

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bushey, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117089

Headteacher: Mr Alan Grant

Reporting inspector: Brian Aldridge
17454

Dates of inspection: 21st May to 24th May 2001

Inspection number: 191285

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bushey Mill Lane
Bushey
Hertfordshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Laurie Johnson

Date of previous inspection: 2nd December, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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17454	Brian Aldridge	Registered inspector	Physical education	What should the school do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
20350	Vivien Davies	Team inspector	English as an additional language English	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
20911	Judith Dawson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Highwood Primary School is a larger than average primary school in north Bushey which draws its pupils from predominantly average social backgrounds. The number on roll has risen since the last inspection and is now 363 pupils (172 girls and 166 boys). At the time of the current inspection 50 children were attending the nursery part-time and a further 51 children were in the two reception classes. Approximately 12 per cent of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage (mainly Gujarat) and 6 per cent have tuition for English as an additional language. Ninety-one pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, which is above average. Two pupils have statements. About 11 per cent of pupils, double the figure at the time of the last inspection, are eligible for free school meals and this number is about average. The development of children's key skills on entry is just below average. There have been many staff changes since the last inspection and it is only the past two years that the school has had a stable staff group.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has improved significantly. Pupils achieve well and standards are rising. They have very good attitudes and their personal development is very good. Teaching is good with some very good and occasionally excellent practice. The improvements are the result of the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher who are very well supported by the teachers, support staff and governors. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good with some examples of very good and excellent practice, particularly in some junior classes.
- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent; the subject managers and governors support them very well.
- Relationships with parents are very good and parents think very highly of the school.
- Pupils are happy to learn and they are well cared for.
- The curriculum is good, assessment procedures work well and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- The standard of handwriting.
- The work, resources and decoration in the nursery.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was judged to require special measures in December 1996 and after visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors was removed from the category in May 1999. In general, standards have improved since the last inspection because of the rise in the quality of teaching, the good quality curriculum and the good assessment arrangements that allow teachers to plan special work for some groups of pupils. Of the four issues identified in 1999 for improvement, the quality of teaching is now good with some very good and occasionally excellent examples, standards in the foundation subjects are now average and above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and the curriculum now has very good provision for pupils' cultural development. Handwriting has not improved sufficiently although speaking and listening skills are now average. There has been a good rate of improvement since 1999 and very good improvement since 1996. The leadership and management of the school possess the capacity to continue the improvement of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	A	C	C
Mathematics	B	B	C	C
Science	C	B	C	C

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

The table shows that standards in English, mathematics and science were average in last year's tests compared to all schools and similar schools. Standards at eleven in all three subjects have improved faster than the national trend since the last inspection although the school did not achieve the exceptionally challenging targets it set for itself last year. Inspectors found that attainment in this year's Year 6 is average in English, although the standard of handwriting is still too low, and above average in mathematics and science. The rate of learning is improving in lessons as the new teaching team works more effectively together. Standards are above those expected at eleven in ICT, religious education and physical education. In other subjects of the curriculum pupils achieve the levels expected for their age.

In the last set of national tests for seven-year-olds standards were average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. Against similar schools standards were average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. In the present Year 2, seven-year-olds achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and above expected standards in science and ICT. In all other subjects they achieve the standards expected of them. Children leave the foundation stage with attainment in physical and personal, social and emotional development that is above average. In communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, children have reached the stage expected of them by the end of the reception year.

The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The progress of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. Children in the reception classes and pupils in the infant and junior classes make good progress in their learning. Children in the nursery make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and is very well managed.
Personal development and relationships	Both aspects are very good. They show a mature respect for the feelings of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory

Behaviour is good and personal relationships are very good. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils like coming to school and like their teachers and helpers. They show a mature respect for the feelings of others.

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. Of the lessons seen by inspectors 25 per cent were very good or excellent and a further 45 per cent of lessons were good. There were no observations of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory and numeracy is good. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to transfer their good handwriting skills to their day-to-day work. Teaching of English and mathematics is generally good and there are signs that this is improving learning in lessons, particularly for high attainers in English and in mathematics and science. A significant strength of the teaching is the consistency seen between year groups and stages. The very high quality of teachers' planning, the supportive way in which behaviour is managed and the very high quality of day-to-day assessment are hallmarks of the lessons observed. This means that pupils work very hard and know what they have to do to improve. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well and those who learn English as an additional language learn well. Teachers plan work that is suited to the different needs of pupils. Pupils work hard, are interested in their tasks and because of the targets they are set, have a very good understanding of their learning needs. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in mathematical, physical and personal and social areas of learning. Brighter children in the nursery are not presented with enough challenge particularly to gain new knowledge and understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum in reception, infant and junior classes is good and it is satisfactory in the nursery.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	All aspects are very good; the provision for cultural development has improved significantly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and the school's procedures to ensure safety and care are very good.

The curriculum is varied and meets pupils' needs. A notable strength is the very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school's assessment procedures are good overall and need to be upgraded in the nursery. The school's partnership with parents is very good and based upon the school being very open with, for instance, excellent curriculum newsletters. The school talks to parents a great deal and acts on the opinions offered by parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school in an excellent manner and is very well supported by his deputy and subject managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The senior managers and the governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information very effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources, including special educational needs funds and the time of senior managers, are used very well.

The staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall, with improvement needed in the resources of the nursery. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

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 and their behaviour is good. • Children receive the right amount of work, are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature. • Teaching is good, children make good progress and they feel well informed about their children's progress. • The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant concerns raised by parents.

At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaire, parents expressed the view that the school is doing very well, having dramatically improved since the last inspection. Inspectors agree with parents' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery in the term in which they are four years of age and transfer to reception classes at the beginning of the school year they are five. Assessments of children when they enter the nursery indicate a broad range of abilities. However, in the areas of language, mathematical and social development, children's skills are below the local and national average. Learning is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception classes so that by the time children enter Year 1, the majority will achieve the nationally expected Early Learning Goals in the aspects of language, literacy and communication, mathematics, creativity and knowledge and understanding of the world. About a quarter of the children will exceed these levels and will already be working on the first level of the National Curriculum. Pupils exceed the Early Learning Goals in their physical and personal, social and emotional development. The high priority given to developing children's personal, social and emotional development is apparent in both the nursery and reception classes. They are well supported to learn how to be polite and care for one another.
2. In the nursery in language, literacy and communication where children make satisfactory progress a small group of children use single words to answer questions. The rate of progress increases in the reception classes where children are encouraged to answer questions with confidence and enthusiasm. They learn to read simple words by building their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent. Children begin their writing development by making marks on paper and by the time they finish the reception year they are writing their names and, with help, simple sentences. Children learn to use mathematical ideas and develop their skills in play situations as they measure ingredients to make biscuits. By the time they enter Year 1 most children can count to ten, with brighter children counting above that. They recognise numbers to 20 and are developing an understanding of mathematical vocabulary. Older children in the nursery use a computer mouse, recognising and using the 'enter' and 'arrow' keys. Nursery children describe the animals for sale in their pet shop but some have difficulty in thinking about which day comes before or after another. Despite the quality of resources for physical development, teaching in this aspect is good in the nursery and reception classes and children achieve well in this aspect of their development. By the time they are six children show increasing control of their movement and work well together in cooperative situations. They handle brushes, scissors, pencils and other equipment competently. Children have lots of opportunities to develop their creative skills and knowledge. They are encouraged to use the correct vocabulary to explain their ideas. Songs and rhyme help to develop an understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern in music.
3. When compared to the national average, pupils' performance in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds was average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Teacher assessments show that an above average

proportion of pupils gained the expected Level 2 in science. When compared to similar schools performance was average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was above the national average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Seven-year-olds in Year 2 currently attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics whilst in science and information and communication technology (ICT) their attainment exceeds that of most pupils of their age. In all other subjects they achieve the standards expected of them.

4. When compared to the national average and the average for similar schools, pupils' performance in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds was in line in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was above the national and similar school average in English and mathematics. In science the proportion achieving the higher levels was in line with the national average and below the average of similar schools. Despite the slight dip in the results in 2000 the school's trend is rising faster than the national trend. The school did not achieve the exceptionally high targets it sets itself; the headteacher and members of staff are committed to setting themselves, and pupils, very challenging tasks. Inspectors found that attainment in this year's Year 6 is above average in mathematics and science and average in English, though the standards of handwriting drops below this level. In ICT, religious education and physical education pupils exceed the standards expected of them at eleven while in all the other subjects standards are at the levels expected for this age.
5. Although national tests over the past four years have shown very small differences in the attainment of girls and boys, the school is addressing boys' attainment well and there were no differences observed during the inspection. The school has not identified any gifted or talented pupils although a small number of pupils are expected to achieve very high levels in the mathematics National Curriculum tests in 2001. The school is supporting a teacher to gain a higher qualification to help identify gifted and talented pupils.
6. The improvement in the quality of teaching has had a major impact on the rate of pupils' progress. As the rate of learning increases in lessons, standards of attainment rise throughout the school. Overall, this is an improving picture as the school's systems, including the use of sets in literacy and numeracy, help to drive up standards. The detailed targets pupils are set, the sharp focus on assessment procedures and the frequent checks the headteacher makes on individual pupil's progress all help to raise the rate of learning in lessons and achievement over time. Even in the area of handwriting, which was identified in the last inspection as needing improvement, there has been some improvement in the quality seen in handwriting books. This better work has not been transferred into work in other subjects and further improvement in this area is needed.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. This is because the targets match the pupils' needs and are achievable but challenging. The teachers refer to the targets regularly and both pupils and adults know what each pupil needs to learn next. English targets often detail

specific words to learn, handwriting, grammatical and punctuation targets. This provides measurable steps in learning and a sense of achievement when attained.

8. Speaking and listening skills of seven and eleven-year-olds are average. Pupils in the final year of the infant classes are keen to participate in discussions and dramatic activities. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, ask pertinent questions and use correct grammar when talking. Eleven-year-olds' answers are detailed and they support their opinions with references to books or other areas of their learning. Pupils listen well to each other in all lessons, they are polite and offer advice to other group members. Attainment in reading is average by the time pupils are seven and eleven; they read fluently, using different tones to indicate when someone else is speaking in the text. Younger pupils are eager to read with their teacher and keen to predict what might happen next in their stories. Older pupils use text well to support their ideas. Seven and eleven-year-olds' writing is average overall although the quality of handwriting still requires improvement in areas other than the handwriting books. The content of pupils' writing is improving as they begin to write for different purposes. Spelling is accurate and higher attaining pupils select appropriate words and use punctuation to good effect.
9. In mathematics seven-year-olds attain average standards and most pupils work easily with numbers up to 100. They use standard measurements to work with length and mass and use properties to describe flat and solid shapes. They record information using simple charts. The majority of eleven-year-olds are working within the higher levels of the National Curriculum and use the four rules of arithmetic accurately, selecting logical methods to estimate and check their answers. They understand and use mathematical vocabulary to help them explain their ideas and the processes they use are well above those expected of pupils of this age. Standards in science for seven and eleven-year-olds are above average. Pupils of all ages achieve above average levels when investigating and experimenting. They are given good opportunities to investigate and record their findings. Pupils use scientific vocabulary well as teachers insist on the use of appropriate terms. More able pupils enjoy finding out why their experiments do not work as they predict.
10. Attainment in ICT has improved since the last inspection and pupils are now working at above the expected levels set out in the National Curriculum for pupils of seven and eleven. This is due to the installation of a new computer suite and the leadership of the headteacher and coordinator in ensuring that teachers are well prepared to teach the subject. Seven-year-olds control a floor robot and apply these skills when working on computers to programme a sequence of movements. Eleven-year-olds use search engines when working on the Internet, deciding whether the information they have found is in a suitable format for their purposes. They import this information and use programs to display their work.
11. In religious education the good standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained. Seven-year-olds reach the standards recommended in the locally agreed syllabus and eleven-year-olds exceed them. Pupils acquire a good understanding of the five major religions and are encouraged to consider difficult questions. They give mature reflection to these questions and ask their searching questions.
12. Parents think that the school has helped raise their children's expectations of themselves and they talk of how much pupils' work is valued. Inspectors agree with these opinions. The rigorous application of monitoring and assessment systems, the improving quality of teaching and the developments planned to raise the quality of provision in the nursery

