

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST CATHERINE'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117410

Headteacher: Mrs C. E. Clarke

Reporting inspector: R. B. Bonner  
25384

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 May 2001

Inspection number: 189624

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior school

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Park Road  
Ware  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: SG12 0AW

Telephone number: 01920 462653

Fax number: 01920 485810

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr H. Ritchie

Date of previous inspection: 01/07/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25384	R. B. Bonner	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical Education Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9457	G. Bindoff	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
19278	R.A.B. Allan	Team inspector	Science Information and communications technology Design and technology	

21893	V. Brittain	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Art and design Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Learning Opportunities
28200	P. Stevens		English Music Religious Education Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Personal Development

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport

SK8 1BB

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Catherine's Primary School is situated in the town of Ware in Hertfordshire. The school is about the average size for primary schools nationally but is smaller than at the time of the last inspection. The school is for children aged three to 11. There are 214 full-time pupils (94 boys and 120 girls) and 29 children (13 boys and 16 girls) who attend the nursery part-time, giving a full-time equivalent of 229 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 15 children in the reception class who were under the age of six. When the children enter the reception class a very wide range of attainment is represented but is similar to that found in most schools. Eighteen pupils (8 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. There are 50 pupils (23 per cent) on the special educational needs' register. This is close to the national average and significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection, when it was 11 per cent. Of these pupils, three have statements of educational need. Almost all pupils who attend the school are from a white ethnic background.

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

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good. Standards are average in English and mathematics but below average in science. The school is effective in its work and provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning.
- Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The range of activities outside of lessons, especially residential visits is very good.
- Classroom assistants provide pupils with effective support.

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

- Standards in writing achieved by 7- and eleven-year-olds.
- Standards in reading achieved by seven-year-olds.
- Standards in science achieved by 11-year-olds.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Relationships with parents.
- The management role of subject co-ordinators.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in July 1996. It has been effective in tackling some of the key issues, but there are still areas that require further work. Progress has been hindered by the long-term absence of staff and also because of recruitment difficulties. Teaching has improved. All lessons have clear learning objectives that are shared with the children. Teachers have attended courses to improve their subject knowledge. The senior management team has been enlarged to include two assessment co-ordinators. The senior management team has undertaken a systematic analysis of test data of pupils in Key Stage 2. This information has been used to set individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics. However, the test results of pupils in Key Stage 1 have not been analysed to the same degree. There are also weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils in mixed year groups in Key Stage 2 have been set for numeracy and literacy in order to tailor the curriculum more effectively to their needs and to raise standards. Standards are rising in English and mathematics, although there is still room for further improvement. Standards have risen in science and information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and design and technology in Key Stage 2. However, standards have fallen in geography, history and religious education in both key stages and in music and design and technology in Key Stage 1. The development of the managerial role of subject co-ordinators has

been hindered by frequent changes in staff and is currently unsatisfactory. Financial plans and priorities are now closely matched to a systematic analysis of curriculum and resource needs.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	C	D	E	well above average    A above average        B Average                 C below average         D well below average    E
Mathematics	C	D	D	E	
Science	C	C	D	E	

The table above indicates standards in the national tests in 2000 for 11-year-olds were below the national average in all three subjects. Compared with similar schools' results, the school's performance was well below average in all three subjects. The results of all three subjects taken together were also well below average. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science fell below the national average. During this period the attainment of girls has exceeded the national average in all three subjects, but the attainment of boys has been below the national average. There has been a steady improvement in English and mathematics over the past three years. Standards were rising in science but dropped significantly last year.

The findings of the current inspection are that the standards of pupils in Year 2 are above average in ICT, average in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history, music, physical education and religious education, but below average in English. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is above average in design and technology, average in English (although there are weaknesses in writing), mathematics, art and design, geography, history, ICT, music, and physical education but below average in science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen and eager to come to school. They have positive attitudes to their work and are enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in and around school. They understand rules and show respect for people and property. A few pupils find it difficult to behave properly.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils form constructive relationships with one another and with adults. When they are provided with opportunities to take responsibility, pupils perform these duties sensibly.
Attendance	Good



## 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.*

There have been significant changes in staff in the past two years. Despite the positive measures taken by the management of the school, the frequent changes of teaching staff have had a detrimental effect on the progress that has been made by some pupils.

In the lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good. In 92 per cent of the lessons that were seen the teaching was satisfactory or better, in 61 per cent of lessons it was good or better, in 19 per cent it was very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when 21 per cent of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory and the percentage of very good teaching was lower.

The teachers generally have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and plan the lessons well. They effectively use a wide range of methods to help the pupils learn. The pupils and staff have good relationships with one another and these add significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel their contributions are valued and this appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. The teaching of English, including literacy is good, and in mathematics, including numeracy, it is satisfactory. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is good for the children in the nursery and reception classes. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education requires further development. The provision for activities outside of lessons is very good. The school has good links with the local community and works well with its partner institutions.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Inclusion is fundamental to the aims and values of the school. Pupils make good progress against the targets set within their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in each aspect. The school operates as a caring community and aims to provide experiences that encourage pupils to act responsibly and value one another.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for the welfare of pupils is satisfactory. All adults in the school have a strong commitment to the pupils and have a very caring approach. However, improvements are needed in regard to some aspects of health and safety. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

There are many parents who are very supportive of the school but a significant number of parents who attended the parents' meeting and who responded in the questionnaires have lost confidence in the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher and key staff provide the school with clear educational direction and the aims and values of the school are reflected in its work. However, subject co-ordinators are not provided with sufficient opportunities to monitor standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and individual governors have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the governing body takes a limited role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and key members of staff assess the performance of teachers. This work has been hindered by the frequent changes in staff. Information relating to pupils' attainment is analysed: targets are set for improvement and progress towards them is monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. Spending is targeted to agreed priorities, especially the raising of standards. The school has a good understanding of the principles of best value.

The very high turnover of staff in recent years means that the match of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to the curriculum is weak. This particularly relates to the role of the subject co-ordinators. Classroom assistants are well trained and contribute significantly to the progress made by pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy going to school.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The visits that the school provides.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour of the pupils.</li> <li>• The information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Home/school liaison.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>

The inspection supports the positive view that parents have of the school and most of the areas where they would like to see improvement. The behaviour of the pupils is satisfactory overall, but there is a minority who finds it difficult to behave properly. The inspection team endorses the parents' view that there must be better communication between school and home and an improvement in relationships, particularly with those raising concerns. Parents' concerns about a lack of continuity in staffing are understandable but inspectors consider that the leadership and management of the school has done the best it can to lessen the impact of these changes.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### National curriculum test results, trends and targets

1. Pupils' results in the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds were well below the national average at the expected level (Level 2 and above) in reading, writing and mathematics. In the teacher assessments for science standards were also well below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, (Level 3) was above the national average in mathematics, close to the national average in writing, but below the national average in reading. In the teacher assessments for science standards were above the national average. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account), results in mathematics were close to the national average and those in reading and writing were below the national average.
2. Compared with similar schools' results, the school's performance was below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing.
3. The results were lower than in the previous year due to the high number of pupils (37 per cent) with special educational needs who took the test. This view is supported by evidence of standards being achieved by pupils in the current Year 3 class. In the three years 1998 to 2000 the performance of pupils has exceeded the national average in mathematics but has fallen slightly to below the national average in reading and writing. The performance of boys and girls was similar in mathematics but the girls out performed the boys in reading and writing. Over this period, pupils' performance has been very uneven with results rising and falling in consecutive years.
4. Pupils' results in the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds were below the national average at the expected level (Level 4 and above) in English, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, (Level 5) was close to the national average in English, below the national average in mathematics and in science it was well below the national average. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account); standards were below the national average in all three subjects.
5. Compared with similar schools' results, the school's performance was well below average in all three subjects. The results of all three subjects taken together were also well below average.
6. In the three years 1998 to 2000 the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science fell below the national average. During this period the attainment of girls has exceeded the national average in all three subjects, but the attainment of boys has been below the national average. Standards have risen in line with the national trend.
7. Based on prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils who took the tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 had made satisfactory progress. This takes into account the pupils who have moved in and out of this group since the tests for seven-year-olds were taken in 1996.



8. The inspection's findings, which are discussed below, are that pupil's attainments in the current Year 2 are broadly in line with the national average in mathematics and science but they are below average in reading and writing. Pupils' attainments in Year 6 are broadly average in English (with some weaknesses in writing) and mathematics but below average in science. This is a similar picture to that recorded at the time of the last inspection. Since that time however the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the school has increased significantly, from 11 per cent to 23 per cent.
9. In order to raise the level of achievement pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have been set for English and mathematics. This arrangement is beginning to raise pupils' levels of achievement. The school has set challenging targets for 2001 and 2002 and has made good progress towards achieving them. The school recognises the need to raise standards in science and this subject is identified as a key area for development in the next academic year.

### **The findings of the inspection**

10. The attainment of the children in the nursery and reception classes is similar to that normally expected of children of their age. The children make good progress in the nursery class and the reception class and by the age of six most are achieving at the expected level with a small minority exceeding the standards expected and working in the lower stages of the National Curriculum.
11. In English, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 are below the national average. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. By the age of seven, pupils speak confidently in a wide range of contexts. However, a significant number of pupils will not listen attentively either to the teacher or to one another. Pupils read simple text by themselves tackling new words using letter sounds and also use illustrations to help with their understanding of the story. Although the majority of pupils write in sentences with capital letters and full stops, many do not perform this task accurately. By the age of 11, pupils' speaking and listening skills are average. In reading, standards are above average. Pupils explain their book preferences in detail, and compare the layouts of pages in fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils write for different purposes and audiences. Handwriting and presentation varies greatly, with some of the more able pupils still not joining their letters.
12. In mathematics, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. By the age of seven, pupils recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and have a satisfactory understanding of the value of numbers up to and beyond a hundred. They describe flat shapes using their properties, and collect information and display it in charts and on graphs. By the age of 11, pupils use skills of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication to solve problems. They understand multiples, factors, square numbers and digital roots and work out the probability of events. They convert fractions to decimals and calculate fractions of given numbers and collect data and display it in the form of block graphs and pie charts.
13. In science, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 are average and in Year 6 they are below average. By the age of seven, pupils know that living things reproduce, they identify devices that require electricity and can describe simple electrical circuits. By the age of 11, pupils can identify key factors to be considered when making a test fair. They know the names and functions of the major organs in

the body. They make different electrical circuits, and investigate how sound travels through various materials. Pupils can identify how different substances can be separated but their skills of scientific enquiry and knowledge of materials and their properties are weaker than other aspects.

