

INSPECTION REPORT

KENILWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Borehamwood

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117183

Headteacher: Mrs. R. Landa

Reporting inspector: Mr P Dennison
17736

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th June 2001

Inspection number: 192256

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kenilworth Drive
Borehamwood
Herts

Postcode: WD6 1QL

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. V. Ledden

Date of previous inspection: 10th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17736	P. Dennison	Registered inspector	English Art and design Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19365	G. Stockley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2632	R. Holmes	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18101	J. A. Sharpe	Team inspector	Mathematics History Music The Foundation Stage	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kenilworth Primary School is situated in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. The school was originally a first school but became a primary school in September 2000. There will be no Year 6 pupils until September 2001. Currently there are 164 pupils on roll in six classes. In addition, 35 children attend the nursery class part time. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the nursery but overall it is below that expected for the age group. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. This is also broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Three pupils are learning English as an additional language, although none are at an early stage of English language acquisition.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Although standards attained by the older pupils are below the national expectation, their progress has been satisfactory. The headteacher has a good understanding of the issues to be addressed and provides very good leadership. Staff are supportive and the school is in a strong position to move forward after a period of disruption. Much of the teaching is good and has a positive effect on pupils' progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and the school is well managed.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The provision for pupils in the Early Years Unit is good and they make good progress.
- The provision for pupils' personal and social development is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good.
- The school cares well for its pupils and relationships are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards attained by the older pupils in Key Stage 2, especially in English, science, information and communication technology and geography.
- The way support for pupils with special educational needs is organised.
- The use of information and communication technology to support the work in other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Progress since then has been satisfactory overall, although recent improvement has been good. Standards of attainment were reported to be broadly in line with national average. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics, as measured by the results of the national tests for seven year olds, declined in the following two years. However, under the very effective leadership of the new headteacher, the school has improved standards at Key Stage 1. They are now, once again, broadly in line with the national average. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made

satisfactory progress; however, standards in English and science at the end of Year 5 are below expectations. All the key issues for action have been addressed successfully. The introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy has helped the school to address the issue of raising standards, as has the introduction of systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' progress is monitored and clear targets for improvement are set. However, these are not yet being used effectively by all teachers to support their planning. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been developed and they now have opportunities to monitor their subject. The school now satisfies legal requirements on the reporting of attendance.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	E	D	E
Writing	E	E	C	C
Mathematics	E	E*	A	A

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The school's results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in reading were below the national average and well below the average in comparison with similar schools. In writing, standards were in line with the national average and with similar schools. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests in mathematics were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools. These results were an improvement on the previous two years when results had been well below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading are improving and are now broadly in line with most schools. Standards in writing also remain broadly in line with the national average. The results in mathematics were largely due to a very capable year group. The proportion of pupils failing to reach the expected level 2 was above average. However, an above average proportion achieved the higher level 3. The pupils in the current Year 2 are more typical of the school's intake, and inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils will achieve results which are in line with the national average. Teachers' assessments of seven years olds in 2000 show most pupils to be achieving the expected level 2 in science, but relatively few reaching the higher level 3. This is below the results achieved in most schools, but close to those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Inspection findings confirm these results. Attainment in all other areas of the curriculum is in line with expectations.

Standards at the beginning of Key Stage 2 are good. However, although older pupils have made satisfactory progress since their poor results in 1998, standards in English, and science by the end of Year 5 are below the national expectation.

Standards in information and communication technology are rising rapidly as a result of the improved provision. They are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but they are below expectations at the end of Year 5 as pupils have not had sufficient time using the

new facilities. Attainment in geography is below expectations but attainment in all other curriculum areas is in line with expectations.

There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the nursery but overall, standards are below those expected for this age group. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress and standards by the end of the reception year are in line with national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They work hard, concentrate well and show good levels of interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond in a positive manner.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils co-operate well with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Attendance now compares satisfactorily with other schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. During the inspection, 65 percent of the teaching observed was good or better and 16 percent was very good. Four percent of the teaching was unsatisfactory but none was poor. The quality of teaching in the Early Years Unit is good overall. The main strengths are the very good relationships between adults and children, good planning, and the teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and of how young children learn. Teaching in the nursery class is never less than good. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching provided by the two teachers in the reception class. During the first part of the week, teaching is good. In the latter part of the week, work is not well matched to children's abilities, and opportunities to extend their skills are missed. In Key Stage 1, teaching is consistently good. In Key Stage 2, 48 percent of teaching was good or better and 16 percent was very good. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Much of the good and very good teaching was observed at the beginning of the key stage.