and to continue to tackle the development of handwriting skills, indicate that the school is well placed to continue to raise standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good and supported by good behaviour are having a very positive impact on their learning. This shows a good rate of improvement since the last inspection of this aspect in December 1996. Pupils love coming to school and enjoy their lessons.
14. Children in the nursery and reception class respond well to the activities provided. They behave well and try hard to please their teachers. As they move through the school pupils show an increasingly positive attitude to learning. They show a great interest in the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided; waiting lists exist for most clubs and those who attend show very good enthusiasm for the activities provided. In lessons pupils' attitudes to learning are very good overall, with good attitudes in the infants and very good and often excellent, in the juniors. This improvement is encouraged very well by the consistent approach by all staff to the use of praise to reward good effort. Pupils focus on their work very well. For example in a Year 3 religious education lesson pupils' excellent attention and concentration enabled them to produce work of very high quality in designing cards to celebrate the Muslim festival of Id.
15. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is good. A small number of boys experience emotional and behavioural difficulties which are handled expertly by the staff, leading to little or no disruption to their or others pupils' learning.
16. No permanent or temporary exclusions have occurred over the past three years, a figure well below the national average. This is a clear indication of the success of the school's behaviour management policy and to the positive attitudes taken to ensure the inclusion of all pupils. Pupils know the rules well and develop an increasing awareness of how to behave appropriately. They are polite, courteous and cheerful. They say that bullying does not occur. This is a very happy school.
17. Relationships are very good. Pupils play and work together very well. They cooperate very well in pairs and groups which has a very positive effect on their learning. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson for ten and eleven-year-olds an atmosphere of 'sharing learning' and respect for, and confidence in, the teacher enabled pupils to improve their skills in importing information from the Internet. In a science lesson for nine-year-olds a pupils stated 'he should be a scientist' in appreciation of a partner who shared with him his very good knowledge of how an electrical circuit works.
18. There are several pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties on the special educational needs register. These pupils have targets for their behaviour that support their individual needs very well. All the adults that they work with know these targets and the pupils are given praise and encouragement as they achieve each personal challenge

towards acceptable behaviour or greater self-esteem. Negative attitudes are rarely sustained for long due to the effective adult support.

19. Pupils' personal development is very good. They willingly undertake a wide range of tasks and responsibilities. They are developing a very good sense of independence and citizenship, showing initiative in a mature way. Older pupils help younger ones in a range of ways; for example, two nine-year-old pupils gave very good help to the teacher running the extra-curricular mathematics club for six and seven-year-olds. In the school council they consider issues such as playground rules and decorations in the toilets and raise an excellent amount of money for a wide range of charities.
20. Attendance levels are satisfactory overall and are at about the national average. Unauthorised absences are above the national average level but this is because of the strict line the school takes on counting pupils who arrive late as unauthorised absences. Absence levels are strongly affected by the poor level of attendance from children from three particular families. Attendance records are included within the pupils' files. The school is very aware of these families and works very hard to limit the impact of their poor attendance on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT

21. The quality of teaching is good overall and there has been a significant improvement since the school was last inspected in 1999. At that time half of all the lessons seen were taught well or very well. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching in seven of every ten lessons was good or better, with one quarter being very good or excellent, a good rate of improvement. Teaching is good in each stage of the school and is stronger in the reception classes than in the nursery where it is satisfactory. There are particular qualities common to teachers in all three stages. In fact, the high level of consistency between classes and stages is itself a key feature of the quality teaching which has come about as a result of the effective monitoring of senior members of staff and the joint training undertaken by all teachers and at times, support workers.
22. Teachers' planning is of very good quality; it is very detailed and sets out clearly what pupils should learn. Plans include the work to be followed by pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. Teachers carefully set out which methods they will use. There are good evaluations of the lessons completed and these inform the planning of subsequent lessons. Teachers work extremely hard on these plans, often planning one lesson in fine and exacting detail. Senior teachers carefully monitor these plans to ensure that each teacher is working well, that there are no differences in the curriculum of classes of similar aged pupils and that the work planned challenges pupils of all abilities.
23. The management of pupils is very good. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' individual needs and take great pains to value each pupil's work and efforts. In some lessons pupils' interest is captured to such an extent that, for example, eight-year-olds were involved in a delightful drama activity during which they spoke with spontaneity to relatives on the 'telephone' and actively encouraged each other. In other lessons teachers use a brisk pace to ensure that pupils are kept to their work and this was the case in a science lesson for six-year-olds as pupils sorted objects according to their properties. This technique was also observed in a religious education lesson for eight-year-olds.

24. The teaching of basic skills is good overall. The teaching of literacy has some good features but is satisfactory overall because pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to transfer their good handwriting skills to their day-to-day work. The teaching of reading is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior stage. Although there are plenty of books in the school, the library is not used as effectively as it could be. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. Pupils have many opportunities to use their number skills in science and design and technology, for example. ICT equipment and skills, tape recorders and computers for example, are used whenever they are appropriate. Pupils use the Internet as a source of information and conduct their own research using search engines effectively.
25. Teachers' expectations are high throughout the school with the exception of the nursery where, at times, brighter children are not challenged sufficiently. A key feature of this aspect is the different levels of work teachers plan for the groups represented in their classes and sets. In a very good lesson for six-year-olds the teacher showed very good skills as she questioned pupils, choosing carefully the difficulty of each question as they were posed to particular pupils. The skill of questioning is high in all classes. In the above average mathematics set, a challenging investigation was planned for brighter pupils and this supported their good rates of learning. They work at a very brisk pace and are productive.
26. A good range of methods was used in all stages. When direct teaching was appropriate, teachers carefully explained what pupils had to do and taught new knowledge or skills very clearly. If individuals or groups of pupils required specific attention, teachers gave precise coaching points for improvement. This was often the case in physical education and more often than not in other subjects too. For example, teachers often demonstrate skills or techniques in most lessons and participate in role-play activities, which in turn help pupils become more involved.
27. Another significant strength, notably in the reception, infant and junior classes, is the very high quality of assessment and marking. Teachers give pupils very good feedback during lessons as they complete their work. They do not over-praise pupils for good work but offer encouragement and further suggestions for improvement. Teachers value all pupils' efforts and in marking give very good targets. Each pupil has a set of targets, which are aimed at improving work in the important subjects of English and mathematics. In the nursery insufficient use is made of the assessments at the point of entry to the school. Record keeping is well maintained throughout the school and there are simple but highly effective systems used to track pupils' progress and pass information to the next teacher. This also gives pupils a very clear indication about what they have to do to improve.
28. Homework is used well in most classes. The school has taken to heart parents' views about homework and there has been a good improvement in the frequency and quality of the work set. Teachers mark the work frequently and use it to support learning in lessons and prepare pupils for future work.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. The teachers draw up individual education plans for each pupil and discuss them with the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs. Daily lesson planning contains appropriate work to accommodate all pupils, including those with special needs. The teachers keep a profile of each pupil with special educational needs identifying achievements and areas for development. These are especially useful when pupils have problems with

behaviour, concentration or self-esteem. In lessons, pupils are supported very well and their contributions are valued. The best teaching provides pupils with special needs with the knowledge to shine in class discussion, boosting their self-esteem. Excellent relationships and detailed information given to the effective classroom support staff enable pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress towards their targets.

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

30. The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum covering all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Strategies for the teaching of both literacy and numeracy are used appropriately within the school. Combinations of the school's own schemes of work and guidance from a national source are used to plan other subjects of the curriculum, ensuring that the whole of the National Curriculum is covered. A particular strength is the consistency of approach adopted throughout the school; for example, opportunities to explore cultural diversity are identified in all subjects. There are appropriate policies for personal and social education and sex education. Awareness of drugs is included in the programme for personal and social education. The school has secure curriculum plans for design and technology, history and geography. However, these subjects are taught for one term each year. This impacts on pupils' ability to make progress because they are required to build on knowledge, skills and understanding last acquired eight months previously. The school has an appropriate timetable in most respects. In particular, time is allocated to aspects of English that were identified as key issues in the last inspection. The outcome of this allocation of time is that speaking and listening have improved and that handwriting is improving although it has still some way to go. Some sessions, notably mathematics, are longer than the recommended time of 45 minutes for infant pupils.
31. Provision for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the subjects of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school has appropriate plans that are used by teachers to ensure that all pupils cover the appropriate parts of the National Curriculum for this subject. For example, pupils in English and mathematics regularly use class-based computers during group work. The school has a sound long-term plan for the new foundation stage and the implementation of the curriculum for children in the reception years is satisfactory. The youngest pupils are taught in a nursery class and two reception classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's policy in this area has very clear and suitable aims and objectives. Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and their individual education plans are very well matched to their needs. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The differences between results for boys and girls, no more marked here than in most schools, is being actively tackled through the careful choice of texts and selection of teaching approaches more suitable for boys. Observations in classrooms do not indicate any school specific issues. All activities are open to boys and girls. Provision for English as an additional

language, when used, is effective. Pupils who used the service recently have gone on to achieve high standards. When necessary the school has access to a wide range of translation services to enable communication with parents whose 'comfortable' language is not English. Setting in the junior classes for English and mathematics caters for pupils of differing levels of attainment. It has been particularly effective in raising the level of attainment for the most able in both subjects and overall in mathematics. In most lessons the work is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

32. The school promotes English and mathematics appropriately throughout the curriculum. In religious education, for example, pupils' ability to debate ultimate questions tested their ability to use the language of conjecture to the limits. The curriculum planning includes the teaching of technical language to support each subject. Numeracy is used appropriately within other subjects. Pupils record their research in diagrams and graphs, and use their understanding of measures to support their work in science and geography.
33. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. The wide range of activities includes sports, dance and music. Many visits are linked to the work pupils do in school and each class plans day trips or invites visitors to school to support the topics studied. Prior to the inspection week the pupils in Year 5 made a five-day visit to the Isle of Wight where they pursued a full timetable. Pupils enjoy opportunities for taking part in sporting competitions. They are actively encouraged to give by collecting for local and national charities including the World Wildlife Fund. Fund raising events are selected and organised by pupils.
34. Links with other schools are good overall. The school has links with several local secondary schools. Secondary teachers and twelve-year-old pupils visit the school and liaise effectively. The special education needs co-ordinators from primary and secondary schools work hard to smooth the transition. As a result, pupils approach the move to secondary education with confidence. Pupils entering the school make a good start because the school has established good links with the local playgroup and information is shared. Not all children attend playgroup so parents' views are sought during a preliminary visit.
35. The individual education plans drawn up for pupils with special educational needs are very good. They contain small steps in learning across a number of subjects and aspects within subjects such as spelling. They are very clear and are designed to support the parents and pupils. Each task is clearly explained and the strategies to help the pupil achieve them, including the time allocation, are well defined.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. In particular, the provision for pupils' cultural development has improved considerably as this was judged not to have fully met pupils' needs in 1999.
37. During the inspection there were some good, very good and excellent contributions to the pupils' spiritual development in religious education lessons. In one lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to discuss Id ul Fitr and Ramadan. The teacher led them beyond the simple knowledge of the festival

towards an understanding of the sense of community experienced during the festival. There was some deep and meaningful discussion as pupils compared this with their own experiences of their first communion. They produced cards for the festival using ICT, some using an Arabic font, some incorporating the Five Pillars of Wisdom into their designs. This was an inspirational lesson based on clear objectives to develop pupils' spirituality and cultural awareness. In another lesson nine-year-olds pupils reflected on ultimate questions, suggesting ways the world was created. Teachers take every opportunity to allow their pupils to experience delight in their achievements, for example, when a repeated command to the computer produced a hexagon. In personal, social and health education lessons and circle time pupils are reminded that the purpose is to raise esteem. This theme was echoed in an assembly when pupils were urged to throw out their personal rubbish and negative feelings about themselves. Acts of worship fully comply with statutory requirements and there are opportunities for pupils to reflect or join in prayer. Although there is no formal personal, social and health education scheme of work, teachers' planning places reflection and discussion at the centre of the provision.