14. In information and communications technology (ICT), the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 are above average and in Year 6 they are average. By the age of seven, pupils enter, save and retrieve their work. They efficiently use pull-down menus to access the file they require. When word processing they use the shift, delete keys and the space bar efficiently. They control floor and screen robots by entering a series of commands and use an art program to draw pictures. By the age of 11, pupils use a variety of fonts and graphics in their word processing. They competently navigate around menus and option boxes. They create graphs and charts and use the Internet regularly to access relevant information.
15. At ages seven and 11, pupils' attainment in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are in line with those expected. In design and technology, the standards achieved by seven-year-olds are in line with those expected but they are above this level by the time they are 11.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress against their prior attainment.

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

17. Most pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to their learning. In the early years at school children respond very well to the range of stimulating activities provided and sustain their concentration well. Children in the nursery help each other, share toys and equipment and play very well together. They develop independence and self-confidence and tidy away responsibly at the end of the session. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are interested in their work and take a pride in their achievements, for example pupils in Year 1 were proud of the sculptures they had made in an art lesson and were able to make constructive observations about each other's work. Pupils enjoy ICT and are enthusiastic about the new computer suite. Older pupils, in Years 5 and 6, contribute well to discussions and have some mature attitudes. They respond well to challenges set by their teachers and can take some responsibility for their own work.
18. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the opportunities for residential visits that the school provides. Pupils in Year 2 think it is great fun to camp overnight at the school and Year 3 pupils were impressed by the darkness around them when they were taken for a walk in the woods during a stay in Norfolk. Pupils also enjoy other activities that enrich their learning. For example pupils in Years 5 and 6 were very motivated by a visit to a morning of mathematics with Johnny Ball.
19. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. In assemblies pupils behave very well, they enter the hall quietly and sensibly and wait patiently for the assembly to begin. At playtimes they make good use of the large area available and generally play well together with few upsets. In lessons where their interest is fully engaged they behave well but when the work is less stimulating standards of behaviour decline. In Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6 there are some pupils that are uncooperative and rude and challenge the class teacher. Generally this behaviour is well managed by teachers but can disrupt the learning of the pupils themselves and others in the class. Inspectors confirm the concerns of some parents that there are some patterns of

misbehaviour in some classes. No incidents of bullying or other oppressive behaviour were observed during the inspection. The school aims to provide well for the inclusion of pupils but one pupil was excluded for a fixed term during the last school year.

20. Relationships between the pupils themselves are good. They often listen to each other well and have the confidence to share their feelings. This was evident in a session in Year 6 on the subject of 'name calling' and how they react to being 'picked on'. The pupils can collaborate well on activities but at other times they fail to resolve disagreements. Relationships between the pupils and the adults in the school are good. In particular, relationships between the pupils with special educational needs and the support assistants who work with them are very good and contribute significantly to the good progress these pupils make.
21. Pupils are keen to take responsibility when opportunities arise and carry out their tasks well. Some Year 6 pupils run a games club at lunchtime for pupils in Year 1 and the reception class. They organise themselves well and ensure that the younger pupils have a good time. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and understand that their actions have an impact on other people. They support a number of charities and know why this is important. In an assembly a pupil in a Year 3 class defined the meaning of the word 'charity' as 'giving things to people who haven't got anything and need them more than you do'.
22. Attendance is good and is well above the national average. Levels of unauthorised absences are slightly above the national average.

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

23. There have been significant changes in staff in the past two years. Several teachers have had periods of illness, others have moved on to new jobs. At the time of the inspection, temporary teachers were teaching in two classes due to the long-term absence of the class teachers. The school has found the recruitment of new staff particularly difficult. Despite the measures taken by the management of the school, the frequent changes of staff have had a detrimental effect on the progress that has been made by some pupils.
24. In the lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good. In 92 per cent of the lessons that were seen the teaching was satisfactory or better, in 61 per cent of lessons it was good or better, in 19 per cent it was very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when 21 per cent of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory and the percentage of very good teaching was lower.
25. Although teaching in the lessons seen was good overall, evidence from previous work indicate several weaknesses. In some classes, pupils' work is not always marked, and that which is does not always provide pupils with guidance on how they can improve. Teachers do not ensure that pupils complete the work that is set and their expectations of how pupils' present their work are not high enough.
26. Some of the weaknesses in teaching identified in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively but there are still some outstanding issues. Lessons now have clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils so they understand what they are expected to achieve. Planning identifies work to meet the needs and abilities of pupils in different attainment groups. However, teacher's expectations are still variable. Teachers in some classes have high expectations of the pupils' but this is

not always the case. In some lessons teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and concentration and as a result pupils do not make the progress that they might.

27. The good and very good teaching is characterised by lessons that are thoroughly planned and focused, and conducted at a brisk pace so that full use is made of the time available to move pupils' learning on quickly. Teachers use a good range of methods, including explanations, demonstrations, practical work and research to engage the pupils in their learning. In a very good numeracy lesson in the Year 5/6 class, for example, the planning was very good, the lesson moved along at a very good pace that involved all the pupils in their learning. The teacher displayed very good subject knowledge as she effectively questioned and involved the pupils in identifying and developing number patterns. The teacher shared her enthusiasm for the subject and as a result pupils were highly motivated and made very good gains in their learning.
28. Similarly, in English lessons in Years 4 and 6, pupils made very good progress in their learning as a result of very well planned and managed lessons that fully engaged the pupils' in their learning. In these lessons the pupils and staff had good relationships with one another and these added significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produced and the way in which they learnt. The pupils felt their contributions were valued and this appreciation helped to build their self-esteem and encouraged them to try harder.
29. In several very good lessons observed in the nursery class the teacher consistently revealed a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. The introductions to the lessons were brisk and involved all of the children in practical activities. The lessons were very well organised with a range of activities that promoted the children's learning whilst encouraging them to do things for themselves.
30. Weaknesses in teaching, sometimes leading to unsatisfactory lessons, principally relate to ineffective management of disruptive behaviour and lack of subject knowledge. In the former, teachers do not consistently apply the school's strategy to tackle unsatisfactory behaviour and in some cases they do not have sufficiently high expectations of the pupils. The result of this weakness is that pupils are inattentive, they call out, do not listen to one another and as a result do not make sufficient gains in their learning. In some lessons, such as ICT and religious education the lack of teacher's subject knowledge also hinders the progress pupils make. The school has recognised the need to improve teachers' knowledge and expertise in ICT and has planned a series of courses in the next academic year.
31. The teaching of English, and literacy in English lessons is good. Class teachers have a good understanding of all aspects of the literacy strategy. Planning for the literacy hour is effective and has been implemented well. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide work that is well matched to all pupils' needs and interests. Effective use of questions enable pupils to consolidate knowledge and extend their learning. Teachers' management in lessons varies. In some cases the introduction is too long and as a result the pupils become restless and difficult to manage.
32. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy in mathematics lessons is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Learning intentions for each lesson are clearly defined in the planning and shared with pupils. Lessons



begin with a good mental session before the main teaching and a time for recapping at the end. In the best lessons teachers question pupils effectively, challenging their thinking and taking their learning forward. They provide a range of interesting activities to stimulate the pupils' interest and help them to learn well. Weaknesses in teaching relate to unsatisfactory management skills and insufficiently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attention.

33. The teaching and learning in science are satisfactory. Strengths in teaching include very good planning, with teachers concentrating on well-defined objectives for pupils' learning. Teachers use resources well and provide pupils with clear explanations based on a variety of examples. Where teachers have insecure knowledge of the standards expected, their assessment of pupils' work is unreliable.
34. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good in art and design, history, ICT and physical education and in Key Stage 2 it is good in design and technology and geography. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects apart from religious education in both key stages and music in Key Stage 2 where insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement.
35. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan well to include activities that help pupils with special educational needs to succeed, including participating in school performances and extra-curricular activities. There is room for development in enabling assistants to be more involved in assessment and planning, thereby using their knowledge of the pupils. Teachers maintain thorough individual educational plans for pupils and try to ensure that everyone, including pupils' parents, is aware of pupils' targets for learning. These educational plans are always to hand in the classroom and include good achievable targets to do with personal development as well as academic progress. Teachers prepare these plans themselves so that they can use their own professional judgement about what is appropriate for the pupils in their class.
36. The quality of teaching and support from assistants is good, and they always take the opportunity to help pupils during lesson introductions and class discussions by quietly developing their understanding. Supporting within the classroom enables the school to include all pupils in all activities as they take place, This has been particularly important in literacy and numeracy lessons. For example, in a lesson in Year 4 about pirates pupils with special educational needs were encouraged to be confident in discussing people's feelings.

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

### **Learning Opportunities**

37. The curriculum provided for the children in the nursery and reception classes is good. It is well planned and managed and provides effective transition from the Foundation Stage to the National Curriculum. Both the nursery and reception classes have received the Hertfordshire Quality Status endorsement for early years' provision. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is generally broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum for older pupils had insufficient time allocation for English, mathematics and science. The school has worked hard to ensure that curriculum documentation is in place for all subjects. The school has taken into account the recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance. This is well

complemented by medium- and short-term plans that provide for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

38. Even though the school day has been lengthened the teaching week is still slightly below the recommended 23.5 hours for seven to 11-year olds. During the inspection lesson time was frequently lost by the late return of pupils from lunchtime and morning breaks; on one occasion, the session started ten minutes late.
39. Although the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced there is still room for improvement. Reading skills develop well so that they are above average by the time pupils are 11. The school provides specific opportunities for pupils to carry out extended forms of writing, and equips them with the knowledge and skills they need. However, pupils' ability to apply them to their writing is below average at seven and 11. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and the focus on the development of mental skills is helping to raise standards. Teachers use the strategy well and their planning identifies the learning objectives and tasks for pupils of different attainment levels.
40. The new computer suite has enhanced the provision for information and computer skills, although there are concerns about its size. There are schemes of work in place for all subjects and a common, detailed format is used for termly and weekly plans. There is a weakness in the planning for developing pupils' skills of investigation in science, particularly for seven to 11-year olds. Topic work is planned on a two year rolling programme to give similar opportunities to pupils in mixed age and in single year group classes. Some pupils regularly miss work in one subject when they attend instrumental lessons at the same time each week. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are being developed satisfactorily in other subjects.
41. There is some very good provision for pupils' personal development, for example the sessions for Year 6 pupils provided by the Hertfordshire Education Support Centre. Sex education is taught as a part of the planned science curriculum. However, there is no structured programme for personal, social and health education that builds on pupils' developing knowledge and understanding and this needs improvement. For example, awareness of drugs is provided in one off sessions for pupils in Year 6 and does not link with previous work.
42. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons for all pupils. Clubs are held for various sports, computers, sewing and drama. Those held during the inspection week were well attended and provide a valuable contribution to pupils' skills development. The curriculum is enriched by many visits including yearly residential visits for all pupils in the seven to 11 age group. The opportunities for the pupils to learn to play a range of musical instruments are another significant contribution to the curriculum. This very good provision plays an important part in their personal, social and cultural development.
43. Teachers plan well to include activities that help the pupils with special educational needs to succeed, including participating in school performances and extra-curricular activities. Classroom support is particularly beneficial for pupils with behavioural or physical difficulties. Teachers and assistants have good strategies for pupils who begin to disrupt lessons, by for example, giving them a task to do which is helpful and makes them feel valued for their positive behaviour. A pupil with visual impairment takes a full part in all school activities, including, for example, design and technology. She also has access to a computer that can increase the size of the print. It reflects on the caring atmosphere of the school that other pupils readily support their friends

with special educational needs. The school has a good system of assessment that enables it to identify those pupils who enter the school with special needs as soon as possible. Continuous assessment against pupils' individual targets enables the school to be flexible in moving pupils from one stage to another. Appropriate records are kept of pupils' progress.

