

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGH WYCH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

High Wych, Sawbridgeworth

Hertfordshire LEA

Unique reference number: 117398

Headteacher: Ms K Kelly

Reporting inspector: Dr A Fraser
3607

Dates of inspection: 3 July – 6 July 2000

Inspection number: 189327

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Wych Sawbridgeworth Herts
Postcode:	CM21 0JB
Telephone number:	01279 722109
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Dixon
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Alister Fraser	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Under Fives	What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
Miss Shirley Watts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr Martin Mangan	Team inspector	English, Information and Communications Technology, Geography, Religious Education	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Equal opportunities, Special Educational Needs, Science, Art, Design and Technology, History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

High Wych Church of England Primary School is a broadly average-sized primary school educating pupils from 3 – 11 years old. There 212 pupils on roll attending full-time and a nursery class of 26 pupils attending part-time. The average class size is 30.3. The numbers of boys and girls attending are about equal. The attainment of pupils entering the nursery and reception classes is above average nationally but a little lower than the Hertfordshire average except in reading where it is higher. The school is located in the village of High Wych and draws most of its pupils from High Wych, local villages and the northern fringe of Harlow. About half of families are in owner-occupied housing. Many of the parents are self-employed and some have professional backgrounds. 6 (2.8%) pupils are eligible for free school meals which is much below the national average for a school of this size. There are 6 pupils from ethnic minority background and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 49 (23.1%) pupils are on the register of special educational needs which is below the national average and 1 child has a statement of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, High Wych Church of England Primary School is a good school providing for its pupils a good standard of education with some features that are very good. The pupils achieve good standards in mathematics and English. The teaching is good and the school is led and managed very effectively. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. The school provides good value for money. The strengths of the school far outweigh any weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good; staff are committed to raising standards and quality
- Pupils achieve good standards in English and mathematics
- Overall, pupils have good attitudes to school, are enthusiastic learners and their attendance is good
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and extra activities outside the classroom
- The leadership of the headteacher in partnership with subject co-ordinators and the governing body ensures very effective school management
- The school provides a secure and positive learning environment in which pupils develop with confidence

What could be improved

- Curriculum planning by ensuring that schemes of work are updated when necessary and implemented fully
- Assessment, recording and reporting in most foundation subjects
- The level of challenge in some foundation subjects
- Teaching and learning in information and communications technology

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 September 1996. Since then overall improvement has been good. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have improved. Leadership and management are more effective and there is now a whole-school ethos along with improved relationships with parents. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards are more effective. Curriculum planning is better and improving further so that there is now a more balanced curriculum. The overall quality of teaching has improved throughout the school. Pupils' study skills and self-discipline have improved enabling them to be effective learners. The curriculum for the under-fives is now more appropriate to their needs. Monitoring of financial expenditure is good and there are developing procedures for evaluating the impact of spending on standards. Child protection procedures and health and safety practices are now satisfactory.

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	C	E
mathematics	A	C	C	E
science	C	C	D	E

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

By the age of five years, children's achievement is good overall in language and literacy and in numeracy, and satisfactory or better in all other areas of learning.

By seven years of age, in the last reported National Curriculum tests, standards in reading and mathematics were well above the national average. Reading was above the average for similar schools and mathematics was well above the average for similar schools. In writing, standards were very high, in the top 5 per cent nationally and well above the average for similar schools. Over the last three years standards have improved in reading, writing and mathematics. The work pupils were doing during the inspection presented a similar picture of above average standards.

By the age of eleven, standards in English and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average and science was below the national average. Compared with similar schools, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average. Over the last three years results in English and mathematics indicate a picture of change from very good results in 1997 with a decline to the national average in 1999. In science, standards have remained fairly constant but have not matched national improvement such that last year they fell below the national average. The standard of work seen during the inspection does not match the standards represented in the 1999 test results. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are higher, being above average in English and mathematics and average in science. This is a considerable improvement. Early indications are that standards in this year's tests confirm this picture. The school has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for 2001 and is on line to meet them.

At both key stages, standards do not meet national expectations in some aspects of information and communication technology. Attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the non-core subjects, attainment is in line with national expectations except in music and art where standards are good

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and work hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is usually good in classrooms and around the school. There are good strategies for monitoring and managing challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. The very good quality of pupils' relationships, their willingness to show initiative and to take personal responsibility are

	strengths of the school.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good.

Pupils' behaviour, the very good quality of their relationships, their initiative and willingness to take on responsibility, make a positive contribution to the standards achieved by the school.

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.

Teaching is a strength of the school. All the teaching is satisfactory or better with 42 per cent of the lessons observed being good and 22 per cent being very good or better. The overall quality of teaching in English, including literacy, is good and in mathematics, including numeracy it is also good. Overall, teachers use a range of effective methods and the management of pupils is good. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Pupils are very well motivated, engage well with the lessons and are keen to do their best. Teachers are very well prepared and lessons are structured effectively. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and these are met fully although sometimes there is a lack of challenge presented to the more able pupils in some foundation subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The under-fives curriculum covers all the required areas of learning. In Key Stage 1 and 2 the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is regularly reviewed in response to identified needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good attention is given to pupils' well-being. Monitoring and assessment of academic achievement are good in English, mathematics and science but make insufficient impact on standards and quality in other curriculum areas.

There is an effective partnership with parents and carers. They are regularly involved in and contribute to their children's education at school. There is a good level of support from parents and from the parent teacher association which has a positive impact on the work of the school. The curriculum in English and mathematics is a strength. The information and communications technology curriculum does not currently meet all statutory requirements. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance are a strength of the school. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the foundation subjects are insufficiently developed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership of the headteacher in partnership with subject co-ordinators and the governing body ensures very effective school management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is effectively involved in the life and work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards are in place and lead to effective action being taken to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staffing and resources are good and deployed well to meet the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation makes a positive impact on standards and quality. The school gives good attention to obtaining best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of teaching • Standards and progress • The quality of behaviour • The quality of leadership and management • The approachability of the school • The school's high expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in setting of homework • Some parents would like more challenge for the more able pupils • Activities outside lessons • Information about how their child is getting on

The inspectors endorse parents' positive comments. The inspectors feel that there could be greater consistency in the setting of homework. Challenge for more able pupils could be raised particularly in some foundation subjects. Annual reports to parents should include reporting in all subjects of the statutory curriculum. The range of activities outside lessons is very good and enriches pupils' experience.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. By the age of five years, children's achievement is good overall in language and literacy and in numeracy compared with what is normally expected for their age. Their achievement is good in creative, personal and social development and it is satisfactory in all other areas of learning.
2. By seven years of age, in the last reported National Curriculum tests, standards in reading and mathematics were well above the national average. Reading was above the average for similar schools and mathematics was well above the average for similar schools. In writing, standards were very high, in the top 5 per cent nationally and well above the average for similar schools.
3. Over the last three years standards have improved in reading, writing and mathematics. The work pupils were doing during the inspection presented a similar picture of above average standards.
4. By the age of eleven, in the last reported National Curriculum tests, standards in English and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average and science was below the national average. Compared with similar schools, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average.
5. Over the last three years, results in English and mathematics indicate a picture of change from very good results in 1997 with a decline to the national average in 1999. In science, standards have remained fairly constant but have not matched national improvement such that last year they fell below the national average.
6. The standard of work seen during the inspection does not match the standards represented in the 1999 test results. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now higher, being above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Early indications are that standards in this year's tests confirm this picture..This is a considerable improvement which has been brought about by the improvement in the quality of teaching and curriculum planning.
7. The school has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for 2001 and is in line to meet them.
8. Throughout the school, pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are used well in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The progress of more able pupils in the foundation subjects is too low.
9. At both key stages, standards do not meet national expectations in some aspects of information and communications technology. Attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the non-core subjects, attainment is in line with national expectations except in music and art where standards are good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are generally enthusiastic. The parents report that their children enjoy coming to school and on arrival they are usually happy and quickly settle into the activities of the classroom. They join in a wide range of activities including visits to places of interest. Pupils are encouraged to develop their independence and this is seen in the way they raise money for various charities. An example of this is the Essex hospital helicopter for which they raised approximately £600 and pupils asked the crew to land the aircraft on the school field, which they agreed to do. Pupils also fill shoeboxes for the Third World. Pupils feel secure within the school and with the staff, which fosters the good attitude the majority have towards learning.

11. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good in lessons although there are a small number of pupils whose poor behaviour sometimes disrupts others' learning. Pupils generally behave well around the school reflecting the ethos of the school and the expectations of the staff. Staff usually manage challenging behaviour well. Incidences are recorded and monitored. Exclusions never take place.