38. This is a school in which the adults are united in their aims to promote an effective code of conduct throughout the school. Teachers, praise and reward hard work, effort, good behaviour and consideration. There are simple and effective school rules based on care and consideration for others. The adults in school set a very good example. They are polite and friendly towards each other and the pupils and expect the pupils to follow their example. The school council and class councils have moved on from "wish lists" and discuss issues such as "Can we agree a set of rules for the playground?" or "How can we treat each other better?" Many pupils have personal targets for developing their moral and social skills and they are gently reminded of them when necessary. The personal, social and health education programme includes personal responsibility and trying to understand the implication of actions on others. The headteacher provides a consistent role model for the school.
39. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. There is a good range of clubs open to pupils from seven years old onwards and covering a wide range of topics from music to mathematics, sport to computers. Ten-year-olds have a residential trip to the Isle of White while eleven-year-olds complete their statutory tests. In the afternoons of "SAT Week" the Year 6 designed a "Welcome to Highwood" book for new pupils. Pupils are totally responsible for selecting charities to support and organising fundraising events. Older pupils care for the reception children at playtimes and lunchtimes. They organise equipment for assemblies and collect registers. Social skills are promoted consistently in all lessons and pupils have plenty of opportunities to work together independently and to debate social issues. Citizenship is part of the personal, social and health education curriculum.
40. The very good range of extra-curricular activities provides a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. There are three recorder clubs and a thriving choir, trained to a good standard. The choir participates in the annual Festival of Voices at the Wembley Arena and performs in the shopping centre, the Police

Club and at the residential home for senior citizens. Ethnic minorities and the pupils from traveller families are equally valued in school. Pupils learn about music and artists from other cultures and times and the beliefs of the world's major religions. History and geography provide another rich source of cultural understanding. Pupils perform dance from other cultures and drama is part of the weekly timetables. The school has made considerable improvements as a result of the key issue to reflect cultural provision more effectively within the curriculum and planning for cultural links is now clearly identified within the curriculum and planning of the subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

41. The school provides good care for its pupils. Staff know their pupils very well and this helps them to ensure all feel valued and cared for. The quality of care has improved since the previous inspection as the school now has a whole school behaviour policy and staff know the needs of their pupils better.
42. Health and safety procedures are effective and staff awareness of issues is very good. The school is clean and secure. Child protection procedures are good and staff awareness satisfactory; further training has been arranged for staff. First aid arrangements are good and health awareness promoted well. The monitoring of personal development is very good. This ensures a high level of personal support which helps pupils learn in a secure and caring environment. Pupils settle well in the nursery and reception classes, and are supported well by the school in preparing them for their move to secondary school.
43. The promotion and monitoring of behaviour is very good. The consistent implementation of procedures by all staff encourages pupils' good behaviour and increasingly positive attitudes to work. The consistent use of praise and rewards is a particularly effective feature. The inspection found no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. The school has a very good protocol for dealing with disruptive pupils. All staff work very hard to maintain a very happy school. The headteacher and deputy set a strong personal example especially when reinforcing the high priority given to supervision at lunch times and in the playground. The absence of exclusions demonstrates the school's positive attitude towards all of its pupils. Parents consider their children are well cared for. The very good promotion and monitoring of attendance ensures that the school has a very good understanding of the few who are persistently absent without cause. The school takes very good steps to encourage their attendance and to limit the impact of their poor attendance on their attainment and progress.
44. The school has very good systems for the identification of pupils with special educational needs from the time they start school. Assessments of individual needs are very good and the school makes the most of external agencies and advice to support accurate assessments of pupils' needs. As a result each pupil has helpful reports and accurate targets to aid learning. Pupils' progress towards these targets is used to assess how well they are learning. The headteacher and special needs co-ordinator review these and action is taken if the progress is too slow.

45. The school has made good progress in developing assessment procedures since it was last inspected. Systematic procedures have been introduced to assess and monitor pupils' progress by analysing the quality of teaching on the standards achieved. This is enabling coordinators to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. In the infant and junior classes, teachers use information from teacher assessments and statutory and non-statutory tests to identify the needs of groups and individual pupils. The information is used effectively as teachers adapt their lesson plans to ensure tasks and activities are well matched to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding appropriately. The progress of all pupils is monitored throughout the school year and this enables the school to identify pupils who are likely to exceed their targets and those who are likely to require more support. The headteacher's personal involvement in checking the progress of pupils, comparing actual work with predicted targets, sets a very good model for improving attainment by using assessment results.
46. Formal assessment results, for example the national test results, are analysed to identify aspects of learning which need to be improved and any differences in the attainment of groups of pupils for example those who are bi-lingual. The moderation of work by staff in both the infants and juniors is enabling teachers to assess accurately levels of attainment. For example, staff looked at samples of pupils' writing to decide how they would judge achievements.
47. The caring relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and to know what they need to learn next to improve. The targets set for pupils with special educational needs in their individual education plans are a particular strength of the provision. The senior staff provide very good advice and support to staff through their monitoring of teaching, analysis of pupils' work and review of the quality of marking. Informative and helpful advice promotes continuity between classes. Targets are set for pupils in the important areas of English, mathematics, and behaviour, and personal and social development. These targets are shared with parents and form the focus of discussions at parental consultations. Teachers' records comment on the progress pupils make and form the basis of end of year reports. A minor weakness in the target setting is the variation between classes in the precision of short term learning objectives. In some classes they are very specific and time related, in others they are broader time-scales for achievement and are not as clearly defined.
48. Although staff assess children's learning when they join the nursery, baseline assessment results are not used well enough to begin to judge the impact of the nursery curriculum on children' learning. Staff maintain notes of children's achievements but they do not adapt their planning well enough to ensure that more able children are fully challenged. This is a weakness in the school's provision and has been highlighted as a priority area for development in the nursery action plan. This is a key issue for the school to address.
49. In all stages of learning teachers are sensitive to the needs of their pupils and monitor their personal and social development carefully. Personal and social education is given a very high priority and pupils' progress is assessed, recorded and supported through lessons and the very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

50. The school has a very good partnership with parents, which has a very positive effect on pupils' achievements. Parents are extremely pleased with the school.

Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or completed the parents' questionnaire were most supportive of the school and had no significant concerns. The questionnaire returns showed a remarkable degree of unanimity; no more than five per cent of parents responded negatively on any issues. They believe the school provides a good education for their children, who make good progress and love coming. This shows very good improvement from the previous inspection of this aspect of the school's work in 1996 when the partnership was judged to be satisfactory.

51. The school provides very good information to parents about their children's attainment and progress and about the work and life of the school. Information for parents in the nursery is satisfactory; the school prospectus is very informative about the nursery but no written reports on progress or regular written details on nursery children's activities are provided. Excellent arrangements are made to involve parents in their children's education throughout the school. Annual reports are of consistently high quality, containing detailed, honest and evaluative comments. For example, parents of a six-year-old pupil were informed that he '...has a good understanding of numbers up to 20, and can count, read, write and order them'. Targets for development are set as part of the regular consultation arrangements. These are further supported by the use of excellent termly curriculum newsletters by each class, the provision of a library of story sacks, a very informative prospectus, demonstration lessons, a homework club and the use of homework diaries. Staff are available daily to discuss any concerns. Parents respond to the school's efforts and they support their children's education well.
52. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed about the targets in their children's education plan. They sign the individual education plan and are reminded about the dates of reviews. Parents are involved in supporting their children and communication between the teacher and the parents is effective.
53. The 'Friends' raise considerable sums of money to support the school and arrange social functions for parents and children. Parents support homework well. Many provide good help on school trips, with extra-curricular activities and in the classroom, and attend consultation evenings and support the targets set for their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

54. Parents, governors and members of staff praise the work of the headteacher in 'turning the school around'. By concentrating on raising the quality of teaching and learning and devising systems of very high quality for the support of these objectives, the headteacher continues to show excellent qualities and skills of leadership and management. He and the governors have appointed a talented team, including the deputy headteacher whose excellent work both complements that of the headteacher and adds significantly to the overall leadership and management of the school. Subject managers are very supportive of the aspirations of the headteacher and governors; they have worked and continue to work in a highly constructive and effective manner. The inspection team agrees

with parents' view that the school's aims are reflected very well in the school's atmosphere of learning and application.

55. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been good. Many aspects of the school's provision have improved since it was last inspected:
- pupils' attitudes and personal and development are very good, a good improvement since 1996;
 - teaching has improved since 1999 when a half of lessons were good or better; now seven lessons in ten are of this standard with a quarter being very good or excellent;
 - there has been a good improvement in the curriculum since 1999; the provision for cultural development is now very good, all subjects have schemes of work and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good;
 - the quality of care for pupils and assessment procedures have improved since it was last inspected in 1999;
 - the school's partnership with parents has improved considerably since this aspect was inspected in 1996.
- The key issues of the last inspection in 1999 have been dealt with effectively:
- the quality of teaching is now good with some very good and occasionally excellent examples;
 - standards in the foundation subjects are now average and above average in information and communication technology (ICT), and
 - the curriculum has very good provision for pupils' cultural development.
- However, handwriting has not improved sufficiently although speaking and listening skills are now average.
56. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject managers write very good quality position papers, which clearly pinpoint the areas for improvement and plan how these improvements will be met within their budgets. The headteacher has given subject managers authority and responsibility within a very good framework of checks and balances. Governors' knowledge of the school, helped by managers' work and insights provided by parents and pupils, supports a very good development plan which clearly sets out the areas for improvement, funding arrangements and how the effectiveness of the plan will be judged.
57. The systems that the headteacher has developed to monitor and support teaching are very good and bring about very good quality support for members of staff, notably when comparative weaknesses are identified. This means that the induction of new staff and the school's potential for training new teachers is excellent. For example, the deployment of the deputy headteacher to support this work is an excellent use of skills and time.
58. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The funding for pupils with special educational needs is managed wisely so that younger pupils have access to extra support as soon as possible. The support staff have clearly defined timetables and the co-ordinator continuously monitors the effectiveness of the provision to ensure that the funding produces the best value for money. Resources are purchased after careful consideration of

their usefulness. Teachers and support staff are provided with good quality training, either internally or from the local education authority's advisory teachers. The support staff have fortnightly meetings with the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs to share achievements and to solve any difficulties. Some pupils who find it difficult to work within a class situation are withdrawn for individual adult support. This has to take place in the corridor, as there are no free rooms, which makes concentration difficult.