44. People from the wider community contribute well to pupils' learning. Parents and grandparents work with small groups of pupils, for example helping with a cooking activity or supporting work in history by talking about their own childhood. Authors and artists visit the school. This term an artist will work with Year 1 pupils helping them extend their work on sculpture. The community police officer is a regular visitor to the school and works with each class during the term. The school also has good links with Glaxo SmithKline. The company provides some learning resources for the school and has also sponsored a taster tennis lesson for each pupil.
45. The school has an active partnership with other local primary schools and is also part of an outreach group that supports pre-school groups. There are some good links with the neighbouring secondary school that enable the pupils who transfer there to make a smooth transition between Years 6 and 7.

### **Personal Development**

46. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in all aspects.
47. There is a good variety of ways in which the school enhances pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the deeper issues of life such as friendship, and pupils experience moments of awe. For example, they sense the disciples' wonder at the re-appearance of Jesus after Easter, when they thought he was a gardener. Pupils participate in other ceremonies outside the school such as the carol service, a flower festival and a school leavers' service, when they are presented with a Bible. Some of their lessons lead to spontaneous wonder, such as when they show surprise and joy at the sight of an emerging butterfly pumping up its wings with dramatic changes of colour. This led to pupils exclaiming: 'Wow, they look like stars!' 'Or fireworks', 'That isn't real!' In other lessons, teachers plan writing which encourages pupils to reflect, on themes such as the effect humans are having on the Himalayas, the devastation of the earthquake in India, and the plight of evacuees. Pupils' writing about fireworks and in appreciation of Walter de la Mare's 'Silver' show a deep sense of wonder.
48. The school provides a good framework for moral development. School rules are clear and appropriate, and set the tone for good behaviour, and caring attitudes, so pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong. To focus pupils' minds, the school adopts a 'rule of the week'. However, the agreed policy for a progressive approach to dealing with misbehaviour is not consistently applied. Teachers act as positive role models for pupils so that they have good examples to follow.
49. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. There are many clubs in which pupils can participate, including some for sports, arts, and computers. Pupils in Year 6 participate in the Junior Citizen Scheme, in which they learn all aspects of safety with full regard for others as well as themselves. All pupils engage in regular fund-raising for charities such as the National Society for the Deaf and the needy in Romania. There is a very good programme of residential visits for the pupils. Year 2 camp on the field is an exciting preparation for being away from parents. This leads to

good opportunities for pupils to enjoy residential visits in places like Norfolk, York, Dover and the Isle of Wight. As well as enabling pupils to carry out geographical, historical and other studies, these courses help pupils to learn to live, work and play together. This carries on in lessons where pupils are encouraged to collaborate. The school plans to restore the pupils' school council that provides an opportunity for them to participate in the running of the school. Meanwhile, many pupils have a number of duties, some of which involve the older pupils assisting their younger friends.

50. The school recognises well the importance of cultural development. In assemblies, music is played as pupils enter and exit. This includes music from a variety of cultures. However, not enough reference is made for pupils fully to appreciate it. The school invites a range of authors and artists whose work benefits pupils' learning about literature and the arts. For example, Antony Lisak helped pupils to write stories during a 'book week'. Teachers make use of the arts to provide models for pupils' own creative work, and take pupils on visits to the Royal Opera House. The school pays attention to different faiths and recognises a variety of important festivals. However, this does not extend to sufficient reference to different cultures so pupils fully appreciate the richness they provide within their own community and beyond.

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

51. The school's provision for the welfare of pupils is satisfactory. All adults in the school have a strong commitment to the pupils and have a very caring approach. They are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and work hard to ensure that all pupils are included in the lessons and activities provided. Sometimes these efforts are exceptional, for example in providing medical support for one pupil who would not otherwise have been able to go on a residential visit with the rest of the class. Very good provision is made for pupils with statements of special educational need and this provision enables pupils to learn well. Pupils who enter the nursery are also very well supported and make a good start to school.
52. The school is secure and provides a safe environment for learning. However, improvements are needed in regard to some aspects of health and safety. Standards of cleanliness in the school are unsatisfactory and the smell from the toilet areas is unpleasant. Some repairs take a long time to be carried out, for example repairs to fencing. There is satisfactory provision for the treatment of minor injuries and staff training in basic first aid is good. Very good progress has been made in assessment of risks but this does not cover the full range of school activities. Improvement is needed in monitoring health and safety provision.
53. Provision for child protection is satisfactory and is in line with local procedures. However, improvements are needed in training for staff to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and to respond to disclosures from pupils. Improvements are also needed in the programme for personal, social and health education to enable pupils to make informed choices about their lives and to develop strategies to keep themselves safe. Some good opportunities are provided for Year 6 pupils, for example participation in the Junior Citizenship scheme and a drugs awareness session led by the community police officer but these are not integrated into a planned scheme of work.
54. The school has a strategy for promoting good behaviour but this is not applied consistently in all classes. Some pupils are proud of their achievements in gaining

awards for good behaviour and hard work but others feel that the system is unfair and rewards some pupils while not recognising the achievements of others. Good procedures are in place for recording and monitoring behaviour incidents and governors are involved in monitoring standards of behaviour in the school. The school places a priority on educational inclusion and works with the Hertfordshire Educational Support Centre to support individual pupils. Incidents of bullying or other oppressive behaviour are recorded and monitored closely. Some parents have concerns about the school's response to incidents of bullying but others consider that prompt and effective action is taken.

55. Good procedures are in place to promote good attendance and punctuality. The headteacher monitors patterns of absence and lateness and the Educational Welfare Officer provides support when needed.
56. There are no systematic procedures to record and monitor the personal development of all pupils but some end of year reports contain a good summary of pupils' personal strengths and areas for improvement. Good systems are in place in the nursery and reception class and the personal development of pupils with special educational needs is also well monitored.
57. There is no formal assessment policy. This is currently being finalised by the assessment co-ordinators. The procedures being followed are confined to specific areas. For example, individual pupils' results in statutory assessments at the age of seven have been carefully analysed. Consequently, challenging but realistic targets for pupils' attainment have been established. Voluntary national tests are used in order to monitor pupils' progress towards their targets from the age of eight to ten. The results in tests for 11-year-olds have been evaluated very well by matching pupils' results with their earlier levels of attainment to provide a reliable view of the school's effectiveness in English, mathematics and science. However, teachers generally have yet to acquire a working familiarity with the standards expected in subjects other than English and mathematics. This hampers their ability to assess pupils' work accurately in these subjects. Pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are not recorded systematically. This is a critical omission, especially in the current circumstances of staff instability.

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

58. The school's partnership with parents has many good features but a significant number of parents who attended the parents' meeting and who responded in the questionnaires have lost confidence in the school and this is a weakness. Thirty-eight per cent of parents contributed their views to the inspection by completing a questionnaire. Fifty-five parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and several parents contributed their views in discussions with inspectors during the inspection. Over half of the parents who contributed their views consider that the school does not work closely with them and that they are not well informed about their child's progress and standards of work. They are also critical of the way the school is led and managed. Parents are particularly concerned about the high level of staff movement and the lack of continuity in teaching their children. Parents also contributed very positive views of the school. Over eighty per cent said their children enjoy school. Parents value the good range of activities provided for their children including the very good provision of residential visits from Year 3 to Year 6. They also think that class teachers work hard and provide appropriate work for pupils to do at home.

59. Inspectors confirm parents' positive views. Parents' concerns about a lack of continuity in staffing are understandable but inspectors consider that the leadership and management of the school has done the best it can to lessen the impact of these changes. The school provides good information for parents in the prospectus and in monthly newsletters but a more frequent flow of information is needed about the day to day life of the school. Very good opportunities are provided for parents to find out about the work their children are doing, especially in English and mathematics, but the take-up by parents is relatively small. Good opportunities are also provided for parents to discuss their children's progress and standards of work with class teachers and recently with the teachers of sets in literacy and numeracy. There are also good opportunities for informal contact between parents and teachers before and after school, and these opportunities are especially effective in the nursery and the reception class. Parents of nursery children also receive very helpful information before their children attend and this enables them to support their children well and to ensure that they make a very good start to their education. The school tries to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in the regular reviews of their children's progress, but occasionally communications break down. Letters sent to parents are clear and welcoming.
60. The school provides information for parents about the work their children will be doing throughout the year but this is inconsistent. Some information helps parents to support their children's learning well but more detailed information about learning objectives is needed on a termly, rather than an annual, basis. Homework books are used very effectively between some class teachers and some parents but, again, good communications are not consistent throughout the school. Reading records are used effectively in the reception class and are a good link between home and school. End of year reports include some useful information about pupils' progress but there is insufficient guidance about the National Curriculum levels attained for parents to know how well their children are learning. A good feature of the reports is the inclusion of learning targets for each pupil.
61. Parents contribute very well to the life of the school and have a good opportunity to give their views in response to questionnaires circulated by the governing body. A small, dedicated group of parents works hard to improve the environment of the school and some parents contribute very effectively to pupils' learning by helping as volunteers in the classroom. A group of nine parents work a rota system to enable pupils to do some cooking in small groups and they are well supported by a member of staff. The Parent Teachers Association organises a range of events for pupils and parents and raises significant funds for new resources. The association was able to contribute to the provision of the new computer suite, which makes an important contribution to pupils' learning in ICT. A good number of parents attend the regular class assemblies on Fridays and share the celebration of pupils' achievements.

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

62. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. The leadership provides the school with clear educational direction. The staff share the aims and values of the school where each individual is recognised, valued and encouraged to work hard. This vision is to be seen in the good relationships that are shared between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. The school is committed to raising standards with equality of opportunity for all pupils. The leadership team is clear about where it needs to improve and there is a shared sense of determination to succeed and move forward.