12. There are very good relationships between the staff and pupils and pupils are helpful and courteous to visitors. Pupils respect each other's feelings, beliefs and differences and are willing to share with them. An example of this is how they are considerate towards children who are physically handicapped. Pupils are given responsibilities that are appropriate for them and they are eager to do jobs such as returning registers to the office and being classroom monitors. The older children help in a number of ways, for example, getting out equipment for assemblies and helping the younger pupils. Pupils have set up a shop once a week and raise money for a specific project.

13. Overall, pupils' attendance is good and would be higher if less time were taken for holidays during term-time. There is a brisk start to the day and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. It is satisfactory in 36 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 42 per cent, very good or better in 22 per cent. None of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of the teaching of children under five is at least satisfactory and most is good. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good or better in 74 per cent of lessons. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good or better in 58 per cent of lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

15. At the last inspection, teaching in the early years was reported as satisfactory in a third of lessons and good in two thirds. At Key Stage 1 teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in only half of all lessons and in just under three quarters of lessons at Key Stage 2. On this evidence, the quality of teaching has improved significantly throughout the school since the last inspection.

16. The overall quality of teaching in literacy lessons is good in both key stages. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and provide confident introductions to lessons. Lesson objectives are clear and specific and are made explicit to pupils at the start of lessons. Learning activities are well prepared and provide challenge for most pupils. Teachers use questioning skills effectively to challenge and assess pupils' levels of understanding. Work is generally well matched to the pupils' capabilities although, on occasion, activities provide insufficient challenge for the more able. There is good compliance with the recommended approaches in the National Literacy Strategy although

word level work is not always given sufficient attention. Lessons are well structured, with good pace. In the vast majority of lessons, teaching time is well used and pupils make good progress in lessons as a result.

17. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good; at Key Stage 1 it is very good and at Key Stage 2 it is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall with a significant number of unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers comply well with the National Numeracy Strategy which is well embedded in the mathematics curriculum. They are confident in their teaching of mathematics and have sound subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and organised with clearly indicated learning objectives. Teachers use a range of strategies and techniques and the pace is generally appropriately brisk. Strategies for teaching mental arithmetic are good.

18. In science, the quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. All the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, the vast majority was good and a small amount was very good. Teachers are very well organised and have clear expectations of what the outcome of each lesson should be. Teachers plan interesting activities which motivate the pupils. They ask questions skilfully to check what pupils have understood and to prompt them to think and justify their answers. The recent introduction of target-setting for individual pupils means they know what they need to do to improve.

19. Teaching in history, physical education and design technology is satisfactory overall. In information and communications technology, religious education and geography it is at least satisfactory with some that is good whilst in art and music it is good.

20. In the lessons where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teaching strengths outweigh weaknesses. Teachers give clear introductions and make learning intentions clear to the pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Expectations of standards of presentation are generally high. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. Explanations are clearly given and resources are used well to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers use questioning strategies effectively; questions are well targeted on individual pupils and matched to their different levels of ability. Pupils are managed very well and praise and encouragement are used effectively to give pupils confidence to participate. There are good arrangements for supporting children with special learning needs.

21. In the best lessons, teachers are very well prepared and provide carefully selected resources and activities to support and extend the learning of all pupils. There are effective introductions to lessons which review previous work and set out clear learning objectives which are communicated to the pupils. Explanations and instructions are clear. Expectations are high and made explicit to pupils with timescales for completion of work set and a very good working pace established and maintained. A good range of organisational groupings is used that is well matched to the teaching and learning objectives. Teachers use a range of teaching methods that meet pupils' learning needs. Support given on a one-to-one basis is very effective and gives pupils confidence in their ability to make further progress. Lessons are well structured to ensure practice, consolidation and extension of skills. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their own work and to explain their thinking or working methods.

22. Overall, the teaching is characterised by good relationships with pupils, high expectations of behaviour and good class management. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' needs and interests and they use praise and encouragement effectively to motivate them.

Short-term planning specifies clear and appropriate learning objectives and activities and is generally good. In a small minority of lessons there is a mismatch between pupil capability and the challenge of the tasks set. This is particularly the case in some foundation subjects where there is frequently insufficient challenge for more able pupils.

23. Teachers generally make good use of on-going assessment in the classroom to motivate and encourage pupils to improve. However, other assessment, in subjects other than mathematics, English and science, is too informal and unsystematic and not used to best effect to inform further teaching. For example, written records are not always kept which could provide the basis for evaluations of the impact of teaching.

24. Best use is not always made of classroom assistants. Examples were observed of classroom assistants giving very good support to teachers and pupils but at other times teachers were not capitalising on this good resource particularly during the introductory sessions to lessons.

25. The use of homework to enhance learning is satisfactory but lacks consistency. Expectations are not always clearly established and made known to the pupils.

26. In lessons pupils are very well motivated, engage well with their work and are keen to do well. Their attitudes to learning are good and they settle quickly to set tasks. They listen attentively both to their teachers and to one another. They participate well in lessons willingly offering responses and ideas. They speak well and are keen to talk about their work. They are aware of targets that have been set for them and show a responsible attitude to their learning. When working in groups pupils co-operate and collaborate well. In a small minority of lessons, there were a few instances of inappropriate behaviour which had a negative effect resulting in inattention or distraction. The great majority of pupils, however, are responsible and hard-working and are confident in themselves as learners and in their ability to make progress.

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

27. Pupils are provided with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which reflects the aims of the school. Except in information and communications technology, the curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the teaching of English and mathematics. The school's planning for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is good and is having a direct impact on the raising of standards. Teachers have put a lot of time and effort into planning a curriculum which takes into account the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities of pupils in some classes. Consequently, pupils are generally working at appropriate levels in literacy and numeracy lessons.

28. The school is currently involved in updating its schemes of work to ensure they meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. There are detailed policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects except information and communications technology and physical education where there are omissions in some aspects of the national curriculum. The introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has reduced the amount of time available to teach the other subjects of the curriculum. As a result, the depth of knowledge has been sacrificed in some subjects. In some subjects it means that the school is not able to teach all areas of the programme of study for the subject, for example, physical

education and geography. Despite this, the subjects taught are interesting and with the exception of information and communications technology, where the curriculum does not fully meet the statutory requirements, all aspects of the subject are taught, even if it is only at a superficial level.

29. The quality and range of the curriculum provided for those pupils who are under five is good. It includes all the areas of learning specified in national guidance and places an appropriate emphasis on children's personal and social development.

30. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Their individual education plans are generally written well and recent staff training and effective monitoring means they are constantly being improved. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and learning targets are updated every term. Learning support assistants are well briefed and have a positive impact on the quality of learning for those pupils who have special needs. The school recognises the need to provide similar support for the highest attaining pupils. Plans are in place to produce a policy next year and for the special needs co-ordinator to receive appropriate pupils. The school is already trialling the use of individual education plans for such pupils. The school is well equipped to meet the needs of the physically disabled and has committed a significant amount of its budget to improving the facilities.

31. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports activities and the opportunity to represent the school in teams. There is a choir and an orchestra, a homework club, a French club at lunch-time and an after-school club. The oldest pupils have the chance to take part in a residential visit to the Isle of Wight and there is a very good range of visits to places of educational interest, for example concerts, galleries, museums and the Millennium Dome. Visitors to the school include a circus workshop, an engineer to talk about the local bypass, a football trainer, dance troupe and several theatre groups, amongst numerous others.

32. The school has constructive links with the local pre-school, which uses its nursery facilities, and with other local organisations for pre-school children. It works well with other local primary schools and is developing stronger links with its main secondary school. The school has satisfactory links with the local community.

33. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The subject is taught through other subjects, for example science, rather than as a subject in its own right. The school nurse visits and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs. Sex education is provided appropriately.

34. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Collective worship is well planned and is successful in developing the pupils' awareness of a greater being. Opportunities are regularly provided for pupils to wonder at nature, such as spiders, caterpillars, unusual plants and flowers and precious stones. Good use is made of both music and art to promote spiritual development in assemblies and lessons.

35. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils have contributed to the writing of the school rules, which means they understand the reasons for them. There is an effective rewards system and pupils are keen to gain their rewards. Pupils respond positively to praise and accept sanctions for unacceptable behaviour with good grace. Teachers clearly explain why something is unacceptable when correcting pupils. They provide a good role model, valuing pupils as individuals. Pupils are constantly reminded to be thoughtful about the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are made aware of environmental issues and

are encouraged to care for and improve their own environment. They are taught to consider those less fortunate themselves and are very successful in raising money for charity. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school and enjoy mutual respect with others in the school.

36. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' social development. The ethos of the school enables pupils to work together well. Pupils learn to share, take turns and help each other from a very early age. The very good provision for extra-curricular activities makes an effective contribution to social development through teamwork, particularly in sport and music. Pupils learn to accept defeat with good grace and to celebrate the success of others. The annual residential visit for the older pupils provides opportunities for them to become more independent and to cope with life away from home. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to life in the local community, for example, carol singing at the local home for the elderly and taking part in local music festivals. Each term pupils have the chance to take part in a school play or concert and to perform in public. The parent teacher association regularly organises social activities for the pupils and they recently had the chance to attend a jazz concert given at the school.

37. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own cultural heritage, particularly through the study of history. An awareness of local heritage is fostered through the study of the local area and all pupils take part in this. In art, pupils learn about the work of a good range of famous artists and learn about art in non-western cultures. In music, pupils listen to and learn a variety of songs from their own and other cultures. Through religious education, pupils learn about the life and beliefs of different faiths. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to visit galleries and museums of different types. In addition, they have been visited by theatre groups, dancers and musicians. The school also provides pupils with the opportunity to learn French.

38. Since the last inspection, considerable improvements have been made in the curriculum provision. The school has policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects some of which now need to be updated. The school now fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. There is now a planned approach to homework and parents are made aware of the schools' expectations. Teachers now take care to plan work matched to individual needs in literacy and numeracy, but have still to apply this consistently to other subjects. Co-ordinators of subjects are now clearer about their roles and responsibilities and are beginning to carry out effective monitoring in their subjects. Pupils who are under five now experience an appropriate curriculum and time within the school day is used efficiently. The school has successfully developed an ethos which is positive and shared by all. Pupils have clearly developed an understanding of what is right and wrong and their behaviour is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and the staff know their pupils well as seen particularly in the mixed age classes. The personal support and guidance given to pupils is good and the current procedures now promote the health, safety and well-being of the pupils and staff.

40. The arrangements to safeguard pupil's welfare and safety are good. Audits pertaining to health and safety are carried out regularly by the school and the caretaker. Any minor repairs which staff are concerned about are placed in a book and attended to.

Issues are prioritised and placed in the school development plan, some of which are awaiting action. Responsibilities are clearly designated, for example first aid and the testing of the hygiene for the swimming pool. The school's aims are built around the pupils' safety and well-being. The kitchen is aware of pupils on diets and caters accordingly. The school has now ensured that the procedures for child protection are formalised and well monitored. The school works as a team to ensure that all the children have the best personal support and guidance that is available. The school nurse visits regularly and participates in talks for sex education and healthy eating. Drugs issues are in the process of being addressed.

41. Procedures for monitoring school attendance are very good and records are kept on computer. There is close liaison with the Education Welfare Officer and the school contacts parents promptly if there are difficulties.

42. Pupils have opportunities to visit places in conjunction with lessons and there are a variety of extra curricular activities, all of which develop the pupil's social and academic awareness. There are good links with the pre school group and the transfer to nursery and reception classes are well managed. There are adequate procedures for pupils transferring to secondary school

43. The procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory with elements of good practice. There is evidence of assessment guiding curriculum planning in the core subjects but in the foundation subjects it lacks structure and is not systematic. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress in foundation subjects are insufficiently developed. There are no formal systems in place to track pupils' progress, although there is continuous assessment in class. There is good target-setting in the core subjects.

44. Overall, the school's educational guidance is effective in raising pupils' achievement including that of pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils.

45. Parents expressed concern over the amount of homework; the amount and day of the homework is stated to parents in a letter at the beginning of the school year. Years 5 and 6 have regular homework but there is an inconsistency elsewhere. Parents are not always aware of the homework set.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Overall, the parents' views of the school are positive. Parents are most satisfied with the good quality of teaching, the standards and progress their children make, the good quality of behaviour, the good quality of leadership and management, the high expectations of the school and its approachability. Parents felt that the school has improved in the last two years, although concern was expressed over homework, information regarding their child's progress and extra-curricular activities. The issue of homework was highlighted in the last inspection and homework still remains inconsistent within the school.

47. The school's links with parents are good. Parents know they can contact the school at any time and the school keeps them well informed over any concerns or information regarding their child.

48. During the last three years, the school has improved its relationships with parents and they have worked well in partnership during the changes that have taken place.

Parents are involved in the work of the school through assisting in the classroom, swimming and the helping pupils use the Internet. The impact this has on pupils' learning is good. The parent teachers' association raises money in the region of £6000 per year for school projects, and social activities are put on for both adults and the children.

49. Information sent out regularly by the school is good. The prospectus is well presented, can be updated as appropriate and conforms to statutory requirements. The annual report from governors allows parents to have a full view of the working of the school. However, the quality of annual reports to parents on their children's progress is inconsistent and should be more specific by reporting on subjects individually; in this, they do not meet statutory requirements. The school uses questionnaires to ascertain parents' views and a curriculum evening is held each year. There are regular meetings to enable teachers to discuss the children's work with their parents. Additionally, teachers are prepared to discuss issues at other times.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher, in conjunction with the teaching staff and a supportive and active governing body, is very effectively managing the school. There is a positive school ethos, which provides a caring and supportive learning environment for its pupils. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified during the last inspection - especially in relation to promoting good standards of behaviour and good levels of attainment in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

51. Since her appointment, the headteacher has appropriately placed a good deal of emphasis upon improving the quality of teaching in the school, raising standards of attainment in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy and in improving the quality of pupils' behaviour. She has also been instrumental in introducing systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. These actions have had a positive impact upon raising the standards of education in the school.

52. The governing body provides good support and has developed an effective partnership with the headteacher and the staff of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and generally fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. There is good governor involvement in monitoring a wide range of school activities. The governors' curriculum committee provides good leadership in curriculum development and the finance and premises committee manage the school's requirements effectively. Governors are kept fully informed by reports from the headteacher, which encourages discussion on school development and financial issues. The governors committees are well established and working effectively. They work very closely with the headteacher and her staff to ensure that available funds are used well to promote standards. For example, there are plans in place to increase staffing levels at the top end of the school in the next academic year, to address issues related to raising standards and large class sizes.

53. Many governors visit school regularly and take an active part in the monitoring programme. The premises committee is particularly effective. It has produced a detailed premises plan and works closely with the deputy head to manage its completion. This has resulted in many positive improvements in the school. This very effective partnership between the governing body and the senior management in the school makes a significant and positive contribution to school improvement. The governing body ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all statutory requirements concerning equal opportunities and special educational needs are met.

54. Arrangements for the monitoring of financial expenditure are good and procedures for evaluating the impact of spending decisions on standards of attainment are developing. The governors' finance committee receives regular financial reports from the headteacher and monitors expenditure against the agreed budget headings. Variances in expenditure patterns are discussed with the full governing body. All the minor issues in the last school audit have been successfully dealt with. The administrative staff gives good support to ensure the smooth running of the whole school. The governing body also allocates finances appropriately to meet development plan priorities.

55. There is a school development plan in place, which highlights development plan priorities for a three-year period. This clearly indicates specific actions to be taken and identifies both responsible personnel and financial implications. The development plan has

enabled staff and governors to target school resources on a range of improvements. This is now in need of review. The governors take the development plan into account when planning the budget at the start of each financial year. Teaching staff are involved in the creation of the plan which is presented to the governing body for their approval. In recent months, the focus upon improving target setting in core subjects has had a positive impact upon raising standards and the increased emphasis upon improving systems for monitoring is appropriate. However, procedures for monitoring the school development plan and for evaluating the success and impact of new initiatives are not clear. In addition, success criteria are not always sufficiently succinct or focused upon improving the quality of pupils' learning.

56. The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators have also been the subject of recent development and some subject co-ordinators, notably music, mathematics, English, science and ICT, are beginning to develop a good overview of subject strengths and weaknesses and to influence and guide classroom practices. The headteacher provides regular opportunities for co-ordinators to observe and work with colleagues in their classrooms. As a result of these opportunities co-ordinators have produced detailed and constructive feedback for teachers. This is a positive development, which now needs careful management to ensure that there is sufficient time for the whole school to address the issues raised. Co-ordinators have produced detailed action plans for their subject, which are undoubtedly leading to further improvement, especially in relation to the management and provision of subject resources. These action plans are occasionally, but not always, based upon detailed analysis of standards of attainment and the feedback from lesson observation.

57. Formal systems for the appraisal of teachers are well established but arrangements for the induction of new staff are not fully in place.

