

INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLTSMERE END INFANT AND NURSERY
SCHOOL**

Shenley Road, Hemel Hempstead, HERTS. HP2 7JZ

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117377

Headteacher: Mrs Val Wood

Reporting inspector: Mr Jeff Lemon
21116

Dates of inspection: 19th - 22nd June 2000

Inspection number: 190423

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shenley Road Hemel Hempstead HERTS
Postcode:	HP2 7JZ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Steve Simmonds
Date of previous inspection:	29 th April to 3 rd May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jeff Lemon	Registered Inspector	Mathematics, Information Technology, Physical Education	The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Catherine Fish	Lay Inspector	Equal Opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Moles	Team Inspector	Special Educational Needs, Science, Art, Design and Technology, Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Susan Metcalfe	Team Inspector	Under Fives, English as an additional language, English, Geography, History, Religious Education	How well does the school care for its pupils or students?

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The Registrar
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PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This average sized nursery and infant school serves an area of mixed private and local authority properties and is situated just to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. The 238 pupils on roll are organised into the nursery with 73 part time pupils, and then full-time pupils are organised in six single-year-group classes for the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. There are more girls than boys and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average as is the number of pupils with special educational needs. The number of pupils from ethnic minorities is about average and there is a small number of pupils with English as an additional language. The background of the pupils is mixed and attainment on entry to the nursery is below average as pupils have poor language and social skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective, lively school which provides an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Pupils are taught well and the children in the nursery and reception classes are taught very well. This leads to good standards of work and very positive attitudes and behaviour. The headteacher, governors and staff lead the school effectively and are committed to and capable of further improvement. The income of the school, taking into account the provision in the nursery, is about average and, when compared to the good quality of education provided, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaches its pupils well.
- Standards are above average in science and in some areas of mathematics.
- Pupils' personal and social development are good and they have very positive attitudes and behave well.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the under fives are good
- The headteacher and key staff lead the school well.
- There are very effective links with parents.

What could be improved

- Governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The monitoring, evaluation and further development of the quality of teaching.
- The impact of the work of subject co-ordinators across the whole school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in May 1996, and performance has improved steadily since that time. Standards, which were judged to be in need of improvement, have risen satisfactorily in reading and writing and standards have risen well in mathematics. The provision for religious education now conforms suitably to requirements and is well taught. Schemes of work for all subjects have been drawn up or appropriate use made of published documents from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA); these schemes have been suitably implemented. A clear assessment policy is now firmly in place and assessment is good. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed but they do not as yet always have sufficient impact on their subjects across the whole school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	E	A	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	A	C	C	
Mathematics	D	A	C	C	

The table shows that standards achieved in last year's tests for seven year olds were broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for all schools and for similar schools. Whilst there have been some fluctuations over the last four years there has been a trend of improvement in line with the national trend. Results achieved in 1999 and reported in the school's PANDA (Performance and Assessment data) indicate that standards in 1999 were below average when compared to similar schools. However the cohort contained a significantly higher number of pupils who were on the special educational needs register and also over half the cohort had birthdays falling between May and August and would consequently have had less time in school. Although national and bench mark data are not yet available early analysis of the results from the 2000 tests indicates that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are continuing to improve.

The evidence from lessons seen during the inspection and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that attainment for the under fives in all areas of learning is good. At Key Stage 1 attainment in English and mathematics is satisfactory with some pupils achieving good standards. Standards reached in other subjects are in line with what would be expected for pupils of this age with evidence of higher than expected standards in science, art, music and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes, they are enthusiastic about coming to school and show good levels of enjoyment in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils listen carefully to what the teacher is saying, they are polite to each other and to adults and are respectful of property.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils show good personal development. They are encouraged to be independent and respond well. Relationships across the whole school community are good. Pupils relate well to each other and to the adults in the school. They work and play well with their classmates, and help each other.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory, there are no unauthorised absences and the figures for authorised absences compare favourably with national levels.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	N/A

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

Teaching is a strength of the school; this was noted at the time of the previous inspection and the school has successfully maintained this high quality. The quality of teaching in almost three-quarters of lessons is good and in one third of lessons is very good or excellent. The teaching of the under fives is very good; teaching in two thirds of the lessons is very good and in others is always satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 there is a significant amount of very good or excellent teaching although there is small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. As a result of the generally high quality of teaching pupils learn well, increasing their knowledge and developing skills in all subjects.

Teachers have good knowledge, particularly of phonics teaching, they have high expectations of pupils and insist on good behaviour. In the best teaching teachers challenge pupils and provide stimulating activities. These activities catch the imagination of the pupils and from this interest good learning takes place. Pupils are helped in their learning because the teachers mostly plan well and give very clear instructions, allowing pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. The teachers make sensible use of a mix of whole-class teaching, group teaching and individual teaching, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are followed well.

The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are well aware of their needs and clear individual education plans are followed. The teaching assistants are used well to work alongside these pupils and there is good feedback to teachers on how well they have done. As a result, pupils make steady progress towards the targets set. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are given suitable support, for example when teachers give extra clarification or explanation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is very good for pupils to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. The Key Stage 1 curriculum is good, effectively meeting statutory requirements and using the National Literacy Project and the National Numeracy Project well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Throughout the school the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified at an early stage, parents are immediately consulted and good support is provided.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is satisfactory for the small number of pupils who need support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are aware of rules and are fair and honest. Social development is very good as pupils work very well together. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the pupils well. Assessment is good and the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science is carefully tracked and recorded. Procedures for ensuring the health and wellbeing of pupils and ensuring good behaviour and attendance are well established and practised.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a purposeful vision which is shared by staff, thus promoting high standards of teaching and learning. However, co-ordinators do not yet use effective strategies to gain knowledge of standards in their subjects across the whole school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive and hard working. They fulfil their statutory duties but need to develop more effective systems to identify strengths and weaknesses and to build these into long-term development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A sound start has been made and there is a clear commitment to self-evaluation. However, practice is not yet sufficiently well established to ensure that issues identified are acted upon in order to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	The staff are mostly suitably deployed and the support staff and other adults work well with teachers which enhances learning and raises standards. The accommodation is good and is used well. Resources at the school are generally good. There is a need to update and increase the number of computers and the ICT skills of teacher: this is currently a priority of the school development plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school helps pupils to become mature and to take responsibility.• The school is well led and managed.• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.• The good behaviour.• The way the school works closely with parents.• That children make good progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extra-curricular activities.• Use of homework

The evidence gained by the inspection team supports the positive views of parents and carers. The inspectors feel that satisfactory extra-curricular activities are provided for a nursery and infant school and that homework is used well to support children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Results of the 1999 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics taken by seven year olds show that standards were broadly in line with the national average and also with similar schools. Whilst there have been some fluctuations over the last four years there has been a trend of improvement in line with the national trend. Results achieved in 1999 and reported in the school's PANDA (Performance and assessment data) indicate that standards in 1999 were below average. However the cohort contained a significantly higher number of pupils who were on the Special Educational Needs register and also over half the cohort had birthdays falling between May and August and would consequently have had less time in school. Although national and bench mark data is not yet available, early analysis of the results from the 2000 tests indicates that in reading, writing and mathematics standards have continued to improve. There has been a considerable improvement in standards since the time of the previous inspection when it was noted that they were in need of improvement.

