

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARGARET WIX PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Albans, Herts

Hertfordshire LEA

Unique reference number: 117188

Headteacher: Mrs J Thomas

Reporting inspector: Dr A Fraser  
3607

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> January – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 190555

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Oaks St Albans Herts
Postcode:	AL3 6EL
Telephone number:	01727 759232
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Harris
Date of previous inspection:	18th November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Alister Fraser	Registered inspector	Maths	What sort of school is it?
		Music	What should the school do to improve further?
		RE	The school's results and pupils' achievements
Mrs Elizabeth Cooke	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		English as an additional language	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs G Battarbee	Team inspector	English	Under fives
		Art	How well is the school led and managed?
Mr M Mangan	Team inspector	IT	Special Educational Needs
		DT	How well are the pupils taught?
		Geography	
Mrs P Palmer	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		History	
		PE	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Margaret Wix Primary School is a medium-sized school catering for pupils from 4 to 11 years old with 214 full time pupils and a nursery class of 51 part time pupils. The numbers of boys and girls attending are roughly equal. The attainment of pupils entering the reception class is a little lower than the Hertfordshire average. The school is located on the north western edge of St Albans. Most pupils come from two estates which are a mixture of private and local authority owned accommodation with the majority coming from local authority housing on the estate in which the school is situated. A significant number, about 15%, comes from the other estate which is about 2 miles distant from the school. National indicators suggest that the school is not in an area which is particularly socially and economically deprived. However, the school draws pupils from a wider intake and compared with many areas of Hertfordshire, it is below average in this respect. 22.3% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above average for a school of this size. About 20% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are 41 pupils with English as an additional language. There are 72 children on the register of special educational needs. The average class size is 22.9.

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

Overall, this school provides a satisfactory standard of education with some features that are good. The pupils achieve standards in mathematics and science that are well above those of similar schools. The teaching is good and the school is managed effectively. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The strengths of the school outweigh its weaknesses.

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

- Quality of relationships, attitudes to the school and behaviour are good
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is good overall
- Attainment in mathematics is good
- Overall, teaching is good with over half of lessons observed being good or better
- Provision for the youngest children is good
- The quality of care for pupils and behaviour management are good

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

- The opportunity for staff with management roles to play a more effective part
- The effectiveness of monitoring by subject co-ordinators
- Teaching of the curriculum to achieve breadth and balance
- The opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry skills
- Teaching and learning in information and communication technology

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then it has made satisfactory improvement. Whole school planning has improved to ensure progression. More effective analysis is now carried out of pupils' attainment. Greater consistency has been established in the assessment of pupils' work. Monitoring systems including the monitoring of the quality of teaching, pupils' lateness, and the analysis of pupils' results, have been improved. However, they are not consistently applied within the school and there is room for further improvement. Standards in art at Key Stage 2 have improved to some extent. However, the improvements lack consistency, resources are limited and monitoring and assessment are under-developed.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	C	D	C
Mathematics	B	B	B	A
Science	B	B	B	A

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

[Note: an alternative standards table where KS1 results are needed is in the summary]

Most of the five year olds in the current reception class achieve what is normally expected for their age, in language and literacy and in numeracy. At seven years of age, standards are above average in mathematics, below average in reading and average in writing. By the age of eleven, standards in mathematics and science are above average when compared to all schools and well above average to schools with similar intakes. Standards in English are below average compared with all schools and average to similar schools. Overall, in mathematics and science, results have remained above the national average over the last three years and have improved when compared to similar schools. In English, standards have remained broadly average but have dipped in 1999. The school has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for 2000. The standards of work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed these standards except in science where they were lower. Overall, pupils achieve well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes, are enthusiastic about their work and try hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is good. Around the school, pupils are courteous and conduct themselves in a responsible way.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well in lessons and approach their work with confidence. They have very good relationships with teachers and one another.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils' moral development is very good and their social development is good. Personal development is limited by too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to show initiative.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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



The overall quality of teaching in English, including literacy, is satisfactory up to the end of Key Stage 1 (4-7 years old) and up to the end of Key Stage 2 (7-11 years old). The overall quality of teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good up to the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Overall, teachers use a range of effective methods and the management of pupils is good. Teachers set a brisk pace and make good use of resources. Questioning is used well both to challenge pupils and to make on-going assessments of what pupils know and understand. Lessons are structured appropriately. Teachers are confident and set clear objectives which are shared with pupils. However, teacher expectations are not always well matched to the needs of all pupils. Some lessons have overly long introductions and lack a brisk pace. There are too few opportunities for pupils to pursue their own lines of enquiry. 92.7% of the teaching in lessons observed was satisfactory or better with 55% being good or better and 7.2% being judged unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the under-fives. In Key Stages 1 and 2 some aspects of subjects are under-represented and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of enquiry. The school fails to deliver all statutory curricular requirements information and communication technology in Key Stages 1 and 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Work designed especially for them enables pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for these pupils is satisfactory with appropriate support provided in class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is sound provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, for social development it is good and for moral development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe, secure and positive environment for all pupils.

The school has formed good relationships with parents. Parents are well informed about the curriculum and their children's progress. Opportunities are made for parents to find out about the curriculum but the uptake of these is limited. The strategies for teaching numeracy skills are effective

in attaining high standards. The provision for personal, social and health education are good. Good use is made of visits and visitors to the school to enhance the curriculum. The school's curriculum meets all statutory requirements except in information and communication technology (ICT). The behaviour management procedures are a strength and are recognised by parents as a successful feature of the school. Procedures to eliminate oppressive behaviour of all kind are very effective.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and key staff provide satisfactory leadership and management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory.

The headteacher and the governing body work well together. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is reflected in the aims of the school and in the school development plan. She provides a positive role model for the management of pupil behaviour. Effective senior management team work is, as yet, under-developed. The adequacy of staffing is good. The accommodation is satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum. Learning resources are variable from subject to subject but are satisfactory overall. The school gives appropriate attention to obtaining best value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approachability of the school when parents have a question or a problem</li> <li>• The good teaching</li> <li>• Their children like coming to school</li> <li>• The expectation that children will try hard and do their best at all times</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The good behaviour of the pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• A small minority would like to see closer working links with parents</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse parents' positive comments. However, there is scope for development in the quality of leadership and management. The range of activities outside lessons could be greater which would enhance the children's experience and have a positive impact on standards and quality. The school offers a sufficient range of opportunities for parents to become involved in the work of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. By the age of 5, children's achievement is satisfactory in literacy and good in numeracy compared with what is normally expected for their age. It is good in all other all other areas of learning except in creative development where it is in line with the national expectation.
2. At seven years of age, 1999 results show that standards in writing are in line with the national average, below average in reading and above the national average in mathematics. By the age of eleven, 1999 results show that standards in English are below the national average but above the national average in mathematics and science.
3. Compared with those of similar schools, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the average in writing, broadly in line with the average in reading and well above the average in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, in comparison with similar schools, standards in English are broadly in line with the average whilst mathematics and science are well above the average.
4. Overall, in mathematics and science, end of Key Stage 2 results have remained above the national average over the last three years and have improved when compared to similar schools. In English, standards have remained broadly average but have dipped in 1999.
5. The work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed these standards except in science where standards were judged to be only satisfactory. This is because pupils' attainment in experimental and investigative science, which forms a significant component of the science curriculum, is well below the standards expected for their age in both key stages.
6. Pupils' skills in literacy are used well in other areas of the curriculum but their skills in numeracy are less well used in other curriculum subjects, for example in science.
7. Overall, pupils achieve well compared with similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The attainment and progress of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for 2000 in English and mathematics and is in line to meet them.
8. At both key stages, standards do not meet national expectations in information and communication technology. At both key stages attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the non-core subjects, attainment is satisfactory.

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

9. Pupils show good attitudes to school and are keen to participate in lessons. They are happy to come to school, parents report that their children enjoy being at Margaret Wix Primary School. Pupils generally approach their lessons with interest and are able to sustain concentration well across the curriculum. For example, in a well managed Key Stage 2 Circle time pupils followed the rules, listened to each other respectfully and offered

sensible suggestions to solve peers' problems throughout the whole lesson. This applies to all groups of pupils in the class. Pupils in discussions reported that they particularly enjoy mathematics lessons, as well as physical education and music. Behaviour throughout the school is good, parents acknowledged this at their meeting. Pupils show good behaviour both in and outside lessons. At playtimes, despite restricted playspace, especially in Key Stage 2, they are good natured and kind to each other. Supervision at playtimes is firm and friendly, simple equipment provided helps to focus play. Behaviour management by all adults across the school is very effective, characterised by consistency, respect for individuals and high expectations. This is a strength of the school. On the few occasions pupils did show unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons, this was associated with less successful teaching; lesson pace was a key weakness here. The school is well cared for with resources, artefacts and work on display; pupils respect this and each other's property.

10. Relationships are very good, no evidence was seen of unkind or oppressive behaviour. The school is a harmonious place. An example of this is the care a girl took of her classmate in assembly when he was having difficulty sitting quietly.