When teaching is good, lessons are well planned, work is well matched to pupils' needs and effective support is provided to enable them to make appropriate progress in their learning. Lessons usually proceed at a lively pace and pupils work hard, showing good levels of concentration. As a result, they make sound progress. On the occasions where teaching is less successful, it is usually because the work provided is not well matched to pupils'

needs. At times it lacks challenge and the pace of pupils' response slows, with an adverse effect on the progress made.

Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of teaching literacy and numeracy and plan carefully within the National Strategies. However, handwriting and presentation of work is a weakness for older pupils in Key Stage 2, where teachers accept poorly presented work and marking has little effect on ensuring that pupils improve.

Teachers and classroom support staff provide additional help for pupils with special educational needs during class lessons. These pupils also receive additional support with their reading and writing. They are taught in small groups withdrawn from class lessons. The teaching is good and the support provided is effective. However, pupils do not receive their entitlement to the whole curriculum, missing work in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sound overall. There is good provision in the Early Years Unit. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is an appropriately wide range of learning opportunities to support pupils' academic and personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is unsatisfactory. Pupils who are withdrawn from class lessons for additional support with reading and writing, miss work in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils are well supported and fully integrated into the life of the school. None are at an early stage of acquiring English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good provision is made for personal development. There are very clear expectations of behaviour and the positive values promoted in assemblies and lessons help to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Good procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.

The school encourages parents to support their children's learning and establishes a satisfactory partnership with them. Teachers know their pupils well. However, they do not always make effective use of assessment to support their planning and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. The school is managed well. Other key staff provide sound support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive. They are aware of the needs and priorities facing the school and contribute effectively to its success.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of planning and teaching. Assessment results are analysed carefully to monitor standards of attainment and the progress of pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use is made of the school budget and additional grants for the benefit of pupils' learning. Financial planning is good and resources are used well to support the school's educational priorities.

There are sufficient, well-qualified and experienced teachers and a good ratio of support staff to meet the needs of pupils. The accommodation is good. Learning resources for information and communication technology and reading have been improved recently but resources for science, design and technology and geography are inadequate.

Collectively the headteacher, staff and governors contribute very effectively to the quality of education provided and to the standards achieved by the pupils. The school improvement plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This is based on an analysis of the school's needs. It clearly identifies the school's priorities and is reviewed regularly to evaluate progress.

The headteacher and governing body consider cost, quality, service and efficiency appropriately in their decisions on the choice of goods and services, and obtain tenders for larger expenditure. The school applies the principles of best value soundly.

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 • The behaviour in school is good • The teaching is good • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best • The school is well led and managed • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns 	<p>A small minority of parents would like: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of activities outside lessons.

Through the questionnaire and in discussions with inspectors, parents expressed much satisfaction with the school's provision. They have a high regard for the leadership and management of the school and appreciate the fact that their children are happy, behave well in school and are helped to become independent and responsible. They respect the teachers and find them very approachable. The inspection team supports these views. A few parents have reservations about the provision of extra-curricular activities but the inspectors consider the school's arrangements for these to be both adequate and appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the nursery but overall, standards are below those expected of this age group. Provision in the nursery and reception classes is good. The curriculum is soundly based on the six areas of learning suitable for children of this age. Appropriate priority is given to: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and, mathematical development. The good teaching has a positive effect on children's learning and they make good progress. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority of the children achieve the expected levels of attainment in: personal and social development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and, creative development. Children with special educational needs receive a good level of support to enable them to participate in activities and to make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

2 The school's overall results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in reading were below those of most schools and well below those in similar schools. In writing, standards were in line with most other schools and with similar schools. These results were an improvement on the previous two years when results had been well below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading are improving and are now broadly in line with most schools. Standards in writing also remain broadly in line.

3 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests in mathematics were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools. These results were a considerable improvement on the previous two years when results had been well below average. They were largely the result of a very capable year group. The proportion of pupils failing to reach the expected level 2 was above average. However an above average proportion achieved the higher level 3. The pupils in the current Year 2 are more typical of the school's intake, and inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils will achieve results which are in line with the national average.