2. The school carries out baseline assessment when children enter the nursery which indicates that attainment is below average, particularly in the area of social development. Realistic and challenging targets are set for the numbers of pupils expected to reach Level 2 by the end of Year 2 but this practice would benefit from focussing on numbers reaching the higher levels of attainment also. Clear targets are set for individuals pupils and also very detailed targets within Individual Education Plans are set for those pupils with special educational needs. Progress is carefully tracked by teachers and for pupils with special educational needs by the headteacher acting as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Regular reviews of progress are used to bring about changes to teaching strategies or approaches resulting in all pupils making steady and often good progress. The good standards reached by the time pupils leave the school show that overall progress made is good. The good standards reached and gains in learning are as a result of the generally high quality of teaching at the school.

3. The evidence from lessons seen during the inspection and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that attainment for the under fives in all areas of learning is good. At Key Stage 1 attainment in English and mathematics is satisfactory with some pupils achieving high standards. In their writing pupils know about how to set out a story or a piece of factual writing using story sequencing and writing outlines. Pupils are starting to produce pieces of extended writing and are redrafting and editing their work

4. In mathematics pupils understand and confidently use multiples of 2, 5 and 10 and count on and back using this understanding. They count confidently to 100 and develop skills in addition and subtraction when working on activities such as giving change from different amounts in "Café 2000". Standards in science are high. As part of a project on buildings pupils decide the criteria for sorting building materials according to their various properties. For example, some pupils decided to sort the wide variety of materials available according to the substance they were made from: clay bricks and tiles and concrete bricks and tiles.

5. Standards reached in other subjects are in line with what would be expected for pupils of this age with evidence if higher than average standards in art, music and physical education.

6. Good use is made of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, are found in each class within the school being 9.5% of the school population. Of the 13 pupils who speak English as an additional language, 3 receive direct support from the ethnic minority and travellers achievement grant teacher. Previous years' test results indicate some differences in the performance of boys and girls but standards presently indicate no significant difference between the results achieved by boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes to their work and to school life, their behaviour and relationships with their peers and the adults they work with are good. They are fostered through the positive and caring ethos of the school. The standards identified in the previous report have been maintained.

8. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and this is reflected in the positive attitudes with which they approach all the school has to offer. The enthusiasm of the children is recognised by their parents. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons is good overall and it is sometimes excellent. From a young age they show good levels of enjoyment in their learning. For example, in a Reception class science lesson when the teacher was demonstrating how butter is made from cream, the pupils were absolutely enthralled and watched with great enthusiasm the various stages and held their breath when the first pupil tasted the final product. In a Year 2 physical education (PE) lesson, pupils showed, by the good development of skills, their enjoyment of the activities they were asked to do. Good levels of concentration develop as pupils mature; they sustain this even when there are the inevitable distractions that arise in an open-plan school. Pupils listen well to each other as they get older; hands go down in lessons when their suggestion has been mentioned by someone else. They work well together. However, there are some occasions when pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory. When this occurs it is generally due to the pace of the lesson being too slow, tasks set not being sufficiently challenging and questions too precise; all this results in pupils becoming restless and the behaviour of some deteriorates. Pupils are willing to talk about the work they are doing and are confident to ask for help if they require it. They also show enjoyment in extra-curricular activities, such as playing the ocarina.

9. Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Parents recognise and appreciate this. In classes, most pupils are able to sit still and listen carefully to what the teacher is saying, they are polite to each other and to adults and are respectful of property such as musical instruments and computers. They also respect the outside environment and the creatures which inhabit it. In the Year 1 science lessons where they studied mini-beasts, pupils were very careful to put the specimens back where they had found them. Behaviour in classrooms, around school and in the playground is good. Pupils are aware of the school's rules on behaviour; these are well promoted by the headteacher during assemblies and meetings. Comments may extend to behaviour beyond school; during the inspection the headteacher told the pupils of her great pleasure in their very good behaviour at the picnic and summer fair held the previous Saturday. All pupils, including those experiencing difficulty with their behaviour, try hard to rise to the high expectations of the school. Pupils are tolerant of each other and make allowances for others where necessary. Pupils enjoy playing with each other and do so sensibly and with awareness of the need to play safely. No bullying was observed during the inspection and pupils spoken to were not concerned about it. The school has never excluded a pupil.

10. Pupils show good personal development. They enjoy taking part in the day-to-day routines that help the school to run smoothly, such as taking the dinner register back to the

office and tidying away at the end of the lessons. There are special helpers identified in each class and they enjoy having that status. Many pupils are able to organise their own work. Some older pupils are developing initiative, such as the boy who, unprompted, removed a chair from the hall where it was wrongly placed and the girl who did up her friend's buttons when she could not manage. Pupils are encouraged to be independent from an early age by putting their own work away, hanging up their coats, collecting and carrying their own dinner tray to the table and clearing away afterwards, and changing for PE with the minimum of assistance.

11. Relationships across the whole school community are good. Pupils relate well to each other and to the adults in the school. They work and play well with their classmates, and help each other. The school has no personal, social and health education policy, but this does not hinder the school working hard to promote these areas. Pupils treat others who have specific difficulties with great respect, waiting for them to take their full part in lesson activities.

12. Attendance is just above the national average; there are no unauthorised absences and the figure for authorised absences compares favourably with national levels. Pupils are awarded certificates for full and very good attendance and these are much prized. Registers are marked to the agreed procedures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Teaching is a strength of the school; this was noted at the time of the previous inspection and the school has successfully maintained this high quality. In almost three quarters of lessons teaching is good and in one third of lessons teaching is very good or excellent. The teaching of the under fives is very good; in two thirds of the lessons teaching was very good and it was always at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 there is a significant amount of very good or excellent teaching although there is small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. As a result of the generally high quality of teaching pupils learn well, increasing their knowledge and developing skills in all subjects.

14. Teachers have good knowledge, particularly of phonics teaching. They have high expectations of pupils and insist on good behaviour. In all areas of the school, teachers, nursery nurses, teaching assistants and other adults work well as teams and relationships are good. In the best teaching teachers challenge pupils and provide stimulating activities. For example, when making butter or hunting in the school grounds for mini-beasts. These activities catch the imagination of the pupils and from this interest good learning takes place. Pupils are helped in their learning because the teachers mostly plan well and give very clear instructions, allowing pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in one excellent physical education lesson the teacher followed up the explanation of a task to throw and catch by asking pupils if they could make the task harder. Pupils came up with good ideas, for example one suggested throwing then clapping hands and catching. The result was that skills improved rapidly.

15. The teachers make use of a mix of approaches and the recommendations for whole-class teaching in line with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are followed well. This whole-class input is often followed by group activities with suitable direct teaching by the teacher to a particular group. Good use is made of the teaching assistants, parents and other adults who mostly work well alongside the teachers. Occasionally teaching assistants are engaged in routine tasks when it would be better to be supporting pupils who have language difficulties or whose behaviour needs careful

watching. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory teachers lack sustained enthusiasm and the lesson is conducted at too slow a pace, pupils become restless and there is a lack of progress, particularly by higher-attaining pupils.

16. Teachers have good skills in questioning and challenging pupils' thinking. For example, the use of questions like; "How will we know 25 is a multiple of 5?" or "What do you notice about the units column?", means that pupils cannot just give short answers but must explain their answer with reasons. This practice is well established in the school and leads to good learning. In the best lessons there is a very good use of plenary sessions to recapitulate on the lesson and to assess how well the pupils have learnt but in the unsatisfactory lessons there is either no planned plenary session or the focus is not sufficiently on the learning intentions of the lesson. Information technology is appropriately used to help with learning and this an area identified for further development within the school's development plan. Homework is suitably used, pupils are encouraged to read at home and to learn number facts and spellings which has a positive impact on standards.

17. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, teachers are well aware of their needs and clear individual education plans are followed. The teaching assistants are used well to support these pupils and there is good feedback to teachers on how well they have done. As a result, pupils make steady progress towards the targets set. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are given suitable support, for example when teachers give extra clarification or explanation. The school has a teacher specifically funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. This teacher has been in the school for only a short time and is still identifying and planning for pupils' specific needs.

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

18. The school makes very good provision for pupils to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. It meets well the statutory requirements to implement the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The National Literacy Project and The National Numeracy Project are used well as teaching strategies. The provision for personal and social education is good. There are appropriate arrangements for sex and drugs education. Collective acts of worship meet requirements.

19. In the foundation classes the curriculum for the under fives is very well planned and provides a wide range of good quality learning opportunities. It prepares children well for starting the National Curriculum. The curriculum is relevant and related well to children's individual needs and there is a good balance between teacher-directed tasks and activities where the children are encouraged to choose for themselves.

20. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 is good. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good and effectively support teachers in their lesson planning which has helped raise standards in English and mathematics. Provision for science is good and ensures that all the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered well. The provision for all other subjects including the implementation of schemes of work are at least satisfactory and mainly good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers continue successfully to make cross-curricular links when planning and delivering lessons. This aids pupils' learning of the links between subjects, for example, work in numeracy and the shape and size of different materials in science.

21. Throughout the school the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified at an early stage, parents are immediately consulted, good support is provided and the majority move quickly off the register. Currently the role of SENCO is ably filled by the headteacher. The governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs has a good knowledge of the school and meets regularly and works closely with the head teacher. The school successfully involves outside agencies in the provision.

22. The school makes good use of visitors to the school to support curricular provision. Visitors have included such people as an artist in residence, a string quartet and grandparents to talk about life when they were young. Pupils make good use of the school grounds to support their work, particularly in science and art. The school enriches provision by visits to museums, local towns and national parks. There is satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities.

23. The school makes good provision to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. It is very conscious of the community it serves and does all it can to be truly a community school and is successful in this. There are close links with playgroups and other schools in the area, including the partner junior school.

24. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are aware of rules and are fair and honest. Social development is very good: pupils work well together, share equipment sensibly and play well together at break times. They behave in a mature way at meal times collecting their dinner, finding a seat, talking sensibly to others on their table and clearing their things away afterwards. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils express excitement at finding small creatures and marvel at their fragile habitat, they learn about music from other cultures and about Asian traditions and African music. Greater opportunity should be made of these occasions to reflect on the feelings engendered in art or music and to study some art work from non-European backgrounds.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school provides good support and guidance for its pupils, which have a positive effect on standards and on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Parents comment on the caring and happy ethos in the school, and this view was supported by findings in the inspection. All members of staff provide good, caring support for pupils. They know their pupils well, and have good knowledge of both their individual personal and educational needs. Any concerns about pupils are discussed in a weekly staff meeting. All pupils are well known to staff and this helps them to provide a consistent approach to those pupils experiencing difficulties, for example with behaviour. Pupils feel secure in school and are confident to approach staff with their concerns. The atmosphere in school is both warm and welcoming.

26. The school takes good care of its pupils. There are good routines and policies to ensure their safety. Accidents and the action taken are well noted and staff will telephone home if necessary to alert parents of an accident. The administration of routine medication is well recorded and there are good procedures for dealing with emergencies with particular pupils. The school has good arrangements for child protection and is fully involved in the attendance at core group and child protection meetings. All staff have received training in this area during the last school year. When arranging trips and visits out of school due attention is paid to the specific needs of individual pupils.

27. Overall the school has effective procedures in place for ensuring pupils' care and welfare and the monitoring of their academic performance that make a major contribution to pupils' learning. In the previous inspection, although the school was successful in providing a safe and caring community, internal assessment systems to monitor educational progress were seen to be weak with the headteacher undertaking the majority of assessment monitoring rather than the subject co-ordinators. This has been improved and an assessment co-ordinator and grid for assessments over the year has been put in place. Some good assessments are being made by such as the English co-ordinator who has built up a portfolio of annotated work to support learning, target weaker areas and teachers' planning in the subject. The information from an analysis of standardised assessment tasks, special educational needs audits and baseline assessment is used to set whole-school targets within each curriculum area, resulting in provision that is well matched to pupils' learning needs. By working closely with parents, especially the consultations with parents in formal and informal situations, plans for pupils' academic and personal development are in place. This has resulted in good educational support and guidance and effective support and guidance for their personal needs. The school tracks pupils' performance well in the core subjects, though less so in foundation areas and marking is used effectively to give guidance and feedback. The information from marking and lesson evaluations is used to inform the planning of work in the following week.

28. Teachers and non-teaching staff genuinely care about the wellbeing of pupils and they provide both personal and academic help when it is needed. The school has a strong sense of community and within this all staff have created an emotionally secure environment within which pupils can feel respected and valued. Teachers know children well, which ensures their personal development, is effectively monitored. Part of this is in sharing progress with parents, especially at consultation meets and in reports. Staff are always available and listen well to parents. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. There are both school and class rules. Pupils fully understand them and are motivated by a range of rewards. Pupils are also encouraged to behave well through personal targets. There are very few pupils who find it difficult to behave well consistently and they have appropriate support from their teachers.

29. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Attendance registers are regularly checked and patterns analysed with support from the educational welfare officer. Prior to taking pupils on visits risk assessments are made and the school environment is also considered to ensure the health and safety of pupils while on the school premises. Generally teachers make sure all pupils are safe while in lessons but in some physical education lessons pupils are not checked to ensure that they are not wearing jewellery which could catch and cause an accident.

30. Measures to promote discipline and good behaviour are good and effective. The school's rules are based on shared responsibility for behaviour. There are high expectations based on respect for others, the school and the environment and this ethos is seen throughout the school. Pupils strive to meet them. Those experiencing difficulties with their behaviour are well supported through individual plans and with the involvement of parents.

31. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Registers are monitored weekly and any absences not accounted for are followed up by the headteacher. Should any patterns of absence or persistent lateness appear the school involves the educational welfare officer who visits the school termly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Parents generally have very positive views of the school and this reflects the situation at the previous inspection. Parents are particularly pleased with the way the school helps their children to become mature and take responsibility, how the school is led and managed, the expectations that their children will work hard and achieve their best, and the good behaviour and progress which the children make. They are also happy with the way in which the school works with parents and feel confident in approaching the school with problems and concerns. Concerns are expressed about the range of activities outside the lessons, the amount of homework provided and the information about how their child is getting on. Concern was also expressed about the crowding in classrooms at the start of the day. Inspectors agree with the positive comments and feel that the concerns are not well founded. The reasons for this are given here and in the rest of the report.

33. Parents are provided with a good quality report at the end of the year. These reports give good and informative details of the pupils' attainment and progress, together with general comments about what has been covered and some areas for improvement. Consultation evenings are held twice a year at which targets for improvement are set and those set previously are reviewed, if they have not been mentioned in an interim annual report. Teachers are always available to talk with parents at the daily link time after school; this also gives time for teachers to make contact with parents if necessary. All these opportunities give sufficient time for parents to discuss their child's progress. Good links between home and school are fostered by the headteacher through class liaison parents who act as the spokesperson for classes; they will test out ideas and proposals with parents as well as alerting the headteacher to any general concerns. Newsletters and other general information provided for parents by the school are very good. Of particular note is the very good display, in each classroom, of plans for the week's work, together with longer-term plans. The school holds meetings to keep parents informed about what is being taught, such as the one held recently about the teaching of numeracy.