11. Pupils have some opportunities to develop independence and show initiative and when these are offered they are keen to take them. This was seen at lunchtimes when the oldest pupils carefully assist the younger ones in the dining room and help to supervise their play. Pupils also deliver milk and registers to classrooms before school, help to organise assemblies and undertake job in classrooms. Each class formulates its own rules which all then 'sign up to' for the year.

12. Attendance at the school is satisfactory overall. The problem with lateness previously reported has been vigorously tackled by the school with some success. There remains a core of a few pupils whose poor attendance is associated with a range of concerns. The school has worked closely with families and the effective Education Welfare Officer to improve rates of attendance for these pupils. Rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are similar to national averages. Exclusions of pupils are, at 3 fixed term periods last year, fewer than the national average.

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

13. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. It is satisfactory in 38 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 36 per cent, and very good or better in 19 per cent. In 7 per cent of the lessons the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching of children under five is also good. There is little variation between the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

14. At the last inspection, teaching in the early years was reported as mainly satisfactory, and at Key Stage 1 and 2, teaching was judged to be 'sound or better' in 88 per cent of lessons and satisfactory overall. On this evidence, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

15. Teachers' understanding and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is good in both key stages and pupils are making satisfactory progress in the development of literacy skills. In a large majority of the lessons the teaching in literacy lessons is nearly always satisfactory, with an almost equal balance of strengths and weaknesses. Current attainment levels are in line with national expectations. Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of pupils, lessons have good pace and teachers use good questioning skills to extend children's understanding. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good in both key stages and all pupils including those with special learning needs are

making satisfactory progress.

16. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good and pupils are attaining standards above national expectations in both key stages. Strategies for teaching mental arithmetic are good. In both key stages, the majority of lessons are challenging for pupils and a good pace is maintained. Teaching of basic skills in mathematics is good and pupils are making good progress in all aspects.

17. In science, the teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and satisfactory, overall, at Key Stage 2 apart from the teaching of experimental and investigative science, which is unsatisfactory. Teaching is also satisfactory, in both key stages, in art, geography, and Religious Education. However, the range of teaching strategies used is rather limited in many subjects and pupils are currently given too few opportunities to engage in investigative, collaborative, and open-ended tasks requiring higher order thinking skills. Teaching of music is good in both key stages and the music tuition provided by specialist instructors is also good. In physical education, teaching is at least satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 largely due to a frequent mismatch between lesson objectives and pupils' capabilities. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in Information Communication Technology (ICT) or history at either key stage due to the small number of lessons that took place during the inspection period.

18. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is satisfactory in both key stages apart from dance, which is a weakness. Teachers' subject knowledge in ICT is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2, but pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and understanding in this area.

19. In the lessons where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teaching strengths outweigh weaknesses. In these lessons, teachers give clear introductions, generally make learning intentions explicit to pupils and generally show sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. They explain clearly and use questioning strategies effectively to draw out and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are managed very well. There is good use of praise and encouragement and a positive working atmosphere is created. Pupils usually understand what to do. However, in some lessons, teachers do not always make it clear how they expect work to be presented, nor do they indicate how long pupils have to complete tasks and on occasion lesson pace is affected. Learning objectives are not always revisited at the conclusion of lessons and as a consequence teachers are not always aware of the extent of the progress made by the pupils.

20. In the most effective lessons, the teachers are well prepared and provide carefully selected resources and activities to support and extend pupil learning. They make learning objectives explicit to all pupils and they provide a range of appropriate resources and activities to help their pupils achieve these. They deliver effective introductions to lessons confidently. Pupils are given clear indication of the time-scales for completion of their work and a good pace is maintained. The teachers make good arrangements for supporting children with special learning needs. They structure lessons carefully to ensure that pupils are given time to practise, consolidate and extend skills and they set time aside at the end of lessons to evaluate the impact of their teaching. These effective strategies now need to be extended across the school.

21. In a small minority of lessons the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. This is largely due to poor planning and preparation, which result in a mismatch between teacher expectations and pupil capabilities. There is not always an appropriate balance between whole class sessions where the teacher talks to the pupils, and time for purposeful practical activity. Some lesson introductions are too long, resulting in restlessness amongst pupils. The pace of lessons is sometimes slow and questioning fails to involve enough pupils. In

these instances, the quality of pupil behaviour and the quality of learning deteriorate significantly.

22. The quality of pupil management and the very good relationships with pupils is evident in all classes. This is a clear strength of the school. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and very good class control. They have high expectations of behaviour and make good use of praise and encouragement to motivate pupils. They are sensitive to their pupils needs and interests. Pupils generally respond to this by working with sustained concentration and enthusiasm. Another key strength is the quality of teachers questioning strategies. Teachers use questions effectively to encourage the participation of all pupils in class discussions and to extend the pupils' subject vocabulary. The quality of communication with the class assistants is also very good and good use is generally made of the additional support provided. Many lessons are well structured and well paced, especially in English and maths, with a good balance between whole class and individual work.

23. Currently, teachers use a rather limited range of teaching strategies. These are generally used effectively but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to work collaboratively, undertake open-ended investigations or to follow through their own research enquiries. In some subjects, for example, science, design technology and geography, lessons are over-directed and pupils are given too few opportunities to explore or investigate. The overall level of challenge in some lessons could be higher, especially but not exclusively in relation to the needs of the more able pupils.

24. The teachers' planning, which was described as a weakness in the last inspection, has improved, and this is now satisfactory in all subjects with the exception of planning for ICT, which is unsatisfactory. Detailed, well-organised, medium and short-term plans are produced for all other areas of the primary curriculum. The teachers' medium and short-term plans generally specify clear and appropriate learning objectives and planned activities for pupils. In the planning of a small minority of lessons, little account is taken of the range of attainment within the class and of the need to extend and support pupils with special learning needs. This is especially noticeable at Key Stage 2 in foundation subjects. Although teachers make good use of on-going assessment in the classroom to motivate and encourage pupils to improve, the arrangements to assess the progress of pupils are not always clearly indicated on the plans. However, teachers are beginning to evaluate the impact of their teaching, especially in maths and English, and to annotate plans to indicate the need for follow up or extension activities for pupils. This practice now needs to be extended to all subjects in order to improve further the quality of the planning.

25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory overall. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' needs and work hard to create an atmosphere of trust and encouragement. In accordance with the Code of Practice, Individual Education Plans (IEP's) have been prepared for pupils at Stage 2 or above on the school's SEN Register. These are beginning to have an impact in the classrooms. Class teachers are now beginning to become more involved in this process and this needs to continue if this impact is to be maintained and developed. The targets set in the current IEP's are sometimes too general and therefore difficult to evaluate at termly reviews. In some instances the same targets have been set in successive terms apparently indicating little pupil progress. This needs to be addressed consistently at the next parental review. Good use is made of special needs support staff who build up good relationships with pupils and enable them to work with greater concentration in small group situations. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator also provides sensitive and well-informed support for staff concerning pupils on the SEN Register. She also works with a number of pupils at Key Stage 2 in a withdrawal situation and provides well for their needs. However, currently there is insufficient liaison with class teachers who are not always aware of the work undertaken

nor of the progress that pupils are making in these sessions. Moreover, the practice of withdrawing pupils during the literacy hour needs to be reviewed, as the current literacy programme for SEN pupils does not reflect national expectations. The support provided by the SENCO may be more effective if applied in the classroom alongside the class teachers.

26. Written marking varies in quality and quantity through the school. In some instances it is barely sufficient. Written feedback to pupils is often positive but places far too little emphasis on ensuring pupils know what they need to do to improve. Homework provision is satisfactory

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

27. Provision for pupils under five, including those with special educational needs, is good. The curriculum received by the children offers good opportunities to meet the desirable learning outcomes, by providing a wide range of appropriate learning experiences.

28. The school has reviewed whole school planning for Key Stage 1 and 2 in response to the previous inspection recommendations. The curriculum is now delivered through discrete subject lessons, which has improved the clarity of the learning intentions. Literacy and numeracy follow the national strategy documents. The numeracy strategy is effective in achieving high standards in mathematics although it is not yet sufficiently applied in other curricular areas. The Literacy Strategy is in place throughout the school and is having a positive impact on standards in English but, as yet, is having a limited impact across the other subjects. Schemes of work, following government or local authority guidelines, are in place for all other subjects except information and communication technology. These have helped to focus teachers' planning on clear learning objectives and progression in most aspects of pupils' learning. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) continues to be good. It is delivered throughout the school and is well resourced to address a range of issues including sex education and the misuse of drugs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is overall sound with some good planning for focused support within lessons.

29. The curriculum actually taught to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 does not provide sufficient breadth, balance and relevance. Teachers do not yet deliver the statutory requirements for Information Communication Technology (ICT) and ICT is also not used sufficiently within other subjects. Some aspects of subjects are under-represented in teachers' planning. For example, in science the experimental and investigative strand of the science curriculum and the range of ways pupils should be taught to present scientific information is given insufficient attention due to the desire to ensure pupils have high levels of scientific knowledge. The level of knowledge being delivered through planned activities is not always appropriate for all abilities. Some activities, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, are pitched too high for lower attaining pupils so that the content has little interest for them. In other lessons the content does not extend pupils' understanding of the subject sufficiently, for example, in some dance lessons.

30. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is restricting the rate of progress across most subjects of the curriculum. There is often an over emphasis on teacher-directed activity with the intention of ensuring gains in subject knowledge. However this strategy is severely restricting the development and application of pupils' practical and thinking skills. The taught curriculum provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and apply enquiry and problem-solving skills. It offers very few occasions for pupils to initiate their own investigations. The provision of

opportunities for critical reflection is limited. This is restricting progress especially in such subjects as physical education.

31. The school curriculum is enhanced by its extra-curricular provision of visits to places of interest linked to the subject topic structure, for example, the visit to the Evacuee Experience in a history topic on World War 2. Visitors to the school, such as the local historians sharing their expertise of the Victorian era, also contribute greatly to the quality of pupils' learning. The range of activities outside lessons, currently choir, recorder, football and netball, could be greater. This would enhance the pupils' experiences and have a positive effect on standards and the quality of learning.

### *Personal Development*

32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There is a whole school commitment to establishing good behaviour, showing mutual respect and establishing a strong moral code.

33. The provision for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness is sound although there is limited active planning to promote spirituality throughout the curriculum. Assemblies are well planned to develop appropriate themes on a weekly basis and include opportunities for reflection and prayer. Music in assemblies is used to develop the expression of emotions and the appreciation of nature and art develops a sense of awe and wonder.

34. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are very clear about what is morally right and wrong, particularly when it involves the feelings of others. What constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is understood well by all pupils and staff discreetly reprimand those who infringe the class rules, to which they have all given their commitment through the signing of their name.

35. Pupils' social development is good. They understand the need for good relationships. They generally work together well in lessons. There is an expectation that pupils will be supportive and caring of each other. Older pupils are expected to comfort those pupils who are upset at playtimes. Through festivals, such as at harvest time, pupils have the opportunity to help people in the local community. Pupils also have opportunities to support people in more disadvantaged situations such as sponsoring a child in Bangladesh. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility or show initiative in other aspects of school community life.

36. The provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. History and Religious Education in particular provide good opportunities for pupils to explore their own culture, that of other civilisations, such as the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians, and different faiths, for example, a parent coming to share her experiences of Hanukkah. In previous years there have been visits from artists in residence and musicians but these are not evident in current plans.

37. The school has good relationships with other schools. In particular there are strong links with the local playgroup prior to pupils entering the school. Links with the two main recipient secondary schools provide both curricular facilities and expertise, such as the use of the swimming pool and library, as well as personal familiarisation for pupils. Secondary pupils regularly visit the school and work with pupils. The school also joins with other local schools for a science event and sporting occasions.

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



38. The school makes good provision to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare, and has maintained standards previously reported. The Governors oversee a suitable range of measures and checks that ensures the school is a clean, safe and pleasant environment. This includes a regular Health and Safety audit, fire practices and checks on electrical and fire equipment. The school is undertaking building work this term to provide a better school reception area.

39. The school has effective Child Protection procedures in place and has two named people responsible, the headteacher and the nursery teacher. These procedures are closely linked to the school's good systems to monitor and support pupils' personal development. These are effective because there are clear reporting procedures and channels which enable urgent information to be disseminated quickly. Examples of this are the daily staff briefing and the notebooks for lunchtime supervisors to record concerns, these are monitored weekly by the headteacher. Routine assessment of personal development is reported annually by means of a comprehensive tick sheet that is passed to the next class teacher and summarised in reports to parents. Teachers know their pupils well; all adults in school are made aware if necessary of special concerns about individual pupils. Behaviour management strategies are very effective and are underpinned by the comprehensive policy. All adults in school adhere to this consistently and the school is an orderly place. Parents are pleased with provision in this area for all groups of pupils. Pupils' learning benefits from this good care because they feel comfortable and safe in school, this enables them to settle and learn.

40. Attendance is carefully monitored by the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer who work closely together to tackle poor attendance of individual pupils promptly. Registers are usually completed accurately at the start of sessions in compliance with requirements and the school's good procedures. A few minor problems with registers were noted during the inspection, occasional use of correction fluid, a missing mark, a register marked late but, overall, they are satisfactory.

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

41. Parents and carers are pleased with the work the school does, with the standards achieved and with their relationship with staff. Parents feel confident that their children are well cared for, are treated with respect and are learning suitable values and attitudes. They are particularly pleased with the school's procedures and achievements in managing behaviour which are felt to be consistently successful. Parents say the school is open and approachable and almost all are satisfied with the links forged between home and school. Parents like the annual reports they receive on children's progress and the opportunities they have to discuss their children's progress. Reports are well written and informative but do not meet requirements in reporting Information and Communication Technology. Teachers note parents' comments at consultation evenings and are careful to inform them promptly if there is a concern about their child. A number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school. The inspection team judge provision in this area, including visitors and trips, to be satisfactory overall.

42. The school has maintained its sound links with carers successfully. A strong feature of the school's work in this area is the willingness of the management team to seek parents views on a number of topics, gathered in the form of questionnaires. For example, the concern about homework provision noted in the previous inspection was overcome following consultation of parents. Carers now have a high level of satisfaction with the homework set. The school provides a prospectus, newsletters, a policy library and

curriculum information to parents which together with consultation and information meetings provide a good range of information for parents. This applies to families of all groups of pupils. The school has a bi-lingual classroom assistant who is able to offer support, if needed, to families with English as an additional language. The school has expressed disappointment at the low numbers of parents attending meetings that are arranged for them. The school has an active parent teacher association who organise fundraising and social events. Parents also help in school in classes, by accompanying pupils on trips and visits, helping with swimming and at special events. At home, carers offer support by sharing reading, helping with homework and providing artefacts.

43. The involvement of parents and carers in school life has a positive impact on pupils' attainment in many areas. Parents contribute financially by fundraising, the library area at the school was paid for from voluntary contributions from parents and local community. This has enhanced the accommodation. Children share books and other homework with carers, many home/school reading books are full of comments by families on books shared together. This practice in academic areas improves pupils' attainment. The great majority of parents send their children to school each day ready to learn and are supportive of the school. This contributes by creating positive attitudes towards learning in pupils.

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

44. Overall the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision of how the school will improve. This is embedded in the school aims and reflected in the detail and structure of the School Development Plan. Thorough analysis of data has focused the School Development Plan on raising achievement in English, maths and science. This is evident as an appropriate high priority throughout the school and there is evidence of the positive impact of that focus particularly in the end of Key Stage 2 test results in mathematics and science. The three year plan also reflects the school's priority to maintain the emphasis on the core curriculum. The headteacher manages an orderly and busy school, and provides a positive role model for the management of behaviour in a quiet, calm atmosphere.

45. The management system of the school has recently been re-structured. This has been a major development for the school and the benefits have not yet matured. Although the Senior Management Team has had a series of meetings during its first term, the systems and structures needed to secure confident effective teamwork are still under-developed. This has resulted in inconsistencies across a range of aspects such as communication, the monitoring of work and an unclear understanding of delegated roles. However, the headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the team and how it will underpin the next phase of school development planning and the new team members are keen to clarify and develop their roles.

46. The autumn term not only saw the restructuring of the Senior Management Team, but also a number of new appointments to the school and within the school. The staffing structure shows a good match of teacher skills to the needs of the school and the demands of the curriculum, although there is currently a high ratio of inexperienced teachers. This is resulting in high demands for support being placed on the Senior Management Team, who are themselves new to post. However, appropriate support is provided for newly qualified teachers, although the monitoring of their teaching would benefit from a systematic framework. The support for new staff has focused particularly on Literacy and numeracy and has been effective in ensuring a consistent approach in those areas.

47. The majority of curriculum areas have schemes of work in place, school development plan priorities, and evidence of prepared budget bids, although many of these

were prepared by staff who are no longer at the school. The headteacher provides a good co-ordinator role model as English co-ordinator ensuring coverage, monitoring and target setting are effectively in place.

48. In other subjects however, co-ordinators have not yet been enabled to apply this model. In mathematics and science, the monitoring of pupil achievement in national tests is relatively detailed and systematic but other aspects of their monitoring role lacks a sound operational framework. This results in inconsistent monitoring and support to improve teaching and learning. Co-ordinators, especially those new to post, are unclear about their delegated responsibilities. Consequently, there is a lack of systematic knowledge about the quality of teaching, learning and achievement and co-ordinators currently have little impact on improving standards in their subject. The headteacher is aware of this situation and plans to include the development of the co-ordinator role in the new School Development Plan. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and keen to develop their subjects.

49. The Governing Body has a sound understanding, a keen interest in the work of the school and a clear commitment focusing on the needs of the pupils. The recruitment of a number of new governors and a review of procedures has already resulted in the governing body planning to increase their involvement in both school development planning and budget processes as a means to further their knowledge, understanding and contribution to the school and to raising standards.

