learning in classes other than their own during lesson time.
- There is inconsistency in pupils' use of information and communication technology and so their skills are not used to best effect to support their work in other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1996 and has made satisfactory improvement since then. The rate of improvement has been affected by a considerable change of staff during the intervening period. Most notable improvements include:

- Pupils with special educational needs have benefited from improvements in teaching and learning practices and are now making good progress over time.
- Most of the teaching of English, mathematics, science and music is now good, resulting in good learning in these subjects.
- The attitudes of almost all pupils' to schoolwork have risen to a very good level. This has created a climate for learning where relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are very good. This impacts beneficially on their behaviour and progress, as do improvements in social and moral provision.

- Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are now significant strengths of provision. Systems for collecting and recording information about pupils have strengthened, so that there is a wealth of data with which to target pupils' work at a more individual level.
- The governing body has successfully communicated with a far wider range of parents and other community members, bringing a clearer understanding of their work in promoting teaching and pupils' learning opportunities.
- There have been improvements in the school's strategic management of financial resources, which have led to effective longer term planning of class sizes and expansion of teaching and learning facilities.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | A* | A | B | C |
| mathematics | A | A* | C | E |
| science | A | A* | A | A |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| very high | A* |
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |
| very low | E* |

- Some caution should be exercised in the interpretation of these gradings because of the small group taking these tests (17).
- Realistic targets have been agreed with the local education authority in these subjects.
- When comparing these subjects with similar schools, the 1999 results were average in English, well below average in mathematics and well above average in science. Trends over the past three years show considerable variations, ranging from very high results through to those well below national averages. The results in 1999 were significantly below previous years' levels in mathematics, and illustrate the year-on-year fluctuations often evident in small schools. Standards in science have been maintained well above national average. Inspection evidence shows that standards in all three subjects are above average levels at the end of both key stages. Differences in standards as compared to the outcomes of national tests are generally due to differences with the groups of pupils taking these tests each year.
- Attainment on entry is variable year-on-year and is currently above average. Children who are under five years of age make at least satisfactory and often good progress, and most achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning by the age of five.
- Overall standards of attainment in information technology are close to national expectations at the end of both key stages, but pupils' use of the wide range of information and communications equipment is inconsistent. Standards are satisfactory for almost all pupils in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Standards in music are good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school because of the warm, caring and happy ethos that is created for them. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The behaviour of the large majority of pupils is regularly very good and has a significantly positive impact on the way in which they are able to learn. There is a small amount of inappropriate behaviour. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good overall. The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Some opportunities for them to take on minor responsibility and to show initiative are provided. However, sometimes too much is done for them rather than letting them show initiative and self-sufficiency as they become trustworthy. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and |

| | |
|------------|--|
| | staff, are very good. |
| Attendance | Good. Attendance levels are better than the national average. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are very good and there are no unauthorised absences. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. In the teaching seen, 98 per cent was satisfactory or better, 56 per cent was good or better and 12 per cent was very good. There was 2% of unsatisfactory teaching. From these lessons and the analysis of pupils' work, it is frequently good and occasionally very good in the subjects of English, mathematics, science and music. Teaching of under-fives is good overall. Across the school, the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, with some teachers showing good competency. These teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of individual pupils and pay close attention to their learning of basic skills. In the best lessons, teachers successfully meet the needs of all pupils by making effective use of assessment information and through their firm knowledge of individuals in their classes. Pupils acquire new knowledge, develop skills successfully and increase their understanding, making good progress. Weaknesses in teaching are identified when lesson time and information gained from assessments are not used effectively, and when teachers' expectations are not high enough. Good provision is made for those pupils who have identified special educational needs. Support staff and voluntary helpers are given clear instructions and they have a positive effect on the pupils' rate of learning and standards reached, especially where they are involved with supporting pupils with special educational needs. As a result of effective teaching, standards have been maintained in most subjects and improved in English, science, design and technology and information technology. Almost all pupils show interest in their work and understand what they are doing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. The quality and range of learning opportunities continues to improve and currently meets all requirements. There is breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum, with equality of opportunity for all pupils. Provision for the under fives is currently appropriate and is suitably under review to meet the Early Learning Goals for September 2000. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. There is good overall provision for pupils on the schools' special educational needs register, enabling these pupils to make good progress with their targets over time. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and that for cultural development is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good. The school's management continues to provide a happy, safe and secure climate for learning. Almost all pupils' attitudes to work and their relationships with each other and staff are very good. The staff has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and is committed to raising standards. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory with good features. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school. She is caring, conscientious and well respected by the whole school community. There is a harmonious working relationship with senior managers and together they show firm commitment to raising standards. However, the information they gain from classroom monitoring is not always used to best advantage. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. The governing body are active and enthusiastic, showing firm commitment to improvement. They have worked successfully to improve the parents' perception of their roles and responsibilities towards all pupils. Almost all statutory requirements are met. They have not yet completed the process of home / school agreements. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory. There is appropriate evaluation of outcomes of school activity. The management team of governors and headteacher meet regularly to appraise the school's performance. They usefully analyse assessment results, but do not make best use of this valuable information. There is effective targeting of resources to bring about improvements across the school. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. There is effective strategic planning and administration of school financial resources. School spending is analysed regularly and school development planning is appropriately adjusted in response to new information or requirements. The principles of applying best value for money are followed to a good level. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What most parents like about the school | What some parents are not happy about |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like going to this school. • Their children make good progress because of the good teaching. • They are encouraged to play an active part in the school. • They find it easy to approach the school with questions and problems to do with their children. • The large majority of their children achieve high standards of good behaviour. • The school is well led and managed and promotes high expectations of its pupils. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some are not satisfied with the work that their children are expected to do at home. • A few feel that school does not always work closely with parents. |

There was a significant positive response from those parents who attended the meeting and from responses to questionnaires. The inspection team firmly supports the views of the large majority of parents about the many strengths of the school. Although a few parents would like larger amounts of homework for their children, the inspection team concludes that the school provides a satisfactory range of homework assignments, intends to improve unproductive practices and is very willing to discuss any parental concerns. There is no indication from inspection evidence to substantiate the claim that the school does not always work closely with parents. Partnership with parents is very good. There are strong and beneficial links with

parents and the local community. This has a very positive effect on the way in which parents feel informed about the school, their children's progress and the ways in which they might help their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children enter the reception class, as under fives, their skill levels are widely variable, with the larger proportion showing levels close to and slightly beyond those expected for children of their age. Most arrive with well-developed speaking, listening, physical, creative and social skills and showing a good awareness and understanding of the world around them. Children make at least satisfactory progress in all the areas of learning and most achieve the nationally recommended levels of the Desirable Learning Outcomes before commencing the statutory years of education.
2. In each year group, there is usually a small group of pupils and a broad range of attainment, making it extremely difficult to make generalisations, and so caution should be exercised in the interpretation of statistics. At the end of Key Stage 1, the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests showed that the proportion of pupils attaining national standards of Level 2 and above was very high in reading in comparison to the national average and above average in writing. The proportion attaining the higher Level 3 and above was very high in reading and well above the national average writing. In mathematics, the proportion attaining Level 2 and above was close to the national average, but the proportion attaining Level 3 and above was very high in comparison to the national average. Teacher assessments in science show that the proportion of pupils attaining at Level 2 and above was below the national average, but those attaining Level 3 and above was well above the national average. When compared to similar schools, the performance of pupils was well above average in reading and mathematics and close to the average in writing. The performance of boys was broadly similar to that of girls in reading, writing and mathematics.
3. The group of pupils taking the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum assessment tests in 1999 was small (17). Results showed that the proportion of pupils attaining the required national Level 4 and above was above the national average in English, close to national average in mathematics, and was well above average in science. The proportion attaining at the higher Level 5 and above was above national average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. When compared to similar schools, results were close to the average in English, well below average in mathematics and well above average in science. Realistic targets have been agreed with the local education authority. Over a four-year period, the attainment of girls has been similar to that of boys.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of both key stages, many pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in the essential areas of speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy and the larger proportion of pupils attains standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement in the pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of learning in English at both key stages and science at Key Stage 1 reported in the previous inspection, especially at the higher levels. Differences between the standards found during the inspection and those achieved in the previous year's National Curriculum assessment tests can be attributed partly to the differences between each year's pupil group and the small number of pupils taking the tests. Good teaching and increasing resources within the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies enable the large majority of pupils to make good progress and achieve above average levels within these lessons. The good progress that they make in their learning is a direct result of clear planning of content, effective use of assessment information and the quality of teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject material and pupils' potential in these lessons.
5. Pupils' standards of attainment in information technology (IT) are broadly in line with expectations at the end of both key stages, which is an improvement. The rate of development has increased more significantly from September 1999, and about three-quarters of pupils have access to home equipment, which gives them increased opportunity to practise skills. A significant minority shows good knowledge and skill when using information technology for word processing and Internet

communication by the end of Key Stage 2. In art, design and technology, geography, history, and physical education most pupils make satisfactory progress and attain expected levels for the age in both key stages. Pupils' receive good teaching in music and a majority attains at a level beyond that expected.