58. The school has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced teachers. The current level of staffing is sufficient to ensure that all pupils are taught effectively. Support staff are generally used effectively to target pupil progress. The number of midday staff is sufficient to ensure effective supervision and they make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. The staff work well together at all levels and display a clear direction and sense of purpose.

59. Overall, the quality of accommodation in the school is good and makes a significant impact upon standards. Classrooms are relatively spacious and are in a good state of repair. The newly-appointed site manager is beginning to make a significant and positive contribution in this respect. Areas for storage of central resources are limited, although recent internal modifications have provided an effective literacy resource centre which doubles as a meeting room for parents and staff. There is a good-sized medical room. The spacious, well-organised library is very well located and provides good access to all users. It is well stocked with classified non-fiction books and is a very useful resource for pupils to develop their reading and library skills. Provision of reading books in the classrooms needs review as in some classes there is an insufficient range of readers for more able pupils. The size of the hall meets the school's need for assemblies and lunch-time use. At other times it provides very good facilities for various aspects of physical education. There is an open-air swimming pool for summer months. Provision for outdoor play is good, especially for the under fives.

60. The quality, quantity and range of learning resources are generally good for most areas of the curriculum, with the exception of information technology but plans are in place to address this deficiency.

61. Taking into account the overall standards of attainment, the impact of leadership and management and the overall quality of educational provision, the school is providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to take the school forward and to build upon its present quality, the staff and governors should:

- (1) Further improve curriculum planning by:
 - ensuring that schemes of work are updated where necessary and fully implemented (paras 28, 109, 110, 113, 126, 130, 143).

- (2) Improve assessment in subjects other than mathematics, English and science by:
 - extending the good practice for assessment, recording and reporting that has been developed in the core subjects thereby developing and putting into practice more formalised and systematic structures for assessing, recording and reporting
 - using information gained from assessment to guide planning
 - revising procedures in annual reports to parents to ensure reporting in all subjects of the statutory curriculum (paras 23, 43, 49, 80, 89, 104, 109, 116, 122, 136, 143).

- (3) Raise the standards of attainment in the foundation subjects to a level comparable to that in the core subjects by:
 - ensuring that tasks are matched to the needs of the different ability levels with appropriate challenge particularly for the more able pupils (paras 22, 122, 109).

- (4) Improve standards in information and communications technology by:
 - broadening the range of experiences in ICT to ensure that all elements of the statutory curriculum are in place (paras 27, 123, 126).

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Review and develop the current homework policy to ensure consistent application by all teachers and effective communication with parents (para 46).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	18	42	36	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	212
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	49

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	18	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	37	37	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (96)	100 (93)	97 (97)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	37	36	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	97 (96)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (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	10	13	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	8
	Girls	9	8	10
	Total	16	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (78)	74 (73)	78 (78)
	National	70 (64)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	7	4	4
	Total	12	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (94)	48 (88)	48 (78)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

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	4
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	232
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.6
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	402546
Total expenditure	394510
Expenditure per pupil	1827
Balance brought forward from previous year	23932
Balance carried forward to next year	31968

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	29	5	3	
My child is making good progress in school.	48	40	10	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	52	6	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	44	19	11	2
The teaching is good.	50	37	8		5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	49	16	6	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	37	3	3	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	38	6	3	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	49	10	6	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	30	8	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	40		5	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	40	16	5	11

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

63. Children who are under five are taught mainly in the dedicated nursery building with some in the reception classes. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is above average nationally but a little lower than the county average generally except in reading where it is higher. The school provides a good induction programme for the new children and their parents which includes visits for children, meetings with parents and provision of appropriate information. There are good links with the pre-nursery group from which many of the children come and which shares facilities with the nursery. Children are given a good start, encouraging early confidence and enjoyment in their new environment. Most children go on to enter the school's reception classes. Their attainment is satisfactory or better in all the areas of learning. The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is good and is now more appropriate to their needs. In the last inspection, teaching was judged to be good in two thirds of lessons and attainment was consistently satisfactory or better. Teaching is now more consistently good. On this evidence, standards and quality have been improved.

Language and literacy

64. In language children make good progress. Both structured and informal opportunities are provided to encourage and enable children to take part in conversation and to use language. During snack time, staff engage the majority of children in conversation and children respond confidently, mainly speaking in whole sentences, asking questions and sharing ideas. During the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* most children listened and showed very good understanding of sequencing, recall and anticipation of repeated phrases. At other times, teachers engage children in spontaneous conversations and children listen well and respond appropriately. Teachers have good questioning skills asking a range of appropriate questions which are designed to meet the needs of the children and to elicit responses. Standards in reading and writing are above expectations.

Mathematics

65. The majority of children make good progress in mathematics and are in line to meet or exceed national expectations by the age of five. Children participate readily in mathematical activities such as recognising numbers and counting. Many children were able to count the numbers of boys and girls present during registration. In the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, most pupils were able to use number names in order related to the various items that were eaten. Most pupils could count reliably up to ten objects. Some pupils, using a computer programme, were able to count objects accurately and to select the appropriate number symbol. Many children know the names of and can recognise common shapes such as triangles, squares, rectangles and circles. The quality of teaching is good. Members of staff take every opportunity to reinforce number, for example, during registration time by counting the number of children present. All the children are enthusiastic, enjoy mathematical activities and talk about what they are doing with interest.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world well and they make satisfactory progress. Teachers plan learning opportunities relevant to

children's experiences. For example, children have been learning about bulbs and flowers. Linguistic and mathematical skills are developed through these experiences and children have increased their awareness and knowledge. Children use a variety of construction kits. They have access to the use of a computer and have produced pictures using appropriate software. In addition, they use the computer in other aspects of their learning for example in mathematics for shape recognition. Children use wheeled toys safely in the outdoor area and have learned to share with others. They are aware of issues related to health and cleanliness; for example washing their hands before eating. Children indicated awareness of the other children around them and listened to what each other had to say about their likes and dislikes, their families and friends, events that had happened and events that had been planned such as forthcoming holidays.

Creative development

67. Opportunities for children's creative development are good. There is an interesting array of children's work displayed in the nursery which indicates a good standard showing a wide range of artistic and creative learning experiences. For example, children have been involved in cutting and sticking, finger painting, model making and wax-resist painting. Children are confident in line drawing and painting. They like role play, taking different roles and making up stories. The quality of teaching is good.

Physical development

68. Children's progress in physical development is satisfactory leading to standards which are expected for their age. They have a good range of fine motor skills. They can manipulate small objects and handle simple tools successfully in a range of activities such as sticking, cutting and model-building using construction kits. The development of their gross movement is well catered for with large apparatus and a very good outdoor play area. Appropriately challenging activities are presented to the children who respond enthusiastically and with interest.

Personal and social development

69. Children who are under five make good progress in the development of social and personal skills. They are given a good start both to their learning and their personal development through the wide range of opportunities presented to them. They learn about sharing and taking turns, playing together and being considerate towards others. They have good levels of confidence and participate well in the nursery routines. They get on well with their teachers, support staff and with each other and some good co-operation was observed particularly during snack-time. They respond well to praise and encouragement from adults and apply themselves well to do their best. Children who are under five play a full part in the life of the school. They are prepared well for their move into the reception classes through sharing activities on some occasions with children in Key Stage 1.

ENGLISH

70. Pupils make good progress in English and attainment levels are generally above national expectations.

71. In the last reported National Curriculum tests the pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 1 were generally very high in comparison with the national average in reading and in writing where they were in the top five per cent nationally. In reading results were

above the average compared with similar schools and in writing they were well above. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was also above national expectations in 1999. At Key Stage 2, the number of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in reading and in writing was broadly in line with the national average but the number of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in English was below national average levels.

72. In the last three years, standards in English at Key Stage 1 have been improved in reading and have remained high in writing. At Key Stage 2 results declined from very good in 1997 to the national average in the last two years.

73. The standard of work in English seen during the inspection period indicated that pupils in both key stages were attaining good results, above the national average in all aspects of English. Early indications of this year's test results confirm this picture of good standards.

74. In Key Stage 1 almost all pupils listen well to their teachers' explanations. They take pride in their achievements, strive to achieve learning targets, and make good progress. By the end of this key stage, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and work with sustained concentration throughout learning tasks. They have well developed skills in speaking and listening and are confident in expressing their opinions on books and authors. Almost all pupils have a secure grasp of basic literacy skills in reading and in writing and they use these effectively in their work. Pupils are keen to do well. Work is usually well presented. Most pupils exhibit good skills in spelling and in sentence construction. In Year 2 for example, most pupils are able to spell words accurately by applying their existing word knowledge and skills. They demonstrate the ability to apply these skills in composing their own poetry involving repetitive patterns. At the end of the key stage, more able pupils demonstrate confident and fluent reading and writing skills and some produce work of a very high standard. For example, recent work in the class newsletter project is of a very good standard as is some of the story writing which was constructed in preparation for the end of key stage assessments.