50. The headteacher and governors work well together and through their committee system the governors have a good understanding of the budget monitoring process and have supported the emphasis on maximising spending on pupils. They are knowledgeable about the premises and site, personnel issues and are gaining knowledge of the curriculum. However, the curriculum monitoring role of the governing body is currently under-developed although a good start has been made and there are plans in place to develop it further.

51. Detailed planning by the headteacher has ensured that the priority areas of the school development plan have been well funded. Adult support in these areas is good and curriculum resources are satisfactory. However, this emphasis has led to an imbalance of resources between and within other areas of the curriculum such as geography, art and design and technology.

52. The data analysis in English and mathematics is good and results in regularly monitored targets of achievement for individuals and for groups, the outcomes of which are shared with the governing body. This analysis also leads to the development of well-researched initiatives to support pupil achievement, such as the school extension of the Additional Literacy Support, or the focus on gender appropriate books. However, the success of these initiatives is not monitored against clear outcome targets of improvement.

53. The governors and headteacher make good use of specific funds, ensuring that money for special needs pupils and those with English as an additional language is well targeted and carefully monitored. The progress of those groups of pupils is also well monitored and their rates of progress suggest that the use of the funds is having a positive impact on pupil progress. The Literacy standards fund was used well to support identified areas of need, such as the purchase of non-fiction big books to support a range of subjects. Other financial opportunities are also used well. This will improve further the environment for the pupils.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

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

- Enable the staff with management responsibilities to carry out a more effective role by:
  - drawing up clear, agreed job descriptions which set out roles and responsibilities
  - establishing a programme of regular Senior Management Team meetings with agenda and minutes which are firmly focused on whole school development priorities to raise standards  
(paragraphs: 45)
- Develop the effectiveness of monitoring by subject co-ordinators by:
  - clarifying and agreeing roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators
  - providing time and resources to enable the roles to be carried out
  - drawing up and establishing a whole school framework of systematic monitoring
- Ensure that teaching of the curriculum achieves breadth and balance by:
  - ensuring that there is full coverage of the curriculum
  - ensuring that there is appropriate balance in the aspects of each subject  
(paragraphs: 48, 88, 97, 109, 123, 139, 142, 150)
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of enquiry by:
  - raising awareness among staff of the need for pupils to develop a critical, investigative approach to their learning
  - by planning for such opportunities in a sustained and regular way
  - by teaching the necessary skills for pupils to carry out their own enquiries  
(paragraphs: 29, 31, 92, 114, 115, 116, 125, 126, 132, 149)
- Ensure appropriate teaching and learning in ICT by:
  - ensuring the planned curriculum meets the statutory requirements in short, medium and long-term planning
  - improving the management and maintenance of ICT resources
  - drawing up an agreed scheme of work and revising the ICT policy in line with the new curricular requirements  
(paragraphs: 30, 92, 94, 95, 96, 121)

#### **Other less significant areas for improvement**

- Improve the quality of teaching in physical education (paragraph: 142)
- Improve standards in dance (paragraph: 140)
- Improve resources in science (paragraph: 97)
- Continue to develop strategies for encouraging parents into school meetings (paragraphs: 42, 43)
- Ensure registers are completely free of errors (paragraph: 40)
- Continue to promote punctuality and attendance (paragraph: 40)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.4	17.2	35.7	38.6	7.1	-	-

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	215
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		48

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	72

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	41

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	29	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (81)	86 (94)	97 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	16
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	28	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (79)	91 (88)	94 (78)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	15	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	9
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	17	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (68)	73 (64)	85 (76)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	17	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (68)	73 (64)	73 (76)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	3
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.3
Average class size	22.9

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	209

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	4 (1.8 FTE)
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	554232
Total expenditure	543180
Expenditure per pupil	2217
Balance brought forward from previous year	2302
Balance carried forward to next year	9651

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	270
Number of questionnaires returned	57

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54.0	40.0	5.0		
My child is making good progress in school.	44.0	47.0	7.0		2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31.0	64.0	5.0		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18.0	71.0	7.0		4.0
The teaching is good.	56.0	42.0	2.0		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40.0	53.0	5.0		2.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67.0	28.0	4.0		2.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50.0	46.0	2.0		2.0
The school works closely with parents.	25.0	61.0	12.0		2.0
The school is well led and managed.	50.0	45.0	4.0		2.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39.0	58.0	4.0		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9.0	47.0	37.0	5.0	2.0



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### Under Fives

55. Children who are under five are housed in the nursery and in the reception class. Many children enter the nursery with skills that are under-developed in language and literacy, mathematics and approaches to learning. The school provides a good programme of induction for the new children and their parents which encourages early confidence and enjoyment. The overall quality of provision for the under fives is good and in some aspects very good. The school recognises that a significant number of children who achieve well on the baseline assessments and who do well in the nursery are children who go on to attend reception classes in other schools.

56. In language children make good progress. Both structured and informal opportunities are provided to encourage and enable children to take part in conversation and to use language. During snack time, staff engage the majority of children in conversation and children responded confidently, mainly speaking in whole sentences, asking questions and sharing likes and dislikes of the different snack items on offer. During the Three Bears story-time children listen enthusiastically and show very good understanding of sequencing, recall and anticipation of repeated phrases. They also engaged readily in conversations about play, such as where the train was going and why.

57. Children make satisfactory progress in literacy and are in line to match national expectations by the time they are five. Opportunities are provided for children to make marks and they are encouraged to begin letter formation and to write their name, for example, on cutting and sticking pictures. This term the school has introduced a structured phonic approach for the under fives which will develop their phonological awareness and provide a clearer link between reading and writing.

58. The under fives, who have just joined the Reception class, take part in the Literacy hour, respond well and make good progress. The majority listen and answer questions and are beginning to link sounds to letter symbols. During the independent activities, appropriate matching and sorting games are used and most children complete the activities correctly. Children start to write letter symbols but are not yet using them to build simple words independently. Most children can write their names, but the quality of letter formation varies.

59. The majority of children make good progress in mathematics and are in line to exceed national expectations by the age of five. In play dough activities, children recognise different shapes and are able to talk accurately about squares having four sides, counting the points of a star and choosing a circle. Good opportunities are used by staff to reinforce number, for example, during snack time counting from the number line. All the children are enthusiastic and the majority count accurately up to nine with some children counting to ten and beyond. In the story, the children recognise direction and size comparison of the three bears, and in the sand activity are able to identify which containers would hold more or less. In the role play area, children match household items together such as plate, knife and fork and are able to sequence an activity, such as preparing an imaginary pancake. Children enjoy mathematical activities and talk enthusiastically about them. There are fewer instances of pupils beginning to record numbers; this is an area for further development.

60. Children are provided with a variety of opportunities and are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They are able to talk about their family, pets and friends during snack time and make associations between their likes and dislikes. They are also aware of issues regarding health and cleanliness, they help tidy up and they wash their hands. Most children are able to talk about what they did at Christmas and what they might do when they go home. They recognise the difference between animals and materials but are less clear about plants being living things. In the role play area, children talk enthusiastically about and demonstrate how to use the new model video and what can be seen on the films.

61. Progress in physical development is good. Pupils demonstrate a range of fine motor skills. They are able to manipulate a range of small objects and tools successfully, such as hammering, puzzles and cutting and sticking. They receive clear guidance in safety issues and show a good understanding of them, for example, by interpreting the safety issue of using a hammer by consistently wearing a safety helmet. Children show good progress in the development of gross movements, gaining spatial awareness, differentiating between types of movements such as marching, skipping and hopping and understanding speed and direction. Children are given very good support in developing independent skills of dressing and they make good progress.

62. Children experience an appropriate range of creative activities and their progress is satisfactory. Children respond well to familiar songs and join in enthusiastically. They can identify common sounds, such as children returning to class next door and they understand and respond to sound signals. The great majority of children recognise red, blue, yellow and a substantial range of secondary colours such as purple. They enjoy mixing colour to create other colours and in addition they enjoy using a range of fabrics and materials to create patterns and pictures. Children spend time exploring the skills of creating models from junk material and show a good understanding of adhesives, independently selecting and experimenting with a variety.

63. Children with special educational needs are well provided for in the nursery and they make satisfactory progress. There is a relatively high level of adult support provided for groups and for individual children. The staff show a good understanding of the children's individual needs. They provide appropriate activities and, when necessary, quiet individual support during group time to ensure the child can benefit from the teaching. Very good careful assessments of children's needs are made and are systematically recorded. These assessments inform the curriculum plans for those individual children.

64. The quality of teaching for the under fives is always satisfactory or better, usually good and occasionally very good. The teachers, nursery nurses and support assistants work well as a team. They have weekly meetings to ensure planning is adjusted according to pupils' needs and to confirm that continuity and progression is maintained. All the staff have a good knowledge of the needs of the under fives and a shared style in the management and care of the children. This is underpinned by a caring, calm, common sense approach. The staff are skilled in focusing the children on a variety of learning areas during their activities and are well planned and organised. Pace is used well. In order to improve the work of the nursery further, clarification of learning objectives for activities would enhance the children's focus and understanding, and opportunities for differentiated questioning would increase expectations and challenge for all children. More opportunities for practising the early skills of reading and writing would promote the children's access to the written word. The nursery is well managed and staff are keen to develop and provide further learning opportunities, such as the introduction of a commercial phonics scheme. Resources are appropriate and well organised in order to support the development of children's independence. The use of day-to-day objects, such as a very large, empty cardboard box, is also recognised for the exciting opportunities it provides for young

children. Good opportunities are created to establish positive relationships with parents. They are made welcome to help with activities and they openly express their support and appreciation.

65. Overall, the children who are under five make good progress in the development of social and personal skills. They are given a wide range of opportunities to learn about taking turns, playing together and sharing, such as in the cutting and sticking activity in which two children decide how to share the glue sticks. They are careful with resources and join in the tidy up session enthusiastically. During activity time the children remain on task for prolonged periods and show good levels of concentration and interest. They are confident to talk to members of the nursery staff and all but one or two of the most recent arrivals are confident to be left in the nursery. Praise is used effectively by the staff and children respond positively, the majority showing high self-esteem and confidence. Most children are able to share a book and are prepared to persevere with activities, such as in the junk modelling activity when a particular part of the model proved difficult to anchor. The children play and work well in a in an appropriate manner, most of them still play independently, although a few are capable of meaningful interactive play. The children will be well prepared and ready for their transition to the reception class.

## **ENGLISH**

66. The results of the 1999 national tests in English indicate a dip in levels of achievement. Both key stages dipped below the national average in English except in writing at Key Stage 1, which remained broadly in line with the national average. However, when compared with similar schools the levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 are in line with national averages and at Key Stage 1, they are above the national average.

67. In Key Stage 2, the number of pupils achieving level three or less is above the national average but this proportion of low attainment may be correlated with the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. In general, girls out-perform boys in English at both key stages, this also correlates with the higher number of boys on the SEN register.

68. Scrutiny of work and analysis of the school's thorough assessment data, indicate that standards at the end of both key stages will remain below the national average this academic year. Lesson observation also supports this at Key Stage 2. However, there is evidence to suggest that standards are improving within both key stages.

69. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school.

70. In Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils speak clearly and are able to communicate confidently about a known subject such as a recently read book or a game. The youngest pupils speak in whole sentences and are starting to use good vocabulary, such as, "I know those characters" in reference to a new book. Pupils listen well in lessons and are able to interpret and remember facts and instructions. They also demonstrate good speaking and listening skills when working together, as in a lesson when pupils were sharing ideas about how to strengthen clay models.

71. In Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils speak confidently in answer to questions and are able to express their feelings and emotions to each other, although only a few are able to take part in a sustained two way conversation. The pupils use a good range of technical and mature language in literacy lessons but this ability is yet to be applied more widely. There is also clear evidence of pupils beginning to recognise different uses of language in speech, such as "kill two birds with one stone", spotted with great enthusiasm by a pupil in

the younger end of Key Stage 2.

72. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 are making sound progress in reading. They are keen to read, enjoy their books and read at home. All pupils know how books are organised, are able to retell a story with the use of picture cues and are developing good phonological awareness. However, in some of the early phonological work, progress is too slow, particularly for the more able. Pupils were unable to express any views regarding non-fiction. The majority of pupils at the end of the key stage know the alphabet and understand the organisation of a dictionary but are not able to put it to use in a practical way during lesson time. They are also able to read accurately, and have a good understanding of the story. Where reading is good, the pupils take account of punctuation and were able to use a range of cues to read new words. Few pupils are able to offer alternative meanings for common words. Most pupils recognise speech in their storybooks and a few pupils are able to attempt intonation in response to a little encouragement.

73. In Key Stage 2 progress in reading is sound. All pupils have a reading book, although in the upper part of the school pupils are unclear about any systematic assessment of reading progress or identification of targets to work towards. The majority of pupils read independently and accurately at their appropriate level, they use cues well and show good understanding and recall of story content and an ability to predict. By the end of the key stage, where reading is average, pupils demonstrate fluency and confidence and, with encouragement, most are able to use punctuation as prompts for intonation. They can describe the main theme of a book and talk about the characters, although they are less confident to attempt inference and deduction. Apart from a small minority of pupils who are able to describe the types of books they like and particular authors, most pupils do not express an enthusiasm for reading for pleasure and only have a vague opinion about likes and dislikes, such as "story books". However, a significant number of pupils can name the books used during the literacy hour as ones they enjoy. Generally, the pupils demonstrate a good understanding of library skills, although none of the pupils spoken to was able to recall any instances of using the library for reference or for independent research.

74. There is some evidence that the quality of writing in Key Stage 1 is improving, with increasing numbers of younger pupils likely to be in line with, or above national average levels of attainment by the age of seven. In these cases, pupils use a variety of cues, including phonological awareness, to spell simple and common words accurately. They use capital letters and full stops and their handwriting is gaining accuracy and consistency. However, progress in places is slow and overall it is inconsistent. Pupils need more early experiences of writing whole words and sentences and opportunities to write for a purpose in order to develop the skills they are learning in the literacy hour.

75. Although the standards of writing this year are likely to be below national averages for eleven year olds, there is clear evidence of progress in Key Stage 2. Handwriting shows a marked improvement over the year's work in a significant numbers of books, the use of punctuation is developing and the introduction and widespread use of writing frames is providing pupils with strategies for organising their written work. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussion with pupils suggest that they respond well and are confident with prepared tasks and exercises but are less able and confident to apply the writing skills they are learning in an independent setting. A number of examples of writing across other areas of the curriculum were seen, such as the Fairground Project reports in Year 6, however a wider range of opportunities for using writing skills would help to embed the pupils' literacy skills.

76. Generally, the manner in which all pupils respond to lessons is a strength. They are well behaved, and keen to contribute in whole class sessions and show respect towards all

members of the school community and towards visitors. There are, however, a few instances when their good classroom behaviour does not necessarily correlate with high levels of learning. Pupils do not generally demonstrate good independent strategies for such skills as checking work or finding spellings, or at a more advanced level, spontaneously attempting to upgrade the quality of their work.

77. The Literacy Strategy is being carried out effectively throughout the school and is providing a clear framework for lessons, which pupils understand and respond to well.

78. The quality of teaching in English is nearly always satisfactory or better in both key stages. With an almost equal balance of strengths and weaknesses across the key stages.

79. In all but one instance, good and very good teaching corresponds with good and very good learning. Where teaching is good, the pupils are clear about what they are learning, pace is maintained, behaviour management is good, questioning is appropriately differentiated and teachers are confident. Where teaching is very good, high expectations are the norm and pupils are appropriately and consistently challenged against their ability level. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, pace is slow, learning objectives are unclear and pupils given undemanding, or over-demanding, tasks resulting in loss of attention, poor behaviour and low levels of learning. The pupils' work is regularly marked, tending to focus on positive feedback. A more consistent approach to marking by providing further guidance and targets for improvement would support pupils in developing more independent work strategies and in taking responsibility for their own work. Some tasks are unnecessarily repetitive, such as letter formation practice, resulting in pupils lacking challenge and practising mistakes.

80. Pupils with special educational needs are well managed and given appropriate tasks. They receive good quality additional support from the educational support staff, who are well organised and work closely with class teachers, resulting in these pupils making sound progress. However, when additional classroom support is unavailable, work for the less able pupils is, on occasions, inappropriately targeted to meet their needs and pupils do not focus on appropriate objectives. The withdrawal of a small number of Key Stage 2 pupils from the literacy hour should be carefully monitored and success criteria and targets for the scheme carefully measured against outcomes. The school Additional Literacy Support programme is well managed and effective and pupils with English as an additional language receive planned support both for developing their English and as support for other subjects.

81. Lesson planning is good but could be improved further by more focused learning objectives in the independent work. Assessment procedures are thorough providing good information to support future learning and target setting. The English co-ordinator manages the subject well, providing support and guidance through the monitoring of teaching, planning and work scrutiny, and providing feedback to teachers which outlines specific areas for improvement. The subject is appropriately resourced with a high proportion of new books that pupils enjoy using. English has been a high profile area for improvement in the school for a number of years and there are now signs that standards are beginning to rise.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Standards of attainment in mathematics are above the national average throughout the school. The inspection confirms the school's recent national test results which are consistently above national averages. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance at age 11 is well above average. Standards of

presentation are generally good in both key stages. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the good standards achieved by pupils and has increased the number of pupils achieving the higher levels at both key stages. The school has also improved the quality of teaching which is now more consistently good.

83. At Key Stage 1, teachers successfully build upon the good range of mathematical experiences provided for children under the age of five. Most children are developing good number skills. Across the key stage, the work is appropriately based on practical experience with everyday objects and with mathematical equipment. Although a great deal of attention is given to the development of numeracy skills, there are also many opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in solving 'real' problems. In Year 1, for example, pupils were calculating the change to be given from making a series of purchases. Pupils use appropriate mathematical language to discuss their work.

