

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLYWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117290

Headteacher: Jane Howard

Reporting inspector: Lynda Maple
6435

Dates of inspection: 9 –11 July 2001

Inspection number: 191824

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tolpits lane Watford Herts
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Josephine Hopkins
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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6435	Lynda Maple	Registered inspector	Mathematics ICT	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9003	Bryan Findley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10856	Lyn Watkins	Team inspector	English Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
11250	Britt Parker	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English as an additional language Music	
31998	Delyth Parris	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography History	
23257	Elaine Adams	Team inspector	Science Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23318	Gerard Thompson	Team inspector	Design technology & Religious education	
18936	Carol Frankl	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Hearing impaired unit	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holywell Primary School has 289 pupils on roll and is bigger than the average primary school. The vast majority of pupils come from the local estate and the housing is mainly local council and housing trust properties. The school is situated in an area of social regeneration. There is a part-time nursery and children transfer to the reception classes at the beginning of the autumn or spring term in the year in which they are five. Some of the classes contain mixed-age groups to accommodate the variation in numbers from year to year. Thirty-five per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This is above the national average. The percentage with a statement of educational need is above average and includes several pupils in the school's unit for the hearing-impaired. The hearing-impaired pupils are mainly taught within their class groups with additional teaching support. The proportion of parents claiming free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, although the proportion eligible to claim is higher. The pupils are representative of the local community; twenty six per cent have English as an additional language and this is very high. Of this number, over half- forty-two pupils in all- are at the early stage of learning English. There is a small number of refugees and a few children from traveller families. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

There have been three headteachers in post since the last inspection in 1997. The present headteacher took up her appointment the term before this inspection. In the short time she has been in post, she has identified weaknesses in the school's work and has made a positive start on improving the quality of education. She has taken steps to improve the quality of teaching which is now satisfactory overall. In one third of the lessons seen, teaching was good or better. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are still low, but the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in their time at the school. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. It is successful in its aim to be a fully inclusive school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The new headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has established effective procedures for raising standards.
- Provision for children in the nursery is very good.
- The school is socially and educationally inclusive. All groups benefit from the support they are given.
- Standards of behaviour are good. There is a high degree of racial harmony.
- The care and welfare provided for pupils are good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in history, geography, physical education and religious education
- The quality of provision and teaching in information and communication technology.
- The role of subject coordinators.
- The involvement of parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school continues to address the issues raised by the previous inspection in 1997. There have been significant improvements and the school recently received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Employment in recognition of the improvements in test scores at the end of Key Stage 2. The percentage of pupils reaching the average level in English and mathematics is much higher than at the time of the last inspection but remains well below the national average. A main contributory factor is the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2 English. The previous inspection reported that over a quarter of the lessons in English at Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory whereas none was unsatisfactory in this inspection. The teaching of science has improved and results have steadily risen. Standards in music have improved. The whole-school topic framework has been replaced by more effective planning for separate subjects and this has resulted in better implementation of the National Curriculum. The school is still addressing the weaknesses in the planning of history, geography, physical education and religious education. The leadership provided by curriculum co-ordinators has been adversely affected by the very large turnover of staff. However the new staffing and management structure indicates clearly roles and responsibilities and how these will be evaluated. Teacher appraisal is now embedded in the work of the school through the implementation of performance management. The teaching of information and communication technology and the standards achieved by pupils are still unsatisfactory and little progress has been made in this area. The school's improvement plan clearly acknowledges the weaknesses and sets out a coherent strategy for tackling them.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	Year 1998	Year 1999	Year 2000	Year 2000	
English	E	E	D	E	Well above average A above average B
mathematics	E*	E	E	E	Average C Below average D
science	E	E	E	E	Well below average E

The table shows that the school's results of the 2000 tests in English were below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, results in all three subjects were well below average. Although the school's results do not match the national picture, standards have risen and the number of pupils attaining the expected level has significantly increased over the past few years. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were similarly well below average but have risen steadily in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics were declining but improved in 2000. In general, pupils achieve well. The school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics by a small margin. Standards for the current pupils mirror those of the previous year, although there is an improvement in science in both key stages. The school's concentration on literacy and numeracy has left little time to tackle weaknesses in the other subjects of the curriculum, and consequently standards are often lower than expected. The school has a high numbers of pupils

with English as an additional language and special educational needs. These pupils are supported well and they make good gains in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils work well in lessons and enjoy their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. Pupils respond positively to school rules and treat one another kindly and with respect.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships at all levels are good. There is a high degree of racial harmony and tolerance.
Attendance	Attendance rates are poor and despite the school's efforts to improve the situation, unauthorised absences are high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
55 lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

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.

- 88 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory including 11 per cent which is very good and 2 per cent excellent. 12 per cent is unsatisfactory including 2 per cent where it is poor.
- Teaching in the nursery is very good and the children are learning through well-planned, purposeful activity.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and science is satisfactory throughout the school and at times it is good; taking the three subjects together 95per cent of lessons were satisfactory.
- Teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory.
- Almost half of the unsatisfactory teaching was in physical education lessons.
- Teaching of the pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum in the nursery is very good. The quality and range of the curriculum in the rest of the school is satisfactory but provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects except information and communication technology. Arrangements in place until recently for planning the foundation subjects have not enabled pupils to acquire the necessary basic skills in some subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and are well supported and guided in their learning by teachers and teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils are effectively included in the whole curriculum of the school. Teachers and classroom assistants ensure that they understand their work and make continuous progress towards speaking fluent English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	The school provides well for pupils' social and moral development. It encourages pupils to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. All adults contribute towards forming pupils' attitudes to good social behaviour

development	and self-discipline. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and all staff are sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of the pupils. Systems for monitoring pupils' personal and academic progress are good.

9 parents attended a meeting with the Registered Inspector and 90 returned the questionnaire. The school enjoys their support and they are kept informed about their children's progress. There are weaknesses however, in the extent to which the school and parents work together. Arrangements for actively involving all parents are not effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher and deputy provide good leadership and effective management. They have established a firm basis for the future of the school. Subject co-ordination is under-developed as a result of the many staff changes the school has experienced.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are committed to supporting the school's efforts to raise standards. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities to a satisfactory level but their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is limited.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has initiated very effective systems for monitoring and analysing its standards. There is a clear acknowledgement and understanding of its weaknesses and effective action is taken to tackle them.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its available resources effectively to support identified priorities.

The school has experienced many changes in its leadership and management that have adversely affected continuity of school improvement. However, the new management team has established a clear vision of what the school should achieve and demonstrates the capacity to succeed. The school applies best value principles, albeit informally, to all aspects of its work. The range of learning resources in several subjects is unsatisfactory but effective use is made of those that are available. Teachers and support staff provide good support for pupils including those in the hearing-impaired unit. The school's accommodation is good and plans to provide an information and communication technology teaching area reflect the shared commitment to using the available resources to raise standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • The school helps children become mature and responsible. • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The information about how well their children are doing. • The amount of homework set. • The way the school works with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views of the school but find the amount of homework set to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the nursery, children's attainments are well below average. In spite of pupils achieving well in the nursery, on entry to full-time schooling children's assessments show that levels of attainment are below average.
2. Though standards are well below average, the school's end of key stage results have improved over the last few years. In recognition of this improvement, in 2001, the school received an award from the Department for Education and Employment.
3. In comparison with schools nationally, the school's results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards were also well below average. These results reflect the school's population that includes a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, the inspection team confirms the school's view that it could improve further and bring the results nearer to those of similar schools.
4. Inspectors found that the majority of pupils in the present Year 2 class attain the average level for their age in mathematics and science, but very few pupils attain the higher level. In English, more pupils achieve the higher level but fewer overall achieve the level expected for their age.
5. In 2000, in comparison with all schools, test results for 11-year olds were well below average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, the school's results were also well below average. In relation to the pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, the standards achieved were lower than expected. However the trend over the last three years has been one of steady improvement. Inspectors judge standards for the present Year 6 pupils to be below average in English and mathematics and average in science. In relation to their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have made satisfactory progress and the majority of those with special educational needs have made good progress.
6. At the end of both key stages, standards in art and design and music are average but in geography, history, physical education, religious education and information and communication technology, standards are lower than they should be and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Underachievement in these subjects is a consequence of the topic approach used in the past when National Curriculum programmes of study were not adequately covered. As a result, pupils have not developed the appropriate skills and knowledge and the standard of work they produce is lower than the average level described in the National Curriculum. In design and technology too little work was seen to form a judgement. The school has rightly concentrated on raising standards in English, mathematics and science and has begun to tackle the other subjects. The

National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having a direct influence on the quality of teaching, and the majority of pupils achieve well in most aspects of the subjects. The pupils' literacy and numeracy skills help their work in other subjects.