34. Overall, the school's links with parents are very effective. Very good links are fostered through the 'reading comments' and the 'work to do at home' books. The start of the day provides a good link with parents and an appropriate transition time for pupils. Parents bring their child into the classroom, discuss the question on the pocket people stand, placing the person in the appropriate place, and change their book if they need to. This also helps to build strong and productive relationships between home and school.

35. Parents come into school to help when they can. Although there are only a few parents who come into school on a regular basis, more come in to help with specific activities. This was demonstrated on the first day of inspection by the large number of parents who came to help with a mini-beast hunt. The help provided by parents and other volunteer helpers, such as those who come through the University of the Third Age provides a valued resource, which is supported and appreciated by the school. Parents automatically become members of the Home School Association when their child joins either this school or the junior school next door. The association works hard to raise money to support the schools and arranges social activities to promote a school community spirit together with fund raising events. The money raised is split equally between the two schools and here has been used to purchase mathematics equipment and outside benches. A further initiative which rents out videos on a weekly basis, has raised sufficient funds to purchase a computer for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. The headteacher is clear and knowledgeable about the needs of Key Stage 1 pupils and children under five. She provides a purposeful vision which is shared by staff thus promoting high standards of teaching and learning. There is a strong commitment from all involved at the school to improvement and good potential for further improvement. The aims of the school are clear and set out in the prospectus and as a basis for the school development plan along with a precise mission statement. These aims are realised in all the work of the school which ensures good relationships and that all children are equally treated.

37. The governors are supportive and work hard with a growing awareness of what their role entails. Training from the LEA has already been sought in order to improve this awareness into good practice. The school shares the site with its partner junior school and until September 1999 the governing body served both schools. Following degrouping in September the governing body has been short in numbers despite the best efforts of the chair to bring it up to strength. The governors maintain good contacts with the school on a day-to-day basis and communication and relationships are good. At present the governing body fulfils its statutory duties but needs to develop more robust systems to identify strengths and weaknesses and to build these into long-term development planning.

38. The school development plan is a clear working document and correctly identifies priorities. A strength is the contribution by co-ordinators of action plans for their subjects. The plan focuses appropriately on raising standards but there are no procedures identified for tracking that actions have happened or how successfully targets have been reached.

39. A sound start has been made to monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher, co-ordinators and the governing body and there is a clear commitment to self-evaluation. However, practice is not yet sufficiently well established to ensure that issues identified are acted upon in order to raise standards. For example, records of monitoring by the headteacher show that areas for development for staff are noted but the impact on raising the quality of teaching has been insufficient. The high quality teaching seen in much of the school needs to be utilised to raise standards even more and improve the school. Procedures for the professional development of teachers are well established and the current requirements for appraisal are met.

40. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed since the time of the previous inspection and there is good practice for example in priority areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. However, co-ordinators do not yet use effective strategies to identify standards in their subjects across the whole school nor procedures to influence and improve the quality of teaching in the school.

41. The staff are mostly suitably deployed and the support staff and other adults work well with teachers which enhances learning and raises standards. The accommodation is good and is used well. The school was not designed to fully accommodate recent initiatives which require whole-class teaching but the school adapts well and the organisation in all year groups is effective in delivering a stimulating and exciting curriculum. In all areas there are good displays particularly of art work which celebrates pupils' achievement although there is an insufficient amount of numeracy guidance and celebration of pupils' mathematics work. Staff, children and cleaning staff take pride and care in their building and look after it well.

42. Resources at the school are generally good, they are accessible and responsibly used by staff and pupils. There is a need to update and increase the number of computers and the ICT skills of teachers: this is currently a priority of the school development plan. There is no secure outdoor play area for the under fives in reception classes and although not hindering the development of physical skills there is a lack of opportunity to develop social and creative skills through outdoor play involving climbing or ride-on toys.

43. There is good understanding and application of the principles of best value. A sound approach is used to gather information about spending in similar schools to make comparisons and a range of quotations is sought for major purchases often using the guidance of the LEA. The day-to-day business of the school by administrative staff is efficient, allowing the headteacher and staff to concentrate on teaching and learning as a priority.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. The school should now:

- (1) *Improve governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by
 - arranging training for new governors
 - improving the monitoring and evaluation of the school development plan.*Paragraphs 41, 42.*

- (2) Improve the quality of teaching even further by:
 - developing systems to monitor teaching more regularly and to act on the outcomes.
 - ensuring that the very good practice of some teachers is used to support all teachers.*Paragraphs 43, 64, 87.*

- (3) Improve the role of the co-ordinators by
 - establishing specific job descriptions for their role
 - setting up strategies for co-ordinators to have an understanding of the standards and provision for their subjects across the whole school.*Paragraphs 44, 69, 77, 81, 84, 89, 92.*

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

45. 1. Improve the outdoor play facilities for the under fives in reception classes.
2. Identify further opportunities for spiritual and cultural development.
Paragraphs 26, 46, 95,

* The school has already identified this issue in its school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	33	37	20	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	37	165
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	27	33	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	17	24
	Girls	31	31	30
	Total	51	48	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85	80	90
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	24
	Girls	31	30	30
	Total	51	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85	87	90
	National	82	86	87

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	183

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	37

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	407427
Total expenditure	405559
Expenditure per pupil	1668
Balance brought forward from previous year	38412
Balance carried forward to next year	40280

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	24	7		1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	6	1	
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	35	1		4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	44	19	3	
The teaching is good.	65	27	6		3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	31	13	3	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	13	7		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36			3
The school works closely with parents.	59	34	6	1	
The school is well led and managed.	82	15	1		1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	36	1		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	39	23	6	11

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46. Overall the provision for and teaching of children under the age of five is strong within the school. They enter into the nursery and reception classes bringing with them a range of skills and abilities, settle quickly into the school and make consistently good progress as a result of the high quality teaching. By the time they leave the nursery and enter the reception classes those from the nursery have made good progress in their acquisition of personal and social skills along with language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development as well as knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Here they are joined by others from a range of pre-school experiences including pre-school playgroups. By the time they are five most at least reach and the majority exceed the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes for five year-olds, making a seamless move into the work required for Key Stage 1.

Personal and social development

47. The children's personal and social development underpins all the work in the nursery and reception classes of the school. To become competent learners it is important that the children become increasingly independent from adults and they are gaining the skills and experiences in structured sessions to help them do this. The children are confident and willing to take the initiative in directing their own learning. They relate with confidence to each other and the adults round them, select the resources they wish to use and contribute with fluency to discussions. The children are able to share resources, concentrate and persevere for some length of time over the activities in which they are engaged and do not demand adult attention; rather they take their turn and work well together. They are gaining an understanding of right and wrong and consider how to treat others by thinking about how they like to be treated. They are learning to show respect for the beliefs of others, are eager to explore and willing to have a go at new activities. The teachers, nursery nurses and other staff provide a good range of activities and role models, especially developing the children's literacy skills of speaking and listening to empower them to access a full curriculum by clear and thoughtful communications. Parent helpers also contribute well to this. Routines are well established and this helps the children know what is expected of them.