84. At Key Stage 2, pupils have well developed numeracy skills with a good range of strategies for mental calculation and for estimating and checking answers. Many pupils know their tables well. They have a good understanding of shape, space and measure, although data handling is less well represented in pupils' work. Appropriate emphasis is given to using and applying mathematics in mathematics lessons but their knowledge and skills are not well used in other areas of the curriculum, for example, in science. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well to support and extend pupils' learning in mathematics.

85. Pupils with special educational needs are given tasks appropriate to their ability. They are given effective support from the educational support staff. As a result, pupils make sound progress.

86. Pupils' confidence in a range of mathematical activities increases as they progress through the school, particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2 where pupils discussed their learning in mathematics in a very positive way and were able to see purpose in it. Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics and enjoy their work in this subject. They are confident learners and see mathematics as being taught in an exciting way in the school. In the majority of lessons, they are able to sustain concentration and they show a real interest in their work. They are keen to do well and are willing to work hard in order to succeed. They are able to work independently and when working collaboratively they provide good support for one another. They are confident in making contributions to discussions and in talking about their own work. Overall, the majority of pupils make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.

87. No unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics was observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching overall is good with some that is very good or excellent. There is good compliance with the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers show a sound knowledge and understanding of mathematics and they show an enthusiasm for the subject. They use a range of strategies and techniques and the pace is generally appropriately brisk. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding and, by skilful questioning, pupils' mathematical reasoning is assessed and challenged. There is a strong emphasis on mental mathematics and teachers have devised a number of games that are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils, which reinforce mental calculation and which help to raise pupils' confidence in mathematics.

88. Appropriate time is allocated to teaching and learning in mathematics and the statutory requirements for the subject are met. The mathematics co-ordinator gives a positive lead and uses his expertise to give advice and support to colleagues. The school

has carried out detailed analysis of pupils' performance in the national tests and has used this information to continue to raise standards. However, overall monitoring and evaluation of the subject is currently just satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has development plans to raise the level of monitoring through, for example, work sampling.

89. Mathematics has a high profile in the school. Most classrooms have good displays of pupils' work in the subject and all are supportive of learning with such provision as number lines and squares, times tables and readily accessible resources and equipment. Mathematics is mainly taught as a separate subject and there is currently insufficient emphasis on mathematics being used to support learning in other subjects such as science and design and technology. The resources available for mathematics are adequate but are beginning to be a little 'tired' and in need of replacement as funds allow. There is insufficient ICT software available to teachers. The school has its own scheme of work which is supplemented by the use of various commercial schemes.

## **SCIENCE**

90. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment was close to the national average for level 4 and above, but above the national average for the proportion of pupils attaining level 5. When compared to pupils in similar schools attainment was well above the national average point score.

91. In Key Stage 1 attainment, as measured by teacher assessment, was above national average for pupils attaining level 2 and above and well above for the proportion of pupils attaining level 3. These results are also well above those of schools of similar type.

92. The results show a significant improvement from the previous inspection in 1996. The evidence available during this inspection indicates that attainment in both key stages is currently in line with national expectations for knowledge and understanding and that whilst some pupils are attaining highly for their age these do not appear to form such a large proportion as in the previous year. Pupils' attainment in experimental and investigative science, which forms a significant component of the science curriculum, is well below the standards expected for their age in both key stages.

93. Pupils in Year 1 are able to raise appropriate questions to explore the properties of materials, use their sense of touch well to develop descriptive language and from the responses identify the material hidden from view. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the effect of hygiene standards on their personal health, for example when preparing food, and can state the appropriate action needed to take to control the risks. With help some are able to link cause and effect when describing the effect of the size of a push on a moving object or the length of time from harvesting on the appearance of vegetables. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing a broad scientific vocabulary, for example related to change of state and the concept of force. There are however very variable levels of pupil confidence and accuracy in defining and applying correct terminology when making explanations. Pupils are able to relate scientific concepts to everyday situations, such as the application of friction to riding a bike in Year 4. Year 6 pupils are beginning to understand the concept of chemical change by relating ideas to the processes of burning and cooking. Whilst all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in acquiring scientific knowledge, their progress in acquiring and refining the skills of scientific enquiry is poor.

94. The majority of pupils work with sustained concentration but with varying degrees of enjoyment and enthusiasm reflecting the quality of the learning activity. The standard of

behaviour is good and, when offered the opportunity, pupils cooperate well. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activity. Whilst the older pupils appreciate the need to revise to do well in the end of year tests, they regret the reduced opportunity for practical work and this has adversely affected their enjoyment of the subject. Pupils' progress in personal development is restricted by the lack of opportunity to show initiative and make decisions.

95. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with some good in Key Stage 2. Teachers' factual knowledge is good; their lesson plans identify clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson. This is an improvement from the previous inspection findings. In the best lessons there is constant reference back to the learning intentions to secure pupils' understanding. The activities are appropriate for the needs of all pupils and teachers try to involve all pupils in the discussion. Some lesson plans are amended to build in opportunities to clarify and develop issues that have been identified in previous lessons, resulting in improved pupil understanding and a firmer knowledge base from which to proceed. However in many lessons, even the better ones, there is too much emphasis on drawn out discussion and not enough on pupil activity, which has a negative impact on the pace of learning and pupil motivation. Much of the questioning is closed and pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop and apply independent thinking and systematic enquiry skills. For some pupils, particularly the lower attaining pupils, the high level of concepts and language used in some lessons confuses their basic learning and impedes their rate of progress. This is particularly noticeable in Year 6 where there is an understandable drive to establish high standards for the national tests. The quality of marking throughout the school is very variable and in some instances does little to support pupils' progress or assess their level of achievement.

96. The school devotes a significant proportion of time to science. It uses the scheme of work well to provide a framework for progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding, but the experimental and investigative component of the subject is severely under-represented in the curriculum delivered to pupils. This is an issue that has not been addressed from the previous inspection. The school has yet to plan for progression in gaining and applying investigative skills and developing independent enquiry. The few investigative activities used do not sufficiently target the levels expected. This is particularly with regard to the need for pupils to plan independently and to gather, record, display and reflect on evidence, especially patterns in data, to form conclusions. The strength of pupils' numeracy skills are not effectively applied and developed in science. Similarly scientific literacy is not well developed in the subject, indicated by the limited amount of written evidence and lack of variation in scientific communication methods. There is as yet little use of ICT to collect and present scientific information. The school does, however, make good use of extra-curricular activities to enhance the subject, such as the use of hands on exhibits, the neighbourhood engineers scheme and theatre companies.

97. The school has monitored pupils' performance in the national tests thoroughly and has raised attainment progressively as a result. There is no portfolio of annotated assessments to standardise teacher assessment. Standards generally across the school, particularly for practical activities and statutory communication techniques have not yet been monitored. Resources for the subject are barely adequate, particularly for independent practical enquiry to be undertaken by a large group or whole class. This was also an issue raised by the previous inspection.

## **ART**

98. During the inspection there was limited opportunity to observe the teaching of art.



However, using the evidence from those lessons observed, display around the school and discussion with teachers and pupils, the standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are almost in line with national expectations.

99. The development of art at Key Stage 2 was a key issue in the last school inspection. Although there is a comprehensive scheme of work the evidence of systematic, effective coverage is inconsistent and the majority of pupils are unable to talk about their work or about previous work. There has been a clear attempt by the co-ordinator to improve the quality of art in the school, through the organisation of art trolleys, an Art Week and in-service training. However, this was not maintained and consequently has not yet had a meaningful impact on pupil achievement. In an attempt to secure time for art, the school arranged the art timetable into blocks which they recognise has led to inconsistencies in coverage. A combination of these facts has resulted in variable standards between classes dependent on teacher confidence and competence rather than on a planned, cohesive programme of development.

100. In the relatively small number of lessons observed, the quality of the teaching is at least satisfactory and in some cases better. Lessons are well organised, generally resulting in good behaviour and pupils remain on task. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure but variable and some good demonstration techniques are used. Teachers provide high quality, stimulating artefacts to which pupils respond with enthusiasm and care. Teachers also go to some trouble to provide appropriate resources, but resourcing is generally unsatisfactory, offering a restricted range of opportunities to pupils such as in drawing in which only the use of pencil was noted. There is little evidence of pupils developing independence through informed choice of materials. Learning objectives are not consistently explained and shared with pupils, resulting in pupils explaining that, "We're just drawing", but unable to say more. Expectations against the objectives are not challenging and in some instances inappropriate, uncritical public praise is given, which reinforces negative values for the majority of pupils. There is no evidence of systematic assessment or monitoring of art.

101. In the display work around the school there are some good examples of work in both key stages, although attention to detail, such as the quality of cutting in Key Stage 2, is an issue for fine motor skills. In Key Stage 1 a set of observational drawing of faces showed a developing grasp of proportion, good colour matching and shading. In Key Stage 2 a good set of water colour paintings, some abstract art designs and some large three-dimensional work show a range of skills.