4 These improvements are the result of good teaching, together with the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy which have provided a framework for planning and led to a clear focus in lessons. The school has also implemented clear strategies to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress and attainment is above the national expectation. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have made satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science but their attainment in English and science is below the national expectation at the end of Year 5. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

5 Teachers' assessments of seven years olds in 2000 show most pupils to be achieving the expected level 2 in science, but relatively few going on to reach the higher level 3. This is below the results achieved in most schools, but close to the results of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Inspection findings confirm these results.

6 When pupils enter the nursery, attainment overall is below average. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of language and communication skills and this enables pupils to make good progress. Attainment in speaking and listening by the end

of Key Stage 1 is generally in line with the national average. Most pupils demonstrate the ability to listen attentively, contribute to class discussion, ask questions and respond to their teachers' questions with confidence. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to read and develop positive attitudes to books as they move through Key Stage 1. Pupils also make satisfactory progress in learning to write. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write independently and are beginning to write stories with a beginning, a middle and an end. Their spelling of simple words is generally accurate and they are able to use full stops and capital letters appropriately. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress but the standards attained by older pupils are below those expected for their age group. Higher attaining pupils read stories with fluency, expression and understanding; showing a good understanding of plot and character. However, a significant number of other pupils are hesitant when reading aloud and do not have a clear understanding of what they have read. They struggle with basic reading skills and have limited strategies to deal with unfamiliar words.

7 In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to write descriptions, instructions and reports. By the end of Year 5, higher attaining pupils are able to compose pieces of writing which demonstrate accurate sentence construction, punctuation and grammar. However, many pupils are struggling to write at the levels expected nationally. Their skills of punctuation and grammar are weak and they have difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly. At the beginning of the key stage, the pupils' writing and presentation of work is satisfactory. Most use a joined script and take a pride in their work. Presentation of work is less satisfactory in Years 4 and 5. There is a lack of consistency in developing handwriting skills and many pupils are still printing at the end of Year 5. Work is often completed carelessly with little thought to its presentation.

8 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in mathematics. By the end of the key stage, they have an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Most can add and take away numbers at least to 20 and apply this to other work on estimating, money and measurement. They know the names of regular two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and understand terms such as 'sides', 'corners' and 'curved'. The highest attaining pupils understand simple multiplication and division and can 'round' numbers to the nearest 10.

9 Overall, standards in mathematics are in line with the national expectation by the time pupils reach the end of Year 5. Teacher's assessments suggest that most pupils have made good progress since they were seven when their test results were well below average. Most pupils can calculate accurately on paper, working with numbers, often to a thousand and beyond. They know what multiplication tables are, but not all are yet quick enough with their mental recall of these. Pupils solve problems involving money, length, decimals, fractions, negative numbers and probability.

10 Pupils make satisfactory progress in science. They benefit from a strongly practical approach to the subject, improving their skills in handling equipment and making careful observations. By the end of Key Stage 1, they appreciate that a test has to be made fair if the results are to be of any use and some pupils can suggest what needs to be done to make an investigation fair. Pupils are making good progress at the beginning of Key Stage 2 and standards of attainment are above average. They continue to make good progress in their approach to investigations in the top two classes, but their knowledge of science facts is not as good as it should be and the attainment of the older pupils is lower than that expected for the age group. They can remember work that they have done recently fairly well, such as the different ways seeds can be dispersed, but they are less secure on earlier work such as the differences between solids, liquids and gases. There are some surprising

gaps in what they know, for example the temperature at which water freezes and the conventions used to draw an electrical current.

11 The school has recently installed a suite of 15 computers in a dedicated room. Classes are now using the computers regularly and standards are rising rapidly. Lessons in the computer room are taught well, but this dramatic improvement in provision has not yet had time to bring pupils up to the expected levels of achievement in all aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards which are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. They are confident with the computer, can start programs, save their work and know the conventions of using a mouse to operate the program. The current Year 5 pupils are achieving appropriately in using the computer to communicate information, particularly changing the appearance of a document by altering the style and layout of the text and importing pictures. They have not reached the expected levels in handling data or in monitoring and control.

12 By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, and physical education is in line with the national expectation. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

13 By the end of Year 5, attainment in art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education is in line with the national expectation. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment in geography is below the national expectation. Pupils in Year 5 do not use maps confidently; they are unsure about scale, are not familiar with the conventional symbols used to identify features on Ordnance Survey maps and are surprisingly unsure of the compass directions.