59. The school benefits from excellent financial planning and management, which ensure that resources are allocated most effectively in line with the school's educational priorities. This is having a very positive impact on school improvement and provides a secure basis for future development. The headteacher, with expert support from the financial administrator, has excellent financial awareness and provides excellent information to the governors to ensure their full involvement in resource allocation and financial management. Budget control and monitoring are of a very high standard. The reports provided are informative and understandable and enable governors to fully meet their legal requirements. Specific funds, for example in relation to pupils with special educational needs, are used very effectively. Day-to-day administration is excellent and allows senior managers and teachers to carry out their duties most effectively.
60. Governors and staff have a very good awareness of the principles of best value and these permeate their work. For example, the headteacher's consultation process with parents is excellent, especially in its use of questionnaires. The school compares its results with similar schools. The governors set clear targets and measurable goals to evaluate outcomes of spending decisions. New technology is used very well in relation to all aspects of the school's work. The school has a good range of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. The use of the deputy headteacher's time and expertise is most effective in supporting class teachers, especially those newly qualified, who receive excellent support. Staff teamwork is very good. The school's arrangements for performance management are very good.
61. Accommodation is satisfactory. Currently a new classroom is being built. Classrooms are of a sufficient size. There is a rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment that is necessarily long term given the often poor fabric of the building. The hall space is good, including a stage. Outdoor space is good except for the nursery where improvements are planned in the school's development plan. Resources are satisfactory overall. Resources for ICT are good and used well with a positive effect on standards. Resources in the nursery are inadequate and the school has well founded plans to develop its resources and provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

62. In the light of the school's many developing strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Improve the standard of handwriting by:*

- increasing the number of opportunities each week for pupils to practise their skills;
- monitor the quality of handwriting used in all subjects of the curriculum.
(paragraphs 5, 6, 8, 24, 55, 80, 86)

Improve the quality of provision in the nursery by:*

- ensuring staff make better use of assessments, especially to plan work which stretches brighter children;
- raising the quality of displays to celebrate children's learning and increase the use of words and pictures;
- increasing the range and quality of toys and the use of the external environment;
- seek ways to improve the quality of the internal decoration and floor covering.
(paragraphs 2, 25, 48, 63 – 65)

Other issues governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan:

Review the frequency of teaching of geography, history and design and technology.
(paragraph 30)

*** Issues already identified by the school and included in the school development plan.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	95
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	21	51	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	338
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	91

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	25	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	23
	Girls	23	21	24
	Total	42	39	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (83)	78 (83)	94 (83)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	23	23
	Girls	22	24	24
	Total	41	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (85)	94 (83)	94 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	31	24	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	27
	Girls	20	21	24
	Total	40	41	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (92)	75 (83)	93 (98)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	26	28
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	47	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (79)	89 (83)	95 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	11
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	5
White	253
Any other minority ethnic group	14

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9 : 1
Average class size	22.2

Education support staff: YR-Y7

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25 : 1

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.3 : 1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	710,546
Total expenditure	683,162
Expenditure per pupil	1,893
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,497
Balance carried forward to next year	35,881

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	359
Number of questionnaires returned	145

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	1	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	58	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	4	1	8
The teaching is good.	59	39	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	50	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	37	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	54	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	37	2	2	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

62. Children are admitted to the nursery from the term in which they have their fourth birthday and transfer to the two reception classes at the start of the year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection 50 children attended the nursery on a part time basis taught by a teacher, nursery nurse and part time assistant. Fifty-one children attended school on a full time basis, taught in two reception classes. The school's provision for children in the foundation stage of learning is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception classes. The assessments of children's development when they start the nursery indicate there is a broad range of attainment but in language, mathematical and social skills they are below the local average. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception classes. The curriculum is planned to match the requirements of the nationally prescribed 'Early Learning Goals' and provides a range of practical learning experiences that encourage independence and decision making. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and good progress in the reception classes and by the end of the foundation stage, the majority are likely to meet the expectations for six-year-olds in language and communication, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. About a quarter of children are likely to exceed these expectations and are well prepared to start the formal learning of the Year 1 National Curriculum. In their physical, personal, social and emotional development children exceed the expectations of the early years curriculum.
63. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching observed in the mathematical, physical and personal and social areas of learning. Activities provide opportunities for children to learn in small groups. Objectives are clear in the main tasks but there are times when the activities do not provide enough challenge for more able children to explore more fully their knowledge and understanding. The strength in provision is the priority placed on developing social skills and independence. Relationships are good and children receive encouragement to share resources and take turns, consequently they play happily together. In the good teaching observed in the nursery, for example in physical development, the lesson was well structured to ensure the groups of children practised skills and extended them, so they made good progress. The weaknesses in provision at this stage are the lack of precise emphasis in planning activities to develop language skills more systematically. There is insufficient use made of staff assessments of children to inform planning for individuals and groups. At the present time individual records of learning are maintained for each child but there is no specific use of the baseline assessment data to measure rates of progress. While parents have opportunities to discuss their children's progress they do not receive written reports. While curriculum planning has been reviewed to meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage Curriculum the nursery information booklet for parents has not yet been updated.
64. The nursery environment is in need of refurbishment. At present the decoration, staff study and carpeted floor areas require attention. Many toys, books and resources are also old and in need of replacement. Displays are often too high and insufficient attention is given to labelling to promote early learning skills, for example word and letter recognition. Insufficient use is made of tactile materials, colourful pictures and objects to inspire curiosity and interest and invite children to question and discover. Better use could be made of the outside play area to extend activities beyond the

classroom. Parents are encouraged to share books with children regularly but there is scope to develop further the learning partnership. The nursery nurse and assistant work in close partnership with the teacher and support children well, often leading lesson introductions and endings. Where teaching is good, for example in physical activity in the hall, the teacher provided a clear lead and structured progression throughout the lesson. In some sessions there is too little teacher directed work to celebrate children's achievements, extend activities beyond the limits of the plans and secure a faster pace to learning for more able children

65. There has been insufficient development of the approaches to teaching and learning in the nursery since the time of the last report. While teaching by staff in the nursery is satisfactory overall, improvements to the provision are now needed. Staff are willing to listen to advice and act upon it. For example, during the inspection, they began to make greater use of the outdoor area and to consider how they might address this management issue. The development of provision for the nursery is a key issue for the school to address.
66. The quality of provision in the reception classes is good and shows improvement from the last inspection. Teaching is good and activities have precise learning objectives designed to specifically meet the needs of groups of children. This enables them to make good progress, especially in their language and mathematical development. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been adapted well to meet the needs of the age range. Teachers organise tasks well to promote communication, language, literacy, mathematical understanding and independence. There is a good balance of directed tasks and opportunities for children to make choices. Staff ask questions which enable them to check and extend children's understanding. They identify children with special educational needs and those who are more able to ensure they are challenged and supported appropriately.
67. In both nursery and reception classes praise and encouragement are used effectively and children are very well behaved. They enjoy school and develop trust and confidence in the relationships they have with adults and each other. Children are given very clear instructions which enable them to understand precisely what they are expected to do. The daily routines are well-established, providing security and promoting independence.
68. Assessment procedures are systematic and reception teachers record pupils' progress to measure the gains they make in their learning. They assess children's understanding and set targets that provide realistic challenges. Assessment strategies are not yet used to predict children's likely attainment at the end of the infant classes, but this has already been identified by staff as an area for improvement.
69. Staff in reception classes plan activities together to ensure consistency between the classes. Whilst they meet regularly with nursery staff there is insufficient linking of the curriculum in the nursery to secure progression through the foundation stage to the early stages of the National Curriculum. This results in a lack of clarity about the small but significant steps in learning which should inform the planning and extension of activities, particularly for more able children.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority. Children come to school happily and enjoy the well-organised routines of school life.

They are given good support to understand how their behaviour affects others and from an early stage in the nursery they learn to say 'please' and 'thank you' and to share toys and equipment with others. They automatically say they are sorry if they have accidentally hurt someone and are helped to control their anger through well-focused discussion and reasoning. Consequently, they learn the difference between right and wrong and the learning environments in both the nursery and reception classes have a happy atmosphere. The very good relationships between staff and children reflect trust and respect. Children are well behaved, eager to learn and to explore new ideas. Staff handle children's actions and questions sensitively to enable them to consider the feelings of others. Children cooperate very well. When creating collage pictures in the nursery, baking biscuits and playing in the 'pet shop', they talk to one another politely and share toys. Reception children also work happily together, for example when sharing counting cubes in mathematics and listening to stories. Children are encouraged to reflect on their actions and feelings and develop sensitivity to the needs of others, for example asking a friend who has fallen over if they are all right. This is a strength of provision in the foundation stage and through consistent good teaching children exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

Language and literacy

71. Teaching is good in the reception classes and satisfactory in the nursery. The reception classes provide a wide range of experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. Good emphasis is placed on developing listening skills and children listen carefully to adults and follow instructions well. The majority enjoy taking part in discussions although there is a small proportion who are shy and need support to use phrases and sentences and to pronounce their words accurately. They enjoy stories and rhymes and join in enthusiastically. Reception staff provide good role models to support the development of spoken language. Challenging questions and comments are used to extend children's thinking. This helps children to develop a broad range of vocabulary and to use new words. In the nursery, opportunities are provided to share stories and introduce the daily activities but staff do not ask enough searching questions to enable children to extend their ideas and understanding.
72. Most reception aged children answer questions with confidence and enthusiasm, using phrases and simple sentences. In the nursery a small proportion prefer to use one-word answers, or to demonstrate practically what they know. For example, when playing in the sand younger children sometimes prefer to fill their bucket with sand rather than to explain their understanding of terms such as full and empty. In a literacy lesson with reception children the teacher used the story of The Elves and the Shoemaker to enable them to repeat rhymes and mime the actions of characters. This worked well and the children enjoyed sharing the story together. Children were encouraged to articulate and repeat words accurately. The activity resulted in considerable excitement and enthusiasm. Structured play situations, such as the home corner in reception and pet shop in the nursery provide opportunities for children to talk about their own experiences. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper and by the age of six they write their own names and, with support, simple sentences. They develop good knowledge of letters, sounds and words and more able children recognise capital and small letters and the use of full stops. Children use their phonics knowledge of initial sounds to help them to read simple words. All children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members and the use of story sacks containing tapes and toys representing book characters motivate interest in reading. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented and this has a positive effect on children's

achievements. By the end of the reception year the majority of children achieve the early learning goals and about a quarter exceed these expectations.