102. The pupils behave well in art and enjoy the lessons. However, in general they are unable to talk about the skills they are learning now or have learnt in the past or give reasons why they like or dislike particular pieces.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. In the last inspection, the overall standards in design and technology were described as satisfactory and the main weaknesses were deemed to be the insecure subject knowledge of teachers. Since the last inspection, the subject knowledge of the teachers has improved and this is now satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. However, the standards of pupil attainment in this subject are barely satisfactory.

104. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in this subject. Only one lesson was timetabled to take place during the inspection period.

105. Judgements on the standards of pupil attainment are based upon a scrutiny of a

very small sample of pupils' work, scrutiny of planning files and interviews with pupils and teachers.

106. Pupils in Key Stage 1 demonstrate enthusiasm and positive attitudes to this subject. They are keen to talk about and show the models they have made. By the end of this key stage, pupils are able to produce simple, two-dimensional drawings of designs, which make their modelling intentions explicit. They are able to say which tools will be required to complete a range of tasks and demonstrate the need for working with care and attention to safety. They are beginning to develop knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties in relation to technology. They know which materials are easy and difficult to work with, which materials bend and which are hard to cut. They show a limited understanding of different ways to join a range of materials together. The few models on display in Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils are able to work with some accuracy and attention to measurement and shape.

107. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate equally positive attitudes to design and technology. They feel that they make some progress and that their models are becoming more accurate due to their developing skills in cutting, shaping and measuring accurately. They can recall a few items they have made in the past and are able to give some sensible evaluations of the successes and limitations of these. They are able to select and identify simple design criteria and critically reflect upon the success of their designs. Some, but not all, Year 6 pupils have produced thoughtful and well-developed evaluations on recent work on Ferris Wheels. The few models on display show satisfactory attainment and relatively close resemblance to original design intentions. Less able pupils also show some awareness of how to improve their designs and their models but they have a relatively limited repertoire of design and technology experience to call upon when completing evaluations.

108. The school has a design technology policy which is dated 1994-1995. This is now in need of review in light of recent changes in legislation in relation to the primary curriculum. The school has a designated area for design and technology resources. The recently purchased technology cupboards provide good central storage but resources are rather depleted and disorganised and many trays do not contain the items labelled on the front of these.

109. The new scheme of work recently introduced is beginning to have a positive impact upon the quality of planning in this area. The curriculum overviews show clear intentions to deliver the full programmes of study in greater depth in the remaining part of this academic year. This should help to improve continuity and progression through the school and address issues relating to under attainment. The co-ordinator has been able to undertake limited monitoring of teachers' plans and lessons, but recent staff changes have restricted the impact of this initiative. She is aware that the school needs to devote more time to teaching this subject in order to promote higher standards and of the need to develop a more systematic monitoring of the quality of planning, teaching and learning in the immediate future.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Very little evidence of recorded work was seen during the inspection. Judgements on standards of pupil attainment are largely based upon interviews with pupils and observation of pupil responses during the small number of lessons observed.

111. Standards of attainment and progress in geography are satisfactory at both key stages. This represents a slight improvement on the last inspection: attainment was

deemed to vary between sound and unsatisfactory and progress was described as mostly unsatisfactory.

112. Teaching in this subject varies from satisfactory to very good with most lessons being good or better. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of this subject. They usually set clear and appropriate objectives, which they make explicit to pupils at the start of lessons. They provide a range of appropriate and well-prepared activities to stimulate pupil learning. They use good questioning strategies to assess and extend pupils' understanding. In one lesson, very good use was made of information and communication technology to support the pupils' geographical understanding and knowledge of St. Andrews.

113. In Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate satisfactory levels of attainment. Pupils are able to describe features of their immediate environment. They are also aware of places in the world following their work on the travels of Barnaby Bear which effectively captured their interest and excitement. Pupils are able to name places that Barnaby had travelled to, and in some instances, they are able to name both the country and the continent. Pupils in Year 1 have also undertaken comparative studies between New Greens and the Island of Struay. Following a recent walk around the local area, these pupils demonstrate awareness of the buildings and their purposes. In Year 2 pupils have completed an exploration of the seaside from both a historical and geographical perspective. They are able to identify simple comparisons and contrasts with their lifestyle and the lifestyle of others living by the sea. They have limited understanding of environmental relationships or issues and limited experience of using maps and photos to identify geographical features.

114. In Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to this subject. Their levels of knowledge and understanding of places and of environmental issues are generally in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 3 are able to identify a range of differences and similarities in land use and life style between St Albans and St. Andrews. Following study based on the theme of water, pupils in Year 5 are able to name some of the main oceans and deserts of the world. They have relatively detailed knowledge of rivers and understand that the location of a river's source is often on high land. They also have a satisfactory understanding of the fact that access to water varies in different parts of the world. Geographical skills are less well developed. Many pupils have an insecure knowledge of the UK beyond their immediate environment. Some pupils in the upper part of the school are not able to locate the countries of the UK on a map. An even larger number of pupils in the upper years were unsure how to read a map reference, or how to interpret simple map scales or symbols on a key. They were also insecure in their understanding of how to tackle a range of simple geographical investigations.

115. Evidence from the teachers' plans demonstrates that the recently implemented scheme of work based on the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of provision. However, as this scheme is new, there is no clear detail of how the map work to be taught in each year will be built upon. There is no formal agreed system in place to ensure consistent approaches to the assessment of pupils' work in this subject and there are no clear links established between assessment and planning. Some teachers are beginning to annotate their plans to record the need for extension or follow up work. Learning objectives are clear in planning, but these do not always show how work is matched to pupils' prior attainment levels.

116. Good coverage of the programmes of study is now emerging although scrutiny of recent planning and feedback from lesson observations during the inspection suggest that insufficient attention is being devoted to the development of geographical enquiry skills in both key stages. Pupils have not been given sufficient opportunities to engage in geographical investigations.

117. The geography co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of current provision in the school but has not yet managed to have a significant impact upon raising standards of teaching and learning in geography. An action plan for development of the subject has been produced but the resource requirements essential for the completion of this plan were not provided in the last financial year. Current resource provision for this subject is extremely poor. There is a complete lack of suitable materials and equipment to aid geographical investigation and most of the texts currently stored in the geography resource area are extremely old and of little educational value.

## **HISTORY**

118. Because of the school's topic structure only two lessons were observed during the course of the inspection, but these along with a scrutiny of teachers' assessments, pupils' work and discussion with pupils show that, throughout the school, standards in history are just about in line with national expectations. This reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in acquiring an awareness of the past.

119. In Key Stage 1 pupils recognise differences between the present and the past when studying games and the seaside. They compare photographs and artefacts for differences and ask questions of people from a different generation about their personal experiences regarding the topic being covered.

120. As pupils move through the school they develop their sense of chronology and knowledge of different civilisations, such as the Ancient Egyptians and their culture of mummifying bodies. During inspection some pupils in Year 5 were gaining an understanding of the importance of evidence in history as a means of interpreting and understanding the past.

121. Although the pupils can communicate ideas orally very well, they do not have sufficient opportunity to express ideas freely and with increasing depth in a variety of ways. This is restricting their rate of progress and was an issue raised by the last inspection, which has yet to be satisfactorily addressed.

122. The resources available for the subject are good and are further extended by use of the museum service. There is a very strong commitment to enhancing the curricular provision by visiting historical sites and bringing in visitors to share experiences. This is very successful in motivating and stimulating pupils to learn. A session was observed, following on from a visit to a local Victorian schoolroom, lead by two local historians. They posed very challenging questions and provided explicit exposition enabling the pupils to make very good progress. They also provided an excellent range of resources to enable pupils to search for clues and build up an idea or explanation as to the object's identity and purpose. Pupils were thoroughly absorbed in what they were doing, contributing ideas and responses in a confident manner. Even where the situation is less stimulating, most pupils work with sustained concentration.

123. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection the school has implemented a new scheme of work and improved the quality of teachers' planning and the clarity of the intended learning outcomes. However, the annotation of these plans as an assessment record is very variable and the activities are not always well matched to the needs of all pupils, as witnessed by the difficulty experienced by some lower attaining pupils when asked to carry out a research based activity. The marking of work is not thorough and does little to contribute to improving pupils' progress. There are some cross-curricular links between subjects but

there is little use of information and communication technology. As yet there is no monitoring of the quality of the teaching in history or the standards attained by pupils.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

124. A judgement cannot be made on the quality of teaching in ICT due to the small number of lessons that were scheduled to take place during the inspection period. Judgements relating to curriculum coverage and the standards of pupil attainment are based upon interviews with pupils, scrutiny of the teachers' plans for ICT and interviews with the class teachers and the subject co-ordinators.

125. The evidence from scrutiny of planning and interviews suggests that the school is currently failing to deliver the statutory programmes of study for ICT.

126. Scrutiny of the teachers' plans of work, discussions with the teachers and interview with the co-ordinator indicate that very little teaching of ICT and very little use of ICT has taken place during the current or previous academic year. Technical problems are the main reasons given for the lack of teaching and therefore learning in this core curriculum area.

127. The school has recently invested a good deal of money and other scarce resources to improve the level of provision for ICT within the school. A networked computer suite, containing 15 personal computers has recently been installed. Unfortunately, the network has proven to be fraught with problems. Many staff have now discontinued attempts to use it. In Key Stage 1, staff also report considerable technical difficulties with classroom computers which has also prevented them from implementing the full statutory requirements. The co-ordinator for ICT has a very good subject knowledge and a good awareness of the technical problems colleagues are experiencing. He has produced a plan of action to help the school overcome its difficulties.

128. As a direct result of the lack of teaching and opportunities for pupils to use ICT in the school, the overall standards of attainment in this subject are unsatisfactory at the end of both key stages.

129. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, demonstrate positive attitudes to ICT but are unable to recall many incidents when they use the computers at school. Pupils in Year 6 are able to recount experience of using word processors to write poetry and newsheets. They know how to load and save their work but many pupils are unsure of all but the most simple word processing tasks. They have an insecure understanding of how to undertake a spell check on their work, or how to edit texts using cut, paste and copy. They are unable to recollect any work undertaken involving databases, spreadsheets or work using painting techniques or working with graphic images. They have good understanding of how to extract information stored on CD Rom and they also know how to access information on the internet. They know how to load and shutdown the computer and how to carefully structure questions to get the right information. They have no recollection of work using ICT systems to control or monitor external events.

130. Pupils in Year 2 also have limited understanding and experience of using ICT. Pupils interviewed stated that their computer had been broken for a long time. Scrutiny of the teachers plans verified software and hardware deficiencies and the fact that the children also had had very little experience of ICT in the previous year owing to further hardware deficiencies.

131. Evidence from discussions with several teachers in both key stages indicates that

the overall subject knowledge and expertise on the staff is satisfactory to good. In the two lessons where teaching using ICT was observed, the quality of the teaching was good and pupils made good progress in these sessions. However, both teachers noted their reluctance to use the IT suite due to previous technical problems.

132. The current arrangement for the planning and provision of ICT experiences for pupils needs urgent review. The lack of an appropriate scheme of work and up-dated policy also hampers the progress and development of this subject within the school. Most of the teachers make little or no reference to ICT in their planning files. Where planning is done, learning intentions are often not realised due to resource difficulties, for example, in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.

133. The management and maintenance of ICT resources is a weakness, which needs to be addressed. At Key Stage 2, most teachers describe frustrations at not being able to use the new computer suite because of installation problems. Several of the classes at Key Stage 1 are also experiencing difficulties in teaching in this area due to broken hardware or missing software. The school needs to address these problems urgently.

## **MUSIC**

134. Overall, standards in music are in line with national expectations with much that is good. Music has maintained its important position in the school's curriculum since the last inspection.

135. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can sing in tune, recognise the difference between high and low notes and judge rising and falling scales. They can discern a simple rhythm and can copy it by clapping or playing a percussion instrument. They can sing a variety of songs and play simple pieces and accompaniments. Higher attaining pupils can reproduce more complex rhythms.

136. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have further developed their understanding of music and they can appraise a piece of music in terms of the mood or effect it creates. They have developed a good musical vocabulary. They experience a range of different music styles. They can sing a much larger repertoire of songs. They clearly enjoy music lessons and are keen to take part whether performing or listening.

137. Pupils listen appropriately and their responses to music are good throughout the school. They try hard on an individual basis to give of their best and they collaborate well in whole class performance. They have sufficient confidence to contribute ideas and opinions to discussions about music. Learning in music is enhanced by school musical productions and by the contribution made by music to the celebration of festivals such as Harvest and Christmas.

138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is good and the teaching is focused on what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers make the learning objectives clear to the pupils and this has a positive impact on standards and quality. Teaching and learning is supported by a school policy and a scheme of work to ensure a balanced programme and full coverage of the National Curriculum. The level of challenge is generally high but in some lessons is pitched too high for all pupils to meet with success. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and in a purposeful way. The level of subject knowledge and expertise is variable and some teachers are insecure in this subject.

139. Resources are of good quality and are well looked after. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the role in the school and is taking an active part in developing the subject and

supporting colleagues where it is needed. Her monitoring role is at an early stage of development and so, as yet, does not sufficiently inform evaluation of standards and quality.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

140. Standards between the various components of the subject are variable. During the inspection period swimming, gymnastics, dance and games were taught. Although no swimming lesson was observed, discussion with the headteacher identified that most pupils leave the school competent and confident swimmers, having made good progress and with some pupils achieving highly. Attainment and progress in games, as judged by the observation of Key Stage 1 and the after-school netball and football clubs, is satisfactory. Standards in dance achieved by the younger pupils are in line to meet expectations but currently at the end of Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2 do not meet expectations as a result of making unsatisfactory progress. No dance was seen in upper Key Stage 2 and insufficient evidence was available for the end of key stage judgements in gymnastics. The other components of the subject are delivered at different times of the year and so no judgement is possible.

141. In Key Stage 1 pupils plan and perform a range of simple skills safely with due regard for space and with increasing control of their own movements and working with small apparatus. They can work alone, with a partner or as part of a team. They become increasingly aware of the need to practise. Throughout the school pupils are aware of the effects of exercise on the body and can sustain exercise. In Key Stage 2 the younger pupils can find solutions to challenges such as mirroring movements and creating a range of balances on a specified number of points. Older pupils are developing strategies for passing a ball in a variety of ways. In dance pupils do not demonstrate either variety or creativity in their movements. Their performance lacks expression and response to the music.

142. Although lessons are usually well planned and follow the scheme of work, the quality of teaching is variable and is not as good overall as during the previous inspection. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory and with some that is good but in Key Stage 2 there is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. In most lessons objectives are shared clearly with the pupils. In the best lessons there is very good control and a good pace to the learning; instructions are clear and concise and pupil demonstrations chosen are of a good standard to help other pupils progress. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the pace of delivery is inappropriate, either too rushed or too slow and there is insufficient focused teaching. Occasionally pupils and staff are inappropriately dressed for PE. The use of uncritical praise and failure to teach skills effectively results in pupils failing to improve their performance. Most teachers, even in satisfactory lessons, do not require pupils to make judgements about their own and others' performance as a way of improving performance. The co-ordinator has not yet been given time to monitor the delivery of the subject by observing lessons but has arranged to develop expertise in teaching dance as a result of a staff audit.

143. In most lessons behaviour is good, pupils enjoy their activity, sustain concentration well and work with an awareness of safe practice. Some pupils appear rather self-conscious in dance lessons. There is good support for some pupils who find sustaining concentration difficult. Upper juniors can attend weekly football and netball clubs. Pupils take part in a range of sporting fixtures and competitions with local schools.

144. The school has invested substantially in new equipment and staff training to develop good provision for a range of outdoor and adventurous activities. The school is

strongly committed to teaching all pupils to swim and makes good use of the neighbouring secondary school's swimming pool. The local leisure centre is to lead a sports event following the inspection period. Outdoor games are sometimes restricted by problems with the muddy field and playground.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. Pupils' attainment by the end of each key stage is in line with the expectations of the county agreed syllabus and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection other than a recent change in the person responsible for co-ordination of the subject through the school.

146. In the Reception class, pupils were learning about the Chinese New Year as part of a topic on Chinese culture and traditions. At this early stage pupils understanding was not secure but they showed good understanding of previous work they had done on Christian and Hindu weddings.

147. At Key Stage 1, a class was discussing the difficulties of saying sorry. Pupils were attentive and showed sensitivity to other pupils when they were talking about their own experiences.

148. At Key Stage 2, pupils were working on religions at a deeper level. In one class they were learning about the Christening ceremony. They were absorbed by the video they were shown and responded confidently to the ensuing questions and were able to express feelings about encounters with religion. Many pupils showed a good knowledge of Christian terminology and festivals. Other pupils have been working on other religions and festivals such as in Year 5 where work has been done on the Muslim faith. Pupils were able to talk confidently about what they had been learning.

149. Teaching of religious education is satisfactory throughout the school with some that is good. Most teachers have a reasonably secure subject knowledge. The work is generally well linked to the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus but the awe and wonder strand needs greater emphasis. Questioning is effective and challenging, eliciting not only knowledge but also feelings and personal responses.

150. There is a useful policy for religious education. The curriculum co-ordinator is relatively new to the role but has made a good start in managing the subject, for example, by carrying out a thorough audit of the school's RE resources and providing each teacher with a helpful 'year map' of areas to cover to help with planning. She is supportive to staff in their individual planning. She is taking an active approach to developing the subject. Monitoring is currently unsatisfactory but the co-ordinator is aware of this and development plans are in place.

151. Resources need further improvement, especially artefacts linked to various faiths, to support teaching and learning more effectively, although those that are in the school are stored and handled appropriately.

152. Religious education both supports and reflects the ethos of the school as valuing and respecting all and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.