14 Following the previous inspection, standards declined considerably. The school has worked hard to improve the situation and raise standards. This has been successful at Key Stage 1 but standards in English, science, information and communication technology and geography at the end of Year 5 are below expectations. The quality of planning and teaching has improved. Detailed analysis of pupils' attainment has been carried out and very clear targets for improvement have been established. Realistic but challenging targets have been set for each year group, although these are not yet used effectively by all teachers to support their planning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are just as good as they were at the time of the last report; they are still a major strength of the work of the school. Their very good attitudes are evident in the way that pupils come to lessons eagerly and look forward to activities. They usually listen to teachers and other adults attentively, get straight to work when asked to do so and enjoy mental challenges. They answer challenging questions thoughtfully and are not afraid to ask further questions, as in a religious education lesson in Year 2 when a pupil asked the teacher, 'What is a Christian?' Pupils often remember previous work well, as seen when pupils in Year 5 recalled with great pleasure their previous work in music, and they took great pride in performing it again for an inspector.

16 Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils are clear about how they should behave towards others and know what the school rules are. They show equal respect for each other and the many adults who work with them in various capacities. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months, and pupils' behaviour around the school and

in lessons is very good overall. Behaviour is particularly good outside in the playground areas, where pupils organise themselves into pairs and groups, often inventing their own games. Girls and boys work and play safely and very happily together, and there is no sign of pupils not wishing to have any other pupils as partners or group members. Pupils know that they must take fair turns with using the adventure playground and they respect the rules. Pupils are caring in their dealings with each other. A pupil in Year 3, for example, gave a tissue to another child who became upset when talking about a sad time in his life.

17 Pupils become increasingly more confident to help around the school. They are keen to accept many different responsibilities, such as tidying up, scraping plates at dinnertime and taking registers to the office. They notice what needs to be done, as when two pupils spotted that the floor had water on it and set about mopping it up without being asked. Pupils enjoy looking after younger pupils – even to the point of requesting to do this as a reward for good work. Those pupils who are members of the recently formed school council have a mature attitude and take their responsibilities very seriously. There is no sign of bullying or oppressive behaviour and pupils are very clear why it will not be tolerated at school.

18 Since the last inspection, the rate of attendance has deteriorated from the good position reported. In the last full school year it was well below national average with more unauthorised absences than other schools. Attendance has improved again recently and is currently about average with no reported unauthorised absences. Lateness arriving at school continues to be a concern for the school from time to time, but this is mainly down to a small minority of families.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The good quality of teaching reported at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. During this inspection, 65 percent of the teaching observed was good or better and 16 percent was very good. Only four percent of teaching was unsatisfactory and none was poor.

20 The quality of teaching in the Early Years Unit is good overall. In 67 percent of the lessons observed it was good or better and in 25 percent it was very good. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. The main strengths are the very good relationships between adults and children, good planning and the teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and of how young children learn. The activities are carefully planned to enable children to learn through first-hand experiences which provide interest and motivation. The majority of the staff have appropriately high expectations of the children, both in achievement and social skills, and the children are respected and valued. Support staff work closely with the teachers and make a very positive contribution to children's learning. Teaching in the nursery class is never less than good. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching provided by the two teachers in the reception class. During the first part of the week, teaching is good. In the latter part of the week, work is not well matched to children's abilities, and opportunities to extend their skills are missed.

21 In Key Stage 1, teaching is good. In the lessons observed, 93 percent of the teaching was good or better and seven percent was very good. None was less than satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, 48 percent of teaching was good or better and 16 percent was very good. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Much of the good and very good teaching was observed at the beginning of the key stage.

22 Teachers use a variety of teaching techniques and organisation strategies which enable the pupils to learn in the most appropriate way. The teachers generally have appropriately high expectations of behaviour and attainment. They expect pupils to maintain concentration and lessons proceed at a good pace. They make good use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding and they give clear explanations. Group work is organised well to enable some groups to work independently thus enabling the teacher to give intensive support to others. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible about their work, and are given opportunities to work independently and in pairs or groups. Relationships are very positive and pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and show good levels of concentration. Where teaching is most effective it builds on previous learning, work is introduced in a lively and stimulating way and tasks are provided to meet the differing needs of pupils. Where teaching is less successful, work is not well matched to pupils' capabilities and, at times, lacks sufficient challenge.

23 Teachers know their pupils well. They provide good verbal feedback during lessons and help pupils to improve their work. The use of written marking is less consistent. Comments do not always effectively ensure that pupils are aware of areas which need to be improved or to set clear targets for improvement. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is not always used well to plan future work. Consequently work is not well matched to pupils' capabilities.