Language and literacy

48. The children achieve good standards and make good progress in their language learning overall. They are on course to reach nationally recommended levels in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills as well as in their understanding of language. Their skills in English affect their learning in all other areas of the curriculum. They listen well and respond to stories with enthusiasm. Younger children join in the chorus of repetitive verse stories with enjoyment and vigour. In the nursery they can identify the initial letter or sounds from single phonics and identify pictures and words round the room starting with that letter. One child in particular, eating her snack of a carrot, heard the sound 'r' in the word and identified it with 'r' in rabbit. Reception children are practising their reading skills using phonemes, phonics, initial sounds and number words as well as using their speaking and listening skills to discuss the pictures seen in a book and compare what they can see with the written words. Using the Jolly Phonics system they learn the action and sound together, enabling them to decode print successfully. Older children are able to identify words from the key vocabulary and practise reading and writing such words

appropriately. They are given the opportunity to work at their own levels on specifically targeted tasks, practising, consolidating and extending their prior learning; and through role play both in the nursery and in reception they practise communication skills with each other, especially in the picnic area in the nursery or shop in the reception classes. Older children in particular are fluent users of language, have a range of skills to read print, and are developing the writing skills necessary to be able to communicate their ideas and understanding. Younger children are able to listen to and follow instructions with understanding and speed, using language across the wider curriculum into other subject areas.

Mathematics

49. Children's progress in mathematics is supported by their developing language skills as they become more familiar with the vocabulary needed. They are able to recognise order patterns, for instance, using chronological order when focused on the smallest to largest, under, over, in front and behind. In formal mathematical sessions using the national numeracy project work the children are making good progress. Children count on and back in 5's and in 10's to a 100. Children identify 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes and use the correct vocabulary to identify key features, matching 1:1. Individual children are carefully challenged by the teacher to develop as far as they can and they make rapid progress. For instance in group activities older children know that shapes have faces and corners and that shapes can be grouped using common criteria into such as cubes, triangles and spheres. They know that in squares the sides are equal while triangles can have sides of different lengths. Children do not just work orally in mathematics but are developing the skills to record their number work with practice opportunities occurring to write number sentences and stories making sure that numbers are correctly formed and simple addition practised in written form. These young children both in the nursery and in reception are developing their understanding of number through a range of opportunities to sort, match and order play objects. In their water and sand work they are able to experiment with weight, volume and capacity.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is varied upon entry to the school. They achieve good standards and make progress in their work, in for instance science, history and geography, as seen when undertaking work on snails, especially when investigating habitats and locations in the nursery and recalling a farm visit in reception. Older children are able to look at photographs of milk deliveries and identify clues to their age, including carts, churns, bottles and home delivery and compare with supermarkets, card cartons and pasteurisation. The children are confident in sharing their opinions and offering suggestions to the teachers while the nursery nurses support the teaching of the main points effectively during whole-class discussions, extending the rate of learning for these under five's very well. As a result they thoroughly enjoy the work and try hard in the practical work, especially finding, holding and observing snails then making salt dough models from their observations of bugs. They succeed because of the quality of the support of the staff and the clear vocabulary used by all the adults at work in the room.

Physical development

51. All children make good progress in developing their fine motor skills, for instance in putting on and zipping up coats, turning clothes the correct way round when dressing after physical education, using scissors, glue and brushes in creative work and pencils and other markers in their written work and in mathematics. Children are also given the opportunity to

develop specific physical skills using the hall PE equipment. They show control in moving round and working on games skills such as moving a ball by dribbling round a course. In these lessons they strive hard to match the demonstrations of the best, use physical equipment correctly with due care and attention to health and safety requirements, especially when learning the sequencing of instructions as well as waiting and taking turns. They demonstrate understanding of the technical language making movements with associated body control according to instructions and are starting to evaluate their own and others' work. Teaching is consistently supportive and enables children to learn within a safe environment with a good number of role models to ensure progress. Younger children also have the opportunity to develop their physical skills in a range of outdoor play activities. They use bicycles and tricycles with due regard to safety, both of themselves and those walking nearby, they manipulate spades and bottles in sand and water work and develop fine skills and control using plastic food to make sandwiches and pour drinks in the picnic area.

Creative development

52. Achievement is good because of the high quality teaching both by the teachers and nursery nurses. Children mix paints and use the colour they have made with care to produce their ideas physically. They compose pictures and prints using a range of resources, cut and stick a range of papers and fabrics to make collages and three-dimensional models and work in a range of media such as play dough, construction and building materials such as blocks and Lego. They use paint, glue, crayon, paper and material to make a range of lively picture and patterns big and small. Younger children have access to a range of musical instruments to develop their creative skills musically and compose tunes and sound effects to illustrate stories, taking part in performances for others. Older pupils have more formal music lessons. They recognise the instruments in the hall, are able to copy and clap back rhythms identifying the beat or pulse of the music and know which instrument makes which sound. Children in the nursery and in reception are used to singing a range of nursery rhymes outside of formal music sessions and have therefore a wide range of songs that they sing happily.

53. Teaching for the under fives in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Activities are well planned and structured to encourage children's personal and social development, to establish the basic norms of living and working together. All the adults have knowledge of the abilities of the children and plan lessons to give confidence and reinforce skills development. The teachers, nursery nurses and other adults harness learning by asking appropriate questions and answers to children's questions, directly teaching, supporting and developing skills further. A special focus is the development of speaking and listening skills. The teachers direct children to the key vocabulary that is the focus of tasks and encourage children to use language with clarity of speech and thinking, giving more than one word answers and composing appropriate sentences. All the adults use plenty of praise as children tackle and complete tasks but do not accept work that is not of quality. The teachers plan well with the nursery nurses thus ensuring clarity of understanding of tasks to support learning. Through their own speech and behaviour the nursery nurses are good role models for the children. They are especially skilful at refocusing pupils as concentration lapses, encouraging the development of perseverance and raising and extending children's concentration levels. The teaching of the nursery nurses and class teachers are pacy sessions; all adults have a good awareness of time and reinforce previous learning, developing and extending skills further. Adults are clearly concerned for the children's welfare and make clear to the children acceptable standards of behaviour. They make a careful selection of resources for all areas of the curriculum and are especially effective in supporting the learning of more and most able learners. By the

end of lessons, in reception especially, children know where they started and where they have arrived, seeing the progress they have made over the lesson.

54. Leadership and management of the work of the nursery are very good. Careful records are kept, initial assessments made upon entry to the school and these are used effectively to guide the planned curriculum. On going assessments and discussions ensure that the adults identify targets to ensure progress and empower the children to contribute effectively to their own learning. Likewise the work in reception is well led by an experienced teaching staff. The teachers and nursery nurses especially value the relationship with parents and involve them with their children's learning from the beginning. Parents are encouraged to work with their child at home, sharing a book or completing a simple task together, and parents are invited to contribute to lessons, helping with practical sessions and hearing readers.

ENGLISH

55. Standards in English overall are in line with the national average. This fits with the standards identified at the previous inspection. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, the percentage reaching the average Level 2 or above was in line with the national average when compared to all schools and to similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 or above in reading was close to the national levels but in writing above the national levels. Boys attain levels below the national average in reading and writing, while girls attained levels above the national average in reading and writing. An analysis of why these comparative results are lower than those in previous years reveals that over a quarter of the pupils in the 1999 cohort had special educational needs, which is above the average. Over half of the pupils in 1999 also had birthdays between May and August, resulting in their having started school later than most taking the national tests in comparative schools. The school expects that the results in 2000 will more accurately reflect the standards of work within the school. Baseline assessments indicate that pupils enter the school with below average reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

56. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is mostly good. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other and answer questions using an appropriate vocabulary and generally correctly formed sentences. A small minority, especially those with special educational needs, have a more limited vocabulary, but have a love of words and all are adding daily to those they know and use. Most pupils listen to and follow instructions accurately, working out the logical order for giving simple instructions to each other and complete tasks following those instructions. Their work in drama and role-play is of particular value in this. When using their speaking and listening skills in other areas of the curriculum they take their time to answer, striving for accuracy with the technical vocabulary of the subject. This was particularly noticeable in religious education when closely observing the location of features within the Church where pupils considered not just where for instance the font was but also its use and their own baptisms or those they had attended. When reading out loud pupils are able to recall the story of their text and use the language and idioms of the book in their discussions about characters and plot. When reading dialogue they can identify the different 'voices' prompted by such as exclamation and question marks. More-able pupils expand their sentences to convey their ideas and opinions more fully. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate levels as a result of the support they receive over their time in school.

57. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach generally satisfactory levels overall in reading and many younger pupils make good progress. Pupils read a wide range of

material such as storybooks, poems, information texts and worksheets containing both factual and fictional writing. Most pupils identify the characters in stories, recall the plot and can often predict what happens next to those characters. By the end of the key stage pupils are beginning to use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information in books using a content page. Pupils have a range of skills to help them read unknown words including the start letters and sounds, counting the phonemes to build up words. The school reading scheme helps develop these skills. More-able pupils recognise their errors and generally self-correct. They are achieving a good degree of fluency and read with expression. The school works hard encouraging families to share in reading and pupils take books home.

58. Attainment in writing is as expected for the pupils ages and abilities at Key Stage 1 with pupils making good progress. Pupils know about how to set out their writing for a story or a piece of factual writing using story sequencing and writing outlines. Pupils use letter sound patterns in their spellings, building up and using the key vocabulary from the national literacy strategy in their work. These pupils are starting to produce pieces of extended writing, redrafting and editing their work. The literacy hour is helping pupils use a wider vocabulary and is improving grammar and punctuation as well as extending their knowledge of a range of texts. In Year 2 pupils write for a range of purposes including simple stories, letters, instructions, news and comprehension. They are developing early skills of extracting information from non-fiction texts and simple poetry is included in their writing activities. Marking at the end of Key Stage 1 is constructive, giving pupils knowledge of the progress they have made. Handwriting and presentation skills are good with all pupils encouraged to develop a cursive script throughout the school.

59. The quality of teaching is good overall with teaching in two thirds of lessons seen being good or very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Where teaching is good or very good, learning is well supported and pupils make good progress. There are effective strategies for teaching literacy throughout the school. Effective teaching is identified by challenging work and high expectations about positive attitudes and behaviour supporting raised standards. Progress in these lessons is marked with rapid learning and the successful completion of all planned tasks. Pupils enjoy the books they are reading and they are successful in their writing. Teachers use questions skilfully to challenge and guide pupils to further learning. In these lessons teachers have a high proportion of direct teaching and plan for pupils' active involvement in the lesson. When teaching is less effective teachers over-direct and do not match work carefully to pupil's individual needs. This particularly affects the standards achieved by more-able pupils. This lack of challenge causes pupils to lose concentration and results in restless behaviour and untidy, incomplete work. Teacher's knowledge about the literacy strategy is good, as is their knowledge of their pupils' abilities and they plan effectively. By assessing at the end of lessons and using the information gained to plan future work teachers are able to ensure that all pupils receive a curriculum appropriate to their ages and abilities. Pupils who have a special educational need are well taught and work is planned to meet their needs.

60. The national literacy strategy is helping to improve standards further. The strategy is giving a structured development to acquiring skills by ensuring a fairly wide range of texts are studied and closely linking reading to writing. There are times, however, when by sticking too closely to the strategy teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to extend and expand their speaking and reading skills. The school is aware of the need for pupils to write in very specific and structured sessions and pupils' learning is enhanced by these. The curriculum is broad and balanced and supported by the work in other subjects especially in geography, history and science. Ongoing evaluations of lessons are used to refine the planned curriculum. Built into the curriculum are regular assessments of pupils'

progress including records in reading and word checks. The co-ordinator has built up samples of assessment annotated in line with the National Curriculum to give a picture of expectations across the school and these are held in a portfolio of work that is updated regularly. Resources for English are appropriate to support each area of the national literacy curriculum. Where there is a lack of specific materials to support areas of the literacy scheme, especially in information texts about Henry VIII for younger pupils, the co-ordinator has produced her own, differentiated for the range of abilities within the school. This has involved her in a lot of work but has enabled her to match provision to need very accurately. The school has spent wisely on reading materials to support the majority of pupils, and has plans for further expenditure to meet the needs of specific pupils. Literacy is well co-ordinated, led and managed across the school by a particularly highly skilled classroom practitioner who brings her class-teaching skills to support the work of all pupils across the school.

MATHEMATICS

61. By the time pupils leave the school standards are at least average and many pupils attain above average standards. Progress is satisfactory as pupils build on their skills and use number with assurance and accuracy. Pupils understand and confidently use multiples of 2, 5 and 10 and count on and back using this understanding. They count confidently to 100 and develop skills in addition and subtraction when working on activities such as giving change from different amounts in "Café 2000". Pupils can name simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and explain the properties, for example they explain that a square has four sides and that these are all the same length. Numeracy skills are well developed through work in other subjects; for example when pupils think about the need for an even number when getting into twos in PE or when they use correct mathematical terms such as edge or face when looking at materials in science. Throughout the school pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics as a result of the interesting and challenging work which the teachers set for them.

62. In the 1999 national tests, results published in the school's PANDA show that pupils achieved standards which were below the national average, and also below similar schools. However there is strong evidence that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this cohort was higher than average and also that a significant number, almost half, had birthdays in the Summer term and consequently had been in full-time education for a shorter time. These factors mean that a judgement can be made that standards achieved in 1999 were at least in line with the national average and with similar schools. The results of tests over the past four years show that standards are rising. In this year's tests, although national figures are not yet available it is likely that results will show a continued improvement in performance. The school has achieved its set target for the number of pupils reaching average levels and there has been a rise in the number of pupils reaching higher than average levels. There has been marked improvement in standards since the time of the previous inspection.

63. Overall the teaching of mathematics is good with particular strengths in the reception classes. This good teaching was noted in the previous inspection although as at that time there remains some unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have confidently adopted the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy although the quality of the use of plenary sessions is not yet consistent and occasionally they are too short or missed altogether. There is a good balance of mental and oral work with teachers showing good skills in questioning and challenging pupils' thinking. For example when a teacher asks, "How will we know 25 is a multiple of 5?" or "What do you notice about the units column?", pupils cannot just give short answers but must explain their answer with reasons. This practice is

well established in the school and leads to good learning. Teachers plan lessons well and make very good use of teaching assistants, parents and students. Sometimes teaching assistants are unsatisfactorily employed on tidying and sorting when they are needed to support individuals in a whole-class session. There is good practice in planning and organisation as whole-class teaching is followed by group activities which consolidate or practise the topic. At these times the very able adult assistance helps pupils learn and allows the teacher to directly teach a focus group enabling further understanding and also an accurate assessment of how well the pupils are achieving.

64. Teaching is less effective when teachers do not explain tasks clearly so that pupils are unsure of what to do. This lack of clarity means that the pupils are confused and do not behave well. The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow when the teacher goes over the same idea for too long and again pupils, particularly higher attainers, become restless due to the lack of challenge.

65. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge and provides good support to colleagues. There has been some monitoring through observations and scrutiny of work but the inconsistency of practice across the school indicates that the role of the co-ordinator does not yet have sufficient whole-school impact in order to raise the quality of teaching.