Mathematical development

73. The nursery and reception classes provide an appropriate range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Teaching by qualified staff is good in both the nursery and reception classes. By the end of reception most children are in line to meet the early learning goals. Children learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in play situations, for example in the nursery they help to measure out ingredients to make biscuits, and through good teacher direction match coins by shape and size. In the reception classes children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order sequence and count using a range of practical games. Staff use rhymes and number lines to develop an understanding of order and position. Children enjoy counting activities and most reception children can count to 10, with higher attainers counting beyond 10, recognising the numbers to 20 and sequencing accurately. Reception staff place good emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language. Children understand the terms forwards and backwards when counting to ten and twenty and with help children order numbers accurately using a number line effectively to develop an understanding of position. They are beginning to explore the idea of counting in twos but most need more practice to achieve this accurately. Children describe size, shape and position, and opportunities to make models allow children to explore shapes and develop their mathematical vocabulary. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy, such as oral and mental calculations, are implemented effectively and have a positive effect on children's achievements.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Teaching is good in reception and satisfactory in the nursery. Children in the nursery use the computer with adult help; the oldest children are able to control the mouse and recognise the 'enter' and 'arrow' keys. They successfully create pictures with adult support and delight in watching their pictures emerge from the printer. Reception children further develop their skills through the identification of types of fonts in magazines and printing their names. Opportunities are provided for children to learn about their environment. The nursery children were helped to think about their purchases in the pet shop and to describe the pets for sale while reception children discovered that an island is land surrounded by water. Good use is made of registration times to review the weather and practise sequencing the days of the week. Whilst most can repeat the days in order they have greater difficulty deciding which day comes before or after another. They still need help with words such as 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' and to answer questions that require them to think and order accurately. Several children are not yet secure about these sequences.
75. In an outdoor lesson they delighted in creating islands using sand shells, stones twigs and leaves. The teacher developed their understanding by leading a discussion about why the water disappeared into the ground when poured around the island. The use of a tray enabled them to create waves around a second island and to see for themselves how the colour of the sand and stones changed when it was wet. Well-focused questions asking 'why' and 'how' encouraged reasoning and decision-making, enabling all children, including those with special educational needs and those who are bi-lingual, to contribute. Good links were also made to scientific enquiry, exploring the suitability of

clothing for different weathers. The celebration of birthdays and festivals encourages children to develop an understanding of special occasions. Discussions about homes and families also enable them to recognise the difference between old and new and to identify the oldest and youngest members of their families. Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the age of six. While medium term planning is of good quality in the nursery activity plans do not contain sufficient detail to ensure that all staff are well prepared to meet the specific needs of the children.

Physical development

76. The nursery has a secure outdoor play area which is used to support children to learn to pedal bikes and to push and manoeuvre wheeled toys. The quality of large wheeled toys in the nursery is poor. Many are very old, have lost most of their paint and are in need of replacement. Equipment for climbing skills is new and the protective under-surface helps children to develop their climbing and balancing skills and supports their learning well. This area is not used well enough and the daily timed play activities lack specific guidance to stimulate imaginative play and to promote the language of direction. However, the use of the hall to develop skills such as throwing and catching and to enable children to become aware of the use of space and ways of travelling on parts of the body is good. The teaching of both nursery and reception children was good in this respect. In the nursery lesson the teacher directed the activities, used children's ideas to show others how to improve their movements and ensured that all children were supported to extend their movements. Support staff sustained this model well. Children made good progress in throwing and catching balls to each other and in cooperating within larger groups, concentrating on whose turn it was to throw or catch next.

77. Reception aged pupils do not have access to the secure play area but have planned outdoor time supervised by adults. They also make good use of the school hall. Through the good teaching they receive many are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the age of six. Children demonstrate increasing control and coordination over their movements and they work well together, cooperating and sharing equipment. Children line up in order to go to different parts of the school and good links are made to mathematical development as they are helped to line up in twos. The teacher used this opportunity well to extend language, introducing vocabulary such as 'pairs' to support language development and understanding. Children make good progress in their physical skills and handle brushes, scissors, pencils and glue sticks competently. Good emphasis is placed on the development of pencil skills by requiring children to hold pencils correctly. By the end of the foundation stage children are likely to exceed the expectations of their age group.

Creative development

78. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception. Children enjoy a range of opportunities to paint, create textured pictures, sing songs, make models and bake biscuits and cakes. There are also opportunities for

imaginative play. For example, nursery children enjoy their play in the 'pet shop'. These activities help children to use their imagination as they take on the roles of adults in their lives. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals for creative development and a small proportion will exceed the expectations. Through these experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to explain their ideas. A good example of this was the discussion about the school logo in reception. Children compared the size of the logo on a school mug, sweatshirt and headed notepaper, noting differences in size, the shape of the outline and the width of the lines. They showed great perseverance cutting string with scissors to make a print base. Children were amazed to discover how the string was twisted from several strands. They helped each other to cut by deciding who would hold the string and who would use the scissors, taking turns and delighting in their success. Songs and rhymes help develop their understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern and children in nursery and reception enjoy singing.

79. The nursery provides regular opportunities for children to practise their creative skills. For example, in one session they learned to mix paint to create shades of orange with adult help. They then painted their chosen designs on a roll of wallpaper to create a large frieze for their 'orange day'. In the reception classes adults mainly directed activities as staff prepared children for their transition to Year 1. However, they work with a range of papers, fabrics and re-cycled materials to create two and three-dimensional pictures and models and these activities support their understanding of plans and diagrams as they build model classrooms and models of their school.

ENGLISH

80. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-old pupils' attainment was in line with the national average and the average of similar school for writing but below average by both comparisons in reading. The performance of eleven-year-olds was similar to the national average and the average of similar schools. The results of the inspection indicate that by the end of the infant and junior classes pupils achieve average standards in all three areas of English, speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils write neatly in their handwriting practice books but do not write in a well-formed style in other subjects or aspects of their English work. Since 1996 the school's results in the tests for eleven-year-olds have improved broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' achievements are improving as teachers focus more directly on those areas that have been highlighted in assessments as needing continuing attention. Many of the teachers are new to the school and to the profession. Over the medium term attainment will rise as the good quality teaching and improved rates of learning make an impact; this is already visible in Years 3 and 4. Overall, there has not been time for these changes to have had a major impact on standards in the end of key stage assessments.
81. Inspectors found that standards in speaking and listening are average by the end of the infant classes. Most pupils are eager to answer questions about stories and to participate in class based drama and speaking and listening lessons. In a lesson for seven-year-olds, for example, pupils discussed a possible plot for a

story using a planner. Some able pupils discuss the books they are reading. These pupils are very confident, mature speakers who have a very wide vocabulary and enliven their conversation with references to the text. Most six-year-olds pupils, including the least able, ask sensible questions using correct grammar during a circle game. Many pupils in the junior classes take part in challenging class discussions. Eleven-year-olds discuss the similarities and differences between two very different texts, 'The Iron Man' and 'Windows'. Their answers are detailed and backed up by references to the text. In an oral lesson pupils were preparing for a mock headteacher interview. They were seeking to have their questions included in the interview schedule. The pupils' ability to justify their selection of question, arrive at appropriate wording and argue for a place in the running order demonstrated their ability to use language in a formal situation. Listening skills are good throughout the school. Pupils listen well to each other and offer helpful advice during plenary sessions when work is read aloud. In one class a teacher made very good use of paired discussion to prepare pupils for a class question. Timetabled lessons help to develop speaking skills. Drama lessons are very effective in developing role-play; however, classroom space is limited. The school should look at the possibility of utilising a larger space so that the subject can develop even further.

82. Standards in reading are average at seven and eleven. Pupils read fluently at their level. Most are quickly aware when they have misread a word or phrase. The majority of pupils re-examine the word and use phonic knowledge to self-correct. Most pupils use correct grammar so they will also stop and correct when their reading does not sound right. The very youngest pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of common words. The pupils are eager to read along with the teacher, and there are always many pupils with raised hands, who are ready to predict what might happen next. Pupils use text well to support opinions. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the consistency with which they are taught how to link sounds with letters and from regular opportunities for reading and they make good progress throughout the school. Knowledgeable classroom assistants give pupils very good support.
83. By the age of seven, the standard of pupils' written work is average. Pupils apply their knowledge of capital letters and the use of full stops in their own writing. There is a steady improvement in the way they sequence their ideas and apply their developing knowledge of letter sounds to spell key words. These standards are maintained in the junior classes. Most pupils are achieving average levels and a significant number are reaching the higher levels. Writing is fluent and pupils are beginning to write for different purposes, for example when writing letters of complaint. Spelling is generally accurate and pupils correctly use word building. Eleven-year-old lower attaining pupils can write an interesting post card using the correct rules. Average attaining pupils use elements of a poem from T S Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* as a model for a similar piece about a dog. More able pupils achieve considerable mastery of the language and select words and punctuation for effect. In this example an eleven-year-old pupil is writing powerfully about bullying. "Tom was a boy who wasn't like the others, wasn't popular, wasn't even known by the people in his class...."
84. Handwriting in practice books is of a good standard. However, there are differences in the extent to which pupils acquire and use good style in everyday

use. Related issues that have an impact are posture, writing book position, blunt pencils and, in a few cases, the model provided by the teacher outside the handwriting lesson is not good enough. In the infant classes pupils are engaged in short daily practice sessions. Progress over the year is good and pupils use good handwriting in ordinary class work. In Year 6 formal practice occurs less often. Work dates indicate that fortnightly practice is not always achieved. Over the whole year group only a third of the pupils use a fluent joined handwriting style consistently in their ordinary work. The school is aware of this issue and is addressing it.

85. Teaching in English is good throughout the school and in junior classes it is very good or better in two thirds of the lessons seen. In the infant classes in about half of the classes the lessons seen were good and very good. Teachers are very conversant with the national literacy strategy. They think carefully about their lessons and prepare well. Lessons are generally interesting and activities, resources and teaching methods are carefully selected to advance learning efficiently. The planning of work for English is good. Very specific learning objectives are set in most classes, the content and organisation of lessons are well thought out and the teachers make good provision for reviewing the learning in the light of the identified lesson objectives. Teachers use text well to motivate pupils so they approach tasks with eager anticipation. However, when teaching does not reach this high standard, classroom management and organisation are less secure.
86. In the junior classes the teaching of English is a strength. Almost 90 per cent of lessons were of good or better quality and two thirds of all English lessons were very good or excellent. Very thoughtful reflective preparation was the hallmark of the very high quality lessons. As a consequence resource demands were anticipated and teaching methods including the use of the overhead projector were well used. Teachers were imaginative and used simple resources to secure pupils involvement. In an excellent lesson for eleven-year-olds a teacher focussed on one group in shared reading and changed both her expectations and the line of questioning when another group took over. In the same class the teacher built in quick check ups and used techniques so the whole class was required to participate and demonstrate their grasp of the teaching. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop English across the curriculum; for example, during a science lesson for infants and a religious education lesson for juniors. In both lessons teachers asked pertinent questions, gave pupils time to think and offered appropriate language models to help pupils express their thoughts more effectively. All work is regularly marked. Teachers write helpful comments that tell pupils how well they are doing and also focus on specific individual areas for improvement. More formal methods of assessment take place regularly and pupils have personal targets for improvement.
87. Pupils are positive about the subject and across the age and ability range feel that they are doing well. Most pupils can work independently and even the youngest pupils are able to select dictionaries or use word banks to support spelling. Pupils settle very quickly to tasks and concentrate well. The work in their books is well

presented, within the constraints of their handwriting capability, and follows school rules for layout.

88. While the school's book collection contains a satisfactory range of books to support learning across the curriculum, the library is not an inviting area in which to study or work and is generally under-used. However, the literacy libraries are very well stocked with essential and very well ordered resources. The school has a very good collection of books to support the teaching of reading. Pupils use information and communication technology to support the development of their literacy skills. The class collections of books are used satisfactorily to extend their reading and to support work in a range of subjects.
89. The co-ordinator for English is experienced, knowledgeable and is providing very good leadership in this subject. Her commitment and effort, and that of the headteacher and other staff, has ensured that the pupils gain a very firm foundation in their knowledge and skills in the use of language. She uses the outcomes of monitoring and individual staff needs analysis as a basis for effective staff development, for instance in drama. This is a very positive outcome of the thorough monitoring of teaching and pupils' work undertaken by the co-ordinator. The impact of literacy training is apparent in the good subject knowledge seen in this subject. The action plan for the subject identifies handwriting as an area for development.