63. In response to the last inspection there have been a range of improvements in the management of the school:
- The senior management team has been broadened to include two assessment co-ordinators,
  - Key stage leaders have been appointed,
  - Systems for monitoring teaching and the curriculum have been established,
  - Teachers planning is checked every week for clear learning objectives,
  - The head teacher checks that the activities include work for different ability groups,
  - The head teacher checks to see if homework is used to reinforce what is learned in school,
  - The head teacher observes lessons and gives feedback.
64. However, changes of staff and staff absence has meant that some initiatives have lost momentum, for example, the monitoring of the teaching and learning in the classroom. In addition, the development of the role of subject co-ordinators has been severely disrupted and is unsatisfactory. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning but there are weaknesses in this area of the school's work:
- Several curriculum areas are being covered temporarily by different members of staff,
  - Permanent subject co-ordinators are not provided with time or opportunities to assess pupils' levels of attainment and progress.
  - Some co-ordinators are insecure in their subject knowledge.
65. The assessment co-ordinators, who are also the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have analysed assessment data in order to monitor the achievement of different groups of pupils. This information is being used to identify trends and set targets for groups and individuals, particularly in English and mathematics. Based on this information, and observations made by class teachers, lower-attaining pupils are identified for additional support in literacy and numeracy and pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 are set for English and mathematics. Standards are likely to rise in English and mathematics this year but it is not possible to attribute this solely to the measures that have been taken.
66. The key stage leaders manage the day-to-day organisation of their key stage and act as important avenues of communication. In addition they have been instrumental in the development and introduction of curriculum planning in response to the new National Curriculum. They have set performance targets for colleagues and have been particularly involved in the induction and support of new staff. Important initiatives such as work sampling have begun but have been hindered by the frequent changes in staff.
67. Parents are rightly concerned about the impact of the frequency of staff changes and absence on the progress that their children make. The management of the school has taken the appropriate measures to provide the pupils with continuity in their learning. Indeed, the local education authority (LEA) has congratulated the school in its efforts. Other concerns raised by parents pertaining to the leadership and management of the school, including health and safety and relationships with parents are discussed under the relevant headings in the report.
68. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, at present the headteacher, provides good leadership so that all adults work together for the benefit of the pupils. The

governor with special responsibility for special needs is very supportive and the school works closely with outside agencies. The school makes good use of the funding for pupils who have special needs in providing assistants to support them within the classroom. The school's resources are adequate for their purpose, but pupils would benefit from some imaginative additions.

69. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties. The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and is kept well informed about the work of the school. There is a range of committees with appropriate terms of reference that are involved in financial planning, curriculum, personnel and premises. Members of the curriculum committee visit the school each term when they observe lessons and scrutinise lesson plans. The focus last term was on the provision for ICT. The curriculum committee receives information from the headteacher and the assessment co-ordinators about pupils' performance and target setting. There are governors with responsibility for numeracy, literacy and special educational needs. The literacy and numeracy governors have spoken to the co-ordinators about the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and observed lessons. Governors are linked to individual classes but visits are infrequent. Arrangements for performance management are in place and the governing body has set targets for the headteacher. At the present time members of the governing body do not perform annual risk assessments.
70. The governing body is not sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school. Although the committee structure allows for some involvement in the work of the school, the governing body relies too heavily on the information provided by the headteacher. Even when governors find out information for themselves this is not effectively shared with other governors. For example, individual governors knew of parental concerns but had not mentioned them to the chair of governors, or raised them at a meeting of the full governing body. Individual members have varying perceptions of the school's strengths and weaknesses but there is no coherent view of where the weaknesses lie or how the school needs to move forward.
71. The school improvement plan is an effective working document and is based on a thorough audit of the school's present position. The school has set itself a manageable number of clearly defined measurable targets that focus on the raising of standards. All new initiatives are carefully appraised in relation to likely costs. The school has established effective and efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor its finances. Budget setting is firmly linked to development planning and reflects well the educational needs of the pupils. There are close links between planning and resourcing.
72. The school reacted very positively to recover from the deficit budget that resulted from a substantial claw back of money by the LEA due to falling pupil numbers. The headteacher and governors worked closely with officers from the LEA to recoup this money and appointed a bursar to monitor the budget more carefully. The school has recovered from this deficit and has a small carry forward into the next financial year. Specific grants received by the school are used for the purposes for which they are intended and there is a detailed record of how the money has been spent. The specific grant for special educational needs is used effectively for its designated purpose. Financial control and administration are good. Records of financial decisions are accurate and clear. All the minor recommendations in the last audit report have already been implemented. Budget monitoring systems are effective.



73. The school applies the principles of best value well. For example, it analyses its performance using both national and local data and uses this to evaluate the standards that its pupils are achieving and where improvements are needed. Parents are provided with a range of opportunities to voice their opinions. Sometimes, the leadership and management of the school do not react quickly or rigorously enough to the suggestions that they make. For administrative purposes, the school makes satisfactory use of its technological capacity. Many of the administrative records are computerised and are well kept. The school seeks to obtain good value for money when purchasing goods and services.
74. The very high turnover of staff in recent years means that the match of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to the curriculum is weak. For example, there is insufficient expertise in music and the science co-ordinator is shortly to leave the school with no long-term plans for a replacement. Design and technology and art and design are co-ordinated by the same part-time teacher. Classroom assistants are well trained and contribute significantly to the progress made by pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult.
75. Resources are good in music, art and design, physical education and religious education where there is a good range of artefacts from different faiths. However, there is a lack of up-to-date reading books in English and the school has to borrow sensing equipment in order to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum in ICT.
76. The new computer suite has good resources but is located in a room that is poorly ventilated and too small for normal classes to be accommodated satisfactorily. General care and maintenance, including standards of cleanliness in public areas, classrooms and toilets are unsatisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection but in order to further improve the quality of education in the school, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- 1) \*Improve pupils' writing skills by:
  - Having higher expectations of pupils in drafting and re-drafting their work.
  - Applying the school's marking policy consistently in order to support pupils with the development of accurate English and to demonstrate higher expectations of style, handwriting and presentation
  - Having higher expectations of pupils in the assessment and correction of their own writing, so that they successfully apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy.
  - Creating more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills in subjects other than English in order to reinforce their application.  
(see paragraphs: 1-8, 11, 97, 98, 103, 104, 107, 108)
- 2) \*Raise standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 by:
  - Improving the quality and range of reading books,
  - Monitoring pupils' progress more rigorously and taking effective action to overcome difficulties.  
(see paragraphs: 1-3, 11, 97, 98, 101)
- 3) \*Raising standards in science, particularly in Years 3 to 6 by:
  - Improving the teaching of scientific enquiry,
  - Giving a greater emphasis to the study of materials and their properties,
  - Improving management of the subject,
  - Improving teachers' assessment skills.  
(see paragraphs: 4-8, 13, 118, 120, 123 )
- 4) Improving the provision for subject co-ordination by:
  - Ensuring all subjects have a co-ordinator,
  - Providing co-ordinators with opportunities to monitor standards in their subjects,
  - Providing training opportunities for them to improve their subject knowledge.  
(see paragraphs: 64, 66, 74, 108, 126, 136, 141, 156, 165)
- 5) Establishing systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics.  
(see paragraphs: 57, 125, 141, 146, 152)
- 6) Improving relationships with parents by:
  - Providing more information about what is happening in school,
  - Ensuring action is taken promptly to resolve concerns and to keep parents well informed about what is being done.  
(see paragraphs: 58 – 61, 67)

*\* denotes an issue already highlighted as a priority in the school's improvement plan (numbers in brackets indicate a reference to the main paragraphs where the weaknesses are discussed.)*

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

- Ensure that the governing body takes a more active role in shaping the direction of the school,
- Ensure that the school's behaviour policy is applied more consistently,
- Provide further opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society,
- Develop a policy and scheme of work for the teaching of personal, social and health education,
- Provide training for staff on issues relating to child protection.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	42	31	8	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)	15	214
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	50

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	18	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	9
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	21	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (87)	72 (79)	83 (92)
	National	83 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	9	9
	Girls	14	16	13
	Total	19	25	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (84)	86 (82)	76 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
	2000	17	17	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	12
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	23	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (74)	65 (67)	79 (79)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	8	5
	Girls	11	11	9
	Total	15	15	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44 (67)	44 (69)	41 (74)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	195
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4:1
Average class size	23.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28:1

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.3:1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/ 01
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	£
Total income	544,718
Total expenditure	520,329
Expenditure per pupil	2132
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15,796
Balance carried forward to next year	8593

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	229
Number of questionnaires returned	83

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	27	53	14	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	18	39	23	8	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	11	47	18	17	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	8	57	17	7	11
The teaching is good.	16	43	11	11	19
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	12	30	31	23	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	20	29	24	25	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	14	40	18	8	19
The school works closely with parents.	10	28	30	29	4
The school is well led and managed.	7	17	20	47	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	11	48	20	11	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	49	22	5	13

## **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**

78. Since the last inspection the good provision for children under five has been maintained and this lays a secure foundation for future learning. On entry to the nursery, at the beginning of the Foundation Stage of their education, children have a wide range of attainment particularly in spoken language, mathematics and in their personal and social development. Initial assessment records show that, overall, attainment is in line with what might be expected for children of this age. On entry to the reception class standards are average when compared nationally. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of the Foundation Stage, when the children leave their reception class, almost all of them will reach standards expected for their age in the early learning goals for all six areas of learning. All pupils achieve because of the quality of teaching.
79. Children begin the Foundation Stage of their education in the nursery in the September or January of the year in which they are four. They attend part-time, for a morning session. They enter the reception class in the September or January of the following year. Relationships with parents are good and this helps children to settle in quickly and begin to learn and achieve well. Teachers, nursery nurses and learning support staff forge good, trusting relationships with parents and carers, who receive good information about what their children will learn. Parents are welcomed as partners in the education of their children. They are welcome to work alongside teachers in both the nursery and reception classes. The reception teacher makes good use of homework. Regular activities are suggested for parents to carry out with their children to consolidate learning in literacy and numeracy lessons and there is a good system to enable them to report back what their children have achieved.
80. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There are strong links between the nursery and reception classes to ensure that, as they grow older, the children continue to learn and achieve well. Detailed planning ensures that the new early years curriculum, introduced in 2000, is securely based on the nationally recommended six areas of learning for nursery and reception children. This is an improvement since the last inspection when learning in reception was related to National Curriculum targets alone. Provision for the physical development of children in reception is unsatisfactory because they have no regular access to a secure outdoor play area. The detailed plans for each term show what will be taught for each area of learning. Assessments made early in the year in the nursery and in reception classes are used to plan work that matches the children's learning needs. The achievements and progress of the children are continuously assessed and monitored and information gathered is used well to plan work that challenges and interests children with differing levels of attainment. This results in weekly planning that has specific learning objectives for each planned activity that match the learning needs of the children, enabling staff to focus their work sharply on developing specific skills. Resources are satisfactory for all the areas of learning. Resources in the nursery are good because basic equipment has been supplemented by a significant number of resources brought in by the nursery staff. They are used well to provide good learning activities and this contributes significantly to the good achievements of the children by the time they leave the reception class.