24 Teaching in English and mathematics is effective. Teachers throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of teaching literacy and numeracy and plan carefully within the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Pupils respond well and make sound progress. Lessons usually proceed at a lively pace and pupils work hard, showing good levels of concentration and developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.

25 Much of the teaching of pupils with special educational needs takes place outside the classroom in small groups. The teaching focuses strongly on developing language skills, particularly reading and writing. The teacher knows the pupils well and matches the work to their needs. The teaching is skilful, patient and persistent so that the pupils make progress during the lessons; for example, in one lesson with Year 1 pupils, a girl who had great difficulty at first was eventually able to identify the initial sound of simple words.

26 Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in other subjects (and in the early years) is often carried out by teaching assistants in the classroom. In reception, for example, these pupils are fully integrated with the other children and make appropriate progress because of the skilful way they are supported and because the work is adapted slightly so that they can cope. Similarly in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, the assistant worked very effectively with a group who find the subject difficult. Ensuring they understood the work, she analysed the problems they had by talking with them and provided very effective support so that they made good progress in understanding about turning through an angle. Much of the work in classrooms concentrates on getting the pupils to talk about what they are doing. This enables the teaching assistant to work successfully with the pupils, keeping them well motivated and making progress.

27 From the time children start in the nursery class, the school encourages parents to support their children's learning at home. The amount of homework given to pupils is increased as they progress through the school. This takes a variety of forms including reading activities, spellings and following up class work. However, currently the homework arrangements make only a limited contribution to pupils' learning.

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

28 The school's curriculum for pupils in the early years provides a good range and balance of experiences, firmly based on the national guidelines for the Foundation Curriculum. The curriculum for the rest of the school is sound, covering all the required subjects and generally providing enough time to cover each of them adequately. There is an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics and this is leading to improved standards in these subjects. Time for information and communication technology has been increased so that each class has a timetabled session in the computer suite, but pupils have too little experience of information and communication technology through other subjects.

29 Arrangements for planning the curriculum have been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. There is now an overall curriculum plan based on national guidance for the curriculum. This allocates sections of work to each year so that there is a good coverage of each subject and clear progression through the school. The scheme has only been in place for two terms and so it has not yet had chance to show its full effect. At the moment there are gaps in pupils' experience, such as the coverage of electricity in science, as a result of the previous, less rigorous planning system.

30 National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully and are contributing to improved standards in English and mathematics. The teaching methods advocated in these schemes are also influencing the work in other subjects; lessons regularly start with the teacher explaining what the pupils will be learning and finish with a review of what has been achieved. Some teachers successfully weave literacy and numeracy into their lessons on other subjects, for example, considering how World War 2 evacuees had taken account of whom they were writing to in their letters home, so combining requirements of the history curriculum with considerations of audience from the literacy strategy.

31 The school is very conscious of the need to make the curriculum available to all pupils. Children who seem to be struggling are identified and given special support with the intention of helping them to catch up and be able to work with the rest of the class. Unfortunately, the arrangements for doing this have considerable shortcomings. Children with the most pressing special educational needs, typically five or six from each class, are taken out of the lesson for three sessions each week and taught intensively to develop their literacy skills. These lessons are successful in helping the children make progress in the work they are covering, but there is a considerable cost in the work they are missing with the remainder of the class. The school has recognised this problem and tried to minimise its effect by timetabling these special needs withdrawal lessons at the same time as class literacy lessons as often as possible. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs miss important elements of the curriculum they are entitled to receive. For example, in Year 2, these pupils miss all their music and half of the lessons in personal and social education. Some of these omissions are in subjects where the pupils could shine and the system is preventing this from happening. The school should review its system of withdrawing pupils from lessons for special educational needs support.

32 Alongside the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, there is a well-planned programme to support pupils' personal and social development. For the younger pupils this is often covered through class discussions, sometimes formalised into 'circle time' where each child has an opportunity to speak in turn, and there is a strong emphasis on everyone listening and giving support. Issues about friendship and people

feeling excluded are dealt with very effectively in this way. The programme covers the issues of drugs abuse, factors effecting a healthy life-style and sex education. The strength of this programme, together with the overall quality of care and concern shown by all staff in the school, contribute very effectively to the pupils' good personal development.