6. Each year's group of pupils is consistently small and differences in individual prior attainment are evident. In almost all year groups, there is a wide spread of standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science, with a weighting towards above average. Overall, there is an improved position to that reported in the previous inspection in 1996 when, at the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils attained standards in line with or beyond national average and expectations in a majority of subjects, but progress in information technology and design and technology was judged to be unsatisfactory. There has been some reduction in standards attained in geography and history, which were described as better than expected at the end of Key Stage 2. This is partly attributed to the reduction in time spent studying these subjects. Attainment in music has remained at a level above that expected at the end of both key stages.
7. At both key stages, pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need make at least satisfactory and often good progress towards the targets they have been set. Other pupils on the school's special educational needs register make mostly good progress as they move through the school, especially in English. Where they are given additional adult support, either individually or within small groups, this enables them to make more rapid progress in relation to their prior attainment levels. Additionally, when work is at the correct challenge level, attitude and behaviour improve. However, some pupils, particularly those showing higher attainment potential, do not always make the progress of which they are capable. This is evident from the analysis of pupils' previously completed work and in some lessons, where the priority has frequently been to complete the task set for the whole class, rather than moving on from the individual pupil's levels of skill and understanding. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Almost all pupils' attitudes towards the school are very good. This includes children under five and pupils with special educational needs. Pupils enjoy their time at school and approach lessons and activities with great enthusiasm. For the most part, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. For example, pupils appeared attentive and responsive to a difficult text on Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale'. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and feel fully involved in all aspects of school life. They are appropriately integrated into classes, respond amiably to support and form constructive relationships with staff and other pupils.
9. All pupils are encouraged to offer their own ideas and opinions and most respond eagerly to questions and requests. Attendance at clubs is good and opportunities are offered to all children in the school; even the youngest enthusiastically attend the weekly football club.
10. Overall, behaviour in lessons is good and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. There are, however, isolated incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons. These are usually linked to the inappropriate behaviour of a few, which disrupts the class. There have been no exclusions in the past two academic years. Pupils make good progress in their social skills and work successfully, both independently and also when co-operating in groups. These aspects make a significant contribution to their learning. Since the last inspection the school has successfully maintained good standards of behaviour.
11. Pupils willingly help with routine jobs around the school. They assist teachers in preparing classrooms and clear up conscientiously. The recently organised 'School Council' provides a good mechanism for pupils in Year 6 to take further responsibility and initiative. Pupils' personal development in taking responsibility for their own actions and considering the effects of their own behaviour is good. The school has put considerable effort into developing assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. Each child is assessed using the local education

authority scheme and their performance is discussed with parents at parents' open evenings. Teachers sometimes include in their lesson plans ways for pupils to assess their own performance. They are also given suitable opportunities to choose their own activities once teacher set work has been completed.

12. Relationships between pupils are very good throughout the school, which upholds the views of parents. Pupils like and trust their teachers and other adults who work with them. Pupils work successfully together. They respond appreciatively to the help and guidance available to them and to being valued as individuals. Instances of bullying or harassment are very rare, and the school deals promptly with any incidents that do occur. Pupils are helpful and friendly, and are sensitive towards those who experience difficulties or have disabilities. For example, pupils in Year 6 make individual books for new entrants and help younger children during wet playtimes.
13. Attendance is good and is unchanged since the previous report. Pupils arrive on time for school and almost all lessons start promptly because of this.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In the teaching observed, 98 per cent was satisfactory or better, 56 per cent was good or better and 12 per cent was very good. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching of children under five was good overall. Teaching and other provision enables almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to maintain at least satisfactory and often good progress as they move through the school. This broadly reflects the findings of the previous report.
15. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum is good overall, with some showing an in-depth knowledge of subjects such as English, science, French and music. Least skill is shown in design and technology. The teaching of basic skills associated with literacy and numeracy is good and this has a good impact on the quality of presentation and the accuracy of pupils' recorded work at the end of Key Stage 2. However, some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations and pupils' work can be untidy, unfinished, and lacking in content and quality. In both key stages, long and medium-term planning provides appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum, personal, social and health education and religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced effectively as recommended and are having a strong impact on pupils' standards of attainment.
16. All members of staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitude to work. Staff are respectful to pupils, providing good role models. They successfully encourage pupils to show good behaviour, promote very good attitudes to work and help pupils maintain very good relationships with each other and with adults in the school. The most effective teaching regularly produces good levels of pupils' interest, concentration and the development of independence. For example, the use of carefully thought through questions persuades pupils to predict and speculate on probable answers without fear of being wrong.
17. The management of pupils is generally good across the school. Most lessons in English, for example, move at a brisk pace. This allows sufficient time for pupils to complete planned tasks and for them to apply intellectual and creative effort into their work. Staff members have very good interaction with pupils, encouraging them to remain on task, which most do. All teaching staff make effective use of learning support assistants and voluntary helpers. Support adults are directed effectively, and are sufficiently knowledgeable and enthusiastic to have a very positive influence on pupils in their groups. Their involvement with pupils who have special educational needs is significant and aids their rate of learning. Some members of the governing body help with activities such as the teaching of early years children, information technology and design and technology, resulting in enhanced rates of progress by pupils they support.

18. Teachers complete weekly plans conscientiously. The lack of schemes of work to guide teachers with their planning was identified as a key issue at the last inspection and this has been improved. Teachers are currently making effective use of recently produced national and local education authority guidelines, which provide pupils with a wide range of opportunity. The school makes very effective use of guidance within the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan the programmes of pupils' work. Teachers regularly collect assessment information in these two subject areas and use it proficiently, providing pupils with appropriately challenging work. However, in some other subjects, such as science and geography, teachers do not always make sufficient use of the comprehensive records they maintain. This can affect some pupils' behaviour and progress. Teachers plan their time to give suitable emphasis to literacy and numeracy. Sometimes, this planning does not work out in practice, and so does not show a realistic confirmation of the actual time that pupils spent on their work. Where clear learning targets are set, as in English, pupils are clear about what is expected of them in the time allowed but, sometimes, higher attainers are given a starting task that allows them to work at a more leisurely pace and still complete the task before the lesson ends. This does not complement the school's currently good target setting for pupils with special educational needs evident in their individual education plans.
19. Teachers make satisfactory use of most teaching resources. There is wide, efficient use of musical instruments that includes regular practising by pupils, which improves their skills. The use teachers make of information technology and other communications equipment is satisfactory overall but there are too many occasions when opportunities to use computers as a recording or research tool to support other subjects are missed. The school's book library is not visited with regularity by some classes. Good use is made of the large field area across the road from the school for physical education. Some teachers make good use of homework to reinforce and extend what pupils learn in school time, but the school agrees with parents that practices are inconsistent. Pupils' attempts to complete homework assignments are valued by most teachers, but some assignments are not followed through with thoroughness. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to take home reading assignments, which most parents support. Other tasks include learning spellings, finding information by research or learning to play musical instruments.

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

20. The quality and range of learning opportunities for the pupils are good. The curriculum for the statutory years of schooling is broad and balanced and contains all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, personal, social and health education and religious education. Opportunities are also given to pupils in Years 5 and 6 to learn French. The provision of a curriculum for those children under five covers an appropriate range of the designated Desirable Learning Outcomes. The Governors have agreed a sex education policy and there is appropriate information provided to pupils on the use and misuse of drugs.
21. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced and both are effectively enabling the school to maintain its good, and sometimes very good, standards. The introduction of the focus on mental skills has been particularly effective in sharpening pupils' skills in numeracy. This was an area for improvement identified in the last report.
22. The school has developed appropriate policies and schemes of work, a lack of which was a concern at the time of the previous inspection. The introduction of schemes of work, substantially based on national guidance, has given appropriate content, consistency and structure to the curriculum. The quality of teachers' curricular planning, based on these schemes, is generally satisfactory, although the allocation of appropriate time is not fully considered and developed in medium and short-term planning. This results in there being no whole-school overview of actual practices in relation to the agreed planning.

23. The time available for delivery of the curriculum conforms to national guidelines. While the school has reconsidered the use of time in introducing new schemes of work, great emphasis has been given to literacy and numeracy. Whilst this has had a beneficial effect on pupils' progress in these subjects, the revised organisation of the teachers' timetables has limited the time available for geography and history. For example, a Key Stage 2 class significantly exceeds the guide time for numeracy, while in a Key Stage 1 class, thirty minutes is given to "story time" each day in addition to the recommended literacy hour. Good use of time is made of break-times and lunchtimes to support extra-curricular opportunities.
24. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are detailed and give clear guidance to teachers and classroom support assistants. Effective classroom support and planned withdrawal enables these pupils to access the full curriculum and make good progress with targets. The statemented pupils are given good support. For example, staff ensure that any specialised equipment is in place for lessons and for assemblies to provide equality of opportunity.
25. The school has a firm policy for promoting equality of opportunity that is understood and applied by the whole school community. All pupils have access to the full range of curricular and extra-curricular provision available. A strength of the school's extra-curricular provision is that the number of club sessions is extended to meet pupils' demand. The recently introduced 'School Council' is planned sensitively to enable all pupils to have a turn as a representative of their class in their school career.
26. A strength of the school is the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities provided in music, and the commitment of the school to providing instrumental tuition. This provision has a significant impact on the enthusiasm pupils have for going to school and for their attitudes within school. The school offers a good range of sports, dance and music through timetabled lessons and clubs. Good levels of expertise, accessed through the local education authority's peripatetic music service and voluntary sports coaching, ensure a depth and strength to this provision and enhance the provision made by the school.
27. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to meet and compete with peers in other schools. They participate in inter-school matches and athletics competition in addition to joining other schools for music festivals. The curriculum is very appropriately enriched through a range of visits and visitors. Pupils in Year 6, especially, speak of the value that visitors bring. Unusually, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have the opportunity of a residential visit. This is matched by a similar opportunity at the end of Key Stage 2. Good use is made of these visits to extend learning beyond that of the social experience, such as cultural education and personal development.
28. The continuum of learning is supported by good links with pre-school provision in the locality. There is satisfactory liaison with the secondary schools the pupils will attend. Teachers from those schools visit pupils in Year 6 and they make reciprocal visits, which improve pupils' confidence in making the move. Appropriate information is provided regarding pupils' assessed standards and personal development. The school maintains good curricular links with other primary age schools through a local 'cluster' group. Pupils have good opportunities to join in with the local community through festivals at the church, by Maypole dancing and through entertaining the senior citizens of the "Elderberry Club". The benefits of this activity are clearly illustrated by the sensitivity pupils demonstrate and the empathy that they show for the feelings of others. Using information technology, pupils are able to make positive links with a wider community and access learning through the use of e-mail, which is given suitable encouragement by staff and members of the governing body.
29. The provision for personal development is good. Spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily. An effective teaching plan for assemblies appropriately includes time for reflection. Pupils develop appropriate values and a sense of self-awareness through the broad curriculum and through the example of the attitudes of staff. Self-expression through English, art, and music has a significantly high profile in the school curriculum. Opportunities for reflection are provided

through 'Circle' time and religious education. Pupils do not always make a strong link between their experiences in the church festivals and the reasoning behind those festivals, although they are enthusiastic to take part in activities that are lively and humorous in style.

30. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development and this is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the provision was judged to be good. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong, although a small minority of pupils does not always follow this understanding. The headteacher and staff provide very good role models in their attitudes to each other and in their dealings with pupils. In addition to a strong school creed and firm rules in individual classes, the school's ethos also establishes a firm expectation of what is acceptable. 'Circle' time gives suitable opportunities for pupils to be involved in developing this expectation.
31. Very good provision is made for social development. Pupils are very polite to each other and to adults, and this is actively encouraged. They speak easily and freely to resolve any misunderstandings. They demonstrate good manners. Generally, they think ahead of their actions and check that they are not causing a disruption to others. Teachers give suitable recognition to this behaviour. Relationships across the school are very good. Teachers set good examples of respect for others and pupils follow those examples well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work co-operatively in most subjects. Good pupil collaboration, for example, produces attractive, large murals, paintings and design displays. By Year 6, pupils can hold animated discussions, give each other time for expression and respect each other's views. This progress is further enhanced through the opportunities of the newly introduced 'School Council'. This enables pupils to have a very good involvement in the development of features of the school that influence their daily experience.
32. The school makes good provision for cultural development, which reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. Pupils learn to understand the differences, practices and teachings of a range of faiths. They have opportunities to experience a broad sample of music from different religious and cultural origins. Their work in art has cultural breadth and includes European, Western and African traditions. This is effectively supported through work in literacy and geography, and given depth through discussions in history of previous cultures and changes over time. The depth and range of teachers' knowledge in some subjects, drawing on their own experiences, significantly enhances pupils' learning. Pupils are given good opportunities to know about the locality of the school and due celebration is made of the fact that this is one of the oldest village schools in the country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school has maintained its strong commitment to the care and support it gives to all pupils. This has a very beneficial effect on pupils' learning and gives them the confidence to cope very effectively with school life. There are good procedures in place to monitor pupils' academic and personal development, and a satisfactory level of support and guidance to raise pupils' achievement.
34. All members of staff make a very positive contribution to the school's caring ethos. The school is a very happy place that both pupils and staff are pleased to attend. Staff learn about their pupils quickly and respond very readily to their needs, which does not always promote initiative and self-reliance. They pay very close attention to protecting pupils from harm and to promoting their health, safety and general well being.
35. There are very good procedures for child protection and staff handle any issues in a very sensitive manner. The health and safety policy is closely monitored and there are no outstanding issues. There are good arrangements for first aid and fire drills are held regularly. School mealtime staff's kindly concern for pupils helps to make lunchtime a pleasant part of the school day. All pupils are

fully supervised in the playground, where a particular feature of the school is the way in which pupils of all ages play happily together.

36. The school makes good provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need and there is good liaison with outside support agencies. Learning support assistants are patient and encouraging, and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
37. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good. Parents are conscientious about notifying absences and pupils arrive at school promptly. There are good procedures to promote best behaviour, and the school functions as a calm and well-ordered community. There is a clearly stated behaviour policy and procedures are usually applied consistently throughout the school. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the inspection, and the school makes good use of class discussion time to give pupils the confidence to talk about anything that worries them. For example, in an effectively planned and sensitively handled discussion in Year 6, pupils spoke freely about the forthcoming National Curriculum assessment tests and discussed how they might support anxious classmates.
38. Teachers keep good assessment records of the academic standards pupils achieve, particularly in English and mathematics. These are kept accurately and consistently throughout the school and a rich bank of information about what pupils have learned is available for teachers to draw on. Teachers are beginning to use this data to guide their planning for lessons, but in some lessons in other subjects teachers do not match the work to pupils' individual needs. Systems for assessing children under five on entry are good. Baseline testing for reception class children is undertaken on entry, using the local education authority's baseline test. These assessments are carried out thoroughly and accurately. The information is used effectively to identify pupils' needs and to help set suitable learning targets. National Curriculum assessment tests are conducted at the end of both key stages and the school appropriately analyses these results to identify possible gender variations and areas of the curriculum in need of development. Optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 help with the tracking of these groups. Marking of pupils' work is regularly carried out and some pupils' assessed work is kept in individual portfolios. There are too few developmental comments in most pupils' books and too much work is unfinished in some classes. Although pupils are generally aware of areas of their work that need strengthening, they are not always given specific targets for improvement, which has a negative effect on their rate of learning.
39. Teachers have worked hard to develop a clear picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in personal development. This information is discussed fully by all teachers and then recorded in each pupil's individual profile. Procedures to identify pupils who need early extra help are good and the school follows the recommendations of the national Code of Practice. Care is taken to acknowledge pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. The school is working towards establishing clear targets for each pupil that relate to their academic work, behaviour and personal development. There are plans for these to be monitored for success, and the outcomes to be discussed with both pupils and parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school has put considerable thought and effort into developing its partnership with parents. Its links with parents are now very effective and they have a very positive effect, both on pupils' learning and the quality of life within the school. In the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents registered their strong support for the school. Inspection evidence supports parents' high levels of satisfaction with the way in which the school works in partnership with them. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection report.
41. The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. Parents are kept well informed through regular letters, information leaflets and newsletters about school life. The prospectus gives clear information about school routines, and introduces ways in which parents can support their children's learning at home. The governors' annual report meets statutory requirements. There are

regular meetings to discuss various aspects of the curriculum, such as the introduction of the numeracy hour, and these are usually very well attended. Parents are given comprehensive annual reports of their children's performance, but these do not always give parents a clear idea of the standards their children have achieved and what they should do to improve. Although all parents have been sent a copy of the school's homework policy, a small minority of parents has concerns about the amount of homework some children receive. The school accepts that some teachers are not always consistent in the amount of homework they set, and plans to rectify this situation. Parents of pupils with special education needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress in meeting their individual education plans, and are appropriately encouraged to attend reviews of target setting.

42. The school actively encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school and provides a welcoming environment for them. Almost all parents find all staff helpful and approachable. School policies encourage teachers to involve parents with their children's education, and a significant number of parents make a regular commitment to help in classrooms and to accompany pupils on outside trips. The school greatly values any help that parents can give. Parents co-operate readily with school practices, for example by listening to their children read at home and by reporting absences promptly. Although the school has circulated draft copies of a home/school agreement to all parents, the agreement is not yet in place and so the school is not meeting statutory requirements.
43. There is a flourishing Parents' Association that contributes generously to school funds and which cements very good relationships between parents and staff. Pupils benefit from the funds raised on their behalf and by the quality of relationships forged between home and school. Parents are appreciative of the support given by the staff to the Association's events and see this as practical evidence of the school's commitment to building a strong home/school partnership.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall, with some strengths. The school is improving in almost all areas identified as key issues in the previous inspection report. All staff and governors have a strong commitment to improve pupils' education, particularly in the standards they attain, which reflects the school's vision statement. There is a very positive ethos in the school, and relationships throughout are very friendly and happy. This results in consistently good attitudes to work by almost all pupils. The leadership is dedicated to the improvement of standards and learning, particularly through the teaching in the school, but as yet is not sufficiently precise in how it will achieve this.
45. The leadership of the headteacher is conscientious, supportive and particularly caring, and the whole school community holds her in high esteem. She is steadily developing an effective management team, whilst quietly expanding their responsibilities within the school. However, subject co-ordinators have insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning during lesson time. This was a weakness identified by the previous inspection.
46. The headteacher's pastoral support of her staff is very good, and she also spends a considerable time monitoring the quality of their teaching and the effect on pupils' learning. However, this does not always highlight clearly those areas of development to improve the teaching, concentrating as it does on commending strengths. The headteacher also works very hard at enabling staff new to both teaching and the school to settle successfully into their roles. Monitoring of this induction is detailed and supportive, but lacks sufficient direction as to how teachers might improve their skills.
47. The school successfully operates a positive appraisal system and teachers have regular opportunities to discuss their performance, targets and personal development. Teachers are actively encouraged to attend appropriate in-service training, either sponsored by the school or through their own initiative, as in training towards the introduction of Early Learning Goals for children under five. As a result of focused training, as for the National Literacy and Numeracy

Strategies, standards of teachers' planning and pupils' learning for other areas of the curriculum have improved.