81. There is a high proportion of good teaching in all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. This is a satisfactory improvement on the good teaching seen during the last inspection. Teaching is now good in 60 per cent of lessons, very good in 30 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. Teaching in the nursery overall is very good. A strength of teaching is the way the teacher, nursery nurse and learning support assistant work well together as a team to plan, teach and evaluate the children's learning. They know the children well and understand their needs. Consequently the children's achievements are good. The achievements of children with special educational needs are equally good because their learning needs are identified early and they receive very good provision to help them learn. There is a good balance between teacher directed learning and free choice activities, which are structured well to allow children to increase their creative, imaginative and physical skills.

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

82. By the time they are five most children achieve the standards expected. Inspection evidence indicates that nursery children will exceed expectations in this area because of the skilful teaching, very good provision and the high expectations of what they can achieve. In both classes children have positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy coming to school and form good relationships with the staff. A significant minority of children in reception have not yet learned to share and take turns and they will often interrupt the conversations of others. In both classes children work happily with a good degree of independence and with increasing confidence. Most dress and undress themselves for physical education lessons with little adult support. Routines are well established and pupils know what is expected of them. As a result of this their behaviour is generally good. Children's concentration in group and class sessions is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. Many children persevere and stay on task when working independently at a chosen activity. They are able to co-operate when, for example, they play together with construction kits or in the imaginative play areas. At drinks time children enjoy taking turns to distribute drinks and say 'please' and 'thank you' in return. They willingly help to tidy up at the end of each session.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in the nursery class. The provision of an ordered routine offers security to young children. Independence is developed in both classes by allowing children some choice in their activities. There are high expectations that children should be active learners; for example very good learning took place in the nursery when a group of children making biscuits were able to carry out the full process independently, with the teacher offering good advice. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the children and strive to increase their confidence and self esteem. In a whole class session when a child lacked the confidence to draw a picture for the class book, the nursery nurse handled this sensitively by saying, 'Shall we draw the monkey together?' which they did. Children are taught well in the nursery to take turns and listen to each other's contributions. In a regular, weekly session they share ideas on a chosen topic, for example looking after a tortoise, and speak only when they are holding the 'tortoise.' Expectations are not as high in reception and, as a result, some children are still unwilling to sit for short periods without interrupting others. Children are taught the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to think about the impact of their action on others, for example, when a child was hit by another. Staff use drinks time well to sit with the children and talk to them informally, and this contributes to the very good relationships between staff and children.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

84. By the time they are five most children achieve the standards expected. Children in the nursery have regular, daily opportunities to share their news. Most interact well with each other; speaking confidently and taking turns in conversation. They listen attentively to stories for an appropriate length of time. Listening skills are less well-developed in reception and children still often interrupt each other.
85. In the nursery pre-reading skills are well developed. Average attaining children know that print carries meaning and that English is read from left to right. They are becoming aware of the format of a story, knowing the meaning of words such as 'title' and 'cover.' One girl pointed to the title of a book and said, 'Those are words and words are writing.' Children in the nursery handle books carefully and can 'read' a book they know well by using the pictures to retell the story. Many children are beginning to recognise the initial sounds of words and higher-attaining children are recognising words that rhyme. In the reception class many children are beginning to read simple sentences correctly and are building up a useful sight vocabulary of known words. Lower-attaining children recognise some words and can remember a number of sounds. Average and higher-attaining children attempt to make sense of unknown words using initial sounds and some of them are beginning to blend sounds together. A significant minority of children will exceed the early learning goals for reading.
86. Children in the nursery have a well-developed understanding of the purpose of writing. They regularly 'write' by themselves and some can confidently read back what they have written. The early writing of higher-attaining children shows the correct use of some initial letters as they attempt to write words. Most older children write their own names. Their early attempts at writing are better than those seen in most nurseries. In reception some children are beginning to write their own sentences. Higher-attaining children use strategies to sound out parts of unfamiliar words to help them to spell.
87. The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on standards. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced into reception to plan appropriate activities. When children learn through play with staff they are very skilfully encouraged to talk about what they are doing. This was seen when children talked with the nursery nurse whilst making animal masks and her questions and explanations expanded the vocabulary of the children. The structured play area in the nursery is used well to develop spoken language. The basic skills of reading and writing are very well taught and this enables children to achieve well. Storybooks are taken home regularly to share with parents and all children in reception have early reading books. Writing is particularly well taught in the nursery and staff and children write regularly together, the teacher acting as scribe. There are many well-chosen opportunities for children to write for themselves, for example in the role-play area or by writing speech related to known stories. Higher-attaining children in reception are not given enough opportunities to develop independent writing at the same pace as their reading by the provision of, for example, a bank of known words which they can use. The children effectively develop their handwriting through regular practice of writing patterns and letter formation.

## **Mathematical development**

88. By the time they are five most children achieve the standards expected. Many children in the nursery can count to 10 or more and order numbers to 10 correctly. When working with support, more able children count correctly seven 'elephants' and add or subtract them to make numbers below 10.
89. Most children in reception can add numbers practically to 10. More able children count confidently beyond 20 and can add 'one more' or 'one less. The good use of sand and water play successfully increases the children's understanding of capacity. Reception children are secure in their understanding of 'taller than' and 'shorter than' after a walk around school when they compared the size of objects. They create simple mathematical patterns using two, then three, colours.
90. The teaching is good overall and children achieve well. A good range of structured and unstructured learning activities are provided to extend their understanding of different mathematical concepts. Nursery children are introduced to early measurement when they use a rod of cubes to measure the height of a plant they are growing. The story of Noah's Ark is used well to introduce the idea of pairs. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced in the reception class and it is used to plan lessons appropriately. Teachers carry out day to day assessments well and they are good at using the information gathered to plan learning activities that match the different needs of the children. Occasionally higher-attaining children in reception are not challenged sufficiently. In one lesson, the children were ordering numbers to 10, which they could do easily. One child had written two numbers closely together and said, 'That is 61.' Number songs and rhymes are used frequently and well to reinforce the learning of numbers and early addition and subtraction.

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

91. By the time they are five most children achieve the standards expected, with some achieving higher. In the nursery children understand the passing of time when they discuss and sequence activities for the day. Many children remember which activities occur when, for example one child said, 'We only change our shoes for PE on Tuesdays and we undress on Thursdays.' They are beginning to remember the sequence of days. Children look closely at similarities, differences and change; in food technology they make biscuits and recognise how the mixture changes as ingredients are added and the biscuits are baked. As part of an animal topic they have built up a good fund of knowledge about wild animals. For one day they looked after a tortoise to find out how to care for it. By growing plants from seeds they have watched the seeds germinate, making regular observations to measure how tall the plants have grown. In the reception class children are finding out about the minibeast world. They have learned where minibeasts live by exploring the school grounds and know a range of facts about them. By observing snails in the classroom they have found out how they move and feed. Together they have helped to design and make an underground environment for worms in the sand tray. In both classes activities such as making animal masks and minibeasts allows children to cut, join and stick materials. They use tape recorders independently to listen to stories. They can use computers to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills, often without support.
92. Teaching is good and ensures that children with diverse learning needs are provided with a good, wide and challenging range of learning opportunities. Staff interact well with children in informal play situations and extend their knowledge and

understanding by skilful questioning. The questioning of a learning support assistant as two children were experimenting with mixing combinations of corn flour, water and paints extended their understanding of textures and colours. Children making biscuits were encouraged to look closely at the changes in their mixtures as they added more ingredients and they noticed that they were 'eggier' and 'goeey.'

### **Physical development**

93. By the time they are five most children achieve the standards expected, Children in both classes have regular physical education lessons. Nursery children work with control and confidence as they move their arms and legs quickly and slowly, high and low. They use wheeled toys, climbing apparatus and tunnels with good co-ordination and balance. The development of skills can be seen as older children in reception move with good control and co-ordination, travelling around, under, over and through equipment. Finer physical skills are developing appropriately. Children show sound control when handling scissors, for example when cutting out the eyes of minibeast masks. Manipulative skills are often good. Children show increasing dexterity as they work with pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. Nursery children show good skills as they use play dough to roll out and cut animal shapes.
94. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well. Children and staff dress appropriately for physical education lessons. Warm up activities help children to recognise changes to their bodies as they exercise. Staff often act as good role models to demonstrate skills, which children can model. Class management in these lessons is good and children listen and behave well. Activities are well chosen to develop fine physical skills and children are taught to hold and use pencils, paintbrushes and scissors correctly. The outdoor area for the nursery has appropriate equipment to promote the skills of climbing, jumping and balancing. However, children in the reception class do not have regular access to a secure outdoor area.

### **Creative development**

95. By the time they are five most children achieve the standards expected. They are able to express their feelings through exploring a range of media and materials, music and movement and imaginative play. Children paint imaginatively, experimenting with different types of brushes and mixing colours. They explore a variety of materials to make collages and masks. The observational drawings of a tortoise by nursery children show good detail. Reception children use boxes well to make homes for their mimibeasts that they had made earlier. The vet's surgery and minibeast world are used regularly and effectively for imaginative play. Children sing often, listen to music and play musical instruments.
96. The teaching is good. A wide range of stimulating activities is provided to help children learn whilst they explore and create. Good intervention by staff helps to support and extend their ideas and understanding; for example the skilful questioning of the teacher enabled children to develop their imagination in the design and making of their 'minibeast' masks.

## **ENGLISH**

97. By the age of seven, pupils' overall attainment in English is below average. This is a decline since the last inspection. By the age of 11, pupils have made good progress

and attain the average overall standards identified at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

98. In reading and writing, results of the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds were below average nationally and well below those for schools with a similar intake. This followed a sequence of rises and falls over the previous three years. Girls performed better than boys. Inspection findings confirm that reading and writing standards are below average. In English, results of the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds were also below average nationally and well below those for similar schools. Nevertheless, standards had risen in keeping with a similar national trend. Here, too, girls performed better than boys. This is partially explained by the fact that the majority of pupils with special needs were boys. Inspection findings for current 11-year-olds are that overall attainment is average. Within this, reading standards are above average, and writing standards are below average. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average for both seven- and 11-year-olds.