33 Out of lessons, there is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including sports clubs and music, which is growing in strength with the introduction of a choir. Support staff are involved alongside teachers in running these activities, including teaching clarinet and running football teams. Lunchtime supervisors also play an important role in encouraging informal games and helping the pupils play together productively. The curriculum is enriched by a regular programme of visitors. Pupils also go out on regular educational visits, including two residential visits.

34 The school takes part in events such as the local arts festival and is closely involved with the local community by, for example, adopting a local bus shelter and exhibiting pupils' work in the community. There are productive links with other local primary schools and plans to work together to help parents in the community. The education system in the town is being changed and the number of secondary schools is being reduced. While this is happening it has not been easy to establish links and these need strengthening when the situation has stabilised.

35 Parents approve of the attitudes and values taught, and the good provision for spiritual and moral development has remained one of the school's main strengths since the last report. Lessons provide many opportunities for pupils to think about the deeper meanings of their lives. Pupils in Year 5, for example, write about the qualities needed to become a good leader. In their religious education lesson, the teacher asks them to think about how religion can help people to find the answers to questions about the purpose of their lives. Whilst assemblies provide satisfactory opportunities for stillness, quietness and prayer, pupils do not often express themselves through singing, and teachers could do even more to involve pupils in their own worship. The school promotes a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong. The simple and sensible school rules are displayed around the school and, when asked, pupils know what they are. Other posters, saying for example, 'What have you done today to make yourself feel proud?', give pupils a positive view of themselves and encourage them to do the right thing towards others. Teachers mainly set high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and are good role models themselves. There is a range of encouraging awards for good social behaviour, such as the 'spick and span' cloakroom awards and lunchtime supervisors' awards.

36 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship provide a very good social and moral framework for the pupils. In Year 3, for example, pupils are happy to talk about their personal experiences and their feelings associated with these. The teacher handles the session carefully and asks questions sensitively. This helps pupils to empathise with others and to understand how events and actions can influence their lives. The newly formed school council has already made an impact upon how pupils view their own roles in school. Representatives have made sensible suggestions about how they would like to see the school improve. Staff have responded quickly so that pupils are able to understand that their contributions are valued and that staff are sincere about the project. Staff give pupils a lot of opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, and pupils are seen carrying these out happily and confidently; even children in the nursery become confident to take registers to the office.

37 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. The strong focus on books in the literacy hour widens pupils' knowledge of literature, and work in history helps them to find out about cultures of the past, such as Romans, Tudors and Victorians. Pupils sometimes find out about modern cultures other than their own, as seen in religious education in Year 2, when the teacher brought in Jewish artefacts to help pupils to find out about the Jewish festival of Shabbat. Provision does not yet seek and provide enough opportunities, however, for pupils to understand the multi-cultural dimension of our society or the cultural diversity of the subjects they study, for example in music and art. Otherwise, this good provision for pupils' personal development prepares them well for the next stage of education and for their adult lives.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38 The school offers a warm, welcoming environment where pupils are safe, well cared for and valued. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare, and all staff have a genuine concern for the well-being of all the children, whatever their needs. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection matters and the procedures are good. Support staff are fully briefed about child protection issues, although it is some time since the majority of staff received any training.

39 There is an appropriate health and safety policy but not all the necessary risk assessments have been carried out. The usual routine safety checks and fire drills are carried out on a regular basis. Pupils are warned about safe practices in lessons, and the fire service and the school nurse visit to talk to pupils about aspects of their work, including personal safety issues. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and support is available from the education welfare officer if needed.

40 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. There is an appropriate code of conduct, supplemented by class rules agreed by the children. Good behaviour and kindness to others are recognised and rewarded by stickers, house points and certificates, and celebrated in assembly each week. Adults on duty in the playground at lunchtime take an active part in children's play activities, organising games and playing with the children. Teaching and non-teaching staff operate the policy consistently and there is a regular exchange of information between teachers and mid-day staff about behaviour. There is a good, effective anti-bullying policy. These procedures are very successful in making the school an orderly and pleasant community. The good relationships between pupils and the lack of oppressive behaviour have a positive effect on the quality of learning.

41 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers keep detailed and comprehensive records of pupils' personal achievements. These are recognised and rewarded, and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes. The school's personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers' thorough knowledge of pupils' academic and personal development ensures that they are able to provide good support and guidance for their pupils.