66. Resources are good, there is enough practical equipment for counting and measuring and these resources are well organised and accessible to the pupils. Pupils use their initiative to get what they want and are learning to clear away sensibly. Information Technology is used suitably to reinforce learning; for example pupils make use of a computer programme to better understand symmetry. There are number lines and squares on display to support pupils' learning but classrooms and shared areas of the school lack a sufficient focus on numeracy.

SCIENCE

67. The results of teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 in 1999 were in line with the national averages. The inspection found that the attainment of the pupils at age 7, the end of Key Stage 1, are currently above those expected for pupils of this age.

68. In the assessment tasks in 1999 the number of pupils attaining Level 2 or above at Key Stage 1, was in line when compared with the national average and when compared with benchmarks for similar schools. The number of pupils reaching Level 3 was also in line when compared with the national average and when compared with similar schools. In 1999 a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs took the standard assessment tasks.

69. The pupils currently in the top age group of the school are achieving standards that are above those expected for this age group. The school has maintained the standards observed at the previous inspection. As part of a project on buildings pupils decide the criteria for sorting building materials according to their various properties. For example, some pupils decided to sort the wide variety of materials available according to the substance they were made from; clay bricks and tiles and concrete bricks and tiles; others according to the flexibility of the material. They then discussed the use the materials were put to and decided whether the origin of the material had a bearing on its use. For example, clay bricks for a wall, concrete paving bricks for a drive. Staff and volunteer helpers skilfully questioned the pupils as to the particular properties which made the materials suitable to the job. Pupils drew well on their previous knowledge and provided

perceptive answers. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There was no significant variation among pupils of different gender.

70. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident and have a good knowledge of scientific concepts and this enables them to devise challenging investigations. By sharing their expertise with the teaching assistants and the volunteer helpers they are able to provide good learning experiences to pupils. The use of small groups and the well structured question and answer sessions in these groups lead to pupils learning new concepts such as the link between the substance a material is made of and its use. In addition pupils are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their level of knowledge in these discussions. This is good teaching. In one class observed very good teaching took place. The teacher skilfully drew on a previous lesson and homework from the previous night to inspire precise debate about the form and shapes of particular building material and how this influenced the way it is used. In one lesson observed the teacher opened the lesson well and caught the pupils' imagination but, because of a lack of assessment of the pupils' learning needs, failed to follow this through with any new learning. In the majority of lessons on-going assessment is used sensibly to devise the next activity for the pupils to undertake.

71. Pupils have good attitudes to science. They listen carefully to the member of staff or volunteer leading their group, respond with enthusiasm to questions, want to contribute, work hard and gain new knowledge as a result. They work sensibly by themselves, for example older pupils listing the materials used in the construction of the school. Younger pupils are excited by activities such as a 'bug hunt' in the grounds of the school. They behave well on these exciting expeditions. They enjoy their bug laboratory set up in the practical area of their classroom. They learn to care for the tiny creatures they capture and the fragile relationship between where the creature lives and its success at survival. Pupils are confident in handling small creatures, equipment, and materials and do so with care. These mature attitudes and high level of sensible behaviour contribute significantly to the rate and quality of learning.

72. The science curriculum meets the statutory requirements, the scheme of work covers the required Programmes of Study. The resources are adequate and the school grounds include a wood, meadow land and a large dead tree, all of which provide a rich source of items for investigation. The co-ordinator does not currently have the opportunity to monitor the quality of provision in the school. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject is satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY and ART

73. No lessons in design and technology and very few lessons in art were observed during the inspection but from the observation of two art lessons and looking at displays and teachers' planning, it is judged that pupils at age seven achieve standards that are in line with those expected in design and technology and above those expected for pupils of this age in art. Younger pupils make careful drawings of pieces of bark skilfully blending oil pastel colours to represent the crevices of the outer surface and incorporating good representations of moss and lichen as it occurs on the surface. Such careful observation greatly enhances learning of both art techniques and scientific observational skills. They make a range of three-dimensional shapes including clay work and design and make models of environments for small creatures. Older pupils make clear representational paintings of owls and hyacinths, skilfully using print techniques to represent feathers and petals. They design and make models of vehicles and draw on their work in science and

geography to make models of houses, taking into consideration the structural framework of timber buildings as they do so.

74. Throughout the school, pupils learn and apply new skills successfully. They use art packages on the computer to good effect, for example to produce insects and small creatures. Pupils have recently had the advantage of working with an artist in school and have produced small clay tiles ready to assemble into a 'Millennium wall' in the school's internal courtyard. In this project they take into account the design restrictions of clay and the need to exhibit the work out of doors.

75. Teaching overall is judged to be satisfactory in design and technology and good in art. Class teachers plan lessons with clear objectives and share their planning well with teaching assistants and volunteers, many of whom are skilled in art teaching. It is this ability to draw on particular expertise that results in good learning and standards of work particularly in art. In one lesson observed, pupils were working with a teaching assistant studying the work of Seurat. She skilfully led the pupils through an understanding of the manner in which colours may be blended by the eye even though the colours are laid down as separate points. In lessons the pupils work sensibly and have mature attitudes and good relationships with staff which helps them to learn. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school.

76. The provision fulfils the current requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors the quality of art work through the displays but does not currently have the opportunity to monitor the quality of provision for design and technology throughout the school. Displays of work around the school are of good quality and make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the wide range of work covered in the school, both two-dimensional and three-dimensional. This work includes design and technology models, painting, drawing in pencil and charcoal and a range of printing techniques often coupled to the original sketches, as for example the attractive fish prints in the entrance hall. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection and schemes of work are now satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

77. History and geography are not treated as individual and discrete subjects across the school, rather they are taught as part of the school's thematic approach, although there are policies in place that inform teaching and learning. Thus the history and geography of the area are the basis of literacy work with pupils considering the life and times of Henry VIII and links to Hemel Hempstead. Pupils have made a visit to the centre of the old town looking at evidence and considering the location of the town in relation to London. Younger pupils are linking their 'bugs' work via scientific investigation and observation with geography providing the work on habitats in the locale, drawing maps of the different areas round the school favoured by different types of creatures. Pupils are developing an appropriate sense of chronology in their consideration of changes in people's lives over time, for instance changes in farming when thinking about milk deliveries.

78. Overall pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in their learning and reaching standards that are in line with their abilities and nationally expected levels. This reflects the findings of the previous report in 1996. An especial focus of their work is the development of geographical and historical language and the opportunity to investigate at first hand features of the local environment. Pupils also use secondary evidence such as photographs and video programmes to develop their observational and analytical skills

while older pupils had the opportunity to talk to a great grandmother of a pupil who was born in the area over eighty years before and able to discuss changes she had seen between then and now. When challenged by the quality of teaching they stay on task, discuss what they have seen, ask questions and suggest answers to other questions. They are proud of what they have achieved. Pupils are involved with their work, enthusiastic and quick to pick up on technical language. They work hard, taking responsibility for their own work and concentrate and persevere with the tasks set for them. Pupils are able to co-operate over resources.

79. Teaching is at least sound, and most is good. Teachers know the curriculum as well as the resources and use this knowledge to support learning. Teachers use their own skills to support the development of pupil's skills, especially the development of language and observational skills. They have high expectations that pupils will be challenged by their tasks. Planning is clear and drawn from the overall curriculum map for their year groups. The curriculum is focused on building up pupils' skills of research and identification of research and investigative techniques via practical application. The school has appointed a co-ordinator but monitoring of learning and teaching is underdeveloped. The school is appropriately resourced to support the curriculum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

80. Pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected nationally and progress is satisfactory. Pupils are developing a growing awareness of how a computer can be used to help them find information, record their ideas or to analyse data. Concept keyboards are used appropriately to support early writing and this develops to word processing with redrafting for older pupils. Calculators are used appropriately in mathematics and the use of cameras to record what "bugs" were found around the school shows good application of information technology (IT) to science. Pupils are able to use appropriate software to enter the results of their bug hunt into a simple database and then they produce and print charts and graphs. Good use is made of CD ROM to find information and with support pupils have successfully accessed the Internet.