### **Speaking and Listening**

99. By the age of seven, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are average. Pupils can discuss, for example, the elements of a story, using terms such as 'setting' and 'characters'. They confidently suggest a wide variety of interesting words to describe a difficult situation for their story writing, such as being caught in the snow. However, a significant number of pupils will not listen attentively either to the teacher or to one another, although they are capable of doing so.
100. By the age of 11, pupils' speaking and listening skills are also average. They are more developed when engaged in discussions with a teacher. Pupils discuss the purposes and merits of different styles of published text in a very mature manner, using precise terms such as 'imagery' and 'metaphor' about phrases such as 'swallowed up by the gloom'. They also use the evidence of real election leaflets to make sensible judgements about them. However, they are less confident in situations where they have to sustain an argument, such as in a debate about what should be done about a convict. Pupils listen well to music in assemblies and in the classroom. By doing so, pupils in Year 4 talk in detail about the lyrics in a song, for example, and confidently comment on their relevance to everyday living.

### **Reading**

101. By the age of seven, pupils' reading skills are below average. Less able pupils read very hesitantly, although they tackle new words confidently. Pupils of average ability are also hesitant but are beginning to be expressive. More able pupils read texts expressively and discuss story plots. They put themselves in the shoes of different characters so that they describe their feelings. These pupils are beginning to know their way around the non-fiction library, and can use a book's contents page or index. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy reading and know the meaning of 'author' and 'illustrator'.
102. By the age of 11, pupils' reading skills have progressed very well to be above average. Less able pupils predict what might happen in a story, and identify different types of narrative. They also know that newspapers can be biased. Pupils of average ability explain their book preferences in detail, and compare the layouts of pages in fiction and non-fiction books, using terms such as 'font' and 'glossary'. More able pupils give examples of good character description, and have an advanced

understanding of the use of language to create an effect on the reader. All pupils successfully locate books and specific information in the non-fiction library.

### **Writing**

103. By the age of seven, pupils' writing is below average. Less able pupils write about a string of events without linking their ideas clearly and their handwriting is not well formed. However, some of their spellings show an awareness of letter sounds. Pupils of average ability still do not separate their sentences accurately, but their stories are more structured. Their sentences are more complicated, using words such as 'when' and 'because' and use description more effectively. However, more able pupils have a style that is no further developed. All pupils' handwriting tends to be irregular, but spelling is good. The presentation of their work is very variable, and often unsatisfactory.
104. By the age of 11, pupils' writing is also below average. Less able pupils still write short sentences and are inaccurate with their punctuation. Pupils of average ability structure their stories well and use correct punctuation. They have progressed little in developing interesting sentences, but some words are chosen to have an effect on the reader. Some of the more able pupils' work is well above average, especially in its use of different styles. Pupils are able to adopt the style of a particular author, and write perceptive critiques of poetry, such as of Wordsworth's 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge'. They then write their own sensitively descriptive poems. Pupils properly divide their stories into paragraphs and descriptions are vivid. Pupils are also aware of the elements of a good newspaper article such as about local flooding, and 'quote' the thoughts of residents. Handwriting and presentation varies greatly, with some of the more able pupils still not joining their letters.
105. The quality of teaching is good in both the infant and junior parts of the school. It varies more in the infant classrooms from unsatisfactory to very good. Teachers of infant pupils plan their lessons well, and prepare resources to challenge pupils at different levels of understanding, such as when asking them to re-arrange on a computer mixed up sentences about the seaside. This positive approach extends to other activities, so that, for example, pupils in Year 1 respond eagerly to the opportunity to suggest rhyming words. Once pupils are into their group tasks both teachers and classroom assistants, effectively assess pupils' understanding and support their learning where necessary. Teachers' management in lessons varies. The introduction to some lessons is too long and as a result the class becomes restless and the pace of the lesson slows while the teacher seeks to maintain control.
106. Teachers of junior pupils prepare interesting activities in which all of them can participate. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote letters to the education minister about the rights and wrongs of homework. Pupils of all abilities contributed eagerly to the preliminary discussion. Another activity that the pupils in this class enjoyed was writing in an unusual style, such as a shopping list as a poem. Such was the positive atmosphere of the classroom that pupils had a high degree of self-esteem, so that the less able were able to say such things as 'I am not much good at spelling, but I am trying to improve'. At other times they humorously pushed their teacher to challenge them more when, for example, trying to identify unstressed vowels in words. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils' use of language, so that, for example, they learned what was needed to construct a mature, persuasive argument.

107. Lessons always begin with their aim being clearly presented, and pupils being very well prepared for their activities. Teachers word their questions well, so pupils have to think about such things as the little details of a story. They also appropriately target their questions in order to include everyone in discussions. The quality of the introduction, together with the good rapport between teacher and pupils, generally encourages them to settle down very quickly to their tasks, often in self-imposed silence. When using examples from literature, teachers provide a good model of expressive reading. Again, classroom assistants provide attentive support, especially to those with behavioural difficulties, so that they can make positive use of their abilities. Teachers make good use of homework to extend pupils learning. However, there is inconsistent use of the marking policy, so that some work has no comments at all, while other work has detailed corrective and constructive comments.
108. The curriculum for writing is broad and interesting. However, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to participate in drama and some of the reading books are outdated. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and very good for pupils with statements of learning, behavioural or physical difficulties. Pupils' work makes a good contribution to their spiritual development, such as when they write about evacuees and how they prayed in thankfulness for food and shelter. There is little use of computers except for occasional word-processing. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and help prepare the staff for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. She has undertaken a detailed analysis of pupils' test results and as a result targets have been set for individual pupils. Information from these tests is also used to set pupils so that work can be more carefully tailored to their needs and for setting targets for each pupil in Years 3 to 6. However, there has been insufficient direct monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. More detailed tracking of pupils' progress is necessary if planning is to continue to be targeted to their needs.

## **MATHEMATICS**

109. The standards being achieved by seven-year-olds are broadly average. This is a similar picture to that recorded at the time of the last inspection. The number of pupils achieving at the expected level (Level 2) is higher than that recorded in the 2000 National Curriculum tests, however there are fewer pupils achieving at the higher level (Level 3). The standards being achieved by 11-year-olds in Year 6 are close to the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection and standards are higher than those achieved by the pupils' in the 2000 National Curriculum tests. Taking into account the levels of achievement of pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 5, standards are likely to rise in the next year. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
110. Pupils' results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were well below the national average at the expected level (Level 2 and above). The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, (Level 3) was above the national average in mathematics. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account) results were close to the national average. In the national tests for 11-year-olds pupils' results were below the national average at the expected level (Level 4 and above). The percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, (Level 5) was also below the national average. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account) results were below the

national average. Nevertheless, the trend for improvement is broadly in line with the national trend.

111. By the age of seven, most pupils add two, two-digit numbers, read and write figures to 100 and distinguish between odd and even numbers. They count in 2s, 5s, and 10s and solve simple money problems. The scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they have a satisfactory understanding of the properties of flat shapes, they use standard units when measuring and are beginning to represent data in block graphs. In lessons pupils use their knowledge of counting in tens to solve more difficult problems.
112. By the age of 11, pupils' earlier work shows that most have a satisfactory understanding of the four number operations and the value of numbers when multiplying by 10 or 100. They use negative numbers and have a satisfactory knowledge of multiplication tables. The higher- and average-attaining pupils understand multiples, factors, square numbers and digital roots and work out the probability of events. They develop their knowledge of the properties of flat and solid shapes and rotational symmetry. The pupils record data on block graphs and construct straight line graphs to convert miles into kilometres. In lessons, pupils recall products and quotients and use their understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages to solve problems and devise their own.
113. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to very good but is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Staff have worked hard to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy and lesson planning has improved as a result of this. Lessons now have clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils so that they understand what they are expected to learn. Most lessons contain a good mental session before the main teaching is done, and they also finish with some form of recap of the objectives, although not always enough time is left for this. In the very good lessons, the teachers have good subject knowledge and question pupils well, effectively assessing their knowledge and understanding before asking supplementary questions to challenge their thinking and taking their learning forward. In a lesson in a Year 5/6 class the teacher effectively used the outcomes of assessments to guide the pace and direction of the lesson. In these lessons teachers provide a good range of stimulating activities to excite the pupils and engage them in their learning. In response, the pupils settle well to the activities and work with interest and concentration. In a lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils settled to their group activities very well displaying high levels of self-discipline and motivation.
114. In some lessons teachers do not set high enough expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and do not manage the behaviour of some pupils well. In these lessons a small minority of pupils are inattentive, they do not wait their turn to answer and thereby interfere with the learning of others. Nevertheless, because of their poor behaviour the pace of the lesson slackens while the teacher seeks to maintain control.
115. Examination of pupils' past work indicates that the quality of marking of pupils' work varies unacceptably from teacher to teacher. In some cases, work is marked well with clear indications as to what the pupils have done well and where they need to improve, however this is not the case in all classes. In some, work is simply marked with a tick, or not marked at all and on the odd occasion work that is incorrect is marked as correct.



116. The curriculum is broad and balanced and takes account for all areas of learning. There is a range of evidence of pupils using mathematics to help their learning in lessons such as in science, geography, history and ICT. In science, for example, pupils measure the length an elastic band stretches when weights are attached or how long it takes for a parachute to fall, and record their findings in tables and graphs. In geography, pupils have recorded data interviews in the form of block graphs and pie charts. In history, pupils use timelines to develop an understanding of the passing of time in such periods as the Incas or the Tudors. There are good opportunities for pupils to use computers to investigate angles of turn or to record the cost of shopping on a spreadsheet. During the inspection, the pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 visited a Johnny Ball's 'maths road show', which they enjoyed and which stimulated their interest in the subject.
117. This subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to develop the subject and help prepare the staff for the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. He has worked alongside his colleagues in the classroom and monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work. As assessment co-ordinator he has undertaken a detailed analysis of test results, identifying weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding and the curriculum has been adjusted as a result. Information from these tests is also used to 'set' pupils so that work can be more carefully tailored to their needs and for setting targets for each pupil in Years 3 to 6. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and are stored appropriately.