48. The school's policy, provision and procedures for pupils with special educational needs meet the recommendations of the Code of Practice. The school shows major commitment to pupils who have special educational needs. Good, improved co-ordination of the provision for the pupils has directed significant funds into providing effective support for them, resulting in good progress in learning. There is a nominated member of the governing body who liaises effectively with the school through the co-ordinator. Governors report to parents about the success of their special educational needs policy and give appropriate details of the allocation of funding to support these pupils.
49. The contribution of the governors has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Strong and effective working relationships have been established with the headteacher and all members of staff. There is a clear understanding of most of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body has active and knowledgeable literacy, numeracy and special educational needs link governors, who have undertaken training for their areas, and who offer effective support and constructive comment to staff. Although they have fulfilled almost all statutory responsibilities, they have not yet met their duty to instigate a home / school agreement, which is still in draft form.
50. School development planning has improved since the last inspection, although some projected costings lack detail. The finance committee has improved the longer term strategic planning for the school, in conjunction with the headteacher, and the implied security of stable numbers on roll for several years ahead, has helped to clarify possible attainable objectives. For example, the school is already planning for a new classroom and the purchase of extra land, which it has correctly identified as being necessary to further increase standards. The school now has considerable confidence in its ability to develop progressively and to make major decisions successfully. It no longer carries a large budget surplus with no particular objective in mind. The school priorities for development place considerable emphasis on improvement of standards. However, although they are accurate in identification, they do not, at present, always show sufficiently high expectations for pupils' achievements within this very positive school environment.
51. The staff and governors have worked very hard in the last few years, and have been successful in maintaining and improving staffing and material resources. The school is staffed at an above average level of teachers and classroom support assistants, and pupils benefit from much voluntary help, provided mostly by parents. Non-teaching staff, who contribute much to school life, are managed constructively and helpfully in all classes. Resources remain good overall and are used efficiently, especially in English, music and physical education. However, the school's management of the book library area does not ensure that all pupils are familiar with its purpose and procedures. There is insufficient emphasis placed on monitoring the effects of teachers' management of time. The management of information and communication technology resources is showing recent improvement.
52. The governors and headteacher are aware of, and use, the principle of best value to good effect, although they do not compare the achievement of the school sufficiently with other similar schools. School administration is very efficient and unobtrusive, and enables staff to do their jobs without distraction. Although spending in the school is high, financial resources are used to good effect. The management of the school has improved, and is continuing to evolve, with many staff wishing to contribute to the successful management of improvement in all aspects. The combined effect of all factors shows that the school continues to give satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the standards of attainment and progress of all pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Make better use of assessment information, in subjects other than English and mathematics, to improve teachers' short-term planning and practice, so that in all classes the tasks and activities are matched more closely to pupils' individual needs;

This can be seen in paragraphs: 7, 18, 38, 39, 70, 76 and 88.

Develop the role of the subject co-ordinator, as stated in the previous report, so that there is increased opportunity for all teaching staff to measure pupils' standards of attainment and progress in learning during lesson time, and to share best practice;

This can be seen in paragraphs: 45, 71, 79, 87, 97, 106 and 129.

Extend the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, so that pupils' skills are practised more frequently and their opportunities for broadening learning are extended;

This can be seen in paragraphs: 5, 19, 71, 89, 98, 102, 113–118, 122, and 128.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL:

Complete the process of creating home / school agreements so that all statutory requirements are met;

This can be seen in paragraphs: 42 and 49.

Raise some teachers' expectation of what pupils are capable of achieving with their standards of presentation, volume of work and overall attainment, when they are appropriately challenged;

This can be seen in paragraphs: 16, 50 and 112.

Take greater account of time parameters and decisions made about the use of available time, so that the planned curriculum works more effectively in practice;

This can be seen in paragraphs: 23, 51 and 79.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

| |
|----|
| 46 |
|----|

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

| |
|----|
| 47 |
|----|

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 12 | 44 | 42 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | | 137 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 2 |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 22 |
|---|--|----|

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

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 6 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 6 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| | % |
| School data | 4.15 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| | % |
| School data | 0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | 14 | 13 | 27 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 11 | 9 | 11 |
| | Girls | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Total | 24 | 22 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 89 (94) | 82 (94) | 89 (75) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 83 (79) | 86 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| | Girls | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Total | 24 | 23 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 89 (100) | 85 (75) | 85 (94) |
| | National | 85 (80) | 85 (85) | 86 (86) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999 | 4 | 13 | 17 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| | Girls | 11 | 8 | 13 |
| | Total | 14 | 10 | 17 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 82 (87) | 59 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 69 (63) | 78 (74) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| | Girls | 10 | 12 | 11 |
| | Total | 13 | 15 | 15 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 77 (94) | 88 (100) | 88 (100) |
| | National | 67 (66) | 69 (65) | 75 (71) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | 1 |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | |
| White | 136 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 19.3 |
| Average class size | 23 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 78 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 263 433 |
| Total expenditure | 262 515 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2 035 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 1 179 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 2 097 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 137 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 66 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 71 | 26 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 53 | 36 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 45 | 41 | 5 | 0 | 9 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 30 | 52 | 15 | 3 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 48 | 45 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 44 | 48 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 71 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 52 | 36 | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 41 | 47 | 11 | 0 | 1 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 45 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 52 | 39 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 36 | 52 | 12 | 0 | 0 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

53. The quality of teaching and other provision for those few under-fives in the reception class is currently satisfactory overall, although the teaching observed was good overall. Children begin their full-time education in either the autumn or spring term of the school's academic year and most have had significant pre-school experience at the village playgroup or through other similar provision. These children have had an appropriate and effectively planned introduction to the school that included opportunities for preliminary visits. They have adapted quickly to regular routines that help them to feel secure and happy. The recently re-organised accommodation is generous for the group size and is used appropriately. Resources are generally adequate, but are insufficient for supporting role-play, making larger constructions and secured outside play.
54. Overall attainment on entry to the reception class for this year's intake of children was slightly above average. Previous year groups have varied, but have generally been average or above average. Children make satisfactory progress and, as a result, by the time they enter compulsory full-time education, most have achieved the levels expected from children of this age. In their language, literacy and mathematics, most of the current under fives attain standards that are well above those expected.

Personal and social development

55. The teaching of personal and social and development is satisfactory. There are very good relationships that provide security and care. Staff have a positive, sympathetic and sensitive approach in their teaching. There is appropriate provision for the development of children's social and personal skills and this leads to them making steady progress in this area of their learning. Pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to work. They work and play together happily and are beginning to collaborate in a wide range of activities. They show interest in the tasks set and sustain concentration for appropriate periods. They are given some suitable opportunities to develop independence, for example, when working the tape-recorder with minimum adult help.

Language and literacy

56. Teaching of language and literacy is good overall and children make good progress overall in the development of these skills. They are successfully encouraged by their teachers to chat sensibly and many speak with a larger than average vocabulary. They use appropriate language to talk to adults and many use relatively complex sentences. They listen attentively and this has a significant impact on their learning in other areas. They enjoy stories and can discuss them. Many older children in the reception class know the sounds that letters represent and use this knowledge effectively in their reading. Some recognise simple words and read whole sentences with an appropriate degree of fluency and expression. Progress in learning to write is good overall. Most form their letters accurately and write short sentences with some support from the teachers.

Mathematical development

57. The teaching of mathematics is good and leads to the children making good progress in mathematical awareness. Standards of work in numeracy are above those expected by the time they are five. The teachers and classroom support assistants provide a suitably wide range of opportunities for the children to use number and mathematical vocabulary in an interesting way throughout the day. For example, they use the class 'shop' to buy 'food' with an assortment of coins. They construct with a range of bricks and solve counting puzzles. These regular opportunities help the children to develop greater confidence in their number work. They enjoy counting and can recognise and use numbers over ten. They join in with a suitable range of number and counting rhymes enthusiastically.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory and, as a consequence, the children make satisfactory progress in this area of their learning. Through a suitable range of planned activities they learn about a variety of living things. For example, a pet rabbit lives in the corner of the classroom and children are encouraged to attend to its needs. They have a good understanding of the weather and can talk about conditions being sunny, rainy, cold and hot. Children's learning is enhanced by topics, such as "Teddy Bears", which give appropriate opportunities to learn about different ways of looking at the world in which they live. They play enthusiastically with sand, water, play-dough and other materials and experiment with folding, cutting and joining. When making teddy bear puppets, they select resources for themselves, such as scissors, papers and a wide variety of other materials. They cut and stick with a good degree of accuracy. By the time they are five, they have a clear understanding of their own locality and describe what they like and dislike about where they live.

Physical development

59. The children make satisfactory progress overall in their physical development. They show an increasing awareness of space and move in a safe, controlled way when walking and jogging around the hall and play-ground. Most of them are steadily improving their catching skills with beanbags, for example. Children have adequate opportunities to use scissors, pencils and other simple tools to develop their fine motor skills. There is no designated outside, secure play area or a suitable range of large wheeled toys for these children, although there is a climbing frame as part of the school's playground activity area.

Creative development

60. The teaching of creative areas of development is satisfactory and as a result children make appropriate progress in the development of their creative skills. They paint and draw with increasing confidence. They have suitable opportunities to participate in imaginative role-play, and developing appropriate skills in imagination and communication, for example using the telephone to hold conversations with imaginary characters such as 'Pooh Bear' in the playhouse. Most children can name and recognise the sound of certain musical instruments, such as cabassa, ocean drum, triangle and rain stick, without using visual clues.

ENGLISH

61. The previous report found that standards in English were "broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and satisfactory or better at the end of Key Stage 2". Standards now are above the national average in English at the end of both key stages, with a significant number of pupils being well above expectation in speaking, listening and reading. This indicates an improvement in standards in English since the previous report.
62. When pupils reach statutory school age, almost all have already reached the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all aspects of language and literacy. At the end of Key Stage 1, National Curriculum Tests and assessments for 1999 show that pupils attainment was very high in reading in comparison with the national average and above the national average in writing. Reading was well above average in comparison with similar schools and close to their average in writing. Over the last four years, although standards fell slightly in 1997 and 1998, they are now above their 1996 levels in reading and similar in writing. At Key Stage 2 in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation of Level 4 or better was above the national average, as was the proportion attaining the higher Level 5. Over the four years 1996 to 1999, attainment in English was above the national average and broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Previously published information with regard to the results of tests in 1999 was confirmed during the inspection as being incorrect due to errors in collation of independent marking.
63. Inspection evidence indicates that a majority of pupils makes steady, frequently good progress in reading, speaking and listening, although progress is not quite so marked where there is some inconsistency in handwriting, extended writing and presentation. Pupils with special educational

needs, who have a high level of effective support, make good progress in English. Progress in learning is best where there is an appropriately high level of challenge for all pupils in the group.