MATHEMATICS

90. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds pupils' attainment was in line with the national average, but below that of pupils from similar schools. Pupils aged eleven also achieved similar results to other pupils nationally and their achievements were in line with pupils from similar schools. The results of the inspection indicate that most pupils who are now at the end of the infants have reached the average Level 2 with about a third of them achieving the higher Level 3. However, about a quarter of the pupils are working at the lower end of Level 2 or not achieving it. The overall attainment remains similar to last year. The results indicate that the pupils make satisfactory progress from the time they join the reception class.
91. Pupils maintain this good progress throughout the juniors and their attainment at the end of Year 6 this year is above average, with a significant number achieving the higher Level 5 and three pupils who have the potential to achieve Level 6. This is because teachers plan what pupils should learn very well throughout the school. The setting of pupils by ability throughout the juniors enables teachers to match the work more closely to the needs of the pupils. They mark the pupils' work very carefully and identify where there is a need to reinforce learning. Pupils have individual targets and they know how well they have learnt and what they need to learn next. The National Numeracy Strategy is used throughout the school and the teachers adapt the planning to meet the needs of the pupils they teach. The application of mathematics is a strength throughout the school as is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to complement the curriculum. There has been some improvement in standards since the last report

in 1999 but a considerable improvement since the earlier report. Analysis of the national tests over the last few years shows that girls generally achieve higher results than boys. There are more boys than girls on the register of pupils with special educational needs.

92. Higher attaining seven-year-old pupils add and subtract numbers with two digits mentally and know the value of digits in four-digit numbers. They solve whole number problems and find the best methods of solving text problems and mathematical investigations. Pupils with average attainment work comfortably with numbers within 100. Almost all pupils have a secure recall of addition and subtraction facts within 10 and most recall facts to 20. The majority of seven-year-olds use standard units to measure length and mass and name flat and solid shapes, describing their properties. They record their data in simple charts and tables and present their work in a logical way that helps them to calculate accurately. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs have very good support. They are included in all aspects of mathematics at appropriate levels and make very good progress towards their targets.
93. By the time they are eleven the majority of pupils are working well within the higher Level 5 and some are achieving aspects of Level 6. Pupils not only calculate accurately with large numbers using all four operations, but also select the most logical methods based on their estimates of reasonable answers. They use mathematical vocabulary with accuracy and confidence. In one lesson, for example, pupils used “prime”, “multiple”, “factor” and “square” to identify a number selected by a pupil. In another lesson, higher attaining pupils were set a very challenging investigation involving selecting 1, 2 or 3 balls numbered from 1 to 9 to achieve totals by selecting coconuts with different values, for example 147, 51.6, 8951, 7.5. Reaching a given total resulted in a prize. Pupils explained their approaches to the problem at the end of the lesson. Some worked logically through finding all possible combinations while others estimated the totals and experimented with the best fit. Both approaches demonstrated a sophistication that is well above average for Year 6 pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well accommodated within their mathematics group. They cover the same mathematical concepts as the rest of their class with the level of difficulty and support closely matched to their individual needs. Pupils who have English as an additional language have made good progress and they achieve as well as their peers. Most pupils are working at above average levels in both their understanding of shape, space and measures and in the handling and retrieving of data.
94. The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. In one-sixth of the lessons observed during the inspection the teaching was satisfactory, in one half the teaching was good and it was very good in a third of the lessons. There was no judgement about the teaching of mathematics at the time of the last inspection but teaching overall was sound. There has been an improvement in the quality of the teaching since then.
95. All teachers have a good understanding of the teaching of numeracy and the standards they should expect from the different abilities in each year group. The

teaching and reinforcing of mathematical vocabulary is a strength, as is the teaching of strategies to enable pupils to solve problems. The planning for mathematics is very good throughout the school. The teachers have clear objectives for each lesson, which they share with the pupils. Pupils' achievements in each lesson and in their written work are noted and are used to inform the planning for the next lesson. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils, whatever their abilities, and they plan challenging and interesting tasks. As a result, pupils work hard and make good progress in their lessons and throughout each term. The wide range of teaching styles, varying from the brisk mental arithmetic starter and the careful teaching of new skills to the setting of challenging investigations to consolidate and apply the pupils' learning is very effective.

96. Each pupil's effort is valued. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all aspects of each lesson and the teachers make sure that they ask them questions that will extend their learning and enable them to achieve well. The pupils' individual education plans contain targets for mathematics, broken down into small steps for learning. Pupils with behavioural problems are managed very well and the teachers reinforce social targets consistently. The educational support staff are provided with good plans for their part in each lesson and their support of individuals or groups of pupils.
97. The relationships between the adults and their pupils are very good throughout the school. This is apparent not only in the lessons but also in the way the teachers mark their pupils' work. There are encouraging comments and effective dialogue that helps the pupils to improve their work. Teachers explain where pupils have made mistakes and expect corrections to be completed. These assessments, combined with very effective questioning in the classes, are used by the teachers to plan the next stage of learning. During the inspection, for example, a teacher changed her plans because pupils needed more consolidation of the understanding of the relationship between addition and subtraction. She gave the pupils some of the teacher "sums" to check and correct by using the inverse operation. These lower attaining pupils enjoyed finding their teacher's mistakes.
98. Where the teaching was less successful the organisation of the lesson was less precise and pupils did not have sufficient time to work at their individual or group tasks. In one lesson the introduction was not very clear, causing some confusion. However, all teachers promote independent learning very effectively. They expect, as a matter of course, that pupils will work effectively together in pairs and groups as well as individually. As a result, almost all pupils have good levels of independence and work responsibly. Relevant homework is set regularly and pupils are expected to complete it.
99. In all areas of the school the teachers use ICT to support the mathematics curriculum. The teachers use the ICT suite very well and there is a good range of software to support the curriculum. In every lesson where the computers were used the activities were exactly matched to the lesson objectives and the level of difficulty was matched to the needs of different groups of pupils.

100. The good teaching, combined with the good curriculum, accurate and relevant assessments of pupils' achievements and targets for improvement have all had an impact on the pupils' learning over the last year. Many of the teachers are new to the school and the subject manager has only been in post since September. There has not been time for these changes to have had a major impact on standards. The subject manager has a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils through an analysis of test results throughout the school. With the headteacher she identifies strengths and weaknesses in attainment and provision. The headteacher tracks pupils' progress and sets targets for both pupils and their teachers if he does not feel that progress has been sufficient. Teachers have had training to support their work and the co-ordinator has broadened the range of approaches towards mental arithmetic throughout the school by suggesting different strategies and games for the start of the numeracy lessons. The provision for mathematics has improved since the last inspection and the good management of the subject provides the potential for further improvement and higher standards.

SCIENCE

101. Last year in the statutory National Curriculum teacher assessments for pupils aged seven the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 2 was above the national average and the average of similar schools. The standards achieved by eleven-year-old pupils in last year's National Curriculum tests were also above average in comparison with the national average and the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at seven and eleven was broadly average. Over the last four years standards have been rising and they are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in the current Year 2 and 6 are above average. Pupils are achieving very well in Years 3 and 4.
102. All pupils are achieving good standards in scientific enquiry. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to investigate and record their observations using a variety of methods. The pupils in Year 1 carry out simple independent practical tasks when working on early stages of classification. Pupils are successful in separating two groups of objects and deciding which ones to place in the middle of a Venn diagram. They can sort these using at least one criterion and higher attainers are beginning to use two. The success of the pupils' learning was greatly assisted by the teachers' insisting that all their responses were given in complete sentences giving reasons for their choices. Pupils selected and used resources independently so, for example, in a Year 4 class pupils were experimenting with a range of materials to make a simple circuit with a buzzer without using wires. When questioned pupils could explain which materials were conductors and insulators. Their responses were confident, securely based on prior knowledge and understanding of why some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. The range of models and design for electrical switches produced was due to the fact that teachers' planning and management of resources were good. Pupils made choices, selected materials and were not

afraid to make mistakes; in fact, the more able enjoyed the challenge of finding out why something was not working.

103. By the age of eleven, pupils have achieved good standards in carrying out practical scientific investigations. They are aware that, in certain circumstances, such as in their experiment on light and on germination, it is necessary to ensure that there should be only one variable for the test to be fair. Their predictive skills are good and they know it is more than just a guess; they demonstrate this by writing conclusions in which they test whether their original hypotheses were correct.
104. Pupils are encouraged to make choices and record their findings in a wide range of ways - in graphs, bar, pie charts and diagrams. They set out, where appropriate, what they are finding out, their predictions, method, apparatus used and conclusions. They lack skills in making careful observational drawings when studying living things. This is partly due to not making effective use of their own environment; for example, pupils in Year 5/6 studied the life cycle of dandelions using textbook drawings when the field outside their classrooms was covered in dandelions!
105. There is clear progress in their scientific understanding as pupils move from year to year; for example, younger pupils identify different materials and show how they link these when studying Victorian irons. They describe different parts of the iron using correct vocabulary and relate to simple properties, such as the handle is made of wood and will not get hot. Year 3 pupils, when questioned why one would not use an iron to make a bed, responded robustly that it was because 'it was hard, cold and did not bend.' Older pupils knew that heating and cooking can change materials, hence when studying rain cycles they could link their scientific knowledge to an understanding of how heat of the sun can turn liquid into gas and that this was a reversible process. The success of this teaching is based on good medium-term plans that teachers adhere to systematically. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individually identified targets. Learning assistants are well briefed and give good support; however, it may be necessary to explore more practical strategies when pupils are being taught difficult new concepts. Overall pupils' learning is good. The amount, quality and range of work produced are good.
106. Pupils' attitudes to learning in science are very good. They take a lively interest in the subject. Good teaching and effective management ensure that pupils are given a range of opportunities to plan, talk, discuss and carry out practical work. Pupils co-operate sensibly, share resources and help each other with a minimum of fuss.
107. Overall, teaching is very good with a minority of lessons that are satisfactory. The clarity of the learning objectives and purpose of the lesson and the teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject greatly enhance the quality of teaching. Pupils are taught the correct technical vocabulary and teachers ensure that these words are pronounced correctly.

108. Numeracy skills are also used well and applied, for example, by displaying results of investigations in graphical form and insisting upon correct language in the written form. However, insufficient emphasis is given to the interpretation of data. Links with literacy are emphasised properly; for example, a Year 3 teacher insisted that pupils use a variety of grammatical structures when writing up their experiments.
109. Lessons are well structured and in the most effective of them, for example a Year 3 lesson on the structure of a stem of a plant, the teacher stopped pupils midway, both to emphasise the learning objective but also to correct a common error that many of the pupils were making. Assessment of this kind prevents pupils learning incorrect information. Marking of pupils' work is also done with care and tailored to individual pupils' needs. Comments are helpful but also challenging. Where marking is making a significant impact on pupils' progress there is evidence of the teachers follow up the comments if no progress is made in an aspect highlighted, and subsequent planning is adjusted if the same pattern is repeated. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils and communicate their enthusiasm. As a result pupils enjoy their lesson and increase their rate of learning.
110. The subject is well managed by the subject manager who has a secure knowledge and understanding. The planning of science using national guidelines, supported by a commercial scheme, is well developed. Assessment is built in after each unit of work. The analysis of assessment of optional test results and National Curriculum results is satisfactorily carried out.
111. The subject manager effectively monitors teachers' plans and that exercise provides her with an overview of the progress pupils are making. There is a satisfactory range of well-managed and effectively used resources.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in art and design and design and technology are in line with national expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds. Higher attaining pupils (about a quarter) exceed these expectations. There are aspects of both subjects that are particular strengths of the provision. For example, pupils develop a good understanding of the design process through the organisation of their tasks and activities, consequently they know how to plan, draw a design, select resources and evaluate their finished products. There are also good examples of progression in the use of pastels and detailed observation. Because the amount of time allocated to teaching of the subjects is limited, pupils have limited opportunities to practice the skills and knowledge they have been taught.
113. By the age of seven pupils draw, paint and use pastels with appropriate control of pencils, brushes and paints. They have a good awareness of colour and shape and understand the importance of designing before starting their pictures. For example, Year 2 pupils draw and paint still life pictures of fruits that show awareness of colour, shape, position and proportion. By the time they are eleven pupils' knowledge and understanding of the importance of the design process is a significant strength. The use of sketchbooks for designing and trialling ideas provides good evidence of

progress and achievement. Observational drawings show awareness of shading and pattern. In Year 4 pupils applied the techniques studied in the work of Paul Klee and Giuliano Lazzerini, as they printed their backgrounds and made polystyrene block prints to add contrasting colours. Year 6 pupils drew a design based on a special memory and applied this to creating a silk painting using inks and gutta. This work was successful because pupils recalled a significant event in their lives and reflected on how best to represent it through the media selected. All pupils enjoyed their lesson and the outcomes showed good progress in understanding how the gutta prevents the ink from spreading.