## **SCIENCE**

118. By the age of seven, pupils have attained average standards but by the age of 11, they have not attained the standards expected. Since the last inspection, standards in Years 1 and 2 have risen to the national average and teachers' use of clear objectives has improved but standards in the later years remain below average.
119. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2000 show that the proportion of both boys and girls attaining the levels expected of seven-year-olds were well below that found in schools nationally as well as in similar schools. This was due to the higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was close to the national average. The standards of work seen show that pupils now in Year 2 are attaining the expected levels.
120. Pupils' results in tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 were below those found in schools nationally and well below those in similar schools. Teachers' assessments were inaccurate, underestimating pupils' results in tests by about a half. Since the time of the last inspection, attainment in science has fallen steadily from above to below average. In the last three years, boys' attainment has been about one term behind that of girls. Neither in written work seen nor in lessons visited was there any indication that boys now have lower attainment than girls. However, as instances of poor concentration, distraction or misconduct are more common among boys than girls, over time the progress made by these boys is slower than that of which they are capable. The results of those pupils who attended the school from Year 2 in 1996 to Year 6 in 2000 show that they did not achieve as well as expected. Overall, pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

121. In all years, teachers take good account of the needs of low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Consequently, the progress made by these pupils is good and they achieve well.
122. By the age of seven pupils have a good knowledge of physical processes, for example being able to describe the key features of simple electrical circuits. Their understanding of life processes is good, as they demonstrated well when discussing the stages in the development of the frog. Pupils recognised that reproduction is a general characteristic of living things and gave other examples to justify this.
123. By the age of 11, pupils can describe the effects of changes in series electrical circuits, interpreting and using conventional notation. Year 6 pupils know what needs to be done to set up a fair test, as they showed when planning experiments to investigate how sound travels through various materials. Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and knowledge of materials and their properties are weaker than other aspects of science, particularly between the ages of eight and 11. For example, although pupils can speculate about likely outcomes to an experiment, the quality of conclusions and generalisations that are offered by older pupils is usually immature and shows little difference from those of younger pupils.
124. Teaching is satisfactory across the school. The quality of teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. Strengths in teaching include very good planning, with teachers concentrating on well-defined objectives for pupils' learning. For example, in a lesson on sound in a Year 6 class, the teacher questioned pupils closely, probing their understanding of earlier work on the properties of solids and gases. In this way, they were encouraged to reason carefully and clearly, relating sound propagation to the density of molecules. Key learning is strengthened when teachers use resources well and provide pupils with clear explanations based on a variety of examples. The features of the life cycle were taught clearly in a lesson in Year 2 when the teacher combined references to earlier literacy work with a video clip and clear examples drawn from pupils' experience. Where teachers have insecure knowledge of the standards expected, their assessment of pupils is unreliable. In these circumstances, they are not able to guide more capable pupils towards higher levels of attainment.
125. Curriculum planning is good and follows national guidance, but procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are poor. Hence, there is a lack of reliable assessment information to refine curriculum planning. When the school has fully implemented its new policy, test results will be used to monitor pupils' progress towards their targets and form the basis of information for teachers.
126. Management of this core subject is poor. The time available to the part-time teacher who held the post unaided until the week of the inspection was inadequate for the demands of the post. During the days when she was not in school, no formal support was available for teachers.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

127. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two art and design lessons. However, a scrutiny of pupils' finished work shows that standards are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and 11. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
128. By the age of seven, pupils have made satisfactory progress in their skills and understanding of art and design. They have a wide range of experiences in two and

three dimensions. Year 1 pupils made interesting abstract sculptures after studying the work of modern sculptors and cubist artists such as Mondrian. They are beginning to evaluate each other's work. Observational drawing features regularly in all classes and pupils are encouraged to look closely at the world around them. Drawings of leaves and plants by Year 2 pupils show good attention to detail. These pupils have also used a paint program to produce fish paintings of good quality, designing intricate patterns, mixing colours and using different brushstrokes to good effect.

129. By the age of 11, pupils have continued to develop their observational skills and techniques at a satisfactory rate. They use pencil line and shading confidently to represent accurately what they see. Sketchbooks for older pupils show experimentation with shades of colours. They create textures with pencils and explore patterns and orientation. They continue to study and use the different approaches of recognised artists and sculptors. Year 5/6 pupils create high quality geometric shape paintings using the picture of 'The Snail' by Matisse to inspire them. In the same class pupils have evaluated a range of containers on their aesthetic and functional merits, prior to designing and making their own using papier-mâché and clay. The finished products are of a high standard.
130. The quality of teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. The achievement of pupils matched the quality of the teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Planning in both lessons was thorough and good organisation enabled all pupils to be fully involved. In the lesson where the teaching was good a well chosen range of pictures of modern sculpture and paintings enabled pupils to develop their understanding of abstract art and transfer this to the production of their own cubist sculptures. They responded well to the teacher's high expectations and their sculptures reflected their understanding. Teachers in all classes make good use of computer programs to develop pupils' painting and drawing skills. Pupils clearly enjoy their art lessons. Their levels of concentration and perseverance have a positive effect on their learning. In most classes, pupils have good relationships with one another and collaborate well. For example, pupils in Year 1 worked well together to design and make sculptures.
131. A new scheme of work has been in place since September 2000. This provides teachers with good support and guidance for the planning and teaching of appropriate activities. It has improved the quality of planning overall and has increased the opportunities to study the work of known artists and craftspeople. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is still a weakness in the provision of the systematic development of skills and techniques. This is partly because there is no formal assessment or record keeping, and in addition, the subject co-ordinator is not provided with sufficient opportunities to monitor standards or pupils' progress. The present co-ordinator, who has been in post since last September is using her expertise and enthusiasm to raise standards further, although it is too soon to see the effect. She supports and gives guidance to colleagues and has re-organised and extended resources to ensure that there are materials and tools available for each topic. Resources are now good and stored well for easy access; this has improved since the last inspection when the quality and storage of resources were unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored planning and pupils' work informally and she uses examples of good work to show what can be achieved.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

132. Opportunities to see lessons during the inspection were limited. However, it was clear from displays of pupils' work and from discussions with them, that standards of work

in Year 2 were similar to those found in most schools and in Year 6 they were above this level. Pupils who have special educational needs or who find practical work challenging are well supported, participating fully and achieving well. Since the last inspection standards have improved in Key Stage 2 but have fallen in Key Stage 1.

133. By the age of seven, pupils know how to represent their intentions in a clearly labelled plan before making models or other artefacts. Whilst making puppets, promoted by work in literacy, Year 2 pupils checked their plans and worked hard to ensure their intended features, such as colour and decorative items, match their drawings. They can describe the prominent features of their work and offer suggestions for changes or improvements.
134. High standards are achieved by 11-year-olds. Pupils in Year 6 have studied the way footwear is made by deconstructing slippers and evaluating them. They have used this knowledge to design their own and make preliminary models, establishing clear design specifications and checking the feasibility of their designs. They describe examples of modifications well. The final products, along with their designs and evaluations, show attention to detail in order to produce artefacts of a good standard.
135. On the basis of the small number of lessons seen, teachers written plans and the standards pupils achieve, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The clear explanations, to which pupils listen carefully, provide a good basis for learning through practical experience. Health and safety matters are dealt with satisfactorily, and the resources available include a good range of materials, tools and equipment. Links with other subjects, art and design, ICT, science and literacy for example, make lessons efficient and productive with all pupils learning successfully. Those who find learning difficult make good progress as a result of effective practical help from support staff such as that given to a visually impaired pupil. Teachers manage pupils well and encourage them to work considerately with others, thereby promoting their moral and social development well.
136. Despite the enthusiasm and commitment of the co-ordinator, who has been in post since September, the management of this subject is barely satisfactory. Insufficient time is made available for the post holder, who is also responsible for art and design, to fulfil her monitoring role. Teachers' termly plans are checked against the scheme of work but their teaching is not observed. The co-ordinator has established a routine of visiting other teachers regularly in order to ensure that they have opportunities to discuss their work in this subject. This enables them to plan suitable lessons, based on but not dictated by, the national schemes of work. In this way, teachers benefit from informed discussions of standards. In order to raise standards, teachers should become more familiar with the attainment targets to enable them to assess work confidently and reliably.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

137. Standards are at expected levels for pupils aged seven and 11. They are lower than at the last inspection when standards were judged to be above national expectations. Since then the time allocation for geography has been significantly reduced because of the national priority to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.
138. The teachers of pupils in Year 1 make good use of the local area and pupils know some of its features. They know what they might see at the seaside and that it is different to their own locality. Most Year 2 pupils recognise a map of Great Britain and know the names of the countries. They identify features on a map such as towns,

islands and the coastline and are secure in recognising the position of north and south. They know some places in other parts of the world and can explain, for example, 'I went to Tenerife on a plane because it's across the sea.' Pupils in Year 1 begin to draw and use maps. Seven-year-olds draw recognisable picture maps and higher-attaining pupils in this class, show a good understanding of the purpose of plans and symbols. The development of map skills is weaker than at the last inspection when it was deemed to be good. These skills are not developed systematically with older pupils and pupils in Year 6 do not use Ordnance Survey maps. Discussions with these pupils show that appropriate activities have given them a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the other elements of the geography curriculum.

139. Teaching was good in half the lessons seen and satisfactory, with good features, in the others. The achievement of pupils matches the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. All lessons are well planned and learning objectives are shared so pupils know what they were going to do and find out. Well-focused questions are used at the beginning of sessions to find out what pupils have already learned and to build on this. In a good lesson in the Year 6 class, pupils were interested and involved as they discussed why there might be tourism in mountain regions. They then used this knowledge to work in groups and brainstorm the positive and negative impacts of this. The teacher interacted well with the groups, extending their thinking by skilful questioning. Class management was an important factor in how well pupils' learned. A potentially good lesson with younger pupils was affected by the lack of strategies to manage behaviour when some pupils became restless and silly. The sample of pupils' work completed this year by pupils aged seven to 11 shows a lack of consistency between teachers in the quality and presentation of written work. The standard of work of most able pupils was not significantly different from that of other pupils.
140. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to learning in other subjects. In class 6 pupils use the Internet regularly to access relevant information. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class used computers to input data from a survey that they had carried out to find out if Ware High Street should be traffic free. They presented their data in graphs and pie charts. Older pupils often carry out their own research, developing their writing skills.
141. The provision for this subject is greatly enriched by the visits undertaken by all classes to link in with their topics, particularly the residential visits for older pupils. The visit to Norfolk by pupils in Years 3 and 4 has made a significant contribution to their learning this year. There are no assessment procedures in place and this is a weakness resulting in, for example, the opportunities missed to develop map skills through the school. The role of the co-ordinator has not been adequately developed and as a result the monitoring of standards in this subject is unsatisfactory. This clearly has an effect on standards.

## **HISTORY**

142. Standards are at expected levels for pupils age seven and 11. They are lower than at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be better than national expectations for pupils of these ages. Standards have been affected by the reduction in time allocation for history because of the national focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy.