81. Only one lesson was seen, in this lesson the teaching was good, the teacher was enthusiastic and showed good knowledge, for example when she explained in simple terms how the Internet sends information to the school computer. At other times teachers and other adults are able to support pupils working at computers but little direct teaching takes place. The school recognises that teachers need to further improve their own skills and further INSET is planned. The assessment of IT is good, pupils are encouraged to keep a computer diary and also to self-assess how successful they have been, this is then followed up by the teachers who record progress and plan the next activity taking good account of how well the pupil has achieved.

82. Improvements have been made since the time of the previous inspection. For example there are now programmable toys so that the control aspects of the programme of study can be covered. Information technology is usually noted in planning and teachers give some time to pupils to use IT in lessons which results in pupils having positive attitudes and enjoying IT. Opportunities are missed in some lessons to use the computers as a direct resource for independent group work.

83. There is sufficient software but there is a need for more computers to replace those which are ageing and are not compatible with more recent acquisitions. The co-ordinator has recently taken over this subject and has clear ideas about future developments. The school has rightly identified IT as a priority within its current school development plan but

this needs to focus more on monitoring and evaluation of the targets set in order to increase the impact on standards reached.

MUSIC

84. By the age of seven pupils' attain standards that are above those expected for pupils of this age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils follow the tune that their teacher claps and respond well by devising patterns of their own. They join in well with the steady beats of a song and demonstrate that they can control the sound of their voices in terms of singing quietly or loudly, high or low. They can identify a good range of percussion instruments from their sound and name them accurately. They can sing many songs, tunefully and in unison. This is evident in lessons, assemblies and in extra-curricular club activities. Music from other cultures is played in assembly and in music lessons. In one lesson observed the teacher skilfully wove dance into an activity to enhance the learning of time keeping. Such innovation provides valuable opportunities for pupils to be introduced to and learn about a range of different types of music. The quality of teaching in the subject is good. Good use is made of discussion during lessons to develop language skills and to increase pupils' learning of specific terms used in music. The recognition of pattern in written music makes a positive contribution to work in numeracy. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

85. Pupils enjoy music throughout the school. They show a good awareness of each other's performance, listen carefully to each other's singing and playing and work well together. The opportunity to sing as a group or play instruments during lunch time club activities makes a positive contribution to pupils' interest in music and makes a good contribution to the development of skills.

86. There is a very well qualified and enthusiastic music co-ordinator who makes a significant personal contribution to the provision of music through clubs, school plays and performances and some specialist teaching. She keeps an overview of the subject by monitoring planning but has insufficient time allocated to the role, to observe lessons and work alongside teachers.

87. The provision is further enhanced by visitors to the school such as a string quartet. There is a satisfactory range of resources for music including tuned and untuned instruments and recorded music. Resources are of good quality and well stored to ensure ease of access by pupils and staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

88. Standards in PE are good just as they were at the time of the previous inspection and pupils continue to achieve well in this subject. Pupils catch and throw small balls, large balls, bean bags and quoits with increasing controls over height, speed and accuracy. They control a ball using hands and feet and also make use of small bats to increase this skill. They move appropriately to music and explore the space around themselves with controlled and confident movements such as stretching and rolling.

89. The good standards reached are a result of the good quality of teaching. Teaching is always satisfactory and on occasions very good or excellent. Teachers plan lessons well and give clear instructions and have high expectations of behaviour. Teachers set challenges which make pupils think and extends their learning. For example after working hard throwing and catching with a partner pupils were asked to think of ways of sending

their ball to their partner without throwing. Speaking and listening skills were developed as the teacher encouraged pupils to give their ideas. As a result of this sort of stimulus the pupils have very good attitudes to PE. They listen attentively and try hard to improve on their performance. Personal development is good as pupils are keen to show what they have done safe in the knowledge that the teacher will praise and give ideas for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants in PE lessons which enables them to join in as fully as possible.

90. Resources are good; the hall is spacious with good large and small apparatus. The use of different coloured individual mats which also have mathematical shapes are well used not only to help pupils develop skills but also to manage the class effectively. For example in one lesson the pupils were easily and quickly grouped according to their mat colour or shape which kept the pace of the lesson going. The playgrounds and field are adequate and help to promote games skills outdoors. There is no secure outdoor play area for the under-fives in reception classes and although not hindering the development of physical skills there is a lack of opportunity to develop social and creative skills through outdoor play involving climbing or ride-on toys. Pupils dress suitably for PE although a small number wear earrings or necklaces which is a health and safety risk and not satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

91. Attainment and progress by the end of the key stage is in line with that expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus for the ages and abilities of pupils. Religious education is a discrete subject though linked to the history and geography work on the local area. Pupils know that the religion of the area is predominantly Christian and have factual information about Christianity. Most pupils know Jesus is special to Christians, that the Bible contains stories about him and that he told stories [parables] to help guide our relationships and behaviour to others. Older pupils in their follow up work to a local Church visit are able to identify the artefacts and furniture of the building and explain what happens in the different areas of the building. Younger children are able to identify the core of the story of Zaccheus and acknowledge that cheating and lying may not make people happy, but also recognise that people can change.

92. Teachers' planning is directly drawn from the long-term plan for the subject and is differentiated for pupils' ages and abilities within each class. Teachers are careful to avoid indoctrination, they tell the stories well with due regard to the spiritual content and gently guide pupils to consider all the features of the story, especially the feelings and emotions of the key characters. Older pupils have good recall of the facts about the church they visited. Teachers are careful not just to make the study of the building historical but also to consider special events in human life, Teachers of older pupils encourage them to recall what they know about the Christian faith and link to work on other faiths such Islam, Hinduism and Judaism.

93. Pupils enjoy lessons, are full of questions and opinions and wish to contribute positively to their own learning. Using building blocks and model figures older pupils built a large Church in their work area while younger children reproduced Noah's Ark using the same type of materials in their area. Younger children were able to explain their work and recall the story in great detail, moving the toy animals round the construction as they did so. Older pupils were able to explain the features of their building by moving a representative play person through their church, explaining what each symbol meant, for instance the eagle on the ball standing for the carrying of Christianity round the world. Pupils take their work in religious education seriously. They are involved with their tasks and have good

recall of earlier parts of their lessons. They work hard, concentrate and enjoy considering the deeper meaning of their lessons. Pupils reflect on the themes of their lessons, use resources independently and give respect to the work of others. Lessons are characterised by pupil's positive relationships with their teachers and other adults. Religious Education now appropriately supports pupil's spiritual development which was a cause for concern at the time of the previous inspection.

94. The quality of teaching is at least good overall and much is very good and even excellent. Teachers have very good factual subject knowledge and very good understanding of how to structure lessons and tasks to ensure pupils from a range of different backgrounds think about relationships with each other and with God. They hold very high expectations that pupils will develop more consideration for each other and each other's beliefs. All teachers take care to be accurate when telling faith stories putting the stress on the belief as well as the facts of a faith. Sessions are well resourced with appropriate materials well prepared and to hand, especially books and Bibles.