114. Pupils enjoy art and design lessons. They are eager and enthusiastic, work well co-operatively and share materials sensibly. They are also proud of their work. Pupils expect to evaluate what has worked well and how to improve; consequently as they discuss their work with staff and each other they value suggestions made for improvement. They reflect on the outcomes and say which techniques have worked well and those which need more practice. All pupils strive to achieve their best. Behaviour is very good because pupils show interest in their lessons and value each other. Occasionally, a very small number of pupils who have challenging behaviour interrupt the pace of the lesson. On these rare occasions, for example in Year 4, staff manage the behaviour positively.
115. The quality of teaching of art and design is at least satisfactory and where teachers have strong subject expertise it is good. Judgements about the teaching of design and technology could not be made as the subject was not taught during the period of the inspection. Art and design lessons are planned with clear objectives and structured activities. Resources are used effectively and where teaching is good, teachers assess pupils' work through good evaluative questions that require pupils to consider what has worked well and what could be improved. This supports self-evaluation and through useful guidance pupils begin to adapt their designs. This was evident in Year 3 when pupils modelled their maquette designs from dough and learned that larger shapes provided a better base for adding beaded decorations. Where subject expertise is good, pupils achieve more highly, for example in the reception class and in one Y6 class pupils made good progress and exceeded their age-related expectations because teachers were confident and guided pupils through the stages of their work skilfully. In satisfactory lessons the pace of learning is slower and there is less structured guidance to help pupils to evaluate and improve.
116. The leadership and management of art and design show good improvement from the last report. The school has adopted the national guidance for both subjects and has developed planning of good quality which provides clear guidance to staff. This enables teachers to recognise how they can support and challenge the most able pupils. A weakness in provision is the long gaps in time between the teaching of design and technology. The subject is taught during one term each year and in discussion pupils say they would like more opportunities to extend their understanding. They describe how visiting specialists helped them to make masks using plastics and opportunities they have had to make money holders and design chairs. However, they are not sure how the evaluation of their finished products might help them when solving a similar design brief. Because pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to improve their skills they are unable to make faster progress. However, the design process is well linked to art and pupils have a good knowledge of this aspect of their learning. Pupils' achievements are above average in this element of the curriculum.

117. There have been few opportunities for staff training because art and design and design and technology have not been priority areas for development. However, the art coordinator offers good guidance to staff and monitors the progression and quality of pupils work. A display is set aside to celebrate the work of pupils from each age group and reflects how the curriculum is supporting the progression of skills and knowledge. Arrangements have been made to provide staff training in design and technology in the autumn term. Pupils achieve well in relation to the proportion of time allocated for the subjects on timetables. There is scope to develop these subjects further by linking the teaching more specifically to aspects of literacy and numeracy.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

118. No history was timetabled during the period of the inspection. History and geography are taught for one term each during the year. For both subjects the amount of evidence available was limited. Evidence from conversations with pupils, their previous work and displays around the school confirm that standards in the two subjects at both seven and eleven are broadly average. This is an improvement from the 1996 inspection report when standards were judged to be below average.
119. In geography, at seven, pupils are beginning to explore what 'near' and 'far' means. They recognise features they pass on their journey to school. Their work shows they can separate these features into two categories, human and physical. They are beginning to understand the impact of traffic on the local environment. Their survey of the number of cars passing through a local busy street made them aware that 75 cars had passed in the short period of 20 minutes and, more importantly, they were encouraged to interpret data and arrive at simple conclusions.
120. In history, at the age of seven, pupils have made a study of famous people, such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale, showing that pupils were beginning to understand the more distant past. For example, a letter written to Mary Secole by a Year 2 pupil illustrates great empathy and sensitivity. She had written; 'I am sorry I did not like you because you were brown!' There is a growing understanding of difficult times and conditions when they contrast health and hygiene now and during Florence Nightingale's era. Their growing sense of chronology is demonstrated by arranging the events of the Gunpowder Plot into a cartoon strip in chronological order. They are encouraged to consider the influence of religious beliefs on the behaviour of individuals. Good links with science are demonstrated; when visiting a museum they can clearly identify and name materials used to make Florence Nightingale's lamp.
121. By the age of seven pupils are beginning to recognise the differences between past and present in their own and other pupils' lives, for example in their study of the Victorian washday they compare and contrast washing now and then. Pupils begin to develop their skills in sequencing by correctly ordering the Victorian washday activities. Good teaching strategies are used to embed the different skills employed in using a range of approaches to recording findings and observations, for example using drawings, cartoons, written descriptions or

arranging statements into true or false sections. These written skills are developed further in Year 3 classes where pupils write a letter to Claudius describing life in Roman Britain. An in-depth study on the Egyptians by Year 5/6 shows an increasingly mature understanding of main events and the particular features that characterised this period. Encouraging them to use a wider range of information from different sources would have further enhanced their knowledge and understanding. However, most used a CD-ROM and enjoyed searching for information.

122. Learning is progressive because teachers adhere to the medium-term planning. Regular assessment at the end of each theme and unit provides teachers with information about what pupils know, understand and can do. Imaginative and creative ways of assessing pupils were exemplified by the Year 1 teacher who asked pupils to apply their understanding of now and then by constructing a three-dimensional model of two rooms in the Victorian times and now. Pupils use correct vocabulary and generally recall events accurately. Overall, their standard of work and presentation are satisfactory.
123. From the limited evidence available, and without the benefit of direct lesson observation in history, the quality of teaching appears to be at least satisfactory in both subjects. Teachers prepare both resources and activities very well, for example in Year 5/6 pairs of pupils were given well-prepared cards which assisted them in understanding the development of a river from its source to its mouth. Occasionally, pupils struggled because they were not clear about some terms, such as 'meander'. Teachers give clear instructions after introducing the lesson; however, insufficient time is sometimes spent on the initial part of the lesson to enable pupils to increase the depth of their knowledge and understanding by engaging them in a debate and discussion. Pupils were given a range of activities that were well prepared and planned. They are not always differentiated sufficiently, particularly for a mixed age class.
124. The relationships with pupils are good; pupils respond to requests to stop working, and willingly regroup or share in pairs with minimum fuss. There is always a sense of enjoyment. Varied group activities promote good opportunities for pupils to collaborate and develop the use of their vocabulary and enhance their speaking and listening skills. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are motivated and very well behaved even when sometimes the teacher controls them excessively by asking them to stop and fold their arms after every short activity. They oblige in a good-humoured way.
125. Both subjects are well managed. The history manager has carried out a thorough audit of resources. She has prepared a portfolio of pupils' moderated work. This is beginning to establish clear criteria for teacher expectation and benchmarking. Whilst current schemes of work cover the National Curriculum requirements, the limited time allocated to these subjects does not allow the development in depth of all aspects of history and geography. Both subject managers collect termly plans and produce written evaluations for the staff for further development. These procedures have been established for all subject

leaders and provide an effective way of ensuring that there is consistency of approach.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

126. The installation of a new ICT suite has provided better opportunities for pupils to extend their opportunities and experiences and develop skills and knowledge which enable them to understand how ICT can support both their learning and their daily life. Through the very good lead of the headteacher and subsequently the new coordinator, significant progress has been made in improving teaching and learning. Staff have received appropriate training and support to enable them to deliver the curriculum with confidence and this has resulted in a rapid rise in standards. By the ages of seven and eleven the achievements of most pupils are above those usually expected of the age ranges. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection.
127. The school has implemented a well planned curriculum which has quickly supported all pupils to make good progress, for example in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to access information from the Internet for research which requires downloading information, storing it and filing website addresses. During the inspection pupils in Years 5 and 6 used multi-media programs to download information and create 'hyper stacks'. They were excited by their progress and eager to continue their learning, listening intently to the teacher as she described the steps which would be taught in the next lesson.
128. The good quality of teaching in the infants and juniors has a positive impact on pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding and practical experience. Children are introduced to computers in the foundation stage of learning and consequently they become confident to manipulate a mouse and use function keys at an early stage. Pupils in Year 2 control a floor turtle and understand how to give directions involving the use of terms such as right, left, forwards, backwards and quarter turns. They apply these skills well when working on screen and give each other good support as they work in pairs. Pupils describe opportunities they have to word process their writing and are proud of illustrations created in computer clubs held after school. These very good opportunities are supported well and enhance pupils' learning, supporting the raising of attainment. ICT is used effectively to support pupils with special needs. Support staff work alongside pupils, helping them to complete task objectives by reinforcing and repeating instructions whilst ensuring that pupils independently develop their keyboard skills and knowledge of buttons and icons.
129. Through the good teaching they receive, characterised by the use of very clear directions that lead to the achievement of precise learning objectives, pupils are confident to attempt tasks and make mistakes. They value the support they receive. Teachers demonstrate the sequences of tasks through good use of the networked suite and consequently there is a high level of interest and concentration in lessons. Attitudes to the subject are very positive because teachers are enthusiastic. Good links are made to other subjects such as English and mathematics and consequently pupils understand how their skills in ICT can support their learning in other subjects, for example, in the use of bar graphs and pie charts to present data and the use of different fonts and

organisation of text to present reports. In discussion pupils explain the advantages and disadvantages of using ICT sources rather than books.

130. E-mail facilities are not yet available and this is the next stage in the development of the school's provision. Another minor weakness is the length of lessons for infant pupils. Although lessons are very well planned, the hour-long sessions in the computer suite mean that many pupils find it hard to maintain their concentration during the discussions at the end of the lessons.
131. The new facilities have enabled the school to adopt the national scheme of work to accelerate pupils' progress. There is a good level of understanding of communication, modelling, data handling, sensing and controlling. Samples from each unit of work are stored and used to assess pupils' progress and development. These samples inform planning and enable staff to monitor improvements in standards.
132. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and supports staff effectively. She has a clear long-term vision for the development of the subject. Good progress has been made in raising standards in ICT.