64. The introduction of the literacy hour has successfully encouraged pupils to improve upon their already good speaking and listening skills. Reception class children increase their vocabularies, for example by thinking of alternative words for 'huge' and 'enormous', and talk excitedly and articulately about their stories, books and experiences. They listen attentively, although 'carpet' sessions over twenty minutes long tend to produce fidgeting and some distraction. Pupils in Year 1 discussed the content of their 'Absolutely Brilliant Crazy Party' big book avidly, and correctly identified where Jericho Jones was on each page. Year 2 pupils can explain accurately what 'expression' means, and talk about the technical use of apostrophe as "squashes words with a letter missing". Several pupils talked at length about aspects of the text being studied, with accurate usage of standard English. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are also often highly articulate in their use of a good vocabulary and the ability to think about and then explain the correct usage of compound words, prepositions, commas and relationships between characters in texts being examined. Pupils in Year 6 discuss their most recent literary studies of Chaucer and Shakespeare enthusiastically and in a mature manner. They speak knowledgeably about the meaning of descriptive and emotive poems. They have good opportunities to speak in public, for instance in church, during functions and performances for parents and friends, which enable them to develop skill and confidence. The use of 'circle' time produces notable sensitivity in pupils' expression of their feelings through language.
65. The school is successfully developing reading skills and pupils' enjoyment of books. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has increased the emphasis within the school on phonics and word building skills. Consequently, the good levels of reading found in the school at the last inspection have been maintained. Almost all pupils heard in whole class reading, or reading individually, were confident, although not always expressive, and enjoyed their books. They talked enthusiastically about their favourite stories, the 'story so far', and made interesting and sometimes amusing predictions. Many pupils in Year 6 read to their classmates Chaucerian text and poetry with obvious comprehension and emphasis of meaning. The school library is used, but not by all pupils. Many of them talk of 'going to the library' but younger pupils usually mean the public library, and some do not appear to be familiar with the school library. Most older pupils understand the school's book reference system.
66. Throughout the school, handwriting practice is a regular feature. However, particularly at Key Stage 1, and with some pupils in Key Stage 2, the quality of written presentation is inconsistent. Only in Year 6 are most pupils writing clearly and presenting their work in a consistent form. Punctuation is generally accurately used, many younger pupils using speech marks, for instance, from an early age. Spelling tests are used regularly and the school's emphasis on phonics aids the overall standard of spelling, which is good and sometimes very good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are creating extended stories through emergent writing. They are sometimes imaginative and often use interesting vocabulary, as in 'You can't park a horse in a pet shop', 'The Horror House' and 'Alex and the Beanstalk'. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 4 write about their personal experiences, such as 'A Trip to the Dome' and 'A Misunderstanding' and are encouraged to enjoy and write poetry through the creation of their own poetry anthologies. Pupils in Year 6 write frequently for different audiences and in different styles, as for instance poems in the style of Ted Hughes. They regularly review books, write their own versions of classic plays, like 'A Christmas Carol', and create imaginative stories such as 'The Headless Ghost'.
67. Pupils also have frequent opportunities to write in other areas of the curriculum such as religious education, geography and history, which helps maintain their overall good standards of writing.
68. Pupils' attitudes to English are always at least satisfactory, and are often good and sometimes very good. They are sometimes excellent in Year 6. Although they are able to work independently, their relationships with each other are particularly noteworthy. They respect each other's opinions and work co-operatively together in groups, promoting each other's learning. Pupils are consistently eager to answer in whole class plenary session and are attentive almost all of the time, except in

overlong 'carpet' sessions. They work hard to achieve the objectives of their lessons and many manage to achieve a good volume of written work in their literacy groups. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 show very good listening skills and concentration.

69. The overall quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to maintain above average standards at the end of both key stages. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection and is largely due to the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Teaching of English is almost always good or very good, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Pupils' learning is good and sometimes very good, because most teachers manage their classes effectively, set tasks appropriate to each pupils' ability and are good at teaching basic skills. Teachers' flexibility in their use of aspects of the literacy hour, for example, the teaching of word work and phonics before text reading, helps pupils to better understand the application of their language work. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by the generally effective questioning skills of teachers, when they provide pupils with open questions requiring thoughtful replies. Teachers are especially effective in helping the learning of average attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Classroom support assistants contribute considerably to pupils' learning by their thoroughly briefed, sympathetic and understanding management of pupils in their tasks. However, teachers' marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent, with infrequent comments for targets or improvement, although there are many commendable, isolated words of encouragement. In some classes, some work, including homework, is either unmarked or inaccurately marked, and untidy presentation is sometimes ignored.
70. There is a consistent approach to teachers' planning, which represents an improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection. The scheme of work followed is closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy and is managed effectively. It makes a good and sometimes very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The arrangements for statutory assessment are implemented correctly, and the school is continuing to develop consistent assessment, tracking and target setting procedures, which are helping expand detailed analysis of each pupil's needs. Information and communication technology is sometimes identified in planning, but best use of equipment is not always made. Co-ordination of the subjects is aided by clear vision and competent practices. However, co-ordinators have still had insufficient opportunities to monitor the teaching of English across the school, although this is planned to take effect imminently to support the school's drive for even higher standards in English, for which it has the capability.

MATHEMATICS

71. The findings of the previous inspection were that pupils made steady progress and attained standards that were above the national average. This inspection confirms that current standards are above average and sometimes higher. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 was close to the national average, but the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 was very high. When compared to similar schools, results were well above average. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 was well below the national average, whilst those achieving Level 5 was above the national average. The school's performance, when compared to similar schools, was well below average. The apparent fall in standards in 1999 at Key Stage 2 was the result of a small variation in attainment by a very few pupils in a small cohort. The performance of boys and girls over the last three years indicates that, at the end of Key Stage 1, both groups were similar in attainment and attained at a level above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2, both groups attained well above the national average for a similar period, although this was not true for 1999, when boys attained at a level lower than the girls.
72. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning at both key stages. This is despite the overall good quality of teaching and reflects the inconsistencies in rates of progress made by pupils as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and average attaining pupils make generally good progress. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress and have

potential to improve their rate of progress to attain even higher standards. The slight upward trend in the school's good standards has resulted from the improved standard of teaching. The effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to an improvement in mental skills, which were a concern at the previous inspection. Pupils' progress in this skill is consistent through the school. During the more independent session of the numeracy lesson, pupils make their best progress when work is well matched to their needs and when teachers use the time to focus their teaching on specific groups. However, on occasion, some teachers are unaware of the full implications of work that they set, particularly when using material from published schemes, and this leads to pupils' using inappropriate strategies.

73. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of the number system, shape and symmetry. They can create and interpret block graphs and Venn diagrams. Higher attaining pupils can explain numbers in terms of hundreds, tens and units and explain the value of digits. Most pupils count fluently in ones, fives and tens. Many pupils in the reception class count confidently to 50. From this good beginning, pupils in Year 1 improve satisfactorily to count on and backwards in tens from a given number. Pupils, generally, use appropriate vocabulary in discussing their work. Pupils' competency has been well supported by the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. However, as yet, this strategy is not used flexibly enough to challenge some higher attaining pupils and this limits the level of their learning and pace of progress.
74. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress to have a comprehensive understanding of the number system, including working to two or more places of decimals. They are very competent with addition and subtraction and have a growing skill in long multiplication and division. They are generally confident to calculate using percentages and fractions. They know their tables to 10 and can apply them with fluency. They have a good knowledge of shape and can calculate perimeters and area. Most pupils apply their skills effectively to problem solving exercises and they have sound strategies for making investigations. This is beneficially supported by use of the National Numeracy Strategy but, as yet, not fully developed. They interpret data into line graphs and draw conclusions from the outcome. Geographical work is appropriately supported through this skill.
75. The overall quality of teaching is good, which is an improvement on that reported in the previous inspection. At both key stages, two thirds of teaching observed was judged as good. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and use humour to good effect to maintain the momentum of teaching and learning. The National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively to plan lessons, which are divided into the appropriate parts and used to strengthen learning. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, as is most of that for average attaining pupils. Teaching of potentially high attaining pupils is satisfactory overall but can sometimes be unsatisfactory. Some teachers are skilled at using the strategy to discriminate their questioning sufficiently and to match work to pupils' attainment appropriately. When this is missing, particularly in the independent session of the lesson, learning is restricted. Where teaching is most effective, the initial briskness of pace in the mental warm up is maintained and pupils are given time limits within which to work through the lesson. In these lessons, teachers focus their teaching on specific groups in the 'independent session'. The plenary session is generally used to good effect. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 agreed to the teacher's suggestion to take over the teaching to give a clear explanation of their work that investigated patterns in numbers to the power of 10. Where teachers use published schemes effectively, work is carefully selected and pupils reinforce or extend their learning appropriately. However, in some year groups, pupils sometimes begin work without appropriate preparation and this has a negative effect on their learning. Insufficient use is made of information technology. Teachers' expectation of presentation of written work is sometimes too low and results in untidy workbooks.
76. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate tasks are set. Teachers ensure these pupils are enabled to participate effectively. Pupils are very effectively supported in group work through classroom assistance, but sometimes less so in whole class sessions if the support assistant is not appropriately briefed and positioned to give help or interpretation. Good use is made of group sessions to boost attainment in Years 5 and 6.

77. Pupils enjoy their mathematics and talk articulately about the subject and the teaching they receive. They have very positive attitudes to the subject and to their teachers and peers. Sometimes this enthusiasm leads to over exuberance and this diminishes the potential for learning. However, overall, pupils pay close attention and listen attentively to their teachers. They show good behaviour and settle to their tasks quickly and quietly, and this strengthens their learning. They work independently and co-operate fully when necessary. For example, in Year 2, a pupil was aware that a classmate did not understand when the teacher used the word “digit”. She set about teaching the meaning herself and made the teacher aware in a kindly way.
78. Overall, the subject is effectively co-ordinated but there are differences in time allocations and actual length of lessons. There is appropriate knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy brought about by effective in-service sessions. The school has correctly identified the absence of monitoring as the missing element to further develop the quality of teaching and learning. Currently there is insufficient opportunity to monitor other than through effective work in reviewing planning and ensuring resources are available. There is a good pupil attainment tracking system in place to record the information from the extensive progression of assessments across the year groups. This record reflects a good understanding of pupils’ potential in the targets that are set. Whilst appropriate use is generally made of this information throughout the school, teaching of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 makes particularly good use of this when planning work to match pupils’ needs.

SCIENCE

79. At the end of Key Stage 1, results of the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above was below the national average. The proportion of those attaining the higher Level 3 and above was well above this average. By the end of Key Stage 2, the results of the national tests show that a majority attained at a very high level in relation to the national average at Level 4 and above, and a well above average proportion attained the higher Level 5 and above. When compared to similar schools, results were well above average. Some caution should be used when considering this data because of the regularly small size group taking the tests each year. However, this shows sustained good levels of achievement since the last inspection in April 1996.
80. Inspection findings confirm that there is wide variation in the pupils’ standards of attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 and, overall, the proportion attaining Level 2 and above is above the national average, which is an improvement on the position stated at the time of the last report. Similarly, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain at differing levels, with the largest proportion achieving a level above national average, and with an above average proportion currently attaining at a higher level, except in their knowledge of electricity, which is part of the physical processes element of their studies. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys to that of girls.
81. Key Stage 1 pupils carry out simple experiments and they make observations through investigation, as when considering animals and their adaptation to different climates. Reception class children’s work on plants is developed successfully at Key Stage 1, as when pupils carried out a structured series of observations related to the effects of sunlight and soil conditions when growing cress. When studying electricity in the home, pupils in Year 2 draw and label using simple words, with higher attaining pupils writing short sentences to explain their understanding. They know from an early age that electricity moves only if the circuit is complete. Materials are considered for strength and resistance to water. Many in Year 2 are able to explain the effects of magnetism and forces associated with spinning tops.
82. At Key Stage 2, further investigations of forces successfully develop pupils’ earlier work on magnetism. They consider coiled springs in Year 3 for example, using magnets to stretch the metals. Work seen in books and on walls includes other aspects of the National Curriculum, such as considering healthy foods, effects of carbohydrates and proteins on human bodies, mixing and

separating materials, solar systems and our bodies. Pupils in Year 6 also consider human reproduction cycles as part of health education. In relation to their ages, a majority of pupils in both key stages display a good understanding of the scientific significance of these investigations and observations. They use subject specific language accurately when describing their understanding of facts, or when explaining their reasoning for predicting outcomes of experimentation.

83. At both key stages, the quality of pupils' learning is good overall. Pupils are able to carry out 'fair-testing' with clear understanding of the terminology. In most of the lessons seen, most pupils predict probable outcomes with accuracy using their firm foundation of previously learned facts. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 show very clear understanding, often using quite complex scientific vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils make predictions that are sometimes based on guesses, which are generally correct, and they use a more restricted vocabulary to try to explain their reasoning. Numeracy is used occasionally for creating tables of observations or experimentation. When recording the results of observation and experimentation, much of the pupils' recording is carried out to a prescribed pattern and does not allow sufficient opportunities for pupils to draft or try their own recording methods as they become more proficient. Pupils predict accurately and record their experiments and observations, showing clear understanding of method and outcomes.
84. Across the school, pupils' attitude to science activity is usually very good. Almost all are very enthusiastic to learn more and they enjoy their science investigations. Almost all show good behaviour and have a responsible and respectful attitude to the use of science equipment and materials. Relationships between pupils are very good and they work co-operatively in groups, sharing equipment sensibly. They are polite and very respectful, and many try to offer replies to questions asked of them. Almost all listen attentively to each other's ideas, descriptions and reasoning, and to information given by adults around them. Some pupils' work can be untidy, showing insufficient pride and concern to complete this part of their work as quickly as possible, rather than concentrating on quality of presentation.
85. At both key stages, the quality of teaching is generally good, as reported in the last inspection. Investigational and observational skills are being developed soundly across the school. Teachers' knowledge, skill and understanding are good and this leads to good pupil progress. Teachers' planning of coverage of the National Curriculum is good and is closely aligned to new national guidelines, which provides pupils with the necessary structured development of skills. This is an improvement in provision stated in the previous report. The new scheme of work enables teachers to identify any gaps in pupils' learning, as seen with electricity. However, the new planning structure and the lack of notice taken of their prior attainment sometimes hampers the progress of potentially high attaining pupils. The lessons seen were organised and managed effectively, and the good level of teachers' knowledge has been maintained, despite the considerable change of teachers since 1996. The classroom assistants successfully carry out their role in helping pupils, including those with special educational needs, gain full access to the science work in school. Pupils on the school's special educational needs register generally make good progress in lessons, mainly because of the good quality, extra adult support. Occasionally, available lesson time is not always used to best effect, which unnecessarily restricts opportunities to extend activities. On rare occasions, this can also lead to some inappropriate behaviour, some spillage of materials and a slower rate of learning. Good use is made of most resources.
86. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. Good moderation of levels takes place using skills and information drawn from the local cluster group of primary schools. Teachers' long and medium-term plans are monitored effectively for coverage of the agreed programmes of study. However, because of insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning during lesson time, there are inconsistencies in the way in which these plans are translated into actual lessons. For example, the time identified in planning is not always a true reflection of actual pupil activity. This remains an area for development identified in the last report.

87. Regular pupil assessment takes place, but the information is not used with sufficient consistency in the planning of lessons. Usually, pupils carry out the same initial task and they are then helped when they find difficulty. This does not hamper their progress but does not make best use of good quality assessment information related to pupils' previous attainment and level of understanding. Appropriate worksheets provide alternative tasks but sometimes do not take sufficient account of some pupils' known difficulties with language and literacy. Opportunities to raise the level of pupils' attainment, and for pupils to know what they can do to improve or extend their knowledge, are evident in most lessons but are sometimes being missed. In some lessons, extension work is supplied for those who finish the initial task early, but provision is inconsistent. Work is marked regularly, usually with a tick and occasionally written praise. However, the use of helpful comments, which show pupils how they might improve, is inconsistent.
88. Information technology is used occasionally to support science activity, as when creating lists, but its use is currently under-developed, as recognised by the school. Resources are in place to allow for this facility to expand, but insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection. There are some attractive two and three-dimensional wall and table displays to further stimulate pupils' curiosity, and more are planned for next term. Insufficient use is made of these and other forms of encouragement to prompt pupils to carry out more personal investigations and research at school or at home, as identified by a few parents.
89. Science resources are very good in quantity, quality and range. Pupils use the moat adjacent to the school grounds, as when studying mini-beasts. There are plans to create a wild garden for studying mini-beasts following the proposed purchase of the adjoining land strip. In the past some pupils have visited places of interest, such as field study centres, farms and a literary museum in Aylesbury. A trip to use an orienteering trail in Watford is planned for July. These experiences provide further good opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding of science in the world around them, which is having the desired beneficial effect on their scientific achievements.

ART

90. In the previous inspection, standards were reported as "sound", but pupils' knowledge of artists and art from different traditions was "weak". Teaching at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory, but less so at Key Stage 2. Despite the heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy, pupils' standards of art have been maintained. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make progress in their learning that is at least in line with those expected for their age, and sometimes better at both key stages, particularly when pupils are busy with group projects.
91. A good range of learning experiences are provided for all pupils. The school has significantly improved its work in giving pupils a sound knowledge of artists and artistic traditions. The curriculum now provides good opportunities for pupils to study work of European, Western and African artists, as well as the work of past cultures, and this has benefited learning. Pupils at Year 2 have a sound understanding of the work and life of the artist Matisse. They demonstrate appropriate colour sense in working in his style, as well as confirming and developing their own colour mixing skills. Some pupils show awareness of styles that they have not directly studied. For example, a Year 2 pupil used the information from a Key Stage 2 display of Modigliani to stylise his own figure portrait. The display itself demonstrated the close attention pupils in Year 6 had paid to the artist's work, and their skill in translating outline drawings of their own bodies into a large-scale mural in the artist's style.
92. Pupils at Key Stage 1 develop sound skills in a range of media. By the end of the key stage, they have developed individual styles and produce work that uses colour, pattern and texture, sometimes emotively. This is a feature in both portraiture and design and is a strength of the way in which pupils are enabled to develop their art skills throughout the school. In painting, pupils develop an appropriate knowledge of primary colours and are confident in mixing them to suit their purposes. However, younger pupils generally have insufficient opportunity to create their own designs and

too much is prepared for them by adults. Collage techniques for younger pupils are not challenging enough and have little creative value. Pupils make observational drawing from reception age. For example, pupils drew a family pet dog producing lively well-proportioned sketches, which they then coloured. The opportunities for observational drawing continue through the school, but this is an insufficiently developed skill. Pupils through the key stage experience a range of printing techniques, including fabric printing. They make attractive patterns as well as linking their work to, for example, themes in literacy. They work with clay, but the opportunities for using malleable materials are not sufficiently extensive. Pupils work effectively in groups and produce large works of significant impact particularly in emulating the style of other artists. For example, some pupils have created evocative work of small mural proportions exemplifying the work of Chagall. In other larger group work, pupils make good use of vibrant colour, which transposes recalled scenes into abstract creations. However, the quality of such work is not maintained consistently across the range of media and across the key stage, and therefore best standards are not attained overall.

93. A similar pattern of development continues at Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage, pupils are very capable in using their art skills to express a mood, character or an atmosphere. For example, in work of a higher standard, pupils used charcoal and chalk together to create eerie pictures of witches. The painting of puppet faces, linked with literacy studies, shows a good eye for character detail. Delicate shading and blending of colour is used to good effect, but there is insufficient evidence of pupils' developing their draughtsmanship to enhance the general standard of their work. In learning about textiles, pupils use colour and sense of design appropriately and sometimes to produce more vibrant designs, as when extending the pattern of small squares of fabric to produce a larger area of the pattern.
94. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and are pleased with the outcome of their creativity. Pupils generally show good behaviour, although some unsatisfactory behaviour was observed. Pupils access resources and use their equipment sensibly and carefully. Not all pupils have the routine of clearing away at the end of the lesson. Pupils in Year 2 co-operated happily when working in pairs to paint in the style of Matisse. They allotted responsibilities, shared resources and talked constructively about their work and this supported their learning. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about their current and past work. They understand their tasks and products, and describe clearly their use of skills and media to achieve their objectives.
95. Although only two lessons could be observed at the time of the inspection, this and other evidence show that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but with some inspirational teaching occasionally taking place. Teachers make good use of the local education authority guidance, which forms the scheme of work. Where teaching is less effective because of limited knowledge of skill development, pupils' learning is hindered. The school is aware of this and has plans for appropriate support.
96. Co-ordination of art is good overall, and is carried out enthusiastically through good knowledge and understanding of skill development. This has resulted in an improvement in teaching and learning at Key Stage 2. However, there remain insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to identify and promote good practice and learning during lesson time.
97. Displays in the public areas of the school give pupils an opportunity to show their work and to appreciate and learn from each other's work. This has a positive impact on their social and cultural development. Information technology is insufficiently used to give another important media dimension. Teachers make good use of festivals and themes from other parts of the curriculum to guide the selection of subject matter in art. This gives a firm purpose to the pupils' use of creativity to communicate ideas through the use of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. No design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' designs, creations and comments shows that pupils of all levels of prior attainment now

make generally satisfactory progress in this subject area. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when progress by the majority of pupils was judged to be “poor” and overall standards were “below national expectations”. Provision for design and technology is now sufficient so that requirements and pupils’ attainment is now as expected at the end of both key stages.

99. Pupils start to design and make models from the reception class onwards. They use a suitably wide range of materials and learn to cut and join them in a number of ways. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make models, such as teddy bears, with moving parts, making effective use of paper clips and split-pins. They design and make as part of their topic work, creating artefacts, such as paper plate puppets. They have begun to evaluate their products. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made attractive puppets related to their Shakespearean project, using dowelling, balsa and cloth materials. They have successfully made the heads from papier-mâché and clothing is neatly hand-stitched. They have designed and made miniature circus carriages, using wheels and axles. A ‘School Council Box’ was designed and made for posting letters. Across the school, pupils develop appropriate skills in construction, using a good range of commercially produced kits to build various models. Pupils in Year 6 have created some useful models that include mechanisms and structures. Although pupils are involved in designing and making their models, they do not always have sufficient opportunities to evaluate their models and then improve them.
100. From discussions with pupils, their attitude to work in this the subject is good. They talk enthusiastically about designs and models they have worked on individually or as part of a group. In some classes, they are eager to use design and technology more frequently to support other subjects.
101. The effect of teaching over time is satisfactory at both key stages. There is clear planning for all age groups, based on recently produced national guidelines. The school has correctly identified some lack of teachers’ knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject and has plans for further training. Assessment information is collected, but best use is not always made of this information. The school is developing a useful portfolio of photographs of pupils’ work with which to monitor their progress in learning. Teachers make effective use of a good range of consumable resources, which have been successfully improved since the previous inspection. No regular use of information technology to help with the design process is evident. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from the planned use of a dedicated, though small, resource room. Pupils gain from voluntary support from parents, governors and friends, who come into some classes to help teachers with small groups of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

102. It was not possible to observe any geography lessons during the inspection because of the school’s timetables. Evidence from discussions with pupils and teachers, together with analysis of pupils’ work, shows that standards have been maintained since the previous report at Key Stage 1 and are currently in line with those expected of seven year old pupils. Attainment is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents a slight decline in standards since the previous report, when they were described as “better than expected nationally”. The decreased level of pupils’ involvement with this subject following of the implementation of literacy and numeracy initiatives partly explains this difference in standards since the last inspection. Currently, pupils’ progress in learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school, although there is some under-achievement by higher attaining pupils in some classes. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress.
103. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn appropriate geographical vocabulary and initial mapping skills. Pupils in Year 2 develop suitable awareness of features in their local area and can identify similarities and differences in contrasting areas such as the fictional “Isles of Struay”. They correctly identified the distinctive features of such a place. After listening to the story of Katie Morag, they successfully compared the village on the Isles of Struay with their own village, looking for similarities and

differences. They painted colourful pictures of such features as the jetty, 'Granny's Island' and 'Red Burn Bridge' and wrote accounts of living in the Isles of Struay. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can interpret different kinds of maps and have a satisfactory understanding of geographical ideas and patterns. They are aware that the weather has an effect on people and their surroundings, and they have a good awareness of environmental matters, such as effects of pollution.

104. From discussions with pupils, their attitude to geographical work is generally good. Most pupils are sufficiently well-motivated to present their work appropriately, but some pupils' work can be spoiled by carelessness, as when drawing information maps.
105. The quality and effects of teaching are satisfactory in both key stages. National guidelines have been adopted, which is helping to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are developed in a logical, sequential way. Teachers have sufficient knowledge skill and understanding to provide work of a satisfactory quality. Their planning is satisfactory and meaningful links with other subjects, such as mathematics and art, are established. Most teachers have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' work presentation and content, but some work is untidy. The co-ordination of geography is satisfactory overall. Although the previous report identified the need to monitor effectiveness, this issue has still not been fully addressed.
106. The range and quality of resources are satisfactory. As a result of an Internet link, pupils in Year 6 were able to use information technology effectively to retrieve information for their work on mountains and rivers, which is making good use of alternative sources. This does not happen with sufficient regularity in other classes.

HISTORY

107. Evidence indicates that standards in history have been maintained since the previous report at the end of Key Stage 1, and are currently in line with those expected of seven-year-old pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress and their attainment is as expected for eleven-year-old pupils. This represents a slight decline in standards since the previous report, when they were described as "better than expected nationally". The reduced level of pupil involvement with this subject, mainly following of the implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies, partly explains the difference in standards since the previous inspection.
108. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are able to answer simple questions about differences in one time period to another, using phrases such as 'long ago' correctly. They are beginning to realise that familiar objects, such as toys, can be valuable sources of evidence from the past. They know that objects like photographs, books and pictures can be useful sources of information about earlier times. Pupils learn about important historical events and have undertaken interesting studies of the Great Fire of London, the wives of Henry VIII and the Ancient Egyptians. Although there are 'time-line' friezes in some classrooms, pupils' knowledge of chronology varies considerably. At the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils have a very good grasp of different periods in time, whilst others are unsure and need to refer frequently to their class-based 'time-line'.
109. At both key stages, most pupils show an interest in history and some are very keen to learn more. Many historical pictures and drawings are on display and pupils talk excitedly about them. In lessons, pupils listen attentively, ask sensible questions and show good levels of concentration.
110. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are good, as is their behaviour in lessons. Most are enthusiastic and apply themselves readily to work. They listen attentively and use their initiative when finding things out for themselves.
111. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Most teachers have secure knowledge and understanding, which results in satisfactory pupil progress. Teachers make good use of available resources but there is insufficient planned use of information and communication

technology, for example in support of pupils' historical research. Some of the pupils' work is unfinished and untidy, showing insufficiently high teacher expectations of presentation of written and graphical details. Teaching was particularly effective in the Year 6 lesson on Tudor explorers. In this lesson, pupils were required to draw upon the evidence and their background knowledge to develop their reasoning, and the teacher asked perceptive questions to test arguments and understanding. The co-ordination of history is satisfactory overall, but the level of effective monitoring remains an issue for improvement.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112. By the end of both key stages, almost all pupils have made satisfactory progress from their earlier skill levels and overall standards of attainment in IT are broadly in line with expectations for their age. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below expectations at both key stages. However, there is a very wide range of pupils' understanding, knowledge and skill when using computers.
113. There is a wide range of prior skill level on entry to school. Pupils from the reception class to Year 2 demonstrate a wide range of initial skill and understanding of computers. By the end of Key Stage 2, the larger proportion of pupils has sufficient keyboard and 'mouse' skills to communicate, retrieve and display stored information. They are building on previous achievement through planned skill development, especially with 'menu' skills. Some good use of the Internet as a research tool was seen in geography. Some pupils in both key stages show good attainment in word-processing, for example, but these skills are not extended sufficiently through well-considered work to support all areas of the curriculum. They access data that they have saved to hard disk and expand the information when new facts are learned. During the inspection, although apparatus such as listening centres were evident in some classrooms, there was insufficient use of them to ascertain pupils' learning and standards in the wider use of information and communication technology (ICT).
114. Pupils' behaviour when using equipment is very good. They enjoy working alone or in small groups at the classroom workstations. They respect the resources and share without argument. They support each other, sharing their own knowledge readily to the benefit of classmates, and this has a positive effect on learning. Across the school, pupils gain in self-esteem from their successes and are eager to use IT and other communications equipment more regularly as a tool for learning across the curriculum.
115. At both key stages, the teaching of IT is satisfactory overall, with elements of good teaching in both key stages. Sufficient members of staff have appropriately high levels of personal skill to make effective use of existing and newly arrived hardware and software, and there is a strong commitment to improve everyone's personal skill level to make best use of IT across the curriculum. Pupils are taught how to use the equipment with care and consideration for others. Some effective use is made of IT, for example, when creating poetry or other text using word-processing during literacy lessons, and when creating computer-generated pictures in art. However, use in numeracy and scientific activity, for example, does not appear to be part of regular practice in all classes. During the week of inspection, there were numerous occasions when computers were switched on for considerable periods and pupils were not accessing them with purpose. There is insufficient evidence to confirm the regular use of control technology, but the work seen in Year 6 shows clear understanding of how robots can be successfully programmed to carry out prescribed routines. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, have received some good quality adult support from a visiting governor of the school. This has resulted in electronic mailings to distant countries by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. This enhances the teaching of skills and the opportunity to access computer workstations more frequently.
116. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall. Its strength is in the effective use of knowledge and skill shown by some staff and its weakness revolves around the lack of opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school during lesson time. Pupils' use of equipment is planned

effectively to make sure that there is equality of opportunity for all in the group but actual access time is inconsistent from each year group to another. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory overall, but insufficient use is made of this information to fully develop pupils' potential.