143. By the age of seven, pupils know that history is about finding out about the past and they are developing an awareness of time. They have learnt about important events in British history, for example the significance of Remembrance Day. They remember many details of what a seaside holiday was like 100 years ago and 50 years ago. They can compare these to their own experience of the seaside, noting similarities and differences. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 1 realise that, whilst children still play with buckets and spades today, these are now more often made of plastic rather than metal and wood. By the age of 11, pupils can order chronologically the periods they have studied and they show an awareness of the passage of time relative to the present day. Their knowledge of European exploration is satisfactory and they understand some of the reasons why it happened. By studying pictures of Aztec and Inca artefacts they have found out about everyday life in these civilisations. Pupils are beginning to understand how history might be subject to differing points of view, influenced by the person presenting it.
144. Four lessons were seen, two in each stage. The teaching of the younger pupils was good and it was satisfactory in the lessons for the older pupils. Planning was good in all lessons. Teachers ensured that the pupils understood what they were going to do and find out. In the good lessons, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were working on the same topic. Both teachers used pupils' experiences of holidays at home and abroad well to contrast with holidays in the past. Good use was made of photographs to enable pupils to find out what seaside holidays were like 100 and 50 years ago. In one class tasks were set appropriately for different attainment groups. In both lessons teachers used the end of the lesson well to assess what pupils had learned. These factors were significant in the good achievement of the pupils. The good support for pupils with special educational needs enabled them to achieve equally well.
145. The achievement of older pupils in one class was reduced by the lack of management strategies to deal with several disruptive pupils; as a consequence the pace of the lesson was slow. A well-planned lesson to find out about Aztec and Inca life by studying pictures of artefacts was made less successful by the lack of good quality resources, resulting in the use of black and white photographs that lacked detail. Closer examination of pupils' work shows a variation in the quality of marking and in the presentation of work between classes. There is no evidence that more able pupils are achieving higher standards than other pupils. Much recorded work is purely factual, with little interpretation.
146. This subject makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy and the development of ICT skills. Older pupils use the Internet, CD ROMs and reference books for their own research. The use of visits and visitors is enabling pupils to enhance their learning, often by the use of primary sources of evidence. Residential visits are planned every two years for older pupils, for example, Years 5 and 6 visit Dover to find out about the Second World War. This year pupils in Years 3 and 4 experienced an Anglo-Saxon day where they tried their hand at various Anglo-Saxon tasks such as hand-spinning, making dyes and candles. There are no formal assessment or recording procedures in place. This means that teachers do not have a record of pupils' achievements and are unaware of the imbalance in the teaching of different elements of the curriculum. The role of the co-ordinator has not been adequately developed and as a result the monitoring of standards in this subject is unsatisfactory.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. By the time pupils are seven, their standards are higher than those expected nationally, having made good progress and achieved well in Years 1 and 2. This represents a considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection. Eleven-year-old pupils reach the standards expected of pupils nationally. The difference between younger and older pupils is not a reflection of any significant difference in the quality of provision. Rather it is because the benefits of recent improvements in facilities have had greater impact on the attainment of younger pupils. Older pupils have had to make up for gaps in their earlier ICT learning but are now making better progress. Analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations reveal no significant differences in attainment, progress or achievement between boys and girls.
148. Teachers build the confidence of pupils from the ages of five to seven by using computers in different subjects and in teaching literacy and numeracy. By the end of Year 2, pupils use pull-down menus well to find and operate different applications for creating text, incorporating graphics features and entering data. For example, pupils improve the presentation of their poems by re-shaping their titles and applying different 'brushes' after mixing their own colours when creating images in art.
149. By the time that they are 11, pupils have satisfactorily built upon these basic skills. For example, they analyse the levels of difficulty of an application in order to evaluate its suitability for younger pupils. They present written work well, using different page layouts such as columns and incorporate different font sizes when writing articles in a journalistic style. They create data records confidently to apply ICT in other subjects, for example, in order to analyse the findings on research into litter in the school environment.
150. Teaching for pupils up to the age of seven is good with only one instance of unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. For pupils aged eight to 11, opportunities to see lessons were limited to two occasions when teaching was at least satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good, with careful attention given to well-defined objectives that pupils understand. When teaching incorporates facilities and resources flexibly, pupils learn well. For example, as a result of controlling the movement of a floor 'turtle' (robot) in the space adjoining the computer suite, pupils could link that experience to the manipulation of a screen 'turtle' by using commands on the computer. Teachers have worked hard to become familiar with the opportunities that ICT offers for teaching in other subjects such as literacy, numeracy, geography and art. Weaknesses in teaching arise from their lack of confident and accurate knowledge of the expected standards. Without this it is not possible for teachers to plan work accurately to provide sufficient challenge for pupils, as they become more competent.
151. Although pupils co-operate well, larger classes are cramped when they are all are working in the new computer suite. Adding to the heat generated by the computers, this creates an unsatisfactory environment for sustained learning on these occasions. Some aspects of the curriculum for older pupils, such as using ICT equipment to sense physical data, are not yet established. Arrangements have been made to borrow resources to meet these requirements.
152. The co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues. This has been particularly important in developing their subject knowledge and skills in anticipation of formal training next term. The monitoring that the co-ordinator is able to carry out is limited to checking teachers' planning. In the absence of procedures for assessing pupils'

attainment or progress, there is no information on which to base curriculum planning at a time when pupils' skills and knowledge are developing rapidly.

## **MUSIC**

153. Pupils' attainment at seven and 11 years old is in line with national expectations. Evidence was obtained from three lessons, assemblies and an interview with pupils including a demonstration of the use of percussion instruments. By the age of seven, pupils' listening has developed satisfactorily so that they can discuss how the features of recorded music might suggest different types of weather, for example. The quality of singing, however, is below expectations for pupils of their age. Pupils play percussion instruments together satisfactorily. By the age of 11, pupils have developed enthusiasm for music, and play a variety of rhythms in a synchronised way. They also confidently improvise against an accompaniment. Pupils' singing is of an average standard, being satisfactorily in tune, but lacking volume and vigour. Pupils know the various elements of music, such as pitch, but have not developed the correct terminology for them. Their knowledge of orchestral instruments is very limited.
154. Standards of attainment have declined since the last inspection. Work in the classrooms covers the National Curriculum programme of study however long term plans provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to use percussion instruments. Consequently they do not develop the capacity to compose, notate and perform long pieces in an independent manner. While there is a plan for music, it does not focus on attainment and progress, or develop any form of assessment whereby teachers know where there are gaps in pupils' skills. The staff has received too little in-service training for all teachers to have enough confidence to teach music knowledgeably.
155. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where it is good, teachers ensure that pupils use appropriate words to discuss what they are listening to. They help pupils to understand the meaning of the words in songs, and use some to make a moral point, such as 'There is a time for every purpose under heaven'. They draw pupils' attention to rhythms so that they learn their role in music. Some lessons allow too little time for pupils to develop their percussion skills, and too little attention is paid to developing the quality of singing. In others, teachers ensure that pupils are challenged, by, for example, expecting them to create ways of alternating slow, loud music with fast, soft music.
156. Music has a temporary co-ordinator at present. The school provides a good number of opportunities for pupils to learn orchestral and other instruments, including the clarinet, flute, violin, trumpet, recorder, piano and guitar. In addition, pupils can perform in a band or in an orchestra. The number of instrumental resources is growing, and they are in good condition, which is an improvement from the last inspection. However, they are not being well used.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

157. The attainment of seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds is in line with that expected for their age. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. This is a similar position to that recorded at the time of the last inspection.
158. By the age of seven, pupils travel using their hands and feet, walking, jumping, tummy down and tummy up. In a lesson in the Year 2 class, the pupils effectively combined various movements, travelling forwards, backwards and sideways showing



good awareness of the space around them. More able pupils displayed good skills when moving across balance beams and ladders and performing cartwheels and forward rolls. Most pupils move on and around the apparatus displaying satisfactory levels of control and co-ordination.

159. By the age of 11, the pupils swim 25 metres and more. In a hockey lesson in Year 4, the pupils displayed satisfactory levels of ball and stick control and awareness of space. In an athletics lesson, pupils in Year 6 learned how to throw the ball developing basic skills of good throwing. As the lesson progressed, the technique the pupils used and the distances they threw the ball improved. In a rounders club at lunchtime pupils in Years 5 and 6 displayed satisfactory levels of hand-to-eye co-ordination as they threw and hit the ball. They had a clear understanding of the rules of the game and worked well as a team.
160. The quality of teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The teachers ensure that the pupils are fully warmed up at the start of lessons and cooled down at the end. Lessons are well planned and structured to include all pupils. The teachers display good subject knowledge through their explanations and directions to pupils at the beginning of lessons. In the best lessons, such as one in Year 2, the teacher intervened as the lesson proceeded providing good guidance on how pupils might improve their performances. Also in these lessons, teachers manage and organise the pupils well and set high expectations of concentration and effort. As a result the pupils work hard, at a good pace and progress well in their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to this subject and enjoy working individually and in groups. In some lessons, however, including one that was unsatisfactory, the teachers do not manage the pupils well and as a result, pupils misbehave and do not make the progress that they should.
161. A good range of activities is provided for pupils to participate in outside of normal lessons, including, football, netball, hockey and rounders. Most of these activities are provided for the oldest pupils. The school also participates against other schools in football, netball, rounders, swimming, athletics and cross-country. Opportunities are provided for the pupils in Years 3 and 4 to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities, such as following trails, when they attend a residential visit. The subject co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, is enthusiastic and is extremely active in providing the pupils with the wide range of activities that they enjoy. The school has a good range of equipment to support pupils' learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

162. Pupils' attainment at seven and 11 matches the locally agreed expectations for religious education. By the age of seven, pupils know some of the events in the life of Jesus and some of the stories in the Old and New Testaments. They explain well what Jesus taught, and what Christians believe about him and his relationship with their God. They know the significance of some of the major Christian festivals. Pupils' knowledge of what is to be found in Christian churches is satisfactorily detailed, and they grasp some of the meanings behind symbols such as a cross. Pupils understand the symbolism of a candle as standing for 'Jesus, the Light of the World'. However, their interest in questions is very limited when asking about religious matters or life's mysteries. They are also not very aware of religions other than Christianity.

163. By the age of 11, pupils' knowledge of Jesus' teachings has developed satisfactorily. They recount in good detail the meaning and purpose of Easter. They are aware that the Bible contains details of other religious leaders such as Moses and can recount some of the Old Testament stories. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of the purposes of the features of Christian churches and understand the symbolism behind some of them. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the major services. Their recall about other faiths is limited, except where they have been recently studied. Pupils enjoy asking deep questions about life and God, and have a little understanding that religion affects the way people conduct their lives.
164. Standards of attainment have declined since the last inspection, when they were above expectations. The school's curriculum and assemblies cover the work outlined in the locally agreed programme for religious education. It also includes reference to different faiths and cultures, as well as to the major festivals in their religious calendars. However, this work is not having a satisfactory impact on pupils and they do not maintain their interest and knowledge. Teachers have had little in-service training to help them to be confident and accurate when teaching this subject. Currently, no means is used for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding cannot be identified.
165. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection week. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement of teaching. The school lacks a permanent co-ordinator, although the current member of staff with temporary responsibility for the subject has secured some improvements. The school has a good bank of resources with which to interest pupils in religious customs and practices.