MUSIC

133. Pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations at the end of the infants and the end of the juniors overall. There are, however, some year groups and some aspects of the subject where pupils' attainment is above average. This is due to the individual expertise of some teachers and the commitment and enthusiasm of the school choir.
134. Pupils in Year 1 understand the meaning of 'pitch' and select appropriate singing voices for Daddy Bear, Mummy Bear and Baby Bear when performing their "Goldilocks Rap". Pupils remembered all the words very well and performed with gusto. It was a hot afternoon and pupils found it difficult to concentrate, so their listening skills did not match the quality of their performance. In Year 2 pupils sort instruments by the way they are played. They have a sound understanding of the different types of percussion instruments.
135. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils accurately maintained a two-part rhythm. They had composed music to illustrate the story of the "Hurongatina Tree" from Zambia. They had chosen their instruments well, illustrating an anthill and the magic tree as well as the walking of different animals. Pupils understand the term 'ostinato' and 'conductor' and they take the role of the audience very seriously. They follow a score for the ostinato for the tortoise or the hare and, when performing, a pupil demonstrated real empathy with the haughty lion with his nose in the air! The teacher's very high expectations and excellent relationships, combined with the opportunity for the pupils to evaluate and amend the performance, resulted in pupils making very good progress in this lesson. Everyone enjoyed it and pupils followed the brief to "carry their instruments as if they were injured birds" to the letter. In Year 4 pupils use tuned

percussion to compose a sixteen-note phrase. Although they were not required to do so, some groups refined the performance by adding a pulse with untuned percussion to add structure. Pupils with special needs made good progress within mixed ability groups. In Years 5 and 6 pupils use symbols to write down the sounds they make. Small groups of pupils performed a section of a river's journey to the sea. The music flowed smoothly and was effective in illustrating meanderings and waterfalls. They combined three or four instruments and recorded the sounds that each played for eight beats. This was a good lesson as pupils realised how important it is to write music down accurately.

136. The quality of the teaching varies from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum and some have musical expertise. It is the enthusiasm of the teachers and their good relationships with their pupils that enable the pupils to make good progress. The school choir, for example, with some 30 pupils from Year 4 upwards, sing well. They are tuneful and rhythmical and they sing clearly with appropriate empathy with the words. The teacher has high expectations, good subject knowledge and unlimited enthusiasm, shared with the pupils. The choir performs in the Festival of Voices in Wembley as well as in the shopping centre, the police club and the senior citizens' home. Three recorder groups cater for pupils from Year 2 upwards and all abilities and some pupils accompanied the hymns in assembly during the inspection. Some pupils have the opportunity to play keyboards and tuition is provided by the county peripatetic music service. This is open to all pupils with the governors providing financial support if necessary. Where teaching is less effective, the teachers do not allow younger pupils to play instruments when sorting them, causing some frustration, or there is not enough structure to the activities to enable the pupils to achieve well.
137. The co-ordinator has produced a comprehensive scheme of work to support the teachers and the planning for the subject is good. There are whole school themes, like, for example, music from around the world being played in assemblies. The parents' association upgraded the music system in the hall. The resources for music are appropriate and there are instruments and recorded music from other cultures. The subject makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The latter was identified as a key issue when the school was last inspected in 1999 and there has been a very good improvement since that time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. During the inspection gymnastics and dance were observed in the infant classes and athletics, dance, gymnastics and swimming in the junior classes. By the time pupils are seven their work meets the expectations set out in the National Curriculum and eleven-year-olds attain standards above the expected levels, most notably in swimming. When the subject was last inspected in 1996 standards were judged to be at the expected levels for seven and eleven-year-olds. There has been an improvement in the standards attained by Year 6 pupils and this is due to the higher quality of teaching and the great increase in

the number and range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which are now very good.

139. Learning in the infant classes is good in two-thirds of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the remainder. Pupils are keen to learn because teachers plans lessons which interest them. In a dance lesson, six-year-olds pretended that they were skeletons, and contorted their bodies into grisly and frightening shapes. In this lesson the teacher's instructions were, at times, delivered too rapidly but when she took on the role of a skeleton and dropped her voice to a whisper, pupils reacted very well and their performances improved. In a lesson for seven-year-olds, pupils learned and performed well a traditional Hindu flower dance. In this lesson the teacher set a good example from the beginning by demonstrating the steps well; setting high expectations for pupils the teacher ensured that pupils listened to the music and behaved well. This meant that pupils showed good and positive attitudes to the dance. The teacher's very good subject knowledge made certain that pupils were set challenging tasks and a strong emphasis was placed on pupils developing sequences of movements, which they did with increasing confidence and control. In gymnastics in this year group, as in others, pupils know why they should warm their muscles thoroughly. They understand that the muscles to be prepared should depend on the content of their lessons. Pupils experimented well in this lesson and their balances were effective and of high quality. Pupils' performances improved as the teacher used examples and pupils' own evaluations of their work to set higher challenges.
140. Eight-year-olds were observed swimming in a local authority pool and learned very well as they were taught by a swimming teacher, an assisting swimming teacher and their class teacher. During this lesson pupils made very good progress and, for example, two-thirds of the less confident swimmers removed their armbands and moved across the pool without the assistance of these swimming aids. In the more confident group all of the pupils moved from a paddle stroke to a full crawl stroke. In both groups, confidence, skills and performance were raised and pupils gained a great deal from the lesson. The swimming teacher has set the target that all eight-year-olds should swim the distance set out for eleven-year-olds. An analysis of the swimming records of Year 6 shows that all pupils have achieved this expected level and a great many go on to swim distances in excess of half a kilometre. In the lesson observed pupils' attitudes were excellent and on the bus back to school, pupils talked about how much they enjoyed swimming and how helpful their teachers were during each lesson.
141. Nine-year-olds during games and gymnastics lessons demonstrated very good knowledge of warm-up techniques and without instructions from their teachers began their sequences in a very mature manner. During the games lesson the teacher used these exercises to maintain good levels of control over pupils who usually demonstrate emotional and behavioural difficulties. Throughout the lesson a quick instruction to begin 'fast-feet' was all that was needed for pupils to pay attention. In this lesson and the gymnastics lesson good coaching of small points of technique helped pupils make good progress. Pupils improved their performances in the standing long jump and demonstrated a sound

technique. In the gymnastics lesson pupils were inventive and showed how their floor exercises could be adapted to apparatus. They worked well together, a characteristic of all lessons, and showed good extension of their arms and legs. A few pupils demonstrated attainment well above the expectations for their age range as they held very high quality hand stands and vaulted from tables to very good finishing positions.

142. Ten and eleven-year-olds created sequences and dance movements to music from Cats. Again pupils began their warm-up routines but were halted by the teacher who reminded them that this lesson was dance and pupils changed their exercises to prepare the correct sets of muscles. At this age pupils understand how their heart increases its pace and blood delivers more oxygen to muscles. In this well controlled lesson, the teacher was keen that pupils should use the exact language to describe what they were attempting to do. Pupils understood the difference between a leap and a jump. In a common feature of all lessons' pupils were asked by their teacher to pass comment on how well they thought others had performed and then offer suggestions for improvement. In this lesson there was obvious enjoyment and real pride as pupils were asked to demonstrate. This technique also gives pupils an insight into their own learning and what they need to do to improve. In all of the physical education lessons observed, all pupils worked very hard. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress.
143. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good. They behave well and work together very well. They help each other and offer sensible suggestions and advice when they observing each other's work. Teachers plan lots of opportunities for pupils to work together in groups, whether it is working in pairs to develop sequences or as group on pieces of equipment.
144. The quality of teaching is good. Particular strengths of the teaching are the very good plans that are prepared. These plans detail the content of lessons and the methods that will be used. Teachers are also highly skilled at assessing pupils' learning in lessons; they give pupils very good advice about how to improve and write notes about which of the pupils have attained the learning objectives that they set in the plans. Teachers manage pupils very well. They set realistic routines which help pupils manage their own behaviour but also ensure that pupils have a clear framework for how they should behave. For instance, when all pupils enter the hall or move onto the field, they know precisely what to do to prepare for their work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and ensure that by planning interesting lessons, pupils work very hard.
145. The curriculum for physical education is good. It contains the elements of the National Curriculum and makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The school has developed very good quality medium term plans that ensure all pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The number, range and quality of after-school sports activities are very good. The school football team is very

successful and in general the after school sports activities help to develop pupils sporting skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is in line with the expected standard defined by the locally agreed syllabus and, by the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is above the expected standard overall. Good standards identified in the previous report have been sustained. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning.
147. By the age of eleven, pupils are familiar with some of the Bible stories, such as that of the creation. They are aware that different belief systems have a different explanation for creation. In Year 4 pupils compared the stories of creation in Judaism and Christianity and were then asked to consider their own understanding of creation. This was a difficult and challenging task for pupils of this age whose responses, such as; 'How do you draw God?' and; 'Did God create Mars and therefore does he control the planets?' demonstrated thoughtful reflections.
148. Pupils accurately describe religious beliefs and rituals in detail. For example, in their study of Judaism pupils researched carefully to explain why certain rituals are performed, such as not using yeast during Passover. These accounts are written in their own words, showing a good organisation of ideas and a coherent written style. Similarly, in their study of Islam, pupils increased their knowledge and understanding of the religion in a well-structured way.
149. Pupils' study of Islam extended their understanding of the life of the Prophet Mohammed. They gained a clear understanding of the Five Pillars of Islam and they learn basic Arabic script in order to be able to write the principle beliefs in the appropriate language. They understand prayer times and the reasons for these. Significant aspects of their learning are highlighted in the way pupils learn to connect similar features and make comparisons with Christianity, showing respect for both religions and beliefs. They consider important questions of values and beliefs and what it means to belong to a specific religious group. The success of this learning is based on the teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and was exceptionally well demonstrated in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were studying a theme on celebration during Ramadan and Id ul Fitr.
150. Pupils learn new vocabulary and new concepts and are beginning to express abstract concepts in a coherent way. The standard of work produced is good, showing a range of written presentation and recording methods from a straightforward researched account, to a newspaper article, interviews and cartoons. They write sensitively and accurately. Sometimes the standards of handwriting and presentation, particularly at the top end of the school, are not high enough.

151. Pupils' attitudes to this subject are very good. They have the confidence to ask questions and feel secure that these questions will be handled sensitively. They demonstrate an ability to reflect and articulate mature responses. This is well exemplified in Year 5/6 when the first lesson on Buddhism was introduced and the significance of the Eightfold Path was highlighted. Pupils were encouraged to write their own definition for one of the eight beliefs. In response to 'Right Living', a pupil wrote 'lead your life into a good direction and don't hurt or anger anyone but look after them and try to support them in their own situation'. This demonstrates a mature level of reflection.
152. Infants show a growing understanding of basic Christian events and lives of famous people and their impact on our everyday lives. They are aware of special occasions and that some places are special to different people, such as the church to Christians, a mosque to Muslims and the temple to Hindus. Overall, the quality and amount of work done is just satisfactory.
153. Overall teaching, particularly in junior classes, is of a high standard. Teachers consistently review pupils' prior learning and check that their knowledge and understanding of factual information gained from the previous sessions is accurate and well understood. Planning is effective and learning objectives are clearly stated at the start of the lesson. In very good lessons there are specific opportunities created for pupils to evaluate their learning, for example to discuss in pairs five new things they have learnt during that session. Where lessons are particularly lively, teachers make the lessons interesting by reflecting on their own experiences. This was exceptionally well demonstrated in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were considering how different communities celebrate, such as through the slaughter of animals. The teacher's confidence was based on very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. When the same high level of knowledge and understanding was not apparent, such as in the lessons on Buddhism, the introduction of the lesson was rushed before pupils settled down to well-planned activities. On such occasions valuable opportunities for debating with pupils were lost.
154. Overall, the pace of lessons is brisk. Pupils complete their tasks in the given time and this allows teachers to ensure that a range of activities is introduced where pupils interact in pairs or groups and then reflect individually. This proved to be a very effective way of enhancing and extending pupils' learning.
155. Regular marking and assessment provide a useful indication to pupils about how they can improve their work and to teachers about how they can adjust their plans to take account of pupils' progress. Teachers' comments are often challenging and sometimes ask the pupils to consider moral issues.
156. The subject manager has recently taken up this responsibility. The new agreed syllabus and scheme of work from the local education authority are being incorporated into the school's own scheme of work. The subject manager is aware of the need to secure better links between learning in the infants and juniors. There are plans to improve the range of artefacts and resources. The

subject manager has a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision.