

INSPECTION REPORT

THE HAMMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: 919 Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117282

Headteacher: Miss Gail Porterfield

Reporting inspector: Geraldine Tujanskas
25352

Dates of inspection: 26-29 June 2000

Inspection number: 190558

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cambrian Way Hemel Hempstead Herts
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Mary Rutter
Date of previous inspection:	25 November 1996

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Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Geraldine Taujanskas	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Information technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
		Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
Joanna Adams	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Hilary Ring	Team inspector	Art	
		Design and technology	
		Music	
		Under fives	
		Special educational needs	
Jackie Cousins	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Science	
		Geography	
		History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hammond Primary School is situated in a residential area to the northeast of Hemel Hempstead, in Hertfordshire. It educates girls and boys aged 3-11 years, in a one-form entry school, which is about average in size. Pupils come mainly from the local community, which consists of a mixture of local authority and private housing. Most pupils, about 94 per cent, are of white British heritage. The school has few pupils from other ethnic groups, with black, Indian and Pakistani pupils numbering 6 per cent of the school's population. The number of pupils from homes where English is not their first language is higher than most schools, although none are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Turkish and Urdu are the main languages spoken.

Currently 205 pupils attend the school full time, in seven single-age classes. A further 30 children aged three and four years attend the nursery part-time. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is above the national average. This includes 31 pupils at Stages 3 and 4, and 1 pupil with a statement of special educational needs which is below average for statements. Nearly 25 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school is on a large site, which includes very attractive grounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, where standards are rising. Teaching is good and leadership and management is strong and visionary. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are rising throughout the school in English, particularly in reading, and mathematics;
- Teaching is good and leads to at least satisfactory learning by most pupils, with good achievements in English, mathematics and science, supported well by very good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy;
- The leadership and management of the school is very good, and ensures that the school has a shared vision and commitment to improvement;
- The governing body is committed and enthusiastic, and clearly understands the needs of the school;
- Pupils develop good attitudes to school;
- Support staff provide a good service for pupils with special educational needs which enables these pupils to make good progress;
- Assessment is very thorough and meticulous and used effectively to guide pupils' progress;
- Provision in the nursery, both the curriculum and the teaching, is good and this leads to children making good progress.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing and the curriculum and standards in religious education and music across the school, and standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2;
- The provision for higher attaining pupils in order to challenge them effectively;
- The time available to teach subjects other than English and mathematics to ensure that pupils have better opportunities to extend their learning more effectively;
- Planning for Early Years to ensure a seamless transition from nursery to reception and a good preparation to implement the foundation stage in September 2000;
- Attendance, which is below average, despite the best efforts of the school, and high unauthorised absence, which means that some pupils miss opportunities to learn if they do not attend;

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection in 1996, through a series of well-managed changes. The leadership of the school has improved, with a new and effective management structure in place and an effective senior management team. Suitable systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have been implemented. This has led to improved standards, which have begun to rise from low levels through a rigorous programme of teaching in English and mathematics. The effect of the rise in standards in English and mathematics has been to improve standards in other subjects where pupils can now access the curriculum because their basic skills have improved substantially. Standards in geography and history now reach nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	C	E	E	well above A average above B average average below C average D well below E average
mathematics	B	C	E	D	
science	A	B	C	A	

Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in National Curriculum Tests have been weak over the past few years, with standards in reading below national averages and in writing well below national averages. Reasonable numbers of pupils gain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1. However, the school has implemented a rigorous programme of teaching in English and mathematics, which has been very effective in improving pupils' skills, particularly in reading. This has begun to work through the school year upon year, and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are now much improved, with substantial numbers of pupils gaining average levels in reading and mathematics although fewer reach this level in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in National Curriculum Tests are still below average overall. However, pupils' achievements in lessons are good. They make substantial progress from a low starting point in both language and literacy, and mathematics. The pupils learn well, and this is particularly noticeable in reading which is reaching national averages overall at the end of Key Stage 2.

The improvements in English and mathematics are having a positive effect on standards in other subjects. In geography and history standards have improved, and although judged to be below average at the last inspection standards are now judged to be meeting nationally expected levels. This is due in part to better standards of literacy and numeracy. In science, standards at the end of both key stages reach national averages. Standards in information technology are in line with what is expected at the end of both key stages. In most other subjects standards are in line with what is expected at the end of both key stages. The exceptions to this are music, where standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average, and in religious education where standards are below the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages.

Pupils who learn more quickly are not sufficiently challenged overall and these pupils often do not reach the levels of which they are capable in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes and are keen to be involved in the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory but there is some low level disruption in some lessons and there have been four fixed period exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	There are suitable opportunities to promote pupils' personal development, giving them a sense of responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is low, below the national averages and the number of unauthorised absences is very high compared to other primary schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall throughout the school. Forty-three per cent of teaching observed was good and 17 per cent was very good. Thirty-two per cent of teaching was satisfactory and eight per cent was unsatisfactory. There are particular strengths in the teaching of English, where two thirds of the teaching is good, including all the teaching in Key Stage 2. Similarly in mathematics, teaching is good in all the lessons observed in both key stages. Very good teaching was also observed in Key Stage 2. The good quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy leads to good progress for pupils. In science the teaching observed was good in almost all lessons. The needs of pupils with special educational needs, of whom there are a significant number at the school, are met well in literacy and numeracy. Teachers and support staff plan co-operatively and work well as a team to the benefit of all pupils. This enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Teaching in the nursery is very good and enables children to make a very good start to their education. The very good teaching was observed in both the nursery and in classes in Key Stage 2.

However, there are few other lessons where teaching is as well planned to take good account of the different needs of pupils in the class and this means that pupils do not make such good progress in these lessons. Pupils who could achieve more highly are not sufficiently challenged, and do not learn quickly enough. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in both Key Stage 1 and 2, where some teachers showed a lack of subject knowledge and others had not planned the lesson sufficiently well to attract pupils' attention, so pupils were not well motivated to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A sufficiently broad curriculum is planned for the pupils, which is good, but English, mathematics and science take up a very high percentage of the day, which means there is insufficient time for foundation subjects to be taught in depth. Planning for children under five is disjointed. The foundation stage is not yet in place for next September, to ensure that children receive a smooth and positive transition from nursery to reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and is closely linked to their individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs are given access to the full curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory provision overall with strengths in moral and social development. Although pupils learn about their own culture there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures in the wider society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school works hard to monitor and promote good attendance and behaviour. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress have been rigorously addressed since the last inspection and are very good. They are used well. This helps pupils to learn well.

The quality of information the school provides for parents is good overall and in some respects it is very good. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the standards of work attained by their children, particularly in science. However, overall, parents do not get sufficiently involved in the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school is very good, with a strong established partnership between headteacher and deputy headteacher which works well. This ensures that the school has a shared vision and commitment to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is committed and enthusiastic, and very clearly understands the needs of the school. They are supported very effectively by the experienced chair of governors who devotes substantial amounts of time to this role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its performance very effectively, and takes specific steps to ensure that targets are met and that standards rise.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of resources, including specific grants. The support staff are used particularly well to give appropriate support to pupils with special educational needs.

Staffing is good, and matched well to the needs of the pupils. The accommodation and learning resources are generally used effectively to support pupils' learning. The school applies the principles of best value well in its allocation of finances.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children like coming to school ▪ They make good progress ▪ Teaching is good ▪ The school expects children to do their best ▪ Teachers are available each Wednesday after school for parents to see them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school working closely with parents ▪ Communication is inconsistent ▪ Too little is known about homework and how it is given out

The inspection agrees with parents' positive views of the school. Staff are available for parents and many parents were observed informally talking to staff at the end of the day over matters to do with their child.

Some parents spoke to inspectors during the inspection regarding the fencing and security arrangements in the school. New procedures have not been welcomed, which involve parents in walking further than previously, to the main entrance rather than using the gate which is now fenced off. The governors have spent a considerable time discussing safety and security issues and have taken these measures to improve security and ensure the safety of the pupils by restricting access to the school. While some of these are not popular with parents the inspection finds that the school has tried to maintain close communication with parents regarding any changes.

There are some differences in how homework is organised in different classes which means parents may feel confused about what is expected. Similarly, the information which goes home about the curriculum from different classes is variable. Parents do not receive consistent information about what goes on in school. However, the school has made strenuous efforts to involve parents in the life of the school, including offering informal governor discussion times and curriculum evenings, which have not been well attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The nursery assessments show that the children are well below average in language and mathematics skills when they first enter the school. Their achievements in the nursery are good, and in the reception class children make satisfactory progress with some good progress in language and literacy and mathematics. However, many children when they are five years old are still below the expected levels of achievement for this age.

2. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in National Curriculum Tests have been weak over the past few years, with overall standards in reading below national averages and in writing well below national averages. However, reasonable numbers of pupils gain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1. This is a similar picture to that shown in the last inspection report in 1996. In mathematics, the standards, while not below average, have been variable from year to year. Teacher assessments in science show pupils to be reaching national averages.

3. Results from National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have been variable, but well below average in 1999 in English and mathematics, and in line with national averages in science. In comparison with schools in similar circumstances the standards which pupils achieve at the end of Key Stage 2 are good in science but below and well below average in mathematics and English respectively. The numbers of pupils reaching higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in National Curriculum tests are low, and lower than at the end of Key Stage 1.

4. However, the school has implemented a rigorous programme of teaching in English and mathematics, which now incorporates the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This has been very effective in improving pupils' skills, particularly in reading. This has begun to work through the school year upon year, and standards observed during the inspection at the end of Key Stage 1 are now much improved, with substantial numbers of pupils gaining average levels in reading and mathematics although fewer reach this level in writing. The school is very clearly aware of the need to improve standards in writing further.

5. At the end of Key Stage 2 the inspection finds that standards are still below average overall. However, the same rigorous programme of teaching is being successfully implemented for English and mathematics and the positive effects of this were clear during the inspection. These improvements mean that pupils currently in the lower classes are in line to achieve standards at least in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 2.

6. Pupils throughout the school are making significant gains in their learning in English and mathematics and showing substantial improvements. This is particularly noticeable in reading, which is reaching national averages overall. This means that pupils' achievements are good. They make substantial progress, from a low starting point in the nursery in both language and literacy and mathematics.

7. The improvements in English and mathematics are also having a positive effect on standards in other subjects. For example, in geography and history the inspection finds that standards have improved, and although judged to be below average at the last inspection, standards are now judged to be meeting nationally expected levels. This is due in part to better standards of literacy and numeracy which means that pupils have suitable skills to be able to access the information they need in other subjects effectively.

8. In science, standards observed during the inspection at the end of both key stages reach national averages. These standards have been maintained at Key Stage 1 even when standards in other subjects have been low. In Key Stage 2 standards have risen since the last inspection and are now in line with national averages. Standards in information technology are in line with what is expected at the end of both key stages, maintaining the standards found in the last inspection.

9. In most other subjects standards are in line with what is expected at the end of both key stages. Standards in art have risen since the last inspection and are now in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Improvements have been made in a number of other subjects, mostly at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations and at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved in design and technology, along with geography and history as already indicated, and are now in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages.

10. The exceptions to this are music, where standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average, which is a drop since the last inspection and in religious education where standards have also fallen, and are now below the standards of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. In both cases the focus on the need to drive up standards in English and mathematics has consistently pushed back the opportunities for the school to focus on the needs of other subjects. The development of teacher confidence and knowledge in these subjects have suffered accordingly. Inevitably teachers' lack of confidence and subject knowledge has meant that the opportunities for pupils to gain suitable levels of skills, knowledge and understanding have been limited and resulted in standards which are too low overall. The school clearly recognises the need to address standards in these subjects.

11. The rise in standards has been helped by the use of the national strategies for English and numeracy, but there are other contributory factors. For English and mathematics each year group is split into two sets, taught by the teachers from the year group. This allows teachers to plan more accurately for their group of pupils. This works exceptionally well for the lower set, where significant numbers of pupils are on the special educational needs register. Here classroom support assistants are assigned to the set to support the pupils on the register of special educational needs, who learn more slowly or who have other specific needs. This resource is a significant strength, enabling pupils to receive much needed help and enabling the teacher to be more available for other pupils who can then make better progress. The presence of the support assistants has a positive effect on other pupils who are more motivated, better behaved and who also benefit from the advice given to pupils alongside them. This arrangement has enabled many pupils to make good progress and to reach the national averages at the end of the key stages where they might have been below this level previously. A further positive factor is the good procedures for early identification of pupils with special educational needs so they receive the support they need from an early stage. The school also ensures that the statutory requirements for pupils with a statement of special educational need are fully met.

12. The pupils who learn more quickly, on the other hand, are often not sufficiently challenged overall and these pupils often do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable. This accounts for the lower numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels in National Curriculum Tests at the end of the key stages. The factors accounting for this are complex. The management and organisation of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have supported the lower attaining pupils very well by setting each year group, but the higher attaining pupils have not benefited so clearly from this arrangement. They are generally grouped with the average pupils and work is often pitched at this average level, with some notable exceptions. The school works hard to manage pupils' behaviour well and generally succeeds. However, teachers spend a considerable amount of time in managing pupils, and, in classes where there

are fewer adults because there are fewer pupils with special educational needs this means less supervision of all pupils is available. Pupils then sometimes begin to misbehave. Opportunities for pupils to learn independently are limited by the high proportion of time which is devoted to the teaching of English and mathematics. This leaves little time for the wider development of other subjects where higher attaining pupils might work independently at a challenging level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The last inspection found that the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the children were very good and had a significant effect on standards achieved. This inspection finds that the positive attitudes have continued and while behaviour is satisfactory there is some low level disruption in some lessons and there have been four fixed period exclusions.

14. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. In school, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to be involved in the life of the school both in activities such as dancing at lunchtime and in their jobs around school. In discussions at lunchtime, pupils spoke keenly about their work and enjoyment of school. The attendance rate, however, is below the national averages and the number of unauthorised absences is very high compared to other primary schools.

15. In lessons, pupils often respond well, particularly where the teaching is good, the task exciting and the behaviour well managed. The pupils make a good start in the nursery where they are very responsive to the good teaching. These positive attitudes are fostered in lessons where pupils are involved in the task and it is relevant to their experiences. For example, in a Year 1 geography lesson, pupils were very keen to answer questions about photographs they had taken on a local walk. They can listen attentively and concentrate well, however, there are occasions when pupils are not interested in their work and show little enthusiasm for the task. This is often at the end of the afternoon. In these lessons, their lack of interest leads to restlessness and fidgety behaviour, which disrupts the learning in the lesson.

16. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Parents reported that they felt behaviour was good in many lessons and around the school, and this is the case, particularly where teachers are skilled at managing behaviour and work hard to maintain discipline. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, they are open, polite and courteous when talking to visitors. They have a good understanding of the expectations regarding behaviour and parents felt this was a strength. Where teachers consistently use positive strategies for promoting good behaviour, pupils respond well and the behaviour is good which allows pupils to learn effectively. There are too many occasions, however, where pupils' behaviour becomes restless; this causes a significant amount of low level disruption to the lesson so the teacher has to spend too much time dealing with unacceptable behaviour. This has a negative effect on pupils' learning. There have been four fixed period exclusions in the last year, which is high for the size of school. These were appropriately given in response to serious poor behaviour. There was no evidence of bullying during the week of the inspection although there have been a few recorded instances in the past. These are quickly and effectively dealt with by the headteacher.

17. Whilst pupils have a clear understanding of how they are expected to behave, it is not always evident that they understand why their actions affect others. The personal and social education programme provides good opportunities for pupils to consider how they relate to each other and how their behaviour impinges on others but these opportunities are not always taken up in lessons. Pupils can work well together in lessons; listening to each other's points of views and discussing different ideas. For example, in a Year 4 design and technology lesson, pupils working in pairs were very keen to produce a shared book for younger pupils.

18. While working together pupils also often show a suitable level of maturity. For example, while working on the computer a group of Year 4 pupils were very mature in their

approach to using brush tools to create pictures. A few pupils, however, do not display maturity in their behaviour. They do not always pay enough attention and talk over each other and their teacher. Many pupils take on responsibilities around the school, for example, helping at lunch time and they take these very seriously. Older pupils are also involved in helping the younger ones and in producing work for them, for example, books to read. The Year 6 pupils have an important role in managing the bullying box, which is set up to allow pupils to voice any concerns to an outsider. These opportunities promote pupils' personal development effectively giving them a sense of responsibility and awareness of their position in the school.

19. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are generally good and contribute well to the progress pupils make in lessons. Pupils give each other good support as was observed at lunch time when one pupil was upset and others were quick to come over and offer help.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is good overall throughout the school. Forty-three per cent of teaching observed was good and 17 per cent was very good. Thirty-two per cent of teaching was satisfactory and eight per cent was unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was observed in both the nursery and in classes in Key Stage 2. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in both Key Stage 1 and 2, where some teachers showed a lack of subject knowledge and others had not planned the lesson to attract pupils' attention sufficiently, so pupils were not well motivated to learn.

21. There are particular strengths in the teaching of English, where two thirds of the teaching is good including all the teaching in Key Stage 2. Similarly in mathematics, teaching is good in all the lessons observed in both key stages. The very good teaching in the nursery enables children to make a very good start to their education. Very good teaching was also observed in Key Stage 2. The good quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy leads to good progress for pupils. This has resulted from the significant effort by the school to make improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in order to drive up standards.

22. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Although a significant proportion of teaching was good at that time a very high proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory, at 31 per cent. This is considerably reduced.

23. Pupils who could achieve more highly are not sufficiently challenged. There are few lessons, other than in English and mathematics where teaching is well planned to take good account of all the different needs of pupils in the class. This often means that higher attaining pupils are not allocated tasks which give them scope to be independent and make use of their high level of skills. In history and geography, for example, pupils do not carry out independent work to enable them to develop research skills and broaden their knowledge of a particular aspect. These pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable overall.

24. Teaching which is good and very good focuses on establishing and maintaining good classroom management. This takes a significant amount of the teachers' time, but enables them to focus on teaching rather than the routine and administrative tasks which take up too much time and cloud pupils' learning. Similarly, where teaching is good and very good, teachers plan tasks and activities which will quickly gain pupils' interest knowing that their pupils need to be highly motivated by the content of the lesson in order to learn effectively. In Year 6, for example, all pupils are highly motivated in the music lesson to play from a musical 'score' together. Conversely in lessons where these features are not sufficiently developed pupils become bored quickly and are seen to misbehave much more easily. Good teaching makes use of extensive open-ended questioning and does so in such a way that pupils are anxious to join in and be a

part of the conversation. In Year 3, for example, questioning was used well to check what pupils had learned in both English and mathematics. Combined with positive praise this made an effective lesson, keeping pupils focused and willing to learn. Essentially teaching needs to be good so that pupils can make satisfactory gains in their learning.

25. A weaker aspect of lessons observed is the inappropriate use teachers sometimes make of their voice. In a range of subjects across a number of classes teachers shout and use their voice inappropriately. This is not generally effective in motivating pupils to learn well. Very occasionally the comments teachers make are unsuitable, especially for the younger pupils. Where teachers have not established clear systems for managing behaviour and do not consistently implement these rules the lessons are less successful. Although pupils may make satisfactory gains in their learning overall they do not engage sufficiently in the tasks and this leads to pupils' attention wandering too much. This limits their capacity to learn well.

26. The quality of teaching in the nursery and Reception class is good overall as was found at the last inspection. It is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the Reception class. The nursery staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. The work is appropriately planned to enable all children to have a range of experiences in all aspects of the recommended curriculum for children before they are in Key Stage 1. A good balance of self-initiated activities and those that are guided by adults are provided in order to teach basic skills well. As a result, children enjoy their learning, consider it to be play and quickly make progress. In the reception class, although the activities are thoroughly planned, they are not appropriately referenced to the learning outcomes nationally agreed as important for young children. As a result, the methods used and the organisation of the teaching are sometimes inappropriate when there is an over-emphasis on class teaching and opportunities to learn through structured play are limited. The daily routines do not always provide a suitable balance between planned activities that pupils choose for themselves and those led by adults. The inspection recognises that the school has put in tremendous effort to improve standards in language and literacy and mathematics, but this has resulted in a more formal curriculum that might be appropriate or necessary even when trying to raise standards.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan interesting and varied tasks matched to the education plans and the arrangements for setting during literacy sessions help the children to be taught at a pace of working that is suitable for them. Teachers and support staff plan co-operatively and work well as a team to the benefit of all pupils. A significant proportion of pupils are on the special educational needs register. In English and mathematics, pupils learn at a steady and often good pace because they are carefully taught and helped consistently by support assistants. When some of the pupils do not receive this extra support in other areas of the curriculum they are sometimes expected to carry out the same work as all the class. Teachers' plans do not show reference to their specific targets and special educational needs.

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

28. The quality and range of the school's curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements.

29. The curricular provision is good overall for children who are aged under five. It is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the Reception class. The planning for children in the nursery takes full account of the recommended learning outcomes according to a nationally recognised framework. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first hand experiences of quality, encouraging children to make choices about some of the activities that are available and helping them to acquire language skills. There is a policy document for the nursery but there are

no guidelines for pupils who are under five in the reception class. A strong emphasis is given to class lessons of literacy and numeracy by the reception teacher. However, in this class the children have fewer chances to build on the good personal development started in the nursery by selecting activities and exploring all the recommended areas of learning during each day.

30. A sufficiently broad curriculum is planned for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, but it is not well balanced with English, mathematics and science taking up a very high percentage of the day, which means there is only a little time for foundation subjects. While all subjects are timetabled and taught, the opportunities to develop a topic in depth are very limited. There is regular provision for personal, health and social every week. This year the school has focused on continuing to raise standards in English, mathematics and developing the use of the new information technology suite. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and already there are improvements in the development of mental arithmetic. The National Literacy Strategy is very well developed and there are many activities targeted at pupils to develop good levels of reading and writing. A strength of the curriculum is the very effective way that the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented throughout the school.

31. Policies are in place for all subjects of the curriculum and many aspects of school provision. However, many require updating in the light of the changes to the National Curriculum, such as science, geography and history. There were weaknesses in long term planning for Key Stage 2. This has been fully addressed and there is now detailed long term planning for all subjects at both key stages. It was a key issue to review medium term planning and the school has efficiently addressed this. The school now bases its medium term planning on the National Literacy and Numeracy frameworks. In other subjects National Curriculum programmes of study or the school's own scheme of work are used well to support the quality of teaching. Religious education is planned with the use of the school's scheme of work, which incorporates the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Displays are used very effectively to promote pupils' work and to demonstrate pupils' achievements in all areas of the curriculum and show how one subject effectively intermingles with another in topics.

32. Every class has a daily literacy and numeracy lesson based on national guidelines. There is extra time given to develop reading and writing skills. This is in specific response to the judgements and recommendations of the previous inspection, and the school's recognition of the need to raise standards, which it has successfully achieved. Science teaching at Key Stage 2 is given at least two hours a week. Foundation subjects and religious education do not receive sufficient time allocation at present and the school day is less than the recommended length. The school plans to review the time allocation of subjects in the light of the recent changes to the National Curriculum. There are many suitable cross-curricular links made between subjects such as data handling in science and information technology lessons. This enables pupils to make use of the skills they have learned.

33. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and is closely linked to their individual education plans. All pupils with special educational needs are given full access to the curriculum. Teachers and learning support assistants give good quality support to these pupils in the main section of the lesson and also carry out valuable assessments of pupils in lesson introductions and endings. The support given by learning support assistants is most effective when class teachers' planning is shared with them. The class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator carefully set work for pupils and monitor their progress. Support from other agencies is welcomed and supports the good opportunities offered to these pupils.

34. Extra-curricular provision is good. Pupils enjoy clubs covering a broad range of interests including reading, story, homework, Christian and jig saw clubs as well as art and craft extra-curricular activities. Musical activities include recorder club. There is also a cricket club provided by the school. Most of these clubs take place on one evening and so a good number

of pupils are encouraged to attend. The school has a special grant from the local education authority to develop after school activities next year, so committing it to continuing after school activities. Some pupils participate in football, music and French club for which there is a charge. Last year's production performed by the Key Stage 2 pupils was a Christmas Nativity play with Key Stage 1 pupils singing songs to the school and parents. There are a few visitors who enrich the curriculum such as an author and artist, who assisted pupils to create abstract art work. Pupils visit The Dome, a Saxon Castle at Stanstead, Mount Fitchet and Southend-on-Sea. Two residential trips to extend the curriculum are made to places such as the Kingswood Computer Centre for Years 5 and 6 and Cuffey Camp for Years 3 to 5. Pupils take part in science, geography and history challenges in the Hemel Hempstead locality, for example, learning how to study rivers. These activities and visits all help to enrich the basic curriculum and extend pupils' learning.

35. Equality of opportunities within the school is good. Pupils benefit equally from all aspects of the curriculum. There is good support for most groups of pupils, from special educational needs to those learning English as an additional language. Some gifted mathematical pupils in Year 6 have been identified and keenly attempted the Level 6 National Curriculum Test. However, in many lessons there is little structured planning to challenge the more able pupils. The school has studied the results of National Curriculum Tests for different groups to check the possibility of under-achievement, and has not found any significant variations between groups, such as boys and girls. The school believes strongly that everyone is important and has achieved the status as an Investor in People Award. This has assisted the school in focusing on equal opportunities.

36. The school has a caring ethos and an appropriate priority is placed on pupils' personal development. There is suitable planning for health and social education. Pupils' opinions are sought whenever possible. Good opportunities are provided in lessons for them to ask and answer questions freely, for instance, when transfer to secondary school concerns are discussed in Year 6. There are social skills groups for pupils who will benefit from them. The school effectively teaches sex education and pupils also learn about the use and misuse of drugs in their personal, health and social programme.

37. Links with the local community are good. The school is let out to private organisations and some pupils join the clubs which are available, such as football club. There are valuable opportunities for the community to come into the school and a local company supports nine of its staff to come in and hear children read. This provides pupils with positive adult role models as well as extra support for their learning. Various activities and events take place during the school year. A theatre company worked with pupils developing their awareness of bullying issues. Pupils from the school take part in the local Hemel Hempstead athletics and field events. They play occasional football and cricket matches with other schools. The school took part in the Hemel Hempstead cross-country competition. Pupils from Year 2 and 5 have performed in a local festival this year for singing. These opportunities contribute successfully to broadening the pupils' experiences of participating in events in the local community, and create an awareness in pupils of their part in that community.

38. Suitable links have been made with the local secondary schools. This has had a positive effect on the ease with which pupils adapt to their secondary education. There are regular interchanges with the local secondary schools to ensure that transfer is smooth. Pupils visit the secondary school for a day at the end of Years 5 and 6. Pupils also go to the local secondary school to use their swimming pool.

39. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is well supported by carefully planned whole-school acts of collective worship. These are clearly linked to broad themes which reflect Christian values and meet statutory requirements. For example, there are good opportunities to reflect on being devoted to God in stories about Noah and building the ark. Year 6 pupils have written about their own personal achievements which has given them opportunities to reflect on how they can do their best in life. Pupils include achievements such as disco dancing and making a truce not to fight. They comment positively on how proud they are of their achievements. However, few opportunities are provided in religious education lessons pupils to reflect on how their actions affect others and how they can help others.

40. Provision for pupils' moral development is good overall. This is a strong aspect of the school but less so than in the previous inspection because of the school's drive to raise standards taking greater priority. Many teachers provide suitable role models in their relationships with the pupils that they teach. Support staff also play an important part in encouraging respect and value for one another. Suitable rules have been developed to help pupils realise their moral responsibilities. School rules are clearly defined and are displayed throughout the school. Classrooms have their own set of rules, which the pupils have illustrated. Honesty is respected in this school and every opportunity is taken to ensure that all pupils are aware of this.

41. Social provision is good. At the time of the previous inspection it was judged to be very good, but with the emphasis on raising standards there are fewer opportunities to develop this area at present. Pupils enter the school with very varied social skills and all staff in the school work hard to encourage positive social behaviour. This is particularly evident in the nursery where good teamwork by staff ensures that children have many opportunities to develop their abilities to work and play together. In Key Stage 1 and 2 there are good opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively in lessons such as science and mathematics. This is also seen to good effect in the dining hall, where the friendly family atmosphere is evident. Key Stage 2 pupils are allowed to dance in the hall during break times and the class that wins the tidy classroom award has an extra turn a week. This demonstrates with fun rewards the emphasis that the school places on good routines and responsibility for the environment. Pupils are encouraged to behave with courtesy and respect to adults and each other. Older pupils are encouraged to look after younger ones, which is appreciated by the parents. There is no school council, so pupils do not fully develop their sense of involvement in the school community and their sense of responsibility in this respect. The school encourages pupils to become involved in fund-raising such as the Blue Peter Appeals and Red Nose Day. These activities give the pupils a good sense of social responsibility.

42. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. This is a similar picture as seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils experience a sound range of opportunities associated with western culture in the planned curriculum in art, geography, music and history. For example, pupils analyse the Hemel Hempstead high street. They paint pictures in the style of famous painters from both western and other cultures. Greek columns are designed and made by pupils. However, the school does not develop the pupils' understanding of the wider, multi-cultural society around them. For example, it does not make sufficient use of the local community when it studies other faiths. Nor do visitors from other faiths visit the school often, so that teaching about other faiths is more memorable for pupils. In some classrooms there are good displays of tales and books from other cultures. Stories and tales from other cultures are

explored through new resources for the Literacy Hour. However, there is little whole school emphasis on the development of an understanding about other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. At the last inspection the school was noted as having good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety but one of the key issues was to improve assessment procedures and their use to inform curriculum planning in Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to maintain good procedures for child protection and health and safety. Very good progress has been made in developing assessment procedures.

44. Overall, the school has good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The school provides a very safe and caring environment. The welfare of the pupils is a high priority at Hammond. The headteacher and other staff are nominated staff with responsibility for child protection. They have undertaken appropriate training and have a good knowledge of the agencies involved. All staff are aware of child protection procedures. Many staff are trained in first aid and the procedures for dealing with accidents and providing support are carefully followed. A health and safety policy is in place and whilst regular safety checks are carried out, the school does not formally look at risk assessment. The governors have spent a considerable time discussing safety and security issues and have taken measures to improve security and ensure the safety of the pupils. Some of these are not popular with parents but the school has tried to maintain close communication with parents regarding any changes.

45. The school works hard to monitor and promote good attendance and behaviour but the continued high level of unauthorised absences indicates that this is an area which the school needs to address further. There are good systems for following up absences and the school regularly reminds parents about their responsibilities regarding attendance. The headteacher monitors attendance patterns closely and works well with the education welfare officer to follow up any concerns. Attendance is accurately recorded and reported to parents. Good attendance is promoted through the award of certificates at the end of term.

46. There is a clearly promoted behaviour policy in the school which is appreciated by parents and generally understood by pupils who were involved in drawing it up. In lessons many teachers use the sanctions consistently and manage behaviour well. There are too many times, however, when teachers raise their voices as a last resort to gain pupils' attention. This does not promote good role models for pupils and deters from the generally good relationships between teachers and pupils. It does not effectively promote good behaviour and the understanding of how poor behaviour affects the learning for all. The school is aware that the behaviour policy needs to be reviewed and is in the process of drafting a new one. To increase the use of positive re-enforcement of good behaviour, the school has developed the reward system and the celebration of good behaviour in assemblies. This has a positive effect on promoting good behaviour and work. Parents at the meeting also said that their children appreciated the credit card system for rewarding good work. Certificates are now sent home to help develop parental involvement in this. Not all parents were aware of this.

47. Class teachers monitor behaviour in the first instance and more serious matters are referred to the headteacher. Bullying and racial harassment are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

48. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The results are carefully analysed and used to guide planning work for the forthcoming week and term. There are very good systems for assessment in English and mathematics: tests and reading and mathematics conferences are used together effectively to give a whole picture of

the pupils' and class's attainment. In other subjects, the systems are not so well developed but are still effectively used to inform future planning. Assessment books giving detailed records of levels achieved by pupils form the basis for the monitoring of their academic progress. Individual targets are set for all pupils in English and mathematics and these are regularly reviewed with pupils and parents. At the end of lessons teachers regularly review and record how pupils have worked during the lesson and at the end of the week these are used to plan what will be taught in the next week. In this way teachers know their pupils well and have precise information to tell them where pupils need help. Teaching assistants are used well to provide additional support where needed.

49. The headteacher has carried out detailed analysis of all test and assessment results including monitoring for differences in background, month of birth and gender. She also checks the accuracy of teachers' own assessments. These results have been used well to predict what pupils will achieve at the end of each year when comparisons are carried out to see which children have reached their targets and which have not. In this way pupils can be grouped to meet individual needs or support provided if necessary. Aspects of the curriculum in which many pupils may be underachieving are then reviewed and changes introduced. For example, the school has identified that pupils were not achieving highly enough in their writing and have identified ways to improve writing.

50. Teachers monitor pupils' personal development well and areas of social development such as attitudes to learning, self esteem and relationships are monitored and results reported to parents. Nearly all staff have good relationships with their pupils and work hard to provide good personal support.

51. The local education authority's baseline assessment test is implemented in the early weeks of the nursery and reception intake to assist teachers in establishing starting points for learning. Assessment procedures are meticulous in the nursery with detailed information on each child being used successfully to plan future goals, highlight emotional concerns and to identify those who may have learning difficulties.

52. Procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs are good. Reviews of the good individual education plans take place as required with the involvement of parents, pupils are then placed at the appropriate stage on the special educational needs register. Support assistants make careful observations of the pupils' progress according to their targets and these findings are used in the planning of future work. Classroom assistants provide very good support for the pupils with special educational needs and make an important contribution to pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. At the previous inspection it was found that the school had a good relationship with parents who felt able to approach the school. Much of this is still good and the school has worked hard to improve the partnership. However, there are many parents who are not sufficiently involved in the work of the school.

54. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the standards of work attained by their children, particularly in science. Many parents at the meeting said that the school promotes good behaviour and children are given clear expectations regarding behaviour. Nearly all

parents at the meeting and in reply to the questionnaire felt comfortable in approaching the school to discuss any concerns and feel that the school is well led and managed. They feel they are well informed about their child's progress although a few felt that the reports were too general. The main areas of concern at the parents' meeting and in replies to the questionnaire were in relation to the consistency of communication with home. Not all parents are receiving the same detail of information, for example about homework and the curriculum to be taught. Homework was also a concern to some parents who responded to the questionnaire, who felt that their child does not get the right amount of work to do at home. Whilst many parents appreciate the range of activities outside lessons, there were a few who felt that this was not good.

55. The quality of information the school provides for parents is good overall and in some respects it is very good. The parent consultation reports which follow the parent evenings are excellent in giving parents a good indication of how well their child is doing both in subjects and on a personal level. The targets are reviewed and areas to work on are noted. The annual reports are informative for English and mathematics but for some subjects the comments are very general and not personal to the child. The school works hard to keep parents informed about developments at school and about topics to be covered. A planning day at the start of the year is very useful to allow parents to visit the school, meet the teacher and discuss work to be covered. However, for those parents not attending, the written information is not consistently supplied by class teachers. The school prospectus is out of date and does not contain full information about the school. The headteacher is aware of this and in the process of drawing up a new one, soon to be completed. The governors' annual report to parents is very informative and well presented. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about activities at the school.

56. The school has worked hard to involve parents in the school and in their child's education. The homework diaries and reading records are well used and many parents have written comments in their child's record. Whilst most parents attend their child's consultation evening, few come to events such as the literacy evening organised to keep parents informed about initiatives in the school and education. Very few parents help in school, apart from in the nursery, and support for the Parent Association is often low.

57. Arrangements for children starting school are good and the school works hard to forge positive links with parents. They are kept well informed about the work on topics being undertaken in the nursery and are encouraged to take an active interest in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management of the school is very good, with a strong established partnership between headteacher and deputy headteacher which works well. This ensures that the school has a shared vision and commitment to improvement. This is helped by the clear targets set for both the headteacher and deputy headteacher which are well focused on school improvement and standards of teaching and learning. Both headteacher and deputy headteacher also set good examples of enthusiasm and commitment to the aims and ethos of the school which are reflected in the commitment and positive attitudes of all staff to improving standards of teaching and learning. Staff with management responsibilities have sufficient time allocated to carry out their functions, which contributes substantially to the effectiveness of the school overall. For example, the deputy headteacher has a regular release time from the classroom for management duties. The subject co-ordinators have begun to develop their role

well in managing their subject and ensuring that the curriculum is taught effectively. Some co-ordinators have monitored teaching and learning in their subjects, and others understand that their subjects will receive similar priority at a later date. They have responsibility for the budget for their subject and a clear understanding of the priorities in terms of resources and training.

59. The governing body is committed and enthusiastic, and very clearly understands the needs of the school. It is supported very effectively by the experienced chair of governors who devotes substantial amounts of time to this role. Since the last inspection the governing body has been severely depleted and has only recently returned to full strength, with the addition of several new members bringing fresh enthusiasm and commitment to the hard working core of governors. Governors receive detailed information, particularly in the monthly reports from the headteacher, which enables them to make effective decisions about the future development of the school. Various governors have volunteered to take on specific roles such as special educational needs, information technology and literacy. These governors have good levels of knowledge about their particular aspect, which is useful to the governing body as a whole in accounting for the performance and improvement of the school. The governing body applies the principles of best value appropriately in its management of the school's resources.

60. The school monitors its performance very effectively, and takes specific steps to ensure that targets are met and that standards rise. The school development plan is a detailed and useful document, which is now effectively focused on improving standards, the lack of which was criticised in the last inspection. Currently the focus is clearly on the raising of standards in English and mathematics throughout the school. The school uses assessment well to monitor improvements and the progress pupils make regularly. It also has introduced useful systems for tracking individual pupil progress over time, and these enable necessary support to be allocated effectively, or decisions made about the future needs of pupils. An appropriate system of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is now in place and focused currently on English and mathematics.

61. The budget is effectively linked to these curriculum priorities in the school development plan, allowing these aspects to be funded as well as possible. This does mean that there is little left at present, in terms of resources, for the development of other subjects. Good use is made of resources overall, including specific grants. For example, a grant for information technology has been used to enhance the facilities and develop a computer suite with sufficient machines for a whole class. Funding for special educational needs is appropriately used, with support staff that are used particularly well to give appropriate support to pupils with special educational needs. The governing body has a particularly clear understanding of the need to ensure that spending is managed well, and that it leads to improvements in standards.

62. The provision for children who are aged under five is satisfactorily managed. Although the nursery has clear documentation there is no overall Early Years policy and scheme of work. While children make good progress in the nursery overall and good progress in the reception year in language, literacy and mathematics, they miss some opportunities for development in the other areas of learning. The management of the Early Years as a whole, particularly with the imminent introduction of the foundation stage has not yet been organised effectively. This is a weakness and limits the overall effectiveness of the early years or foundation stage.

63. The co-ordinator for special educational needs assumed this responsibility at the beginning of the school year. She is well informed and has carried out training for the demands of this role. The documentation has been carefully reviewed and the new individual education

plans for children are very detailed. Precise target setting is a good feature of the work. There are plans to find simple ways of showing the overall ongoing progress that all pupils on the special educational needs are making in each class.

64. There is a good match of staff to the needs of the pupils both teachers and support staff. This is particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation is sufficient for the needs of the pupils with extensive grounds which have been appropriately developed and add significantly both to pupils' social development in the space and facilities for break times, and in their use for environmental and physical education. Internally good use is made of all the available space, particularly in the new computer room.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The headteacher, staff and governors should;

continue to raise standards through maintaining a clear focus on effective teaching and learning, particularly in writing and religious education throughout the school and in mathematics and music in Key Stage 2; (paragraphs 2 – 7; 10-12; 71 – 73; 82 – 85; 88; 89; 92; 93; 95 – 98; 126 – 130; 135 – 139)

ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged in all subjects, by careful monitoring of teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics; (paragraphs 12; 23 – 27; 35; 49; 81; 82; 96; 104; 114; 124; 129)

review the curriculum time allocation for teaching in both key stages to meet the recommended minimum, and ensure that there is sufficient time for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education to be taught effectively at both key stages; (paragraphs 10; 30; 32; 106; 111; 117; 120; 130; 134; 138)

renew efforts to improve attendance and reduce the incidence of unauthorised absence; (paragraphs 14; 45)

prepare a common and appropriate approach to the foundation stage in both planning and teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes. (paragraphs 26; 29; 66 – 80)

The governing body should consider the following minor points in the action plan;

- develop a multi-cultural education to give pupils a broader understanding of the society in which they live; (paragraphs 42; 46; 47)
- ensure that the behaviour policy has a clear, common goal which reflects the ethos of the school, and that the pupils, parents and staff have ownership of it; (paragraphs 25)
- renew efforts to involve parents in supporting their children's learning in school. (paragraphs 53 – 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	17%	43%	32%	8%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	205
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	93

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school Year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
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	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	14
	Girls	12	10	14
	Total	23	21	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72	66	88
	National	82	86	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	13
	Girls	12	16	12
	Total	24	30	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	94	78
	National	82	86	87

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final Year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	7	12
	Girls	11	9	14
	Total	14	16	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50	57	93
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	8	8
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	14	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50	61	61
	National	68	69	75

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black - Caribbean heritage	0
Black - African heritage	1
Black - other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	164
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school Year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black - Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black - African heritage	0	0
Black - other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial Year	1999
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	£
Total income	418,975
Total expenditure	411,785
Expenditure per pupil	1,872
Balance brought forward from previous Year	31,738
Balance carried forward to next Year	38,928

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	235
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	38	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	52	2	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	60	2	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	53	13	8	12
The teaching is good.	45	45	7	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	35	10	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	50	12	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	42	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	42	7	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	33	10	5	10

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

66. This section of the report focuses on the children who are aged under five in the nursery and in the reception class. Although the full range of ability is represented, a significant number of children come to school with limited experiences and social skills. Assessments that are carried out when the children have settled into the nursery show that their attainment in language and literacy and in mathematics is well below the expected level for their age and is low compared with other schools in the authority. Children make good and often very good progress in the nursery and mainly satisfactory progress in the reception class, with some good progress evident in literacy and numeracy. Despite the efforts made by staff and the good progress that is made, many children are still below national expectations in language and mathematics by the time that they are five because of their very low starting point. In the other areas of learning, the majority of the present pupils in the reception class are likely to meet the expected outcomes. This represents a similar finding to the last inspection. Nearly all the children who enter the reception class have benefited from at least two terms in the nursery.

Personal and social development

67. A significant number of children are on course to achieve the expected learning outcomes for their age in their personal and social development. This aspect is taught very well in the nursery and satisfactorily in the Reception class.

68. From the time that the children first enter the nursery, they are encouraged to make independent choices from a wide range of appropriate activities. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in the nursery that enables children to feel safe, secure and able to learn, and they respond well to the new challenges. They know which group they are in and positively relate to the adult who is in charge of it. Most of the youngest children are willing to take turns although a few find this difficult. The very good teamwork by staff in the nursery ensures that the children are given many appropriate opportunities to work and play together co-operatively. Taking turns on the large wheeled toys, preparing 'snacks' and serving them help the children to learn to share and consider others in a very purposeful way. One boy was conscientious in seeing that all the children had a paper towel on which to stand their milk cartons before they started drinking. The children have a caring attitude towards each other and those who have special educational needs are very well integrated. Nursery children respond positively to the new challenges. They use tools and equipment sensibly, take responsibility for selecting games and activities and clear away readily afterwards. Although children in the Reception class have jobs to do and take these seriously, they are not given sufficient opportunities to develop independence and to show initiative in many areas of their learning. The behaviour of children who are under five is good. The children in both the nursery and reception class try hard to listen carefully to staff and to carry out instructions. They persevere with tasks and generally sustain concentration well for their ages. Good examples of this were seen in the Reception class during the literacy and numeracy sessions.

Language and literacy

69. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good and as a result the children make good progress. As the majority start from well below average on entry to the school, few are meeting the expected standard by the age of five.

70. All staff are aware of the importance of speaking and using opportunities to engage the children in conversation and to increase their vocabularies. A few nursery children speak only

briefly and do not answer in phrases when they respond to questions. One boy, for example, did not know the names of farm animals in a storybook about a pig in a pond and referred to quack quacks when he pointed to the ducks. On the other hand, another boy was able to describe a visit to London Zoo and explain that his favourite animal was the rhinoceros. Each morning, nursery children have good opportunities to speak out in front of others when they 'show and tell' about items that they have brought from home. They learn to listen and in both the nursery and the Reception class stories are told with expression so that they capture the pupils' imaginations. A good example occurred when the reception class teacher was reading a play from a big book, with the children. It was based on the three little pigs, which the children knew well. They were fully involved in deciding how they would read the parts and which would be most appropriate voices for the pigs, the wolf, the narrator and the chorus. As a result of an effective discussion, they read with very good expression and developed their understanding of the difference between a play and a story.

71. The staff encourages children to gain enjoyment from reading and there are opportunities for them to listen to taped stories and to follow sequences on computer programs. Nursery children learn to identify the front of a book and know which way to turn the pages. Games help them to match pictures and words and they recognise their names at snack time. Individuals like to tell the story from the pictures and pick out some letters but few can recognise words. They are encouraged to talk about what they think will happen in the story. Reception children are developing reading skills at an appropriate pace but higher attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged by their present reading books which they can easily read. Nursery children take home library books and reception children involve their parents in listening to them read and writing a comment in the reading diary. All children know that writing carries a message. Younger children give captions to pictures for an adult to scribe. They learn to trace over letters and by the age of five, most hold pencils correctly. Many of the older children use correctly joined letter formation and several are beginning to make their own attempts at unaided writing and to spell words as they sound. During a literacy session, they were thrilled to use personal white boards and marker pens and with good support they made up words that ended in '..ay'.

Mathematics

72. Most children make good progress as a result of good teaching and several are on course to meet the expected standard by the age of five. However, the overall standard attained by the majority is still below average, as most children start from a low level on entry to the nursery.

73. In the nursery, many are familiar with several action and number songs and rhymes that reinforce their knowledge. Through games and practical activities the younger children successfully sort bears into big and small and make sets of objects according to their colour or shape. They learn to recognise repeating patterns and continue them, and enjoy picking up the correct number of shells and matching them to dots on a card. They count and measure caterpillars and when comparing themselves they learn to use terms such as shorter and taller. A range of practical equipment is thoughtfully prepared by teachers and assistants and enables the children to practise counting, explore the values of numbers up to 10 and beyond and carry out simple calculations by adding on one more. They develop their understanding of volume and capacity through planned activities in the water and sand trays. They recognise circles and put them together to form caterpillars on leaves and make symmetrical picture of butterflies which reinforces their knowledge of shape. A few children know where to place numbers on a number line and accurately work out the number of children who are present. In the Reception class, the children's mathematical understanding is further developed through the numeracy hour. Children count in twos and enjoy quick fire mental work which involves them in making up addition sums with a total of five, or thinking about a question such as 'I have four animals

altogether and I have two ducks - how many elephants do I have? The higher attaining children select two numbers accurately to make a given total up to 10 while the lower attainers are not yet secure when counting the number of objects in a set.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world meets the standards expected by the age of five and children make good progress. Very good opportunities arise each morning in the nursery for the children to talk about the date and notice changes in the weather and the seasons. Children enjoy taking it in turns to put the information on a chart. They are becoming observant and notice with excitement the changes that occur when caterpillars change into butterflies. Simple work in history helps the children to acknowledge the past as 'yesterday' and the present as 'today.' Good opportunities arise for them to place pictures in a sequence and show the stages from babyhood to old age. They discover the properties of materials when they find out how to stick items together to make Postman Pat's village and learn about events in people's lives when they have a 'nursery wedding' celebration. They participate eagerly in a picnic for their teddy bears. In the Reception class they explore the forces of pushing and pulling objects, learn about light and dark and realise the link between sounds and hearing. In early work on geography they learn about where they live, memorise their addresses and recognise aspects of the environment. They pretend that they are going on an aeroplane and learn about the role of the stewardess.

75. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the Reception class. The imaginative approaches to the work which have included helping the children to learn about growing things and journeys have frequently resulted in the children making rapid progress. Displays of shells and items used at the beach help the children to explore materials and extend their vocabularies. During role-play, nursery children were provided with suitcases and packed them for a holiday. This involved them in classifying items that they would need when away from 'home' learning by trial and error how to pack items successfully and realising that suitcase sides are not elastic. They played out the different roles within the family before arriving at the 'seaside' where they pretended to put on their swimsuits, sunbathe and go in the sea. Reception class children also enjoyed exploring their own 'beach' that had been made in a corner of the room.

Physical development

76. A significant number of children are on course to meet the expected learning outcomes by the age of five. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class.

77. In the nursery, the children make good progress as they are provided with a range of activities to develop their physical skills. They have regular access to an outside area where they can run, jump, climb, swing, clamber through tunnels and learn to share wheeled vehicles in order to develop good skills in co-ordination and control of their bodies. The children in the reception class have regular sessions in the hall where they use apparatus and start to acquire early skills in throwing and catching, and in gymnastics. Their progress in developing good physical skills by using climbing apparatus, balancing and using wheeled toys is limited, however, because they do not engage in this type of activity on a regular basis.

78. Although many of the children lack good hand control initially they are given many opportunities to develop fine muscular movements through a range of activities such as using small construction toys, cutting and sticking, picking up pieces of puzzles, moulding play dough and using the computer mouse. They develop good hand and eye co-ordination through

matching games and jigsaws. By the age of five, most children cut and manipulate tools such as crayons, glue spreaders and brushes with competency.

Creative development

79. Children make good progress in creative development and many reach the nationally agreed levels by the time that they are five. Staff in the nursery plan carefully for this element. They extend the children's imaginations through activities in the role-play areas and in the sand and water trays. One boy was seen moulding a cave for a bear in the wet sand while the blue water in the water tray and the small boats involved the children in pretending that they had made 'a seaside'. During the inspection, nursery children went on a 'Bear Hunt' around the grounds based on one of their favourite stories. This was extremely well led by the staff who had planned it carefully. The children made colourful binoculars to help them to see the bear and pretended that they were going through long grass, squelchy mud and a whirling snowstorm. Every so often they joined in with the repetitive phrases they knew from hearing the story previously and were scared and excited when the 'bear' was eventually found. The route 'back to bed' involved further imaginative play and discussion.

80. Children have access to a good selection of media and materials in the nursery. They mix paints and discover that white added to colours makes them lighter and when they mix sand with paint it produces a rough-finished texture. They are delighted to find that they can make hand and foot prints. Apart from the group activities, nursery children have free access to the paints during each session and their efforts are proudly displayed in 'The Art Gallery'. They receive good adult support that enables them to work carefully and thoughtfully and to develop their skills. They make bear masks and models to represent different types of transport. In the Reception class there are good drawings and paintings of individuals and experimental work with colour mixing but few opportunities arise for children to paint freely from memory and imagination. Nursery children enjoy singing songs, clapping and saying rhymes such as 'Teddy bear, Teddy bear' while reception children successfully explore high and low sounds and try to decide if they can match their voices to percussion instruments.

ENGLISH

81. Standards in National Curriculum Tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 are well below the national average. However, from very low standards at the time of the previous inspection, with 27 per cent of pupils gaining the average levels in 1995, standards have improved dramatically, with 50 per cent of pupils gaining average levels or above in 1999. Standards found in this inspection show that in reading the pupils now achieve well. There are substantial numbers of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 who gain the expected levels, now close to national averages. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 have moved more slowly. Although they are improved and substantial numbers of pupils gain average levels, there is still some way to go before they match the standards which pupils achieve in reading, and the national averages.

82. Standards in National Curriculum Test at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show substantial improvement both since the last inspection and year on year. The pupils' attainment in reading was below national averages, although in line with standards in similar schools. In writing standards were well below the national average, with few pupils reaching the higher levels. Standards found in the inspection show that pupils are now achieving well, with standards in line with national averages in reading. In writing standards, whilst approaching the national average, are lower, with few pupils gaining the higher levels.

83. This improvement has been achieved through a well-planned and carefully monitored programme of teaching, incorporating the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils have been

allocated to sets for English and this has enabled teachers to plan more effectively to meet the needs of the pupils. Extra time has been allocated in the curriculum planning to enable teachers to enhance pupils' learning further. This has been very successful indeed.

84. Of particular note is the standard which pupils reach who learn more slowly, including many pupils on the special educational needs register. Good levels of classroom support for pupils who have learning difficulties and those who need more support with their learning have greatly enhanced the standards these pupils reach. The classroom support assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator contribute substantially to this achievement through the focused targets for pupils which the classroom support assistants fully understand and implement successfully. This is a very good feature of the curriculum for English.

85. The provision for pupils who learn more quickly is not so well developed and this is an area of weakness overall. Although in some classes pupils receive challenging work this is not consistent throughout the school. The setting arrangement is not so successful for this group of pupils at the present. While lower attaining pupils are both challenged and supported, the objectives for higher attaining pupils are often linked with those of the average pupils so they are not stretched sufficiently in what they are asked to do in lessons.

86. Pupils' speaking and listening skills at the end of both key stages are mainly appropriate for their age. In Key Stage 1 pupils speak confidently and enjoy answering in class. They have opportunities to answer questions and take part in role-play and discussions. Pupils are capable of listening well, and this is shown in assemblies where well-presented stories capture pupils' interest and keep their attention for some time. In Key Stage 2 pupils generally speak confidently and readily engage in conversation. In some classes, notably Year 4 and Year 6, the teacher's methods, ideas and presentation also keep pupils' attention so that they listen carefully. However, despite their capability, pupils do not always listen well. For example, in a number of classes the teacher has not planned the work sufficiently carefully or presented it sufficiently well to engage pupils' attention. Pupils gain some understanding of how speaking and listening skills are used through visits such as to the pantomime and visitors such as poets and authors in recent years.

87. Pupils' reading skills reach the national averages at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1 substantial numbers of pupils read well, and clearly know how to have a go at words they do not recognise using sounding out and word splitting methods. There are suitable numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and these pupils are also enthusiastic readers. By the end of Key Stage 2 substantial numbers of pupils reach the average Level 4, and a small proportion reach Level 5. The pupils read confidently, they can retell the beginning of the story they are reading and have a go at predicting how it will end. However, the pupils lack a broad background in reading overall. Few pupils have the higher levels of skills in using referencing skills. They do not know a broad range of authors and few can talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors or poets. Although some pupils belong to a local library many do not and rely on the school for the books they read. However, in the lower classes in Key Stage 2 there are indications that pupils have a broader range of skills. For example, they can use referencing skills in the library to find books, can check on how to find information and have better knowledge of authors and ranges of books for their age group. This indicates that reading skills are rising and this should influence reading levels positively as these pupils move up through the school.

88. Many pupils reach national averages in writing at the end of both key stages, but there are fewer pupils reaching the higher levels overall, which is below average. In Key Stage 1 pupils write in sentences and mainly use appropriate punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. They make good use of these skills in letter writing, stories and factual writing such as recipes. Pupils usually present their work neatly and spelling of common words is satisfactory.

Writing although neat is often not joined. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in writing are mainly satisfactory, reaching national averages. Pupils write legibly in joined handwriting and use basic punctuation correctly. They understand basic grammar and have completed lots of work which helps them to understand how to improve their writing, such as how to use joining words in sentences, and exercises in punctuation such as commas and speech marks. Pupils generally write fluently but not at length and this limits the opportunities pupils have to sustain their writing over a longer period. The quality of handwriting and presentation is variable. Some writing is neat and joined but some is not. The school recognises that improvements are needed and has recently introduced a new handwriting scheme. Pupils make good use of their writing in other subjects such as in history where they write about shortages after the war. This is a good feature of the curriculum.

89. Teaching in English is good overall. Teachers plan well, linked to the National Literacy Strategy, and share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils. They make a crisp start to the lessons and capture pupils' interest. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class the teacher brought in fig roll biscuits for pupils to try. This suitably engaged their attention and linked to the introduction of a new class book 'Figgy Roll.' Teachers generally ensure that all pupils are involved in the lessons and use questioning well both to check pupils' knowledge and to ensure that they are paying sufficient attention. Some teaching is very good, in both key stages, and this is characterised by good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and very good classroom management. In Year 4 for example, the teacher enthuses the class to learn with high expectations of behaviour and learning coupled with enthusiasm and good use of praise. They respond well by concentrating for substantial periods of time on the class book, 'Nothing to be afraid of.' Support assistants are effective, and included in teachers' planning, so their time is used well in the lessons. Sometimes teachers use their voices too loudly as a behaviour management tool, and this is not altogether effective. Occasionally teachers lack appropriate strategies for controlling the class and a small number of pupils become silly very quickly.

90. The curriculum is enhanced at times by visits from authors and poets who give the pupils a better insight into different styles of writing and impart their own enthusiasm for writing. This is a good feature of the curriculum. Pupils' experiences of drama are enriched through visits from theatre companies and trips to local plays and pantomimes.

91. The management of the English curriculum is good. The co-ordinator has a detailed knowledge and a very clear understanding of the need to raise standards further in writing. Observations of lessons have been completed and detailed feedback given which enables teachers to reflect on and improve their skills but also ensures that the co-ordinator has the knowledge she needs to make improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. The use of target setting ensures that all staff to know what is expected for their year group.

MATHEMATICS

92. In the 1999 National Curriculum Tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average. However, pupils' attainment was well below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Analysis of the school's register of pupils with special educational needs indicates that there was a high percentage of pupils with specific learning needs in Year 6 in 1999, and this was a contributory factor to the below average test results. Compared to similar schools, the number of pupils reaching the levels expected at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average and at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the national average.

93. The findings of this inspection are that at the end of Key Stage 2 standards are below the levels expected nationally. However, Year 2 pupils are broadly in line to attain average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. The standards achieved in Key Stage 2 over the last three years are considerably higher than during the last inspection. The increase in the

percentage of pupils working at the national average level is due to this year group being taught in ability groups, the effective use of the numeracy strategy and increased use of assessment. In the previous inspection in 1996, standards were found to be below average in Key Stage 1 and 2. Since then, test results and teacher assessments have steadily risen in Key Stage 1, and inspection findings confirm these improvements.

94. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can count to 100 and put numbers in order, reading and recording them accurately, matching the number word to the correct digits. In mental arithmetic, most readily identify odd and even numbers. They can decide which number they will record on paper first when carrying out subtraction sums. Pupils understand simple place value, use number bonds competently in shopping activities, and predict missing numbers when sequencing. Pupils are beginning to learn their two and five times tables, when they record multiples of these numbers by striking a percussion instrument in multiples of two, five and 10. There is a strong emphasis on mental arithmetic now, which is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' recall of number facts. Pupils can double numbers up to eight accurately in their heads. Many can estimate the weight of objects, compare lengths, capacities and masses. They can length of a variety of objects using non-standard measurements, such as cubes. Pupils collect data and convert them correctly into bar charts for display on the walls and in their books. The correct mathematical vocabulary is used from the Reception class onwards and pupils learn to write the words correctly.

95. At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have a sound understanding of place value which they apply in calculation. The higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently well to enable them to develop higher levels of skills. Pupils of all abilities show increasing speed and accuracy when using their mental arithmetic skills. They occasionally use their numeracy skills in investigations involving fractions and decimals. However, investigations in mathematics are not sufficiently well developed overall. There is good practice in some classes, such as in a Year 3 investigation about whether the length of the sides of a square is related to the area, with well recorded results in a table. Problem solving skills are very well developed when pupils learn how to write cheques and calculate change due to the open ended questioning of teachers, which deepens pupils' understanding. They develop good skills of measurement, when they learn effectively about how to measure and draw angles using a set square well due to the practical approach of the teacher. Resources are used well to develop understanding of the relationship between millimetres and litres, and pints and gallons. They collect data and represent the statistics accurately in pie, bar charts and line graphs using pupils' favourite dinners and colours in Year 4, while Year 6 draw interesting pie charts having tallied their preferences for different genres of books. The use of information technology is less well developed in mathematics lessons at present. For example, calculators are rarely used in Year 5 and 6. Those pupils with special educational needs are supported well in smaller groups and reach appropriate levels of attainment.

96. The quality of teaching is good overall and all teaching was good or better, with some very good teaching. Teaching over time in Key Stage 2 is at present sound. Teachers are excited by the National Numeracy Strategy and are implementing it thoughtfully. Planning is based effectively on this and takes into account the needs of pupils who are below average and average. However, more able pupils are not consistently challenged to reach the next level. A strength of the provision is in the setting of pupils into ability groups throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils make generally good progress in lessons. Teachers are well qualified in mathematics and have a good understanding of the subject which means that they make clear teaching points and are able to answer pupils' questions accurately. Direct teaching of the basic numeracy skills is thorough now and opportunities are provided for pupils to use them in problem solving, which they enjoy. Pupils in Year 6 make very good progress in learning how to use inverse strategies when they calculate operations of division and subtraction due to the fast pace of the lesson, which the teacher enhances by telling pupils how long they have to complete a task. The

management of pupils is a strength overall, although sometimes teachers use shouting instead of finding a more positive approach to disciplining pupils. Pupils generally concentrate well and persevere when given challenging work and teacher attention, but those left to work more independently allow their attention to wander away from their tasks, so the amount of work completed is too little, and progress slows down. Teachers assess progress regularly but pupils do not have their individual targets in their books which would help them to focus on achieving well. Another strength of the subject is the use of resources to create practical experiences for pupils, which deepen their learning. Marking of work is satisfactory, but the marking does not consistently inform pupils of their strengths and areas for development.

97. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is a key feature in the school's bid to raise standards. Much time and effort has been given by the co-ordinator to ensure that members of staff are well prepared for this initiative. All the teachers have been on a week's in-service training. Classrooms have lively notice boards listing mathematics vocabulary and large and small number lines are used to good effect in numeracy. Stimulating displays of work around the school help to give the subject importance in pupils' eyes. There are many bright and colourful resources, especially at Key Stage 1 now, which are used well in lessons. There has been an effective level of monitoring of mathematics, which has enhanced the quality of teaching within the school.

98. The leadership and management of mathematics is very good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to provide support on teachers' planning and mental warm ups. She samples the pupils' books, monitors teaching and has ensured many members of staff are well trained to teach numeracy. There have been considerable improvements in mathematics since the last inspection. There is greater use of assessment. There is an appropriate action plan for school which sets targets very clearly for the raising of standards, which all teachers are committed to achieving from Reception to Year 6 teachers.

SCIENCE

99. Science attainment and teaching is a strength of the school. There have been considerable improvements since the last full inspection, which include the use of a whole-school scheme of work, a resources audit and in-service training on to develop teachers knowledge and understanding as well as their skills in teaching science through a more practical approach.

100. Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 reach national averages. Over the past four years since the last full inspection, there has been a steady improvement in standards of attainment in Key Stage 2. Standards are well above average when compared to those in similar schools. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in National Curriculum Tests in 1999 show that pupils' attainment was in line with the national average. At the time of the previous inspection attainment was below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The rise in standards is attributable to an improvement in the quality of teaching, the adoption of the new national scheme of work and improved procedures for assessment.

101. The findings of the inspection are that the current Year 6 pupils are in line to attain average standards by the time they leave the school. Year 2 pupils are in line to attain average standards this year at the end of Key Stage 1.

102. By the age of seven pupils have good levels of knowledge about life and living processes. A strength of their knowledge is in life and living processes. They know about different food types and which are needed to keep them healthy. They can draw food chains and label them. They record different fruits and seeds. Pupils have good levels of knowledge of

materials; they identify what things are made from, such as wood, metal or plastic. They also investigate how push and pull affect the movement of objects. They write carefully about how forces make vehicles change direction.

103. By the age of 11 pupils know the names of the parts of a plant and the ways seeds are dispersed. They can describe their findings about muscles clearly. They can also write about the functions of a human heart in detail. A strength of their knowledge is in materials. They carry out good investigations into how the temperature of water affects dissolving substances. They form conclusions about their work. However, pupils' understanding could be developed by further activities which involve the writing of predictions and conclusions. Their knowledge of separation techniques is sound, with some good writing about soil analysis. There is sufficient investigative work. They can investigate the pulse rate and how exercise affects it. They do not use graphs often to record their results to investigations. There is less emphasis given to a study of forces.

104. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. When teaching is at its best there is revision of the previous lesson's content and good questioning skills are used to discover the level of pupil knowledge at the start of the session. For example, in Year 6 the teacher uses questioning effectively at the start of the lesson to check the amount of understanding which pupils have brought from previous lessons. Teachers then use good subject knowledge to deepen pupils' understanding. In Year 5 for example, pupils learning about the sunrise and sunset is enhanced by the teachers confidence and knowledge of this subject. Teachers set clear expectations of the level of knowledge pupils will develop by sharing learning objectives with pupils. They use the school's resources very imaginatively to make the lessons interesting and relevant. However, pupils' contributions are not always valued if they are incorrect and they are not asked to check errors over carefully. Marking rarely informs pupils about how they could improve their work. Teachers' planning has clear learning objectives but it does not consistently plan for the higher attaining pupils, or have levels of attainment noted, which means that some pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their lessons.

105. The co-ordinator manages effectively and enthusiastically. She has gained a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in science by monitoring teachers' planning and displays throughout the school and examining pupils' books. The school has not updated its policy in the light of the new National Curriculum, but the school has adopted the new national scheme of work and has an effective programme of assessment, which provides the school with useful information. There is a good subject action plan, which sets appropriate targets to develop the subject. Resources are sound, well organised and used effectively. The subject promotes pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through the introduction of a science vocabulary, written reports of scientific investigation and knowledge, data collection and the drawing of graphs. Information and communication technology was satisfactorily used in science lessons during the inspection.

ART

106. The previous inspection report found that standards were below national expectations at both key stages. There have been improvements since then and by the end of both key stages the majority of pupils attain standards that are typical of those expected for their ages. From the scrutiny of work, it is evident that pupils including those with special educational needs make sound progress overall but this often slows towards the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils have limited time to explore the breadth of the subject.

107. In Year 1, pupils paint effectively in the style of famous artists such as Paul Klee and practise making collages of flowers as part of their science display that shows the requirements of plants in order to grow. Year 2 pupils use chalk and crayons to make lively seaside pictures

and experiment with charcoal when drawing natural objects such as logs and nests. They carefully use paper collage materials to form their own pictures linked to a study of nature and with the good support of helpers, they use fabric cut outs to stitch their own design of leaves and flowers on to a background. When using clay, they produce their own imaginative sculptures and tiles, some of which are described by the pupils as 'a doughnut', 'a mask' and 'one with mountains on it'.

108. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have gained some appreciation of the lives of artists but some refer to 'Impressionist' paintings as 'blurry' without knowing that there is a precise word to describe them. When working on perspective they know that objects have to be drawn larger to appear at the front of the picture and that lighter colours help the objects to look as if they are receding. The quality of their drawings is as expected for their ages with skills developing in the use of different pencil techniques. The work of pupils in the earlier part of key stage is often of a good standard with clear exploration of textures leading to decorative work with bookmarks and mosaics, detailed portrait painting of the Tudors and imaginative studies in representing movements that involve collage, drawing and painting techniques.

109. From the analysis of work over time, the evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Particularly good examples of teaching were seen in Year 2 and Year 6. In all the lessons seen, resources were well prepared and there was an attempt to provide pupils with first hand experiences of closely observing items and sketching them. In a Year 1 lesson, where pupils carried out still life paintings and drawings, the teacher clearly pointed out that when looking at a jug, for example, the pupils should only draw the angle of it that they could actually see. As a result, the pupils observed very carefully and made realistic attempts to represent the items. Strengths in the teaching relate to good introductions with well chosen resources, thoughtful intervention when the pupils are engaged in practical work and positive evaluation to help the pupils to consider how they can improve it further. As a result of clear expectations that are given to them by the teachers, pupils work with concentration and enjoy their work. Areas for development relate to allowing the pupils to apply the techniques that they are learning so that they can draw and paint freely from memory and imagination.

110. At the time of the last inspection there was no co-ordinator for the subject. The present co-ordinator assumed responsibility at the beginning of the school year and is enthusiastic and committed. She is aware of how the subject can also be incorporated within aspects of history and design and technology, for example, without losing sight of the necessary teaching of skills. Examples of the good use of sketchbooks are evident but pupils do not use them consistently across Key Stage 2. The school has benefited from a visit by an artist who has demonstrated forms of abstract painting. There is little evidence on display of examples of art that represent cultures from around the world which would broaden pupils' understanding of the range of art to be appreciated.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Due to the organisation of the curriculum it was only possible to make a limited number of lesson observations during the inspection. In the lessons seen, pupils made rapid progress as a result of very good teaching. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work on display and in photographs and discussions with teachers shows that over time pupils make sound progress, although the subject is not always featured consistently, especially at the end of Key Stage 2. When pupils with special educational needs are well supported within lessons they make good progress. The previous inspection found that standards were below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Improvements have occurred since then and pupils attain average standards for their ages at the end of both key stages.

112. By the age of seven, pupils have an understanding of the design process and simple mechanisms. They learn how to make 'moving pictures' with simple levers and slides and know that they can make legs and arms move on cardboard figures by using split pins. In their work on healthy foods, they explore the construction of salads and produce their own. They have access to construction materials and acquire a range of fitting and assembling skills, in addition to exploring how different types of materials can be joined together. When making vehicles they realise that axles can help the wheels to turn and in the past they have produced their own 'Iron Man'.

113. By the age of 11, pupils design and make simple objects. In Year 6, the majority of pupils carry out independent research and produce appropriate sketches and plans. They select tools and equipment for themselves to test the strength of materials and are learning to predict which materials are suitable for specific structures, such as a shelter. Their basic skills are developing and pupils are learning to compile a report that explains the process of making a product. Earlier in the key stage, Year 3 pupils practise their skills in rolling, folding and layering paper to produce effective photograph frames that are stable. They know that they are designing for a purpose and ensure that the photograph will slip into the 'window' on the frame. Year 4 pupils continue to extend their skills when they make three-dimensional picture frames from salt dough so that they complement their paintings of the Tudors and they design money containers. The process of making is featured in Year 5 when pupils produce musical instruments and biscuits.

114. In the lessons seen, the teachers had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve and very good introductions led the pupils to make decision and test out their ideas. In a Year 4 lesson where pupils were designing storybooks for younger children they worked very productively together as if they were a production team and carefully designed which pop up feature would best represent the text on different pages. This was as a result of the teacher's good understanding of the requirements of the subject, thorough planning and excellent discussions with pupils. The work was challenging and inventive and the teacher's organisation was very competent. Similarly, in Year 6, the good preparation of the work and the quality of the teacher's questioning enabled pupils to learn how to analyse the problem and understand the facts from practical experience. This led them to discover how the way in which paper can be folded provides strength in a structure. Some opportunities are missed to enable pupils to develop their writing skills by evaluating their products and considering how they might improve on them. Forms of assessing the development of skills and ensuring that pupils are sufficiently challenged as they move through the school are not yet secure.

GEOGRAPHY

115. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 are now in line with the national expectation. The majority of pupils make sound progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Overall, this represents a considerable improvement in standards since the last inspection when they were judged to be below the national average at Key Stage 2. This improvement in standards is due to higher standards of literacy and numeracy now developed in the school which have a positive impact on pupils' understanding in geography.

116. A strength of the work seen was a rivers project with photographs of pupils carrying out exploration of Gade River in Hemel Hempstead. The pupils analysed carefully how the river had been looked after. They studied the pollution in the river and at its edges to discover man's effect on it. They measured the depth and speed of the flow of the river accurately. The plant and animal wildlife living in and beside the river were sketched. All this work created an interesting project, which clearly demonstrated the pupils' abilities to draw conclusions about the

local environment. This project successfully encourages pupils to take an enquiring approach to the subject, which was recommended in the previous inspection report.

117. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers use resources well when they ask pupils to position photographs of local scenes on a map of Hemel Hempstead, so that pupils revise and apply knowledge gained on a local walk around the area. Their short term planning is satisfactory, but does include challenges for higher attaining pupils. Teachers' good subject knowledge of the locality means that pupils develop knowledge of giving directions to places around the school. Teachers give clear explanations of the task to draw a graph to show traffic in the old town of Hemel Hempstead and learn how to formulate charts of shop usage. Teachers use time well when they tell pupils how long they have to complete a task. Feedback to pupils is not used sufficiently on how to improve their work and make their analysis more detailed. Ends of lessons are used to good effect, for example, in Year 2, when they are used by the teacher to emphasis the learning objective of the lesson by holding up and discussing the reasons pupils have for choosing holiday destinations. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen the teacher did not use initial assessment to determine the level of pupil knowledge and pupils did not learn how to give directions confidently to other people. The major drawback in lessons is lack of time allocated for teaching and learning. Pupils do not have sufficient time in lessons to produce detailed comparisons of places and study the changes that occur over time. They do not carry out personal study projects in Key Stage 2 regularly which would enhance their geography knowledge and skills in working independently.

118. The curriculum co-ordinator for geography has only been leading the subject for a few months, but has made a good start. Overall at present the subject is soundly led and managed. The co-ordinator sets a good example by using scaled maps and the local environment in her teaching. She has led in-service training for staff on the changes in the new National Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, enabling her to gain a basic understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment of pupils' standards is at present weak.

HISTORY

119. No teaching of history took place during the inspection as it is taught in units earlier in the year. Evidence was drawn from plans, children's work, a discussion with pupils and with the co-ordinator. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning about history in both key stages. By the time they leave the school, the quality of their work is at a level expected for this age. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection when standards of attainment were below the national average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

120. The quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory from the examination of evidence. Teachers' historical knowledge is good, so that Year 2 pupils learn out about the past by writing about the Fire of London in Charles II reign and about the life and work of Florence Nightingale accurately. They write interesting facts about the life of Boudicca. Year 2 pupils have been on a trip to The London Museum. Basic skills are being well developed when Year 4 develop a sense of chronology and create a time line about ancient Britain in their study of conquests and revolts. School life in Ancient Greece and the present day are compared carefully. This is an improvement since the last inspection when skills were under-developed. The pupils develop sound levels of knowledge of the Tudors. They write thoughtfully about the end of the monasteries and Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Year 6 pupils study Britain since 1930 satisfactorily and use resources well. They maturely give their opinions about how children were cared for and evacuated to the countryside during World War II. Pupils write explanations of why food was rationed during the former war. At present pupils do not complete their own project or develop the use of their own initiative, which would increase pupils' knowledge and study skills. Too little time is allocated to the teaching of history which limits the standards which pupils attain. Pupils enjoy making models linked to their learning of history

topics such as Ancient Greece. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as many achieve national levels of knowledge.

121. The leadership and management is sound for history. The curriculum co-ordinator has only been in place for a few months, but has already made some improvements. She has updated the national scheme of work for the new curriculum in September and has led in-service training for the staff on the changes to the curriculum. Teachers' planning is also monitored well by the co-ordinator, enabling her to learn about the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. She has audited the resources and is aware of the need to develop resources for the subject, especially about the Victorians. Assessment is also recognised as an area for further development. Information technology is satisfactorily used to develop geography skills.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards in information technology reach the national expectations for pupils at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident in using the machinery of the computer, the mouse for example, and they have suitable word processing skills. Pupils learn that they need to give instructions for the computer to follow and the pupils in Year 2 work hard to do this successfully, writing instructions for a screen turtle. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can create spreadsheets which they fill in with relevant information. For example, Year 5 complete a spreadsheet about daylight hours. They word process well, using the computer's facilities to enhance their work such as changing the font and size of their work. Pupils can use aspects of the computer to enhance their other lessons. For example, the pupils in Year 4 use a painting programme to paint pictures in the style of Seurat and produce some very good results.

123. The new computer suite is a very good facility, which enhances pupils' learning well. It enables teachers to teach the information technology skills which pupils need. It also enables them to monitor the pupils practising their skills as a class activity with enough computers for each pair of pupils. Pupils very much enjoy working in the computer suite and although they are excitable they quickly become absorbed in the tasks the teacher sets.

124. Teaching is satisfactory, but ranges from unsatisfactory to good and very good teaching observed during the inspection. Where teaching is good the teacher has a good knowledge of the program being used and enthuses the pupils to learn. Planning is good and teachers deal positively with pupils' errors, correcting misunderstandings and problems smoothly. This was particularly evident in Year 4 where pupils settled quickly, carried out instructions well and made good progress in their learning. Pupils learn less successfully when the lesson is 'dry.' This involves a simulated activity, such as ordering cards or sentences to show that it is important to do this on the computer too. The school is currently trialing the national scheme for information technology and is following suggestions in that scheme. However, while the principle is good, teachers find this difficult and pupils find it boring. This leads to lessons which are unsatisfactory and in which pupils do not learn sufficiently well.

125. The co-ordinator has good understanding of the subject and is skilled at raising teacher's interest and confidence in this subject. She has a good awareness of staff training issues and endeavours to provide suitable support for staff on a practical basis if the computers are not working well.

MUSIC

126. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are mainly as expected for the pupils' ages, although some pupils show limited skills and knowledge and their attainment is below average. There is very little high attainment. The findings of the previous inspection were that attainment in music was 'in line with national standards.' The present Year 6 is attaining

standards that are below average for their age. Inadequate time is given to some of the elements of music, especially composition and appraisal. As a result, there are sometimes low expectations and pupils do not develop their musical skills systematically as they move through the school. The progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2.

127. In Key Stage 1, pupils experience singing and a little instrumental work, composing and listening. Year 1 pupils name and recognise the sounds of percussion instruments and try to link these to aspects of the weather. Most are confident when making their voices sound happy and sad. By Year 2, pupils realise that sounds are made in different ways and that they can be changed to create specific effects. Imaginative use of vocabulary occurs when pupils try to explain the sounds of a tambourine by referring to its tinkling and rattling noise. They respond well to a conductor and play quickly and slowly as appropriate.

128. By Year 4, the pupils accompany singing games by clapping the pulse and adding a drum accompaniment to a clapping rhythm. They are learning to evaluate their performance but their understanding and the standard of their work is not much higher than that seen by the Year 2 pupils. Similarly in Year 6, pupils are working on aspects that are usually seen earlier in the key stage. They use percussion instruments to perform a composition that has been devised by the teacher. This involves following a simple graphical score and play when the teacher points to the symbols. They have little experience of making their own composition to a given criteria and then producing a graphical score to represent it. Their knowledge of notation is poor. General musical knowledge, for example of instruments, artists, forms, styles, well known pieces and composers, is weak.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in the lessons seen, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. In a very skilful lesson, the quality of learning did not match the high standard of teaching as several of the pupils easily lacked concentration and did not take the work seriously. This was despite good management by the teacher and the fact that an interesting lesson content was provided. The teacher presented the pupils with excellent examples from 'Carnival of the Animals' by Saint Saens that reflected tense and relaxed sounds and clearly demonstrated when chords were discordant or harmonious. They then went on to explore the composition of such sounds with a range of instruments. The high quality of the lesson was evident when the teacher questioned the pupils, introduced them to technical vocabulary and thoroughly evaluated their work with them to find out what they had learned from the practical activity. The quality of teaching over time as reflected in pupils' knowledge and skills is unsatisfactory overall. Shortcomings in teaching reflect limitations in musical ability and knowledge, and as a result there is insufficient direct teaching of musical skills and a lack of awareness of appropriate content. In all the lessons teachers are enthusiastic and try to encourage pupils to participate and enjoy their work.

130. The music co-ordinator is knowledgeable but is leaving the school at the end of the term. She is aware of the present standards being achieved and acknowledges that the pressure to increase standards in literacy and numeracy has had the effect of 'squeezing out' other curricular areas. In addition, the behaviour and lack of self-discipline of some pupils in Years 5 and 6, despite the best efforts of management by the teachers, presents difficulties when pupils are expected to work independently or collaborate in groups on compositions. Resources were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Improvements have been made and the school has acquired some ethnic instruments but there are still some limitations when all the class require instruments of different types as is sometimes prescribed in the scheme of work. Pupils enjoy going to the recorder club, which has a positive effect on the musical knowledge of the pupils who attend. As all the extra-curricular activities occur at the same time, it is not possible to form a large choir. No pupils are at present benefiting from peripatetic instrumental tuition. There is a music tuition club but fees have to be paid for this.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Standards in physical education are just in line with those expected for pupils this age at the end of both key stages. Lessons were observed in both key stages in games and athletic activities, but no lessons were observed in gymnastics and dance due to the timetabling arrangements for the summer term.

132. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about the benefits and the effect of exercise on the heart. They use a brief warm up before the lessons. Pupils learn to throw and catch the ball and to use bats of various sizes in Year 2. They begin to play small side games and some pupils begin to work well together. There are some pupils who find this activity difficult both because of turn taking and the need to participate as part of a team. A few behave badly and this is a distraction although the teacher deals with this well. In Key Stage 2 pupils have a reasonable understanding of the need to warm up their bodies before exercise. They practise jumping skills in Year 5 and try to improve on their own standards. In Year 6 pupils practise throwing and catching skills and become involved in a team game which enables them to practise these skills further.

133. The attitudes of pupils to physical education are mixed. There is a small minority of pupils who clearly do not enjoy the lessons much. These pupils lack motivation and some disrupt the others' enjoyment by not participating or becoming angry and throwing things inappropriately. This is distracting for the teacher and a nuisance for other pupils. To some extent the planning and the enthusiasm of the teacher has an impact on how disruptive pupils are. Where there is clear planning which involves pupils in energetic activity almost all the time with lots of monitoring and coaching by the teacher and clear instructions at every level, the disruption is manageable. However, to be able to succeed in this the quality of teaching overall needs to be good.

134. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons observed teaching was good in one lesson in Year 6 where the teacher had very good control and management of the class and by working hard managed to keep the class motivated and working well for most of the time. This is not always achieved in other classes. While there is good teaching there is too little time to enjoy the physical education lessons, as so much has to be packed into the afternoon. Pupils have either too little opportunity for extended playing of games or their skills' practices is limited to the time before a game. This means overall that pupils cannot excel in physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Standards in religious education are below the standards of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils do not learn enough about Christianity or about other faiths as specified in the locally agreed syllabus. Religious education was an issue specified in the last inspection and it will go forward as a key issue from this inspection

136. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn about Christianity and how people become members of the Christian church through baptism. They learn about the symbolism of water and candles but this is not well organised so pupils begin to lose interest in the lessons and their attention wanders. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn about the significance of colours in the Christian church calendar and links are made to show how colours can be used to express feelings. Pupils have a basic knowledge of who Jesus is and his life. The pupils generally have little knowledge either from previous years' lessons or from home. A few pupils are churchgoers and they contribute significantly to the lessons but most pupils are not. This is most clear with the oldest pupils as they do not easily make connections in their lessons with any previous knowledge or experience, and so find it difficult to make many contributions to the lessons.

137. There is little recording of pupils' work in either key stage and very little displayed which shows what pupils can have learned, both to enable pupils to reflect on it or to share it with others. The school has not made suitable partnerships with other faith communities so there are few visits or visitors to enhance the curriculum and bring it alive for the pupils. The pupils' knowledge about other major world faiths is very weak.

138. Teaching was just satisfactory in the lessons observed, but overall the long-term impact of teaching in religious education is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not learn enough. They do not develop the skills they need to achieve appropriately in the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge. Although some teachers have good all-round teaching skills which are used to impart knowledge they cannot enhance pupils' learning because they lack sufficient subject knowledge themselves. This limits the opportunities for pupils to make progress as the teacher cannot, for example, make appropriate connections to other aspects of religion. Although the co-ordinator is willing to support staff there is little time to do this successfully as all energies have been poured, quite rightly, into raising standards in recent years. There have been few classroom observations and little staff training, although resources have been purchased to give sufficient to support the teaching of the various aspects of the curriculum successfully. While the co-ordinator monitors planning this is not effective in ensuring the plans are translated into teaching and learning.

139. Collective worship makes a very valuable contribution to the pupils' religious education, as do the occasional assemblies taken by visiting local clergy. However, these positive features are not enough in themselves to raise the standards of religious education sufficiently.