117. The number of computer workstations has increased significantly. Each class now has one or more workstations and at least adequate amounts of support software. The quality of computers and associated equipment is good overall, but some equipment is in need of replacement. This increase in resourcing has improved the potential for pupils and staff to access computers more frequently and with growing confidence. There is connection to the Internet as part of the National Grid for Learning and pupils in Key Stage 2 show clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. About three-quarters of pupils have access to home equipment, which also gives them increased opportunity to practise their skills. There is sufficient audio and visual equipment, such as television, video and tape facility to increase use and application to a level beyond satisfactory. The school recognises that the improvement of equipment, the development of pupils' skills and the use of ICT across the curriculum has moved at a slow pace since the last inspection. However, there is a firm commitment to improvement by specific appointment of teachers and planned increase of staff in-service training.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

118. As part of its extended curriculum, the school offers pupils in Years 5 and 6 the opportunity to learn the basics of the French language. No comment was made in the last report. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but this, and other evidence from discussions and analysis of pupils' work, shows that this is a beneficial addition. Its inclusion gives pupils of all levels of prior attainment a good opportunity to learn an alternative language and a valuable insight into a foreign culture.
119. The larger proportion of pupils speaks with good intonation and with developing understanding of simple words and phrases. Almost all pupils in the lesson observed were able to make the correct responses to questions asked in French that related to their names, ages, birth dates, colours and the forthcoming excursion to France. They maintain accurate vocabulary lists.
120. Almost all pupils' attitude towards learning French is very good. They listen attentively and enjoy full participation in activities. Some show confidence when speaking in French whilst others have yet to feel secure. When working in small groups, their behaviour is very good and they encourage each other to attempt answers by sensitively criticising each other's attempts with accents.
121. The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils of all levels of prior attainment make effective progress in their acquisition of a further language. The teacher's knowledge, understanding and skill in the language are very secure and firmly based on wide experience. The management of pupils is very firm and leads to very good behaviour. Relationships between the teacher and pupils are very good. The brisk pace in the lesson seen promoted a good rate of progress in learning. The teacher's lesson planning included a good range of activities, but the current scheme of work is insufficiently focused on the long-term needs of primary pupils and the wide range of prior attainment evident in the group. Whilst pupils in Year 6 have had many hours of practice over a two-year span, those in Year 5 have had less than half the time, but are often attempting the same task. Insufficient use is made of IT to support pupils' learning. There is no display of French material to promote further interest and discussion. No planned use is made of the contribution that other French speaking staff or persons in the local community might make.
122. Resources to aid pupils' learning are almost entirely teacher generated or supplied, and are mainly based on a secondary age range approach. There is an annual day trip to France that is greatly supported by staff, parents and friends of the school. All of these experiences add to pupils' knowledge and understanding of alternative cultures, whilst promoting their personal development.

MUSIC

123. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' standards were judged as "above national expectation" and their progress was good. Teaching by talented musicians supported these standards, whilst all class teachers planned effective class lessons. This position has been maintained. The provision for the subject is good and is a strength of the school. In addition to class lessons all pupils are able, if they choose, to learn a tuned instrument, with a choice of string, woodwind or brass instruments. This commitment to wider opportunity is led by the example of the headteacher using her high standard of knowledge and skills. Further, it supports the ethos and mission of the school, which is equally reflected in the good opportunities for musical activity through dance and instrument tuition clubs.
124. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in their learning. A published scheme of work for the non-specialist teacher gives good support to this learning. Pupils know the names of familiar instruments, including some lesser-known, untuned instruments that form part of the school's good resources. They play untuned percussion instruments, demonstrating a good sense of rhythm. Most pupils can beat the rhythms of words and phrases accurately. They can support a song with a rhythmical beat. They sing enthusiastically and tunefully and enjoy favourite songs, which they sing with expression. In assembly, pupils respond appropriately to the dynamics of hymns and join in effectively with older pupils in 'part' songs.
125. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to make appropriate progress and attain good standards. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have a good understanding of structure and texture in music. They can sing in unison and harmony with good tone. Their singing shows a good understanding and attention to dynamics. In singing a hymn not recently rehearsed in an assembly, pupils performed with good tone and recalled the swells and calms of the music easily. Most pupils will have taken the opportunity to play a tuned instrument. In class lessons, they compose sensitive and sometimes compelling interpretations of words, such as anger and peace, which demonstrate clear structure and progression in ideas. Sometimes there is insufficient opportunity in lessons to repeat performances, or to comment on one another's compositions, to refine the work further and this limits the extent of learning. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of some significant composers.
126. Pupils enjoy their music and look forward to lessons. They are enthusiastic to perform and equally self-controlled when preparing compositions in groups, and this assists their learning. Their behaviour is good in lessons. They take turns appropriately and listen sensibly to classmates' performances. They are generous in their support of their peers and do not protest if work goes awry or is of a lower standard to their own. The views of pupils in Year 6 confirm that music lessons significantly enhance pupils' self-confidence and broaden their appreciation of differing cultures and traditions.
127. Observation of three lessons, discussions and hearing pupils play instruments, confirm that the quality of teaching is good. The musical expertise of some staff enhances learning in the school. Peripatetic teachers provide good opportunities to learn wind, brass and string instruments. Non-specialist teachers make good use of a published scheme to support their own knowledge and teaching. All of this good provision leads to many pupils making good progress in their learning. In better lessons, there are high expectations of pupils' self-control, good planning and a good balance of pace. Appropriate time is given for pupils to compose or consider rhythms, which lead to good learning outcomes. However, there is insufficient use of information technology to support the curriculum and this is a limitation to pupils' learning, particularly in musical composition. Pupils are given good opportunities to perform through music festivals and by involvement in productions and presentations for the school's associated church.
128. The school recognises the need to further develop the skills of non-specialist teachers. Currently, there is insufficient opportunity to monitor the work of colleagues and thereby to influence further rises in standards. There is good understanding of the priorities needed to develop the curriculum. Visits by brass and string quartets enrich teaching and learning and are highly valued by pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Pupils make satisfactory progress and standards of attainment are as expected at the end of both key stages. In the previous inspection, attainment was described as good, although very few lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. Gymnastics, dance and games are taught in both key stages and athletics is added as an additional programme of study in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have swimming lessons in the autumn term and all pupils in Year 6 have achieved the nationally recommended standard of swimming 25 metres.
130. At Key Stage 1, pupils of all levels of prior attainment make satisfactory progress. They learn to listen carefully to instructions, move small apparatus with safety and practise skills of throwing and catching items such as bean bags and small balls. They also warm up vigorously, but often with over excitement, which has a negative effect on their use of space in the hall and sometimes leads to lack of concentration. Most work effectively in partner situations, and pupils in Year 1 also work co-operatively with each other in team games. Pupils enjoy demonstrating their activities to each other, although they rarely discuss what they and other pupils have done.
131. At Key Stage 2, all pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 develop original passing movements in paired work, using different heights and parts of the body, and can also devise five different ways of jumping off one or both feet, with a few achieving good movements. These pupils and those in Year 6 also fully understand the effect of sustained exercise on their bodies, and some can maintain sustained performance in, for example, distance running. Pupils are able to record accurately other's performances, for example in long jumping and running. However, a significant number of pupils are unfit for their age.
132. Pupils greatly enjoy physical education and work with considerable enthusiasm. However, the younger pupils, particularly, are often noisy, especially during warm up sessions, and sometimes inappropriately allow their attention to wander when waiting their turn. They co-operate with one another and learn to handle equipment carefully. Older pupils noticeably encourage each other when attempting to improve their personal standard, which has a positive effect on learning.
133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils learn effectively from teachers' clear instructions and are helped further by the good use of demonstrations of their work. However their learning is less effective where time is wasted unnecessarily in lengthy kit changing, where teachers fail to use pupils often enough to distribute small equipment, and where teachers do not encourage verbal evaluation by pupils of each other's movements. Teachers use all the good resources effectively to promote pupils' learning. These include a generously equipped and spacious hall, a large playing field across the road from the school and a hard-play area.
134. Extra-curricular provision is good. Activities include a soccer club that is open to all pupils, netball, unihoc, touch rugby, Maypole dancing and short tennis. A badminton club is planned. There is also an enthusiastic dance club that includes ribbon dancing as part of its activity. An older boy is attached to a professional football club and other pupils are members of local clubs. Good use is made of outside expertise and parental support. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have a residential activity stay in Cottered village, which has a positive effect on their social and cultural development especially. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 enjoy a residential activity weekend in Chellington village and orienteering exercises in Watford, all of which enhances their learning and progress with skill development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. This subject will be reported on following an independent inspection to be carried out under Section 23 of the 1996 Education Act.