7. There is no significant difference in attainment between pupils of different ethnic or language groups or that of their indigenous classmates. Boys and girls attain broadly similar standards. Pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory or better progress during their time at the school. Pupils who attend the school from the Foundation Stage make good progress; they achieved above average levels in English and average scores in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Almost two thirds of year six pupils with English as an additional language attained below average scores for English and mathematics in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. However only a few had been at the school since Key Stage 1. Several are pupils who also have identified special educational needs.
8. The school exceeded its targets last year by a small margin. The targets set for this year are slightly higher and the unpublished results indicate that the targets have been met in English but not in mathematics. Evidence from the inspection suggests that pupils have under-performed in the mathematics test and the profile of their current work is more in line with the agreed targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in the main and they are keen to come to school. Almost all parents agree their children enjoy their time in school. Most are well motivated and work with enthusiasm and a desire to achieve. They also respond well to opportunities to exercise personal responsibility, for example, when dealing with coats and bags at the beginning of the day. Pupils are usually purposeful in their activities in class and when moving around the school, to and from assembly for example and going outside at playtime. There are a few pupils who lose concentration easily and this is exacerbated where teaching is unsatisfactory.
10. Pupils continue to behave well in and around the school because of a shared understanding of day to day routines and 'Golden' and class rules, which they help to design. They are polite and courteous; they show respect for property and equipment and can be trusted to behave well when not closely supervised by adults. The school finds little need to apply sanctions of any severity and exclusion from school is used appropriately. One pupil was excluded permanently from school during the past two years and there were no temporary exclusions.
11. The quality of relationships throughout the school is good, especially with teachers and learning support assistants, and creates an atmosphere in which pupils learn well. Boys and girls mix well. Harmonious integration, in both work and play, is a feature of the relationships between pupils of different backgrounds. There are no patterns of aggression or intimidation and few

tensions exist between pupils, who tend to be open and accepting of each other and of adults.

12. Pupils develop their social skills well during their time in school. They adapt positively to the different stages of their development and are taking on roles and responsibilities from their earliest days at the school, for example, as monitors and helpers in assemblies.
13. Attendance is poor and rates for overall attendance are well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average although some improvement has taken place during the current year. Overall rates are adversely affected by holidays in term time. There are also patterns of absence, some of which are unexplained, despite the school's endeavours to improve this. Pupils are usually punctual in arriving at school and registration is prompt and no longer, as observed in the previous inspection report, disrupts the start of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2 where 30 per cent was unsatisfactory. The present inspection finds that teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. In the lessons seen 88 per cent was satisfactory or better. In 11 per cent of lessons it was very good and in 2 per cent it was excellent; 24 per cent was good and a further 51 per cent satisfactory; 10 per cent was unsatisfactory and 2 per cent poor.
15. In the Foundation Stage teaching is satisfactory overall though in the nursery it is very good and some aspects are excellent. In the nursery, adults provide an extremely good range of practical experiences for the children to learn by looking, listening, talking and playing. They provide challenging and stimulating activities that fully engage the children and enable them to make very good progress in most areas of their learning. There is a very effective emphasis on language and mathematical development. In the reception classes basic literacy and numeracy skills are given appropriate attention but the overall provision lacks the breadth, balance and stimulation for children to develop their creativity or learn through investigation and exploration. The additional support for children in the Foundation Stage who have special needs or those who are at the early stages of learning to speak English is good and gives them a good start to their school life.
16. Teaching of English and science has substantially improved since the last inspection. Teaching of both subjects is now satisfactory in both key stages and often good. Teaching of mathematics remains satisfactory overall and good in some lessons. Taking the three subjects together 95 per cent of the teaching of lessons was satisfactory or better in the present inspection.
17. English lessons show substantial improvement since the last inspection when 25 per cent of the Key Stage 2 lessons were unsatisfactory. In both key stages teachers now

make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to help them plan work across the full range of English skills and they have, as a result, raised expectations of what their pupils can do. The balance of whole class, group and individual work specified in the Literacy Strategy is contributing to improving reading and writing standards. However, though writing has improved, pupils are still not taught to develop their writing to a high enough standard. Additionally, in most classes teachers do not give enough emphasis to developing their pupils' oral language. However, good practice was seen in some literacy lessons where teachers introduced their pupils to new vocabulary and challenged them to give more developed answers to questions. For example in Year 6 pupils were asked to explain what they meant by terms such as 'chronological'. The teacher herself used technical vocabulary and ensured that pupils understood the meaning of 'etymological' and 'definition' for example.

18. The National Numeracy Strategy has led to improvement in the quality of teaching of mathematics. It is satisfactory overall and during the inspection good or very good teaching was seen in three of the seven lessons. Pupils are provided with work at an appropriate level, all aspects of the subject receive sufficient coverage and sufficient emphasis is placed on them acquiring the key objectives for each year group. Pupils concentrate and work productively. There is a good balance between direct teaching to the whole class and group and individual work. In the best lessons, teachers use questions to assess pupils' understanding and clarify misunderstandings. Pupils' errors are used to reinforce important ideas and pupils themselves are encouraged to identify where they have problems. The organisation for the mixed Year 1/2 classes is effective and reduces the range of ability found in each class.
19. The quality of science teaching has considerably improved since the previous inspection which reported a large number of unsatisfactory features in the teaching. It is now good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In one Key Stage 1 lesson teaching was very good because appropriate questioning enabled the pupils to make good progress. Most teachers achieve a good balance between explanation, instruction and demonstration. In Key Stage 2 teachers provide a good range of investigative and experimental work.
20. In physical education only three lessons were seen in Key Stages 1 and 2 and none was satisfactory. This accounts for half of all the unsatisfactory teaching and all the poor teaching seen during the inspection. The key weakness in all lessons was organisation and management of the learning and this led to lapses in the normally good behaviour of pupils in their lessons. They took a long time to settle to work, did not always listen and frequently chatted idly while their teachers gave instructions or demonstrations.
21. In music and art, teaching is satisfactory and most aspects of the subject have improved since the last inspection; for example, pupils sing well and have opportunities to perform both in school and at other venues in the community.
22. In the remaining subjects of the curriculum satisfactory teaching was seen in most lessons. However, pupils' work showed that, in the past, they had not acquired the skills and knowledge to enable them to work at the expected level in information and communication technology, history, geography, religious education and design technology. Until very recently the specific content of these subjects had not been systematically taught. Cross-curricular topic work has been replaced by separate subject teaching and this is ensuring that the National Curriculum programmes of study are now taught. However, the same work is often set for whole classes and it is as a

result too easy for the most able and too hard for the less able to manage independently.

23. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory and at times good. All pupils learning English as an additional language are included in the full curriculum. Teaching by the designated support teacher is good and work is closely linked to that of the class. The teacher makes very efficient use of her time to gain the most from the limited amount available.
24. The withdrawal, and in-class teaching support that is provided for pupils with special educational needs at all stages of the Code of Practice is satisfactory. The teaching is most effective when pupils of similar needs are taught together. At times, the range of diverse needs included in the groups is too wide to enable optimum progress. In-class support is generally well deployed and of a good standard in the literacy and numeracy hours. In the best of these lessons, pupils are suitably challenged and they make good progress in their learning. For instance, in the Year 1 numeracy lesson the class assistant enabled her group to make good progress in applying their counting skills.
25. Class teachers make a significant contribution to pupils who have special educational needs as well-developed information systems ensure that they know these pupils well. They are fully involved in writing and monitoring individual educational plans. Where they are of good quality they include clear specific and measurable targets set for pupils which are well related to prior assessment and pupils' needs. All plans are reviewed systematically.

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

26. The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of all its pupils. Since the previous inspection the school has increased the time given to science and this has had a positive impact on standards. Schemes of work have been introduced for all subjects. However the school is still tackling the need to provide clear enough guidance to ensure that pupils make progress from year to year in information and communication technology, history, geography, physical education, and religious education. The difficulties created by mixed-age groups have been alleviated by a successful two-year planning cycle and curriculum coverage is, as a result, satisfactory. In some classes, activities are not differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of all pupils. Progress for the more able pupils in particular, is often less than expected. Statutory requirements are not met in information and communication technology.
27. Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory though it is very good for the children in the nursery. The school has introduced the new curriculum based on the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities with an emphasis on visual, practical and tactile experiences so the children learn using all their senses. The curriculum provided in the reception classes lacks this crucial element of play and exploration and focuses on too narrow aspects of learning.

28. English and mathematics are given high priority and extra time has been allocated to the basic skills. The school has adopted a thorough approach to implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and these are beginning to show results. The application of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. However computers are not used enough to promote learning in other subjects nor to enhance the learning of work with pupils who have special educational needs or English as an additional language.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and they have full access to the curriculum on offer. In most lessons teachers provide appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs and support them to make effective progress. The quality of support offered by classroom assistants is satisfactory. Where the curriculum is well differentiated, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils' progress is often good. Pupils from the Hearing impaired unit are very well integrated into the school and have full access to the curriculum. They receive good support in lessons.
30. Personal, social and health education is satisfactory with a suitable programme of topics for all pupils. There is no scheme of work however to enable less confident teachers to plan effectively. For example, a lesson on decision making missed the opportunity to discuss the consequences that follow from decisions made. There is an appropriate programme for sex education and drugs education but the school does not have a drugs education policy.
31. There are effective links with the community and other schools. The school plays its part in the community and pupils support events such as The Watford Rainbow Festival. There is a narrow range of contacts to support learning in school; these include coaching by two local football clubs. There is a good relationship with the local secondary school with wide areas of liaison, including access to sports and technology facilities for pupils in Year 6.
32. Extra-curricular provision is unsatisfactory. Owing to staff changes, the range of clubs and activities has declined since the previous inspection and is too narrow. There is one lunchtime club. Outside visits are too rarely provided and, overall, these activities do not support pupils learning enough.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school is satisfactory overall. Satisfactory spiritual development is fostered through whole school and class assemblies. During the inspection, pupils listened well to the story of 'One World' by Michael Foreman and responded appropriately to questions. They made connections between the moral of the story and individual responsibility for maintaining and sustaining the environment. Music was played during the reflection that followed. Pupils were invited to meditate or pray to their God. There was evidence in some year groups that spiritual development is planned for. For example, a Year 1/2 class had created a Buddhist display inspired by the story of 'The Lord of the Parakeets'. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class compared experiences of Christian and Islamic pilgrims. Overall though, too few opportunities are planned for spiritual development through other subjects.

34. Moral development is good throughout the school. Everyone in the community is committed to the principles underpinning the behaviour policy. These state that all members of the school community are entitled to: feel safe; learn/teach to the best of their ability; and be treated with dignity and respect. Golden Rules are displayed throughout the school. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated awareness and commitment to these agreed principles. This was reflected in behaviour in the playground and around the school. Relationships throughout the community were positive and respectful. Individual pupils are rewarded at assembly for showing good examples through behaviour and positive attitudes to work.
35. Social development is a strength of the school. There is an established school council, which has two representatives from each class. At the meetings they discuss whole school issues. They also raise funds for the Marie Curie cancer charity, NSPCC and Animal Welfare. The work done by the council is complemented by circle time and class discussions. Paired reading takes place on a weekly basis, when older pupils assist younger ones to improve their skills. Fifty pupils led the carnival at Watford's sixth Rainbow Festival earlier in the year.
36. Cultural development is sound. Year 5 and 6 pupils had the opportunity to visit the Centre for Alternative Technology as part of a weeklong school journey to Wales. Local faith representatives have made visits to the school. One was a Rabbi from the local synagogue who spoke to the children about Sukkot. Older pupils have participated in a Ghanaian drumming workshop. A Samba band worked with Year 6 pupils who made drums and performed in an assembly at the nearby community school. The number of school clubs has diminished over recent months, owing to staffing difficulties, but it is hoped that many will be reinstated in September. Too few opportunities are taken to enrich the foundation subjects of history and geography through planned visits or visitors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school continues to offer good levels of support and guidance that contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. Teachers and support staff are committed to children. The teachers and learning support assistants are well informed about the academic progress and personal development of individual pupils by the detailed records they keep and by the closeness of their relationship with pupils. Teachers monitor behaviour well and deal promptly and supportively with any concerns. Attendance is monitored and analysed well by the school but measures to bring about improvement have not been very successful in improving attendance rates.
38. The school actively promotes good behaviour. 'Golden Rules' and classroom routines are expressed clearly and are well understood by the pupils. There are effective levels of supervision and a wide range of activities for break and lunch-time play that are part of an increasingly successful behaviour management strategy. The school has an effective policy for dealing with any incident of

bullying or other oppressive behaviour and pupils feel comfortable and secure in school.

39. Overall, the systems and procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' personal and academic progress are good. An assessment is made of pupils' previous knowledge and understanding soon after their entry to school in nursery and reception classes. Pupils are then tracked throughout the Foundation Stage and detailed observations are recorded. This information is shared with parents and carers. It is also transferred to pupils' individual records each half term. Special educational needs are quickly identified. Termly assessments are made of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 for English, mathematics and science. The senior management team use this data to allocate extra support and set targets for individual pupils. There is a very strong culture within the school of analysing reasons for underachievement. Daily assessments are kept in teachers' folders and used to inform future planning. Classroom assistants also keep anecdotal evidence of the achievement of pupils in their care. Sampling of work in the core subjects is being developed and planned opportunities to do this are identified throughout the year. Analysis of attainment has been undertaken for various groups of pupils. There are no significant issues of differences in achievement between boys and girls or among ethnic groups.
40. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is regularly reviewed and detailed records are kept. The school adheres closely to the Code of Practice. Individual education plans, based on assessment evidence, are drawn up with specific and measurable targets. These are generally good except where there have been frequent changes of class teacher. Contributions from outside support agencies, such as the educational psychology service, are good. The assessment of learning difficulties is satisfactory overall.
41. Good records of progress are maintained for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Together with the good communication between all those who teach the pupils, they make a good contribution to the pupils' learning.
42. The school is educationally and socially inclusive. Each member of the community is respected and valued. There are successful arrangements for child protection with a properly designated teacher to oversee practice in the school but changes in management and teaching staff have brought about a general need for training. There are adequate and effectively managed procedures for the welfare and safety of all pupils. Health and safety is given appropriate attention and practice in first-aid is effective.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school's links with parents are not as effective as they should be. Although parents are positive in their views of the work of the school, the extent to which they involved in the life of the school is very limited. Parents' positive views of the school were mainly confirmed by the inspection findings.

44. Parents are provided with good-quality information about the school through formal publications and letters, although the prospectus does not indicate the right of withdrawal from religious education and collective worship. Reports on progress are satisfactory with detailed information about what pupils know and can do, especially for the key skills in English, mathematics and science. Information from some teachers does not always include areas for improvement and the terminology used does not always give a clear view of progress. Arrangements for discussing progress with parents are good.
45. Some parents support the work of the school well, take a keen interest and are involved in the work their children do, including the small group who help in the classrooms. Apart from providing support to translate at parents' meetings however, there has been little involvement of bilingual parents or those who do not speak English. Although attendance at parents' consultation meetings has improved lately, the efforts of the school to promote an effective partnership have been insufficiently imaginative to bring about substantial and lasting improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The recently appointed headteacher and deputy have accurately identified what needs to improve and the main thrust of their work has been centred on raising standards. The headteacher has prepared a detailed school improvement plan that reflects the most urgent areas for attention together with long-term plans for other aspects of the school's work. The headteacher provides good leadership and is a positive role model for the staff. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when leadership by the then headteacher was judged as sound. The present headteacher is establishing effective working practices with the governors, many of whom are also new to the role. She is taking action to enable them to take an active role in the work and development of the school.
47. The school's aims and values reflect the commitment to help pupils in all aspects of their life. Their social and emotional, physical and intellectual needs are the basis for the school's work. There are good relationships amongst and between adults and pupils. Everyone in the school supports the aims, and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for the pupils. The school actively promotes itself as an inclusive institution and is particularly successful in providing a positive experience for both hearing-impaired pupils and those from minority ethnic groups.
48. The school is at the early stages of implementing systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education it provides. The deputy headteacher and co-ordinators have explicit monitoring responsibilities and these are being incorporated into their work. Their management roles include evaluating teachers' planning, preparing and implementing appropriate schemes of work and in some cases observing teaching. These activities are fairly new and the headteacher is acutely aware that they have yet to have a real impact on the

effectiveness of the school's teaching. In addition, the large turn-over of staff has adversely affected the implementation of these arrangements. An area of success has been the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school has received intensive support from the local education authority and this has been effective.

49. The school has an effective system for setting targets and tracking individual pupils' progress. Targets for pupils for whom English is an additional language are set within the ethnic minority achievement grant plan for each year group. The school's systems for performance management are established and the headteacher has ensured that staff and governors understand the requirements and how those with management responsibilities should fulfil them.
50. In general the governing body fulfils its statutory duties. However, because so many of them are new in post, they are not yet clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and their role in dealing with them. Systems are being developed to enable them become more involved in the work of the school and to determine the direction it should be taking. For example, committees are being established and regular meetings are planned to critically appraise the different aspects of the school's work. The governors are supportive of the school and share the commitment to improve many aspects of the school's work.
51. Systems of financial control and administration are good and the administrative staff contribute effectively to the smooth running of the school. The use of new technologies is at an early stage of development, although arrangements are in hand to help staff acquire the necessary skills. The most recent budget indicates that specific grants are used appropriately, and the budget is set against the school's identified priorities. The headteacher manages the ethnic minority and traveller achievement grant and oversees the co-ordination of the action plan with the support teacher. A large sum has been accrued over recent years. The decision has been taken to use this to provide an information and communication technology suite as part of the measures to improve teaching and learning in this subject. The governors are committed to the principles of best value, but are at an early stage of adopting formal systems for applying such principles and evaluating the effectiveness of their spending decisions.
52. The school has experienced many difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced staff. There has been a high rate of turnover in recent years and many of the current staff are inexperienced especially in management roles. This has meant that some subjects have lacked strong leadership and direction. In order to avoid a few teachers being given too many responsibilities, the newly qualified teachers have maintained oversight of some areas. Even though their level of responsibility has been minimal such arrangements are inappropriate, both for sustaining standards in those subjects and the induction of those teachers. The situation has been further exacerbated by the lack of supply teachers to enable the newly qualified teachers to participate fully in the school's induction programme.

53. The school's accommodation remains good. Internal areas provide ample space for teaching the curriculum and are kept clean and well maintained. External areas are very good with expansive grassed and hard surfaced areas for play and formal team sports. Facilities for play, such as the climbing area, seating and marked surfaces, provide a wide range of activities for pupils to enjoy.

54. Resources for learning are poor in a number of areas. There are few material resources for supporting the teaching of English as an additional language and too little of the grant has been designated for resources or equipment. There is a limited supply of dual text books and there are plans to acquire taped stories in different languages. Resources are poor in history because there are not enough to support pupils' first-hand exploration to find things out about the past. There are few artefacts and those are of poor quality. Resources are unsatisfactory in geography, music, science, religious education and information and communication technology. The range of books in the library is limited for the size of the school. Resources in the nursery are very good. Given the very good start pupils make in the nursery and the improvement in standards and teaching since the previous inspection the school is judged to be providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governors should;

(1) Continue to raise standards in English and mathematics by;

providing greater challenge for the more-able pupils

using the tracking system rigorously to identify where pupils could do better and helping them to do so

teaching pupils to review their own writing, edit and improve it

giving greater attention to developing pupils' vocabulary

(2) Improve achievement in history, geography, physical education and religious education by;

developing the schemes of work to help teachers plan suitable activities and systematically improve the pupils' skills and knowledge

improving the resources, especially artefacts, photographs and other visual support materials

using resources beyond the school in history, geography and religious education

(3) Improve the curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) by;

ensuring that staff receive training to improve their own ICT skills

teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding outlined in the programmes of study

preparing schemes of work to ensure ICT supports learning in all subjects

(4) Take steps to involve parents more fully in the work of school including supporting them to improve their children's attendance.

Other weaknesses not included above should be considered by the school:

Opportunities for creativity and exploration in the reception classes.

The role of governors in helping to shape the direction of the school.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

THE PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

56. There is a high percentage of pupils in the school who are learning English as an additional language. Most pupils speak Urdu or Gujarati and those who enter the school in the nursery or reception classes generally speak very little English. A smaller number of pupils who are not fluent speakers enter other year groups throughout the school. Over 20 percent of pupils in Year 6 are not completely fluent in English and several of this group entered the school in the last two years. Over a third of pupils learning English as an additional language also have special educational needs.

57. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory and sometimes good. All pupils learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum. Teaching by the designated support teacher is good and work is closely linked to that of the classes. Pupils are effectively supported during whole class sessions. Objectives are clarified and work is well prepared; for instance a challenging text for a literacy session was read with pupils before the lesson. The support teacher makes very efficient use of her time to gain the most from the limited amount available. Good records are maintained and individual targets are identified for core subjects. There is close teamwork between class and specialist teachers or assistants. Lessons are planned to build on pupils' previous experiences and pupils are often grouped within classes with another adult to support their acquisition of English. Priorities are carefully considered and help is targeted for specific pupils. Classroom assistants work

throughout the school under the guidance of class teachers and effectively support pupils in managing their work. Classroom assistants who are bilingual help particularly with the youngest children. For instance stories are read in two languages in the nursery and reception classes, first in Urdu and then in English. Very good work was seen in the nursery when bilingual assistants worked alongside children supplying specific English vocabulary and explaining tasks in Urdu to ascertain understanding and encouraging children to practise their English vocabulary. Assessment notes on progress are completed for discussion with the teacher before making future plans.

58. A good start has been made in addressing the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Most of the designated budget has been spent on staff and this enables all pupils to have access to the curriculum. This is successful overall and provides good value for money. However some classes have too many different assistants and this is inefficient.

THE WORK OF THE UNIT FOR HEARING IMPAIRED PUPILS

59. Provision for hearing impaired pupils is organised into two units, one based in Key Stage 1 serving the pupils in the nursery, reception, Years 1 and 2. The second unit is based in Key Stage 2. There are currently nine full-time pupils in the unit and two part-time in the nursery, all of whom have statements. Pupils in the nursery are fully integrated, supported by unit staff. Hearing impaired pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught in the unit for literacy and supported in their classes for most other activities. They are sometimes withdrawn to the unit with a small group of pupils for practical work, or if extra explanation is required. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are in class for most of the day, including literacy and numeracy lessons. They are withdrawn to the unit for specialist speech and language programmes as required.

60. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Some pupils make very good progress given their level of achievement when they enter the school. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is more variable as these skills are more directly affected by their degree of language delay.

61. Pupils in the nursery are learning to communicate effectively in a classroom setting. By the end of year 1 pupils are well integrated and responding appropriately to other children and adults in the classroom. In literacy pupils can write short stories about their experiences, using personal dictionaries and can read them back with intonation and meaning. They understand the routine of the day and can recall activities done yesterday and retell stories from earlier in the week. In numeracy, pupils can count and order to 10. With help, they can count in 2s and 10s and know the properties of simple shapes.

62. By the age of eleven, pupils have made very good progress. Standards of work in science are in line with national expectations. Pupils can describe the structure of plants and understand how plants make energy from the sun. They understand the properties of light and how mirrors reflect light. They have experienced a range of experiments and understand how to carry out a practical piece of work and record their results.

63. In mathematics pupils can classify and sort 2D and 3D shapes and understand the properties of these shapes. They have consolidated basic numeracy skills working on multiplication, division, addition and subtraction. They understand simple fractions and percentages and can solve simple probability problems.
64. In English, pupils write stories for a range of different audiences, including play scripts, persuasive writing, imaginative writing and re telling a story. They plan their work well and use their writing skills effectively in project work in other subjects. An example of this is the comparison between schools in Victorian times with their own experience of school and the extensive project to learn about transport, religion, homes and buildings, employment and trade for people living in the Indus valley.
65. In the nursery pupils are happy to come to school and are learning social behaviour. Although they have no spoken language, they are able to express their needs and ideas. Pupils in Key Stage 1 find it difficult to take an active part in whole class discussion, but as they progress through the school, they are able to contribute very effectively. They listen carefully and ask questions of their support staff to help understand the content of lessons.
66. Pupils work very hard in lessons. They use a range of communication strategies to understand what is going on in lessons. They engage enthusiastically in all aspects of school life and are confident both in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Older pupils particularly are positive about school and have formed successful friendships.
67. Teaching of hearing-impaired pupils is always satisfactory and often good. Teaching of pupils in Key Stage 1 in the unit literacy lessons and support for pupils in literacy and numeracy class lessons in Key Stage 2 is always good. In the nursery where pupils remain in the class most of the time, support is given through effective explanation of difficult concepts, supported by signing and gesture which ensures the pupils are fully included in all the activities in the class. Very effective use is made of multi-sensory techniques so that pupils can see, feel, touch and smell their experiences.
68. In Key Stage 1, pupils are withdrawn to the unit for literacy lessons and some practical work. Teachers and support staff continue to use a wide variety of techniques to check pupils understanding. Clear routines ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. The pace of teaching is carefully managed so that pupils learning at different rates are catered for. Teachers continue to use multi-sensory approaches and probing questioning to check and extend pupils understanding. In Year 1, when making 'stone soup' the teacher used a very range of props to demonstrate and illustrate the class story. Careful explanation, good simple signing of new words and pupils' active participation in slicing vegetables, stirring and tasting the soup enabled them to thoroughly enjoy the lesson. Very good use is made of the home school link books to encourage pupils to speak, listen and write about their experiences.

69. In Key Stage 2 pupils are supported in class lessons for the majority of the time. The teacher and learning support assistant provide excellent opportunities for inclusion, ensuring that pupils' ideas are included in lessons. Pupils are given time and space to express themselves fully. Adults use signing effectively to ensure pupils understand fully. They are constantly explaining, mediating, negotiating and asking pupils what help they want. Staff encourage pupils to be independent by coaching them before lessons when necessary.
70. A good feature of teaching throughout the school is the time taken for the specialist teachers to plan jointly with the class teachers. Teachers know pupils well and tasks are closely matched to pupils' abilities and interests. This ensures that pupils are challenged appropriately and make good progress in their learning. It also ensures that pupils sustain interest, involvement and motivation. Teachers in mainstream classes include pupils with hearing impairment fully in lessons. Learning support assistants working with hearing impaired pupils are very effective in the units and in classes.
71. Pupils with hearing impairment are fully included in the life of the school and have equal access to all activities. They are given high quality specialised support that is well managed to enable them to become full members of the school community. They have very good relationships with the specialist staff in the units. Teachers and learning support assistants encourage pupils to be independent and aid their communication very well. However, opportunities for participation in information and communication technology are limited because the quality of computer hardware and software is unsatisfactory.
72. Assessment of pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Pupils are monitored against the targets on their individual education plans and against the learning outcomes of the lessons. These observations also contribute effectively to teachers planning. In both key stages progress over time is very well monitored in most curriculum areas and in communication skills. Day to day assessment of progress against IEP targets is done half termly or termly. More frequent monitoring of pupils' achievements against their IEP targets would ensure greater accuracy in monitoring progress and informing teaching. In Key Stage 2 progress is monitored against learning objectives on a regular basis. Good use is made of a 'traffic light' system to enable all adults working with pupils to see quickly the progress a child is making in a given area. Annual reviews of statements are carried out effectively.
73. The school has a very good system of home-school books that keep parents informed on a daily basis. Parents meet regularly with school staff to discuss progress. As well as the formal liaison, there are many informal lines of communication. These initiatives ensure that parents and teachers are well informed.

To further improve the work of the unit, the school should;

- Develop a clear rationale for in class and withdrawal support

- Prepare a written strategy to address the additional literacy needs of pupils, especially with speaking and listening.
- Develop a policy on the use of signing throughout the school.
- Prepare a development plan, within the school improvement plan, for the unit to indicate its direction for the next 3 years.
- Co-ordinate provision between the key stages to improve continuity for pupils.
- Provide in-service training for teachers and learning support assistants that is linked to development priorities for the unit.
- Ensure that expenditure on equipment and other resources is planned to match development needs.
- Improve resources for the unit, including information and communication technology.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	11	24	51	10	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	261
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	95

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	103

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
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	16	21	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	14
	Girls	13	14	19
	Total	24	24	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (61)	65 (64)	89 (75)
	National	83(82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	13
	Girls	13	17	12
	Total	25	31	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (57)	84 (75)	68 (50)
	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	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	7	5	8
	Total	16	14	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (44)	56 (50)	72 (66)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	6	8	7
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (47)	68 (56)	68 (53)
	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	4
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	2
Indian	6
Pakistani	45
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	137
Any other minority ethnic group	12

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	288

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	697,247
Total expenditure	690,070
Expenditure per pupil	2492
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,354
Balance carried forward to next year	48,531

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 33%

Number of questionnaires sent out	276
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	48	6	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	40	13	7	3
The teaching is good.	50	36	7	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	40	20	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	40	2	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	36	4	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	40	33	17	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	46	44	3	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	22	18	12	26

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

74. At the time of the inspection children in the Foundation Stage were taught in the nursery and two reception classes. Teaching in the nursery is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the reception classes teaching is satisfactory. Children in the nursery make very good progress in all aspects of their learning. This is not maintained in the reception classes though children make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy and basic skills are soundly taught. In reception, children are not offered sufficient opportunities for creativity and exploration.
75. On entry to the nursery attainment is very low compared to expectations for children of this age except in physical development which is slightly above average. Over two thirds of the children have well below average literacy and numeracy skills when they start nursery. On entry to the reception classes the attainment of a third of the children is still well below average. A small group of children have good skills when they start nursery and they are confident and articulate in their communications with adults and other children. Many children do not attain the full range of early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. By the end of the Foundation Stage children work and play with others and are generally confident. They behave very well and are co-operative. In the nursery they are particularly good at managing their time; they move from one activity to another with the minimum of supervision. They manage their own needs such as putting on aprons, changing for physical education lessons, organising and labelling snacks, checking and replacing equipment and helping with other classroom chores.
77. Children are enthusiastic, eager to learn and willing to take risks. They take the initiative in their own learning often following adult models, for example drawing their own treasure maps after following their teacher's map. Some children persevere for long periods of time; one child in the nursery worked at and improved a paper collage for an hour.
78. Adults in all classes are positive and encouraging and in general provide very good models for the children and have high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes. In the reception classes some sessions are too long and children have to sit and listen to adults for extended periods of time without being actively involved in learning

Communication, language and literacy

79. Children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception classes where teachers follow the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. At the end of the Foundation Stage many have not reached the early learning goals and overall attainment is below average.
80. In the nursery teaching is very good and there is a strong emphasis on developing language and literacy skills in every session. All activities are planned to promote talk and adults are skilful in their interactions with the children and encourage them to express themselves clearly. For example, looking at some fish provided a rich context for developing the children's powers of self-expression and increasing their vocabulary. Bilingual classroom assistants discuss activities with children in Urdu to establish their understanding of key vocabulary in English. They help children choose appropriate books to take home and, using both languages, read and check the children's understanding of stories.
81. Children listen attentively to adults and are gaining confidence in their responses. In one reception class however the children have too few opportunities to talk in lessons and they are not encouraged to give full or detailed answers. In the other class, better practice ensures that all children are invited to join in; for example in naming and describing objects given out by the teacher.
82. Children are introduced to a range of stories and rhymes as well as information texts during the literacy hour and at story times. They are beginning to understand the structure of books and older more able children can distinguish the different characteristics of fiction and non-fiction texts. They are enthusiastic about books. Children in the nursery listen and join in with stories and rhymes and their attention is held by actions and skilful interventions by the teacher. They recognise their names and some know the sounds of letters. In the reception classes children recognise initial and final sounds in words. Children are beginning to read simple books, they can point to the text and follow the print appropriately. Only a few reach the goal of reading sentences independently. There are not enough books and in there is a need for more dual language books and enlarged texts for literacy teaching.
83. Children attempt their own writing in a variety of contexts in the nursery including the imaginary play area where they complete the captain's log on their pirate ship, for example. In the reception classes they are developing neat handwriting but only the most advanced orient their letters correctly and use upper and lower case letters appropriately. A few more able pupils can write more than one simple sentence spelling out words correctly and beginning to use full stops and capital letters consistently. There has been an over-reliance on work sheets with too few opportunities for adults to demonstrate writing for different purposes.

This has restricted the practice of experimental and creative writing particularly in the reception classes

84. Children with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants to take an active part in lessons. They make satisfactory progress and are helped to understand stories in whole class sessions and supported in carrying out their group activities. Bilingual classroom assistants make a good contribution to teaching and assessment of children who are learning English as an additional language.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

85. Children in the nursery make a very good start in learning about numbers and other aspects of mathematics. Teachers produce imaginative resources and use them well to give children the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills. Teaching is very good and mathematical development is embedded in many areas of learning. When comparing sea creatures they considered the size, length, the number of spots, fins and legs. They used a number line to count bears and spot where the missing bears belonged. In a physical education lesson they sorted by colour and shape and learned precise use of positional language. They matched one to one when giving out drinks and weighed and measured ingredients when they made cakes. They had opportunities to develop spatial awareness inside and out using small and large construction apparatus.

86. In the reception classes teaching is satisfactory and children are taught mathematics as part of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers set clear objectives and children are encouraged to estimate and compare objects when considering measures. Adults reinforce specific vocabulary and assess children's progress. Children enjoy whole class sessions and when working with numbers many can count in twos to twenty. The pace of work during group activities is slow however and children are sometimes unsure about expectations. In one lesson they were confused about the vocabulary for different sorts of measures. The most able children are able to compare the length of three objects and record their results. Children learning English as an additional language have additional support that helps them to make satisfactory progress. Children who have special educational needs are effectively supported during group activities. There are not enough additional opportunities for children to encounter mathematical experiences across all areas of learning to confirm their understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

87. In the nursery, teaching and opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the world are very good and at times excellent. Children learn through direct experience. For instance, geographical thinking was promoted by following the route marked on a treasure map of the garden. Scientific thinking is developed through growing things and observing and discussing changes in

materials for example, when mixing ingredients in cooking. Bilingual assistants support children's learning well; for example, working at the water tray in the nursery, supplying English words through questions such as "Is it sinking yet?" "Why not, will it sink if you put more animals in?" Children make very good progress in their learning and understanding. Adults support all children's learning very effectively through very practical approaches and encourage them to want to discover more for themselves.

88. The curriculum in the reception classes lacks this exploratory quality and is not satisfactory. Children have too few practical experiences and their learning does not build on their nursery experience. There is an overuse of worksheets, often given to all the children regardless of their different abilities. Where practical activities are provided they lack challenge and are often under resourced. This results in many children not being able to develop their understanding in any depth or to apply their knowledge to other areas of learning. However, a lesson in one reception class, on water safety, was good; it was well paced and organised, and included interesting and appropriate resources and good demonstration by the teacher.

89. In all classes children make interesting and increasingly complex constructions with blocks. In the nursery, children have daily opportunities to join materials in different ways. Children are introduced to computers and can operate the mouse efficiently in the reception classes although there is little use of computers across the curriculum. Social and moral issues are discussed positively in all classes and children negotiate with each other when they consider something is wrong before appealing to their teachers. They are sensitive to others' needs and supportive of each other. Awe and wonder feature in every session in the nursery although such spiritual aspects are less developed in reception classes.

Physical development

90. Children in the Foundation Stage develop good physical skills. They are confident in using larger body movements in the playground and in physical education lessons. There are daily opportunities for children to cycle, climb and balance in the nursery and they gain increasing skill and control. In physical education lessons children can jump, run at different speeds, find a space and aim and throw with increasing accuracy. Children use a range of tools for writing, drawing, painting and craft work and they gain precision and dexterity in their use. Teaching in the nursery is very good and it is satisfactory in the reception classes.

Creative development

91. Provision for creative development is variable and some aspects are unsatisfactory. This includes work which is over-prescribed by adults with the result that the children's creativity is not sufficiently fostered. There are examples of better work on colour and good drawing and painting. At the end of the Foundation Stage children sing following a tune and rhythm and they are beginning to use a range of unpitched percussion instruments as an accompaniment. In one reception class children enjoyed making 'conversations'

with percussion instruments to illustrate a song and they could name many of the instruments. There is an inspirational role play area in the nursery which supports children in their imaginative play and provides stimulation in many areas of learning. There are too few opportunities for children in reception classes to learn through imaginative play.

ENGLISH

92. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards in reading and writing were well below average compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. At the time of the last inspection standards were reported to be average though they declined markedly at Key Stage 1 the following year. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in the 2000 tests were below average and well below average compared with similar schools. Results for Key Stage 1 have improved year on year over the last three years and have improved over four years for Key Stage 2. Levels of attainment shown by the not-yet published results for 2001 however do not indicate a further rise at either key stage. The main reason for this is that there is in the present Year 6 a high proportion of pupils who are not managing to reach the average level and this depresses the overall standard. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment is lower than expected at both key stages.
93. Evidence from observation in the nursery shows that few pupils have the expected level of competence in spoken language when they start school. Throughout the school many pupils do not have a wide vocabulary and do not express their ideas with ease or fluency. This affects their progress in reading and writing. In class discussions many pupils put forward their ideas hesitantly and their contributions need to be developed by their teachers through questioning or other support. Pupils listen well to their classmates and their teachers but only the most confident speakers ask questions or include interesting detail when describing events or experiences. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory and it is good in a few classes. In Year 6, for example, good teaching has enabled the class to develop a good vocabulary of specialist terms and appropriate language to enable them to speak and write about their science work.
94. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop positive attitudes to books and reading. They learn a range of skills including developing a sight vocabulary and awareness of sounds in words and they use these skills well to help them read independently. The large majority understand what they read in lessons and are able to discuss the content of texts. The most able, about a third of the year group at the end of the key stage, read fluently using a balanced range of strategies including the guidance of punctuation to help their fluency and intonation. They read virtually silently with good levels of understanding. They know the function of markers such as 's' in pluralisation and 'ed' and 'ing' in marking the tense of verbs. There is though, a significant group who are still at the earlier levels of acquiring the range of necessary skills and whose reading is at a lower than expected level.

95. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to enjoy using books for pleasure and for information. Some Year 3 pupils said they loved poetry - both reading it and listening to it. The class listened rapt as their teacher read to them and some asked to hear the poem again. Reading skills are further developed in the key stage and by the end of Year 6 about a third achieve the above average level in reading. However, more than a third do not succeed in reaching the expected level. The more-able pupils use their reading well to find the information they need in the other subjects of their curriculum. They have good skills in using the index, headings and sub-headings in reference books to locate information. They understand what they read and extract information through close reading of selected text. These skills have improved since the last inspection. The less able readers tend to be pupils who have special educational needs or who are bilingual and not yet fully fluent English speakers. The latter group lacks experience of speaking English and this affects their achievement as readers. They are however making satisfactory progress and doing as well as they can when their level of understanding of English is taken into account.
96. In writing, standards are lower than in reading at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils possess the necessary skills of spelling and punctuation but their ability to write in a lively and imaginative way is not as good as it is in the technical skills. More-able pupils write in sentences with appropriate punctuation including question marks and capital letters. At both key stages only the minority of more-able pupils include sophisticated vocabulary in their writing. In Key Stage 2 English books there is very little evidence of good narrative writing; characters and events are rarely developed and few stories have defined beginnings that set the scene or endings that arrive at resolutions.
97. In Key Stage 1 pupils' spelling is reasonably accurate and their good phonic knowledge helps them successfully attempt the spelling of new words. Their handwriting is satisfactory and standards of handwriting are improving well. Cursive handwriting is successfully used in all areas of the pupils' written work. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when only a few pupils could use cursive writing. Handwriting is of a consistently higher standard in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 where some pupils still do not join letters in their everyday written work and the standard of presentation is often low. The standard of spelling in many pupils' work in Key Stage 2 is lower than expected; this is particularly the case for the average and below average writers whose writing contains many misspellings even of words with regular letter patterns. In the past these skills have not received enough attention.
98. Teaching of English is satisfactory in both key stages and it is occasionally good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some work was unsatisfactory. A significant criticism was that English was taught through topic work. English is now taught as a subject in its own right and the main focus of lessons is the improvement of the specific skills and knowledge required. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to help them plan work across the full range of English skills and it has helped raise expectations of what the pupils can do. In Key Stage 1 teachers use shared reading and writing appropriately to teach comprehension and aspects of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Oral work in phonics, grammar and punctuation is effective in the key stage and leads to satisfactory levels of attainment in these aspects. Key words are systematically taught and this provides pupils with a basic independent

writing vocabulary. Guided group reading and independent work are generally effective in improving reading and writing standards.

99. In Key Stage 2, though writing has improved, pupils are still not taught to develop their writing to a high enough standard. Principally this is because they do too little writing at length but it is also because they are not routinely expected to proof-read, edit or improve their own work. Another reason for the low standard in writing is the lack of lively vocabulary in written work. The quality of marking is inconsistent from class to class. It is best in Year 6 where the teacher addresses all aspects of the pupils' writing; technical aspects are covered but the key purpose in the marking is that of enabling the pupils to structure and organise their writing better to make it more interesting for the reader. It was evident that pupils' work had often benefited from such helpful response. In many classes, marking is negative and deals mainly with correcting errors or pointing out omissions. The latter approach rarely helps pupils improve or do better next time.
100. Only a few teachers give enough emphasis to developing their pupils oral language with the result in many lessons that the majority listen passively and too few volunteer to contribute in discussions. For example in geography lessons in Years 4 and 5, teachers asked questions that elicited short, one word answers and they rarely encouraged pupils to expand or develop them. In Year 3 few pupils offered their ideas in a whole class discussion about a non-fiction text in their literacy lesson. In the Year 6 and 4 literacy lessons, however, the opposite was the case. Lively teaching involved the pupils; many were keen to contribute, prepared even to give tentative answers to challenging questions. The teachers insisted that pupils clarified and explained precisely what they meant to say when they used terms such as 'chronological'. They introduced their pupils to new vocabulary and challenged them to extend their answers. In these two lessons pupils participated enthusiastically.
101. In English lessons most teachers manage their classes well and maintain a satisfactory pace of work. The pupils have learned to work independently and this frees the teacher to spend time on good quality group teaching in lessons. Behaviour is always good in lessons and pupils work well at their set tasks. At the time of the last inspection pupils in Key Stage 2 were said to work slowly and with little enthusiasm. This is no longer the case. Pupils worked well in their lessons and completed their tasks. Support staff make a very positive contribution in lessons; they play a full part in all elements of the literacy hour, using their skills to observe pupils and assess their future learning needs for example. They often teach groups, playing a positive part in helping pupils develop their knowledge and understanding.
102. Management of the subject has been successful in seeing that the National Literacy Strategy has been systematically adopted by all teachers. This has made a good contribution to raising standards. Evaluation of standards in different aspects of the subject has alerted the curriculum managers to the need to improve the pupils' writing. But, monitoring of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching is not rigorous enough and this means that significant features have not been identified as particularly successful in promoting better learning for the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

103. The 2000 end of key stage results in mathematics show that standards for both 7 and 11 year olds are well below average in comparison with schools

nationally and similar schools. The reason for this is that a significant number of pupils do not attain the average level for their age and very few pupils attain the higher level. From 1996 to 1999, results at the end of Key Stage 1 declined year on year in contrast to the national trend where results were improving. The 2000 results show a significant improvement and the most recent unpublished results indicate a similar picture. At the end of Key Stage 2, between 1996 and 1998, results got worse but picked up in 1999 and improved again in 2000. The most recent unpublished results indicate that this trend has not been sustained and fewer pupils have attained the average or above average level. Comparing the 2000 results of the eleven-year-olds with their attainment at age seven, the results are well below the level expected. This appears to be the same this year with fewer than half the pupils making the gains expected. The school's analysis of these results show that whereas the pupils with special educational needs made good progress overall, a significant proportion of the more-able pupils did not.

104. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average because very few of the pupils attain the higher levels. These reflect the unpublished test results for the current Year 2 pupils, teacher assessment and the work seen during the inspection. The majority of pupils are gaining an understanding of the number system and how it works. The more able are confident with numbers over 100 and are developing a range of mental strategies for number calculations. They understand the links between numbers and problems involving money and apply their knowledge of number facts to bigger numbers. They are building up a wide range of mathematical vocabulary and link it to appropriate numerical symbols. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of common shapes and describe some of the similarities and differences. Their knowledge of measures, position, direction and movement and associated language is sound. Pupils know how to measure different quantities and use the appropriate units. The lower attaining pupils estimate, measure and compare lengths using non-standard units while the more able pupils use standard units confidently.
105. The work of the current Year 6 pupils indicates that there is a broad range of attainment. Many of these pupils have special educational needs and although they are working at a lower than average level, their learning and progress are good. There is a small number of pupils working at the higher level while the work of the majority is within the range expected for their age. The unpublished results for the end of Key Stage 2 tests however, do not reflect the work seen nor teacher assessments. None of the more-able pupils attained the higher level and a significant number of pupils failed to attain the average level. A particular weakness was in the mental/oral section where achievement was low. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them, indicate that their performance in the tests did not match their general competence in the subject. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are covering work at an appropriate level that builds on what they have done earlier. They use correct notation and vocabulary and are developing a range of calculating strategies. Pupils have speedy recall of number facts but their ability to derive corresponding facts is not so well developed. For example they know multiplication facts up to 10×10 , but do not readily use these to solve examples with larger numbers such as 15×20 .

They have a sound understanding of place value and use this in work involving decimals, fractions and percentages. The small number of high-attaining pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the relationship between numbers and use standard methods of calculation accurately. An area of weakness for all pupils is their interpretation of problems and their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts. For example, where two step calculations are needed, pupils do not use the information provided and only partially find solutions.

106. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and during the inspection good or very good teaching was seen in three of the seven lessons. In addition, very good teaching of the hearing impaired pupils in Year 6 was observed. Strengths in the teaching include the effective use of the National Numeracy teaching programmes in planning the mathematics curriculum. This ensures that pupils are provided with work at an appropriate level, all aspects of the subject receive sufficient coverage and sufficient emphasis is placed on them acquiring the key objectives for each year group. The majority of lessons are conducted at a good pace and this helps pupils maintain concentration and work productively. There is a good balance between direct teaching to the whole class and group and individual work. In the best lessons, teachers use questions to assess pupils' understanding and clarify misunderstandings. Pupils' errors are used to reinforce important ideas and pupils themselves are encouraged to identify where they have problems. The organisation for the mixed Year 1/2 classes is effective and reduces the difficulty of catering for the wide range of ability found in each class. Pupils in each of these groups make satisfactory progress, especially the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs who make good progress over time. The specialist teaching of the hearing impaired pupils is very effective. They are fully integrated into class lessons, activities are suitably adapted and the teaching meets their learning needs very well. A weakness in the lessons seen was the pitch of work for some of the more-able pupils. In a number of lessons, although tasks were adjusted for the differing ability groups, the work for the most able was not challenging enough. Pupils could complete the tasks easily and they did not move on sufficiently quickly to more demanding activities. Teachers' planning does not provide sufficient attention to the learning objectives for this group of pupils and expectations are not as high as they should be. In some lessons, pupils use their numeracy skills to support work in other subjects for example in science and information and communication technology. However, such opportunities are not fully exploited and opportunities are missed to reinforce numeracy skills in different contexts.

107. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they use a range of strategies to engage pupils and hold their attention. Teachers achieve a good balance between explanation, instruction and demonstration and most lessons end productively with reinforcement of the important ideas that have arisen. Pupils are keen to participate and work well together. They are confident when asked to demonstrate or explain their work to the rest of the class. Older pupils readily discuss their work and offer one another constructive help and ideas. In

most lessons, resources are used effectively and enable pupils with English as an additional language to understand what the lessons are about.

108. The pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to develop and use their mathematical skills and knowledge is poor. Teachers do not regularly include information and communication technology work and only one teacher is using the package provided by the National Numeracy Strategy to support mathematics.
109. Assessment procedures are good and directly feed into the school's target setting procedures. New systems for tracking pupils' progress have recently been established. Targets are set for individual pupils at the end of each year and reviewed termly. Where pupils are identified as not on course to meet the targets, a review of their work is undertaken and where necessary additional support is provided. Although these arrangements are beginning to help raise standards, they are too new to have made an impact on standards overall.
110. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. However, changes in staff have impaired continuity of leadership in the subject. The school realises the need to provide stable and knowledgeable leadership to monitor standards and the quality of teaching.

SCIENCE

111. The previous inspection found that there were weaknesses in the subject. The weaknesses were tackled by the school and the action taken has resulted in an improvement in standards and better teaching.
112. At the end of Key Stage 1, the 2000 teacher assessments show that pupils attained less well than pupils nationally and standards were well below average. The 2001 teacher assessments indicate a significant increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the average level. However no pupils attained the higher level.
113. Results from the national tests in 2000 show that standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below average compared with all schools and with similar schools. Over time, however, since 1996 standards have risen consistently. In the not-yet published 2001 national tests the proportion of pupils attaining the average level is higher than in previous years. However, no pupils attained the higher level.
114. In Year 2, pupils can use simple texts to find information. The most able pupils have begun to recognise when a test is fair. For example, when comparing the length of different leaves they realised it is important to know if the leaves are fully grown. Scrutiny of work showed that the less able and average pupils are making the progress expected. Progress for the more able is less than expected largely because they are set the same work as the rest of the class. The overuse of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to think scientifically or plan their own investigations.
115. In Year 1 pupils know how forces such as squashing, bending and twisting can make objects change their shape. In another lesson on variation pupils successfully

presented their results in simple tables. They were encouraged to discuss observations and make comparisons but there was too little challenge in the written task to extend the more able pupils.

116. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are average. Pupils have appropriate knowledge about some scientific processes such as forces and friction. They know how to identify forces and the direction in which forces act. In Year 6 many pupils can plan a simple experiment to test an idea. The more able approach the task systematically. In a Year 5 lesson on the earth's orbit of the sun, most pupils could explain how day and night are related to the spin of the earth on its own axis. One pupil successfully used computer graphics to illustrate the orbit. Pupils related their learning in the lesson to homework that involved plotting a moon chart. In Years 5 and 6, many pupils have a good vocabulary of science terms and use them in investigations and their written work.
117. There is evidence that pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 are on course to reach higher levels of attainment. They ask questions that can be investigated scientifically and find answers. For example, good work arose from the challenge 'How can we find out what snails prefer to eat?' Pupils planned in groups what they would do and how they would ensure a fair test. Many pupils were able to predict an appropriate outcome drawing on experiences gained from a recent visit to Syon Park to study habitats. In this lesson the written task was set at different levels with a higher expectation of the achievement of the more able pupils.
118. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1, with some that is very good. Lessons are successful in meeting their objectives. Teachers build on previous work and are clear about the purpose of their lessons. They achieve a good balance between explanation, instruction and demonstration. They have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour. In the very good lesson, very good questioning challenged pupils to reflect and predict and learn that leaves vary in shape and have observable similarities and differences. The teacher skilfully used pupils' errors to clarify misconceptions and pupils made good progress in their learning.
119. In Key Stage 2 the majority of teaching is satisfactory, though one lesson was good. In the good lesson the teacher related the teaching to everyday situations, drawing on relevant illustrations. Pupils brought their own experience of snails eating young plants in the garden to a discussion about the animals' food preferences. Good attitudes to science were promoted and the investigative and experimental work was the principal focus of the lesson. Where teaching was weak the teacher did too little direct teaching, she did not give clear enough instructions and consequently pupils made only slow progress. For the more-able pupils in general, progress is too slow because they are often set the same work as the rest of the class.
120. The action the school has taken has been partly effective in raising standards. More time is given to the teaching of science at Key Stage 2. A focus on improving pupils' investigative skills has helped them think more creatively about what might happen, what kind of evidence to collect and what equipment and materials to use. The school has adopted a scheme of work, but evidence from the inspection indicates that some teachers do not plan in sufficient detail to make lessons effective. Resources are only just adequate to support the curriculum. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to identify weaknesses in teaching has not yet taken place. Pupils' end of year attainment is predicted at the beginning of each year but there is no termly monitoring to identify problem areas where improvement is needed.

ART AND DESIGN

121. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. Judgements are based on this lesson, scrutiny of work on display, the school's documentation, discussions with pupils and with the subject co-ordinator. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. Standards have deteriorated in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, when attainment was reported to exceed national expectations.
122. In Key Stage 1 pupils have a range of art experiences that enable them to use a range of tools and media to create art work and teaching of the subject is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have wound wool to create patterns, closely matching the colours to a picture. They have sculpted clay by stretching and twisting it. There is, however, little evidence of systematic progression in the key skill of evaluating and developing their work. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to explore and respond to the work of artists from their own and different cultures and times. They have opportunities to draw but drawing skills are not taught in a systematic way.
123. School displays show work in different media, including drawing, painting and printing. In Year 6 pupils have made individual glazed tiles depicting an underwater scene and focused on the tiny detail of a scene to draw it carefully. Work produced following the school journey consisted of sketches and drawings of a good standard. In the Key Stage 2 lesson seen teaching was satisfactory. Learning intentions were made clear to pupils and challenged them to think about the task. For example, they were encouraged to reflect on a previous experience to approach their design task systematically. The teacher made good use of questioning to elicit ideas and assess pupils' understanding. Resources were well organised and easily accessible to pupils. Expectations of behaviour were high and pupils concentrated on their tasks. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They respond with enthusiasm, enjoy their work and talk confidently about what they are doing. Pupils work together well, they help each other and offer advice on how to modify work. They listen carefully to instructions and try hard to produce careful work.
124. The school's scheme for art does not contain the detail needed to help teachers plan progressively more challenging tasks. Evidence from the work scrutiny across the school showed that skills are not progressively built on from year to year. Computers are not used enough to promote learning. Sketchbooks are in use in both key stages but their use varies in effectiveness. In the best examples they are used well to practise drawing skills, make designs and record from close observation. However, there is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to evaluate and develop their work or relate it to that of artists and craftworkers from different times and cultures.
125. Classrooms are well organised for artwork and resources are adequate. There are weaknesses in the management of the subject due to staff changes. There has been little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or implement a training programme for teachers to extend their skills. The co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be done and is attending a subject leadership course.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. The last inspection found standards in design and technology to be appropriate throughout the school. There was insufficient evidence in this inspection to make secure judgements about standards. It was not possible to observe any lessons, owing to the school's timetabling arrangements. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator and the few samples of work available were examined.
127. Very little recorded work was available in pupils' books for the subject but displays throughout the school were scrutinised and some photographic evidence was seen. There was a mature display of work completed by Year 6, following a visit to the Jackfield Tile Museum. Pupils had recorded the various stages of designing and making a clay tile. The processes from moulding to firing and glazing were well explained and illustrated with photographic evidence. The final products were highly decorative tiles. Linked to their history topic, younger pupils had constructed model houses from reclaimed materials. Others had created 'dream-catchers', inspired by their topic on North American Indians. Sketches showed how they had fashioned the models from wool, feathers, metal wire and sequins.
128. The subject features on the current school development plan. There is a subject overview and the co-ordinator monitors long and medium term plans. However, the co-ordinator's role is under-developed. She has had no opportunity to monitor standards in teaching or learning.

GEOGRAPHY

129. No judgement was made on standards in the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in this inspection is judged to be below average at the end of both key stages. The standard of teaching in lessons is satisfactory but the scheme of work introduced this year has not been in place for long enough to ensure continuity of development of geographical skills across the school. Pupils' general knowledge of place is unsatisfactory. Over time pupils have had too few opportunities for fieldwork and practical work.
130. No lessons were seen during the inspection in Key Stage 1. Scrutiny of work indicates that although there is appropriate coverage of the subject, the content is not sufficiently related to pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and work is insufficiently differentiated for the range of ability in the three classes of Year 1 and 2 pupils. The result is that skills and knowledge are not developed in a systematic way. There is an inappropriate use of worksheets at the expense of provision of practical work or fieldwork. Consequently, standards are lower than expected.
131. In Key Stage 2, pupils were engaged in more practical tasks and the standard of work seen was satisfactory. For instance, younger Key Stage 2 pupils locate features on a map of the locality and use a key satisfactorily. Their map making skills are developing satisfactorily. Year 5 pupils demonstrated good levels of

interest and knowledge resulting from their research work on mountain ranges of the world. However, across the key stage pupils' knowledge of place is insecure and their general geographical knowledge is limited. They have had too few opportunities to learn these in their geography work in the past. They apply their literacy skills well in their geography work but have few opportunities to use numeracy or information and communication technology skills.

132. When fieldwork is undertaken, such as the Year 6 residential visit, pupils demonstrate not only positive attitudes but also understanding of physical features of the landscape. For instance, they were able to make a good comparison between the environmental features of the West Coast of Wales with those of Watford. Having undertaken practical tasks, they could describe in detail how sand dunes were formed.

133. The subject has had insufficient attention and standards reflect this. Pupils' progress is limited by the lack of detail in the scheme of work to set out clearly what they need to be taught. At present the work set does not systematically build on what pupils already know, understand and can do. There are not enough resources such as maps, books or software to support pupils' learning and fully develop their geographical skills.

HISTORY

134. At the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory though the report was critical of many aspects of the subject including the development of historical skills at Key Stage 2. There was no scheme of work and only a draft policy. The school used a topic approach that did not provide an appropriate emphasis on developing historical skills and knowledge. Pupils' progress through the school has been adversely affected by this approach. This largely accounts for the lower than expected attainment found in this inspection at the end of both key stages. The school has introduced a new scheme of work this year but it has not as yet had enough effect to make a difference in standards. There is a lack of appropriate resources and pupils have only very limited opportunities to use information and communication technology for research work.

135. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 2. This was in Year 6 where pupils researched aspects of the life of John Lennon. Although the teaching was satisfactory, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the period was limited by the lack of appropriate resources. Their general knowledge of the period studied was insecure and their chronological development underdeveloped. Scrutiny of work for pupils at both stages indicated that the tasks set were insufficiently differentiated to meet pupils learning needs. For instance in Year 2, work set on the Fire of London entailed all pupils undertaking the same task. In a number of classes there was an overuse of worksheets and the tasks set lacked sufficient challenge. In Key Stage 1, although pupils had some awareness of past and present, the lack of artefacts limited their

understanding and prevented their being able to compare a visit to the seaside now with one in Victorian times.

136. The subject is insufficiently developed across the school, consequently pupils' chronological awareness and enquiry skills are not as good as they should be. The standard of resources in this subject is poor. The co-ordinator's role is insufficiently developed because she is not responsible for monitoring continuity of learning and quality of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were judged below average and progress in learning was unsatisfactory. The main reason given was the limited range of opportunities provided for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge. This remains the case and very little progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school is well aware that too little attention has been given to the subject and the new school improvement plan fully addresses the weaknesses.

138. Pupils are introduced to a range of information and communication technology applications, for example, word processing, using Internet sources and graphical work. However much of the work is superficial and lacks development of the ideas involved. Discussions with pupils indicate that those who have computers at home are developing proficient use of them but the school does not build on this to help pupils reach the standards expected. Those without access to computers outside school have had very limited opportunities to learn and practise the skills outlined in the National Curriculum. Pupils are however, very interested in new technologies and are keen to build on what they can already do.

139. Teachers are not secure in their knowledge of the information and communication technology curriculum and there is insufficient guidance about how to implement the National Curriculum requirements and plan a coherent programme of work. In one of the few sessions observed during the inspection, Year 1 and 2 pupils experimented with a tape recorder and learned how to operate it. However, the lesson did not enable pupils to work independently to use the knowledge they had acquired. In another lesson, pupils were given a set of data and were required to complete a corresponding graph on paper. Arrangements for using the one available computer were ineffective and the information and communication technology skills and knowledge learned as a result of the teaching were minimal. Part of the school's action plan for improving teaching includes training supported by New Opportunities funding, but this is to take place in the next academic year. Teachers are aware of their own training needs and consider the future training an essential component for improving their teaching.

MUSIC

140. Standards at the last inspection were judged to be below national expectations. There has been some improvement since then and the work seen in Key Stage 2 was good. Teaching in the few lessons seen was satisfactory.
141. The previous co-ordinator, who is a musician, continues to support staff and pupils; she accompanies singing with a guitar. She has established a brief music policy and a scheme of work that covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and is supplemented by additional material. A range of music workshops is held in the school each year; recently these have included a string quartet, an African drumming group and participation in a multi-cultural festival. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity for recorder or guitar tuition.
142. All class teachers indicate the music they will be teaching in medium term plans using the scheme as a basis for progression. A two-year cycle is followed to ensure progression for mixed year groups. The broad music curriculum however, is still underdeveloped and no use of technology, pupils' notation or work with instruments was seen in either Key Stage 1 or 2.
143. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make considerable progress in their performance of music and in the last term Year 6 pupils made a good contribution to a public festival of music where they sang in three parts. There is evidence of performances, celebrations, festivals and topical assemblies throughout the year when pupils sing and play to an audience. At the end of Key Stage 2, for example, pupils and staff sing carols to residents in the local old peoples' home and patients in the local hospital.
144. The quality of singing heard in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory, pupils were able to sing in tune and keep time with each other and to the accompaniment of recorded music in assemblies. They sing many songs and rhymes with explicit actions that support the involvement of hearing-impaired pupils. Singing at the end of Key Stage 2 is good and pupils can sing songs arranged in three parts.
145. In lessons observed Year 1 and 2 pupils were able to listen attentively and follow instructions when working on pulse and rhythm. They were able to work at varying speeds with increasing or decreasing volume and used their voices expressively. They responded to each other and reviewed their own work and progress.
146. There is a varied collection of pitched and unpitched instruments and a collection of recorded music which is supplemented by staff. A number of instruments are in disrepair and there are insufficient resources to support music adequately throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. There has been something of a decline in standards of physical education since the last inspection. Pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 do not now reach the expected levels. There has been a considerable turnover of teachers

since the last inspection and several changes in the personnel responsible for the management of the subject. The strengths reported in the previous inspection have not been maintained and standards in the subject do not meet the national expectation. In swimming 82 per cent of pupils reach the expected standard of swimming 25 metres unaided by the end of Key Stage 2.

148. Only three lessons were seen; two were games lessons in Key Stage 2 and the third a gymnastics lesson in Key Stage 1. All the teaching seen was unsatisfactory and in one lesson it was poor. The lessons had a similar cluster of weaknesses. They were not well managed with the result that pupils spent too little of the available time on learning or developing their skills and were inactive for too much of the time. They quickly lost interest as they listened to lengthy instructions and explanations; they often chatted to each other while the teacher was talking to the class. They repeatedly failed to stop work when asked to. They were noisy in indoor lessons and did not always take account of the need for safe behaviour. Evaluation was limited to indiscriminate praise and insufficiently focused on raising attainment. There was little evidence of application or serious efforts at improving physical skills. The standard of work achieved was lower than expected in all the lessons seen. Performance was rarely controlled and movements were not precise. Where pupils were asked to, and did, make sensible suggestions about how to improve, teaching failed to use these ideas to develop the quality of their work.

149. The school is aware that physical education is in need of substantial improvement. The optional scheme of work has been adopted but it is not adequately supported with guidance to help teachers plan and teach lessons to a reasonable level.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Standards at the end of both key stages are below the expectations specified in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. At the time of the previous inspection, standards throughout the school were judged as sound. Teaching was observed only once during this inspection owing to a lack of timetabled lessons. Samples of work and displays were examined throughout the school and a discussion was held with the co-ordinator.

151. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 had little recorded work. Samples showed some understanding of Baptism, Lent and the events leading up to the Easter story in Christianity. References were made to the significance of special books in Hinduism and Judaism, such as the Torah and the Vedas. However, work in files was characterised by undemanding worksheets and very little independent writing by pupils. Tasks were not suitably differentiated for pupils' abilities and often lacked challenge. These findings were mirrored in Year 6. Pupils' work showed a basic understanding of the Christian concept of Trinity. Pupils had examined a Buddhist diary extract. They had an understanding of bar mitzvah and were familiar with terms such as Shabbat, Sukkot and synagogue.

152. Scrutiny of displays revealed some better quality work in other year groups. For example, in a Year 3/4 class, pupils had created a display of their study of Islam. They had designed prayer mats and were able to identify the main features of a mosque. Others had written comparisons of the pilgrimage to Mecca by Muslims with that to Lourdes by Christians. Their work was thoughtful and showed a respect and increasing understanding of people's beliefs. Teaching in the one lesson observed was unsatisfactory. The teacher read the story of the creation to stimulate discussion on responsibilities towards the environment and God's creation. Few pupils appreciated the religious significance of the story. Unsatisfactory behaviour and a lack of challenge and pace in the lesson inhibited many from completing the task of composing a letter to express their thoughts.

153. The school has no agreed programme for monitoring standards nor support to help staff assess progress. There are some artefacts that reflect the six main faiths, but these are too few to support the full extent of the work to be covered. RE features on the school improvement plan and the school intends to ensure appropriate coverage, improve planning and review the policy.