75. Standards of reading are good throughout the school and all pupils spoken to during the inspection period were confident in their handling and manipulation of the printed word. In the reception class for example, in reading books written by the author Eric Carle, pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' and can remember the names of other books written by the same author. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to talk confidently about the books they have read and are able to list favourite books and authors, giving reasons for their preferences. Pupils in both key stages read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. They have access to good provision in the well organised school library and usually make good use of the lending system. However, the current provision of 'class readers' in the classrooms is insufficiently challenging to meet the needs of more able pupils.

76. In Key Stage 2, although standards of attainment and presentation of work are more variable, pupils build upon their earlier learning and continue to make good progress. For example, during the inspection, most pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated good awareness of humour in a range of poems and were able to identify examples of alliteration and onomatopoeia in their own writing. Almost all pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to write confidently for a range of purposes at least in line with the expectations for their age group. They demonstrate good awareness of purpose and organisation in their writing and are sensitive to the needs of the reader. Pupils make particularly good progress in upper Key Stage 2 and at this stage, many pupils demonstrate levels of attainment above national expectations in all areas of English. In particular, the standards of written work in the

children's books and on display around the classroom walls indicate both high teacher expectations and high pupil achievement.

77. Although there are inconsistencies in standards of handwriting and presentation in some classes, pupils generally present their work well, write legibly and take a pride in their achievements.

78. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. Much of the work is well matched to their needs and the teachers and class assistants give good support.

79. The overall quality of teaching in literacy lessons is good in both key stages. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and provide confident introductions to lessons. Lesson objectives are clear and specific and are made explicit to pupils at the start of lessons. Learning activities are well prepared and provide challenge for most pupils. Teachers make good use of praise and rewards to motivate pupils. They use questioning skills effectively to challenge and assess pupils' levels of understanding. Resources such as thesauruses and dictionaries are routinely and competently used at the top end of the school. Work is generally well matched to the pupils' capabilities although, on occasion, activities provide insufficient challenge for the more able. There is good compliance with the recommended approaches in the National Literacy Strategy although word level work is not always given sufficient attention. Lessons are well structured, with good pace. In the vast majority of lessons, teaching time is well used and pupils make good progress in lessons as a result. In a small percentage of lessons, behaviour management is inconsistent and, as a consequence of this, some pupils are occasionally slow to settle to activities and do not work with good concentration. In some classes, independent learning routines are not well established. In some lessons, classroom assistants are not well managed.

80. There are very good systems in place for tracking pupil progress and in setting pupil targets for improvement. Pupils have individual learning targets to remind them of what they need to do next to improve and these are having a positive impact upon pupil motivation and attainment.

81. There is a good range of resources in the school to enhance the development of literacy skills. The library is well organised and provides good access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. The newly developed literacy resources room is a significant development and provides teachers with access to a wide range of support material for the teaching of literacy.

82. The subject co-ordinator does not have a specific job description. However, the management of the subject is well directed towards monitoring, evaluating and raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

83. The last reported test results showed that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The inspection confirms this picture of above average attainment. Since the last inspection, standards have steadily improved and the school has increased the number of pupils achieving higher levels. The school has also improved the quality of teaching which is now more consistently good.

84. At the end of Key Stage 2, the last reported test results indicated that standards were broadly in line with the national average but well below the average for similar schools. Over the last three years, results indicate a picture of change from very good results in 1997 with a decline to the national average in 1999. The inspection shows that this decline in standards has been halted and attainment in Key Stage 2 is now above the national average. Early indications are that this year's test results confirm this picture of overall improvement in standards.

85. At Key Stage 1, teachers successfully build upon the range of mathematical experiences provided for children under the age of five. Most children are developing good number skills. Across the key stage, the work is appropriately based on practical experience with everyday objects and with mathematical equipment. Appropriate attention is given to the development of numeracy skills, and there are also many opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in solving 'real-life' problems. Pupils use appropriate mathematical language when talking about their work. By the end of the key stage, most children have developed good number skills. They can perform simple calculations with reasonable accuracy. They can read, write and order numbers and can use their recall of addition and subtraction facts to solve problems. Children recognise and know the names for common shapes and can carry out simple measurements of length and weight.

86. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have well developed skills in numeracy with a good range of strategies for mental calculation and for estimating and checking answers. Many pupils know their tables well. They have a good understanding of shape, space and measure, and are proficient in data handling. Appropriate emphasis is given to using and applying mathematics and their knowledge and skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum, for example in science. Although there were examples of information and communications technology (ICT) being used to support and extend pupils' learning in mathematics, the range of appropriate software is limited.

87. Pupils' confidence in a range of mathematical activities increases as they progress through the school. They develop good approaches to the subject particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2; pupils in these classes see their learning in mathematics in a very positive light. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to mathematics and enjoy the subject. They are confident learners and see mathematics as being taught in an interesting way in the school. In the majority of lessons, they sustain concentration and show a real interest in their work. They are keen to do well and are willing to work hard in order to succeed. They are able to work independently and collaborate well in small groups or in the whole class situation. They are confident in making contributions to discussions and are keen to explain their methods when performing mental calculations. Overall, the majority of pupils make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils make sound progress. Standards of presentation are generally good in both key stages with pupils taking a pride in their work.

88. No unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics was observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching overall is good; at Key Stage 1 it is very good and at Key Stage 2 it is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall with a significant number of unsatisfactory lessons. There is good compliance with the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers show a sound knowledge and understanding of mathematics and they have an enthusiasm for the subject. They use a range of strategies and techniques and the pace is generally appropriately brisk. Lessons are well planned and organised with good attention given to ensuring that they contain appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding and, by skilful questioning, pupils' mathematical reasoning is assessed

and challenged. There is a strong emphasis on mental mathematics. Resources are well organised and used effectively to reinforce the teaching and learning points.

89. Appropriate time is allocated to teaching and learning in mathematics and the statutory requirements for the subject are fully met. The mathematics co-ordinator gives a very positive lead and uses her expertise to give advice and support to colleagues. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject are good. The school has a clear knowledge of standards throughout the school. Careful analysis of assessment data is carried out to identify needs and is used well to inform planning.

90. Mathematics has a high profile in the school. Most classrooms have good displays of pupils' work in the subject and all are supportive of learning with such things as number lines and squares, times tables and readily accessible resources and equipment. Mathematics is mainly taught as a separate subject but is used well to support learning in other subjects. The resources available for mathematics are good and are well deployed in a newly established resources centre for mathematics. A staggered timetable for mathematics in the various classes ensures the most efficient use of available resources.

SCIENCE

91. At Key Stage 1, the number of pupils achieving level 2 and above in 1999 was very high compared with the national average, while the number of pupils achieving the higher level 3, was broadly in line. No pupils achieved less than a level 2 and this is better than the picture nationally. When compared with schools of a similar type, the school's overall results at Key Stage 1 are very high in terms of the number of pupils achieving level 2 and above. The number achieving level 3 is broadly in line with the average for similar schools according to teacher assessments.

92. At Key Stage 2, the number of pupils achieving level 4 and above in 1999 was below the national average because the number of pupils who achieved the higher level 5 was well below the national average. However, the actual percentage of pupils who achieved a level 4 was slightly above the national average. Compared with schools of a similar type, attainment in 1999 was well below. However, the school carefully analysed the reasons for the disappointing results in 1999, targeted pupils on the borderline of achieving a higher grade and concentrated on the weaker curriculum areas in terms of pupils' knowledge. The result is that the provisional results for 2000 show a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving level 5 and all pupils achieving at least a level 4. The scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection supports these results and the observation of lessons in Year 6 indicates that all pupils are being appropriately challenged. Over the last four years, the performance in science has been close to the national average.

93. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn how to carry out investigations and are able to suggest how to make their tests fair. They quickly learn to make predictions and can give reasons for what they suggest. For example, Year 1 pupils in one class all predicted what would happen if a plant received no water. They then observed the results, compared them with their predictions and, with some guidance, reached sensible conclusions. They used appropriate scientific vocabulary in their work. Pupils know the names of the main parts of plants and the highest attaining Year 2 pupils can also name the pistil, stigma, stamen and have an understanding of seed dispersal. They have found out about animals and know what they can do. They know that different living things are found in different habitats and understand what is essential for the survival of living things. Pupils know about push and pull forces and have found out about gravity. They have investigated sound and have a

basis understanding of how our ears work. Standards are average with the vast majority of Year 2 pupils currently achieving level 2 in their science, with a minority achieving level 3.

94. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of the importance of fair testing and are able to plan their own investigations. They write sensible predictions, test them, record their results using charts and graphs and are able to reach logical conclusions. They show a good awareness of the need to take care when testing so their results are reliable. Good examples of this were observed in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection. One class investigated the ability of different materials to work as insulators and those in another class used their prior knowledge to work out how to separate a range of different mixtures. Some pupils also learnt how to use data logging on the computer to record very accurate and detailed results. They then found out how to access and use the information. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know that materials can be changed in different ways and that some of these changes may not be reversible. They understand the dangers of electricity and can construct simple circuits. They know how to draw circuit diagrams using the correct symbols. They have found out about the skeleton and know how muscles work. They can classify a good range of materials according to whether they occur naturally or are manufactured. Most pupils can explain why we have night and day. The amount of written work they produce is limited, but they learn a lot through discussion and investigation which is not recorded.

95. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall at each key stage, but the progress is currently uneven. Pupils in Year 6 make particularly good progress, while the older pupils in mixed age classes make less progress because their work is not always sufficiently different to that undertaken by the younger pupils. On occasions where teachers consciously set more challenging work for the older pupils and clearly expect more from them, pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra help in many lessons and are able to make appropriate progress.

96. Pupils' attitudes towards science are positive. They particularly enjoy practical investigations. For example pupils in one class thoroughly enjoyed heating different materials over a candle and then putting them on ice to see if any of the changes could be reversed. In another class pupils responded very enthusiastically when challenged to produce the cleanest water from a very muddy solution! Throughout the school they are keen to ask and answer questions. On occasions they show real curiosity and a desire to find out more, for example in a class where they were observing live spiders. Pupils generally take care with the presentation of their work. They listen well to the teachers and each other. They are confident to stand up and tell the rest of the class what they have found out from a very early age. Pupils are generally quick to settle to written work and are willing to help each other and to share ideas. The oldest pupils work very well together in groups, sharing out responsibilities and discussing their findings.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. All the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, the vast majority was good and a small amount was very good. Teachers are very well organised and have clear expectations of what the outcome of each lesson should be. They manage pupils well and are generally successful in creating a calm, purposeful working atmosphere. Although some practical lessons become noisy on occasions, it is due to the pupils' enthusiasm and they are almost always on task. Teachers plan interesting activities which motivate the pupils. They ask questions skilfully to check what pupils have understood and to prompt them to think and justify their answers. Work is frequently marked and the recent introduction of target setting for individual pupils means they know what they need to do to improve. Teachers make good use of the resources available, although the scrutiny of

pupils' work shows that the computer is not used as much as it could be. The learning support assistants and other adults present in classrooms are well briefed and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Whenever possible, visits are made to places of scientific interest.

98. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and has produced a useful policy and scheme of work. This is currently being updated to take into account the new National Curriculum. Effective monitoring is taking place, which means she has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There is a sensible action plan in place for the future development of the subject. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to ensure that there is clear progress from year to year and to monitor teachers' individual plans to ensure this happens consistently. She also realises the need to ensure that more of the work is committed to paper, particularly at Key Stage 2.

99. Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable improvements. There is now an appropriate policy and scheme of work for the subject. The subject is now taught in its own right and not through topics. Teachers' planning is now detailed and pupils are generally, but not always, appropriately extended. Behaviour has improved and pupils are now able to work purposefully on practical activities without adult support from a very early age.

ART

100. Art continues to be an important part of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils at both key stages make good progress and achieve standards which are slightly higher than those achieved by pupils of the same age nationally. Their work is well displayed and contributes to a stimulating working environment throughout the school.

101. Pupils' achievement is just as good in the knowledge and understanding part of the curriculum as it is in investigating and making. This is largely the result of the very effective whole-school study of 'The Haywain' in conjunction with the National Gallery. In addition to being taught how to ask questions about the work of John Constable, pupils have had the chance to look at the work of a range of very different artists. Pupils in one class have studied Kandinsky, while those in another have looked at the work of Seurat. Both have produced some very good paintings in the style of the artists. Pupils in another class have looked at Rousseau's Tropical Rainforest and have produced their own very effective version. In addition to this, pupils at both key stages had the chance to visit the National Gallery and to study various paintings. Pupils also have the chance to study art from other cultures. Examples of paintings in Aboriginal style were observed and pupils were able to talk confidently about what they had found out.

102. As pupils move through the school, they develop their close observational skills and become increasingly competent in the use of a wide range of media, for example paint, pastels, chalk, charcoal, pencils, clay, modroc, fabrics and threads and different types of paper. Pupils have the chance to work on a small and a large scale and in two and three dimensions. From the nursery onwards, they regularly use programmes on the computer, such as 'Splosh', to produce pictures. The pupils' ability to mix colours becomes increasingly sophisticated as they get older. They are able to mix powder paint to a very good standard at the end of Key Stage 1. A very good display of such work shows pupils very competently mixing powder paint to completely camouflage a piece of white paper stuck to the middle of a painting by a famous artist. Work on display in Key Stage 2 shows the pupils' ability to use shade and tone to good effect. Other paintings show colours mixed effectively to show mood. Pupils also have the opportunity to paint in response to

music.

103. Pupils display very good attitudes towards this subject. They clearly enjoy it and put in a lot of effort. They listen carefully and follow instructions. They watch teachers' demonstrations carefully and try hard to replicate what they have seen. This enables them to acquire knowledge and skills at a good rate. Pupils are generally keen to do well. The vast majority take real care with their work and produce some very pleasing results. Pupils look after the resources from a very early age and show good levels of responsibility when tidying away materials. They work well both independently and in groups. Pupils are quick to help each other and respond well to advice. Pupils in Year 1 showed sensitivity when asked to comment on each other's work. Their comments were surprisingly perceptive and thoughtful.

104. Few art lessons were observed during the inspection and consequently the judgement on teaching is based on photographic evidence, the large amount of good quality work on display and the scrutiny of individual pupils' work. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good overall. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and take full advantage of any in-service training and professional advice offered. They plan a really interesting range of activities, which successfully stimulate the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Many activities are closely and sensibly linked to work in other subjects, for example in one class, the drawing, painting and making of spiders linked to the science topic. Teachers are well organised and plan their lessons thoroughly based on a helpful scheme of work. They provide competent demonstrations and clear explanations of skills and techniques. Teachers regularly make constructive oral comments to pupils, which help them improve their work. There is no formal system of assessment at the moment, but the co-ordinator intends to introduce a strategy for assessment alongside the introduction of the new National Curriculum in September. Comments on pupils' annual reports are generally too vague and need to stand alone, rather than under the heading of 'Expressive Arts' in order to fully meet statutory requirements. Teachers make effective use of the good range of resources available and the school uses visits and visitors well to promote learning in the subject.

105. The co-ordinator is competent and enthusiastic. She has a sensible action plan for the future development of the subject with realistic and achievable targets. She has provided effective training for staff on several art skills and has used monitoring effectively to evaluate the success of the training and to support teachers.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Pupils at both key stages make sound progress in this subject as they move through the school. Consequently, they are achieving standards similar to pupils of the same age nationally. The standards of attainment are higher in the making aspect of the subject than they are in designing. Pupils have the opportunity to work with the full range of materials specified in the National Curriculum, for example, food, fabrics, wood, junk materials, clay and card. They are able to use construction kits and these become increasingly sophisticated as they move through the school.

107. Pupils at Key Stage 1 produce a good range of 3D models using a broad range of materials. They need less help from adults as they move through the key stage. They develop a sound range of basic skills, such as cutting, sticking, bending, folding, sewing and cooking. They develop the ability to choose appropriate materials for themselves. Pupils have the chance to design artefacts for a particular purpose, for example pupils in one class have designed and made coats to fit a particular toy. They have used a variety

of joining methods, for example, gluing, sewing, stapling and using adhesive tape. Pupils can produce simple pictures of what they want to make and most are able to label them to show the materials and colours they intend to use.

108. Pupils continue to develop their practical skills as they move through Key Stage 2. They put more thought into the choice of materials they will use, choosing them more carefully so they are fit for the intended purpose. They acquire a greater range of skills and techniques and generally use them with greater precision. Pupils produce better sketches before they begin making, but they rarely include accurate measurements and pupils do not produce alternative designs before deciding which is the best. Pupils' oral evaluations indicate that they can think carefully about the successes and failures of their work, but their ability to commit this to paper is limited.

109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages. The school makes good use of the particular interests and aptitude of teachers at Key Stage 2 in order to provide more effective teaching in the subject. Teachers have a sound understanding of the design process, but do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of designing skills, particularly at Key Stage 2. However, they do plan an interesting range of activities, which the pupils enjoy. Whenever possible, appropriate links are made with other subjects and this makes the tasks more interesting, relevant and realistic. For example, pupils in one class were busy designing and making puppets they could use to accompany the stories they will be reading to reception pupils at the end of term. Teachers plan a range of focussed practical tasks, which teach the pupils the basic skills and techniques they will need in order to undertake future designing and making tasks. Teachers provide competent demonstrations and explanations of new skills. They use questioning effectively to help pupils evaluate their work from a very early age. However, teachers' expectations of the quality of designs and finished product are not always high enough. There is no formal system of assessment in place and pupils' annual reports do not contain comments which give parents a clear impression of their child's achievements. The school needs to ensure that the subject is reported in its own right in order to fully meet the statutory requirements.

110. The subject is well resourced, but currently lacks a co-ordinator. The subsequent lack of monitoring means that pupils sometimes repeat work at the same level, rather than systematically building upon their prior experience. As a result pupils achieve satisfactory, rather than good, standards.

111. Since the last inspection, provision for design and technology has been improved. There is an up-to-date policy and scheme of work, which supports teachers' planning. The school recognises the need to review and amend these in the light of the new National Curriculum. The time and emphasis given to this subject has been increased and it is now satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

112. It was only possible to observe three lessons during the course of the inspection. Evidence was also gathered from a close scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display around the school, scrutiny of teachers' planning files and records, discussions with staff and interviews with pupils.

113. Standards of attainment in this subject are just in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. This performance does not correlate with the standards that pupils attain in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In Key Stage 1, pupils have a

satisfactory knowledge of the local area. They are able to describe and make observations about the village of High Wych and are beginning to understand how to carry out simple geographical studies of the school environment. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are beginning to recognise geographical patterns in their study of Clacton and the Isle of Wight and are able to make simple comparisons with these places and their own environment. They also demonstrate increasing confidence in expressing their own opinions about environmental features and change but have a limited geographical vocabulary and experience to draw upon. All but the most able pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are insecure in their understanding of significant places beyond their own locality and several pupils do not have well-developed geographical enquiry skills. However, it is evident that the school is aware of the need for improvement in this area and recent curriculum developments are beginning to have an impact upon the quality of teaching and learning. New schemes of work to enhance progression and continuity are developing but not yet fully in place in all classes.

114. Work in the pupils' books, including those of pupils with special educational needs, reflects recent increased attention to this subject and there are some good examples of work linked to field study in both key stages. Work is always well presented and pupils clearly take pride in their accomplishments. Pupils have positive attitudes to this subject. They show good interest and work enthusiastically on classroom activities.

115. In Key Stage 1 the teachers are beginning to make good use of the local area to enhance provision and pupil understanding. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, good lesson planning and preparation. They give clear, confident introductions to lessons, make good reference to subject vocabulary and make good use of visits to places to stimulate learning. Pupils are well managed and activities and objectives are clearly explained to pupils. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to express their opinions on places and to compare features in their own environment with other regions. They make good use of resources to stimulate interest and to enable pupils to engage in practical study.

116. Assessment of pupil progress in geography is inconsistent and current procedures for reporting to parents do not meet statutory requirements. The school policy and arrangements for curriculum planning and assessment of pupil progress in this subject are unsatisfactory. Although plans are developing to address issue of time allocation, to date, insufficient time has been devoted to teaching geographical and enquiry skills. The school is aware of the need to address inconsistencies in this subject and has identified this as a priority area in its future development plans. There is a good co-ordinator action plan in place, which clearly highlights the areas in need of attention. Resource provision is satisfactory but the overall provision will need to be extended as funds become available. Most resources are stored centrally to facilitate teacher access. At the top end of the school teachers are beginning to make effective use of information and communications technology to stimulate development and understanding.

117. The subject co-ordinator does not have a specific job description. However, management of the subject is clearly directed towards raising standards.

HISTORY

118. No history lessons were taught during the inspection week. Evidence to support the main judgements is based on the scrutiny of pupils' past work, an examination of the schools' planning and looking at the displays of past work and photographic evidence. Overall, pupils at both key stages achieve standards which are similar to those obtained by

pupils of the same age nationally.

119. Pupils at Key Stage 1 begin to understand how things have changed over time. For example, they have found out how the seaside has changed. As part of this they have thought of appropriate questions to ask their parents and grandparents about how it has changed since they were children. Consequently they are beginning to learn how we can gain evidence from primary sources. As part of the whole-school study of 'The Haywain', they have learned about how farming has changed. Pupils have also found out about famous people in the past. They know about the life and work of Florence Nightingale and can write about her in simple terms. Pupils know how hospitals have changed since she was alive. Their language skills develop as they listen to stories and talk and write about what they have heard. Through their work on the seaside, they develop a sense of chronology. A study of the local area means they have had the opportunity to look at some of the features of old buildings. Different classes have visited a water mill, the local church and the old bakery.

120. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to develop their historical skills as they follow the National Curriculum study units. Their progress is sound and they extend the range of their historical knowledge. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have researched the Tudors. They have found out about the lives of the monarchs, about famous explorers of the time, town and country life and the dissolution of the monasteries. Groups of pupils took responsibility for researching each aspect and they then fed back the information to the rest of the class. They have had the chance to compare the reliability of different sources of evidence. Taking part in the Tudor Day at the school helped pupils empathise with some of the people living in the Tudor period. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have studied Ancient Egypt. Each pupil has carried out his or her own research and presented their findings in very attractive and interesting hand-bound books which use a wide range of presentation techniques. Some pupils have made good use of information and communications technology to carry out their research. They show they have the ability to make comparisons between life in Ancient Egyptian times and now. Many have been prompted into analysing how our lives have been affected by the Ancient Egyptians.

121. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, clearly enjoy history at both key stages. Their work shows pride in its presentation. Pupils have enjoyed their visits to museums and the Victorian and Tudor days are well remembered. Their written work at Key Stage 2 shows they are able to take responsibility for their own work and that they are able to work collaboratively when required.

122. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers at both key stages have a secure understanding of the subject. In Year 6, this enables them to write particularly good evaluative comments at the end of pupils' topics. They praise pupils for what they have done well, recognise the effort put in and suggest how further improvements could be made in the future. Teachers plan interesting activities. They plan carefully in order to ensure pupils are able to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Good use is made of the learning resources and pupils have the chance, on a regular basis, to partake in activities which bring history to life for them. The lack of any formal system of assessment is a weakness. It means that teachers do not always expect enough of the highest attaining pupils, particularly in terms of the depth of knowledge required. The annual reports contain very little information about pupils' achievements in history. They do not fully meet statutory requirements as they report history under the heading of Humanities and DT, rather than as a subject in its own right.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

123. It was only possible to observe two whole class lessons during the course of the inspection. Evidence was gained mostly from observations of pupils using computers, scrutiny of work, analysis of teachers' planning files and records, discussions with staff and interviews with pupils. Although pupils are making satisfactory to good progress in some aspects of ICT, the school does not currently provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to undertake the full programmes of study and therefore, does not comply with statutory requirements and pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall.

124. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils exhibit good keyboard skills. They are confident with the use of a mouse and know how to load, save and print their work. They have a good understanding of editing processes in using a word processor and know how to use a spreadsheet to draw a graph of results. In Year 1, for example, pupils are able to use the programmes Datasweet and Dataplot to graph results of a geographical survey. Pupils in Year 2 are able to retrieve information that has previously been stored on the hard drive and floppy discs. They are confident in using programmes such as Dazzle to create pictures and to change paint effects and images.

125. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have further extended and applied their skills. They are able to access stored information and use this in the generation of reports such as the recent work on class newsletters and reports of a recent school trip to the Isle of Wight. More able pupils can incorporate graphical representations in their writing and can manipulate text and images to produce the desired effects. Pupils at the top end of the school show a developing understanding of how to use the Internet for purposes of research. More able pupils demonstrate refined research skills and are usually able to extract the relevant information and to print this out. Less able pupils are still insecure in their understanding of how to refine their search for information and how to insert or save selected paragraphs into a word processing file.

126. Current provision however, does not allow pupils to access the full programmes of study for ICT. Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their understanding of control or in using multimedia presentations. Although opportunities to use spreadsheets and data handling packages are emerging, pupils do not have a secure understanding in this area.

127. The recent introduction of ICT focussed tasks is having a significant impact on pupil progress and understanding. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers provide clear instructions for pupils and present learning activities which meet the needs of most pupils. They make good use of opportunities for using the computers in all lessons. Learning activities are usually well prepared but, in general, there is insufficient differentiation in tasks to meet the needs of more able pupils.

128. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards ICT and most pupils approach computer work with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils demonstrate good collaborative skills and support one another's learning. They are confident in troubleshooting simple technical problems. With the exception of access to the Internet, equal access to computers is well managed and pupils with special educational needs are given good support and make satisfactory progress. Classroom assistants are well used to support pupils learning in ICT.

129. Current hardware provision in most classes is satisfactory although some computers will shortly be in need of replacement. The recent addition of a small computer suite in Year 6 with access to the Internet has significantly improved provision and the quality of learning at the top end of the school. However, pupils in other parts of the school do not

have sufficient access to the Internet at the present time.

130. The current ICT policy and schemes of work are out of date and in need of revision. Systems for recording pupil progress in ICT are also in need of further development. These objectives are seen as key priorities for the subject co-ordinator. She has a good understanding and awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in this subject and has produced a detailed action plan which, when implemented, will begin to address deficiencies in curricular provision. She has provided good support for colleagues and in-service training to address issues relating to staff confidence and subject knowledge.

131. The development of information and communications technology is in a state of transition within the school. Although current access to the programmes of study are unsatisfactory, it is evident that good progress has been made in this area in recent months to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

MUSIC

132. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are above national expectations. The last inspection report made little reference to music so it is not possible to make a judgement about how teaching and learning in the subject has improved since then.

133. In Key Stage 1 pupils listen carefully to music and when asked are able to express their views about it. They are able to discern the different moods created by the music to which they listen and to respond appropriately in various ways such as with movement or stillness. A good example of this was observed in the reception class where pupils reflected on how the music could represent the movements of a spider spinning a web.

134. At Key Stage 2, pupils show a good degree of control over using untuned instruments and all children are offered the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils use appropriate technical music vocabulary. They learn simple musical notation which they use to record their own compositions. Pupils have a good understanding of musical terminology and symbols. They evaluate their own work and that of others and make reasoned suggestions about how it could be improved. A good example of this was observed where Year 5 and Year 6 pupils composed pieces using the pentatonic scale.

135. Throughout the school pupils sing well. They enjoy singing in music lessons, in assembly and in the school choir. The choir is well run and pupils benefit from the experience of working together and performing. The school orchestra also offers valuable learning experiences. Participation in the local music festival, musical productions in school, a recent presentation by a jazz band in school and the school's contribution to the production of a compact disk of pupils' work, have all enriched the range of opportunities for learning in music. The music curriculum is well planned and covers all elements of the statutory curriculum.

136. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. The recent introduction of a commercial scheme of work along with very good support from the subject co-ordinator, has done much to raise teachers' subject knowledge and their overall confidence in teaching music. There is a good level of teacher expertise and this is used to good effect to enhance the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The positive attitudes shown by teachers motivate pupils and secure their engagement. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress in music is a weakness; it currently lacks

structure and is unsystematic.

137. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has done much to raise standards and quality and the profile of music in the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. Based upon observations of games and swimming lessons, standards of attainment at the end of both key stages, in these aspects of physical education, are just in line with national expectations. In the last inspection, standards were judged to be variable ranging from satisfactory to good.

139. In Key Stage 1 most pupils are able to throw and catch with a reasonable degree of control and accuracy. The least able pupils, however, can not perform these actions consistently. Similarly, most pupils are able to bounce and roll a ball with a fair degree of control whilst lower attaining pupils find it difficult to apply these skills to a consistently satisfactory standard. Many pupils show competency in using a bat to send and receive a ball but equally a sizeable number lack accurate control.

140. In Key Stage 2, pupils show progress in their ability to throw accurately. Most pupils can use either an under-arm or over-arm technique to throw to a partner. The higher-attaining pupils can throw accurately over a considerable distance and many can catch with confidence. However, many pupils' skills in these activities are not secure. Most pupils are able to use a bat to hit a ball with some consistency; the higher-attaining pupils can use a bat very effectively and show good hand-eye co-ordination. Many pupils have acquired some basic life-saving skills in swimming lessons and are able to explain the procedures they have learnt. Most pupils can swim with confidence the required 25 metres and have a good understanding of the need for safety at all times in and around water.

141. Teaching in the subject is satisfactory overall with some that is good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives communicated to pupils. Teachers use a good range of organisational groupings selected well to meet curricular objectives. A brisk pace is established and maintained. Demonstration is used well as a teaching method and pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their work. An appropriate emphasis is placed on safety matters. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable; the best have a good all round knowledge of the primary curriculum but for others there are gaps such as in dance.

142. Pupils participate well physical education lessons and try hard to improve their performance and to do their best. In the last inspection, pupils' response was unsatisfactory in a third of all lessons observed; since then there has been a clear improvement. Pupils show good co-operation and collaborate well when working with a partner or in small groups.

143. Whilst there is a comprehensive section devoted to gymnastics in the scheme of work, whole-school planning for other aspects of the physical education curriculum is a weakness. Planning needs to be reviewed and developed so that all elements of the curriculum, including dance, are provided for and progression established. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress lack rigour and need to be developed so that they become more systematic and regular with a clear link established to planning.

144. Resources for teaching and learning in the subject are good. The school has a good-sized hall, playing field and hard-surfaced areas and its own swimming pool that have a positive impact on standards and quality. Equipment is stored well and appropriately

deployed. Opportunities are presented to pupils to participate in inter-school sporting events.

145. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Monitoring of pupils' achievement in gymnastics has been carried out and should now be extended to include all elements of the curriculum particularly with a view to gaining a secure understanding of standards throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. A total of four lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. Evidence was also gathered from a close scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display around the school, scrutiny of teachers' planning files and records, and discussions with staff and interviews with pupils.

147. Standards of attainment in religious education are satisfactory and broadly in line with standards expected in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress particularly in relation to their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. At the end of both key stages, pupils are attaining standards in line with national expectations.

148. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a satisfactory knowledge and understanding. They are able to discuss religious ideas contained in stories. They are beginning to gain an understanding of the range of beliefs that some people hold, including the belief in god god/s. Pupils also show a good understanding of Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter and are able to describe in simple terms the purpose of church ceremonies such as weddings and baptism. They know that the bible is a special book containing stories about Jesus.

149. In Key Stage 2, the pupils' knowledge of key religious figures and events is also satisfactory. In addition to their knowledge of the Christian festivals and events, they have a good understanding of the Hindu faith in particular and are able to describe key figures, festivals and customs. They are also able to consider the significance of religious beliefs on their own and others' lifestyles. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils at the top end of the school have a good knowledge of stories from the Old Testament. More able pupils in Year 6 also have a satisfactory knowledge of Jewish and Buddhist beliefs. They know that the Jewish sacred book is called the Torah, that it is read from right to left, and they could also provide good explanations as to why it was so important to members of the Jewish faith. Less able pupils at the top of the school were insecure in their knowledge of both Christian beliefs and festivals and those of other religions. Throughout the school, pupils also show good awareness of personal qualities such as consideration and kindness, which contributes to the very good relationships they develop with others.

150. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. In all lessons seen, the teachers are well prepared. They have clear and specific learning objectives, make good use of resources to stimulate interest and provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss the content of lessons. They also provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon the significance of the lesson content to both their own lifestyles and the lives of others. The learning activities are usually well managed and provide a satisfactory level of challenge for most pupils.

151. Provision for religious education throughout the school is particularly enhanced by a

range of outside visits and visitors and through the organisation of theme mornings focussing upon understanding of other faiths. As a consequence of these opportunities, pupils are developing a sound understanding of cultural diversity appropriate for their age and experience and are beginning to recognise common cross-cultural values in their beliefs with those of others.

152. There is a detailed and helpful policy in place and the specified learning objectives are being addressed effectively in classes. Pupils in both key stages are given opportunities to examine, investigate and consider the significance of a range of religious artefacts and to gain a satisfactory understanding of both their own and other religions. Opportunities to reflect upon the significance of religious stories, celebrations and festivals are also well used.

153. Although there is no appointed co-ordinator for this subject at present, there are detailed schemes of work in place, which are beginning to have a significant impact upon curriculum provision. However, these are not always applied consistently or in sufficient depth in some classes. This is having an impact upon pupil progress as is the fact that the current systems for monitoring, recording and assessing pupil progress in religious education are under-developed.