42 The school has recently improved its system for assessing pupils and measuring the progress they make in their learning. This is particularly effective in the early years where considerable care is taken to record how children respond to different activities. These records are reviewed carefully and used to group children together for learning and for teachers to plan the best ways to tackling work. In the rest of the school, assessment

procedures are more reliant on information from tests. These provide good information which the school uses well to predict how well individuals should be progressing and then to check that they are moving forward quickly enough. This information is also used to put pupils into groups for teaching in some subjects, but in many lessons, especially at the top of Key Stage 2, all pupils are given the same work to do and teachers do not make enough use of the assessment information in their planning.

43 Pupils with special educational needs are identified successfully and assessed carefully, particularly for their language performance. The class teacher and the special needs teacher liaise effectively in writing individual education plans when they are needed and there are proper procedures to review the plans regularly, involving parents appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44 The school has good links with parents. Parents have very positive views of the school and are pleased with the way that the school is led and managed and the quality of education that their children receive. They feel that the school has a genuine 'open door' policy and that their questions and concerns are dealt with well. They consider that the pupils' behaviour is good and all those who responded to the questionnaire reported that their children enjoyed coming to school. The findings of the inspection support parents' views.

45 A Parents' Association organises fund-raising and social events that raise extra money for the school. This has been used to provide additional equipment for the school such as new benches in the playground. The social events, in addition to raising money, help to promote and strengthen the links between parents and teachers.

46 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus is attractive and informative, and regular newsletters keep parents well informed about school life and events. The governors' annual report to parents is written in a style that is informative and easy to read, and is enhanced by children's drawings and photographs of school events. It does, however, omit to mention several matters that are required by law, such as arrangements for pupils with disabilities and the professional training undertaken by teachers.

47 Prior to joining the nursery or reception class, pupils have the opportunity to visit, so that they become familiar with the school and its routines. Nursery staff also visit prospective pupils in their own homes in order to gather as much information as possible. An informative booklet is provided for new parents and there is a range of activity packs that the children can borrow to use at home. The school organises curriculum events for parents and has arranged a family literacy course for those who are interested in learning more about this aspect of their children's education. The school has regular arrangements for gathering parents' views about what is provided for their children. It also responds to these views. For example, as a result of parental requests, parents are now given advance information about the work to be covered by their children during the term.

48 Parents are welcomed into school at any reasonable time. There are three formal opportunities each year for parents to meet the teachers. Pupils' written reports are informative, giving information about what they have learned. However, very few reports indicate specific targets for pupils to aim for.

49 A small number of parents provide regular help in school and this is much appreciated by the teachers, although on occasions this additional support is not used as well as it could be. An examination of reading record books and discussions with teachers and parents indicate that parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at home. Currently the homework arrangements make only a limited contribution to pupils' learning. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 The school is well managed. The headteacher has provided very good leadership since her appointment in 1999, promoting and sustaining a clear sense of direction for the work of the school. Other key staff provide sound support. The very positive and supportive ethos and the sense of commitment displayed by all who work in the school reflect the quality of this leadership. Governors, teachers and non-teaching staff work well together to support the headteacher in promoting the school's aims.

51 The governors are kept well informed about developments in school and many of them are regular visitors. They provide useful support for the school and are effectively involved in decisions about finance and the curriculum. Individual governors have links with curriculum areas. They have established committees to oversee and meet the requirements of their statutory responsibilities. However, the school is not fully meeting the statutory requirements relating to information for parents in the governors' annual report.

52 The school improvement plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This is based on a clear analysis of the school's needs. It clearly identifies the school's priorities and is a useful and effective management tool. It is linked to the school budget, has clear criteria for success and is reviewed regularly to evaluate progress. It is supplemented with clear action plans for each area of development.

53 Special educational needs provision is co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher, but in practice much of the management of the area is carried out by the special educational needs teacher who works in the school on three days each week. This arrangement works effectively in ensuring that pupils are identified correctly and the correct procedures are followed. However, there are serious problems with the arrangements for supporting pupils with the most serious special educational needs. They are taught in small groups, withdrawn from normal lessons. Although the school has tried to minimise the impact, this means they miss other work, and fall behind in other subjects. Furthermore, the support in these withdrawal groups is strongly focused on language work. The special needs teacher liaises with class teachers and teaching assistants about other work, but there is not sufficient overall co-ordination of the various elements of the work supporting these pupils.

54 The school has effective strategies in place to promote skills of literacy and numeracy. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well managed and have been implemented effectively.

55 The headteacher has introduced good systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. She carries out regular classroom observations herself and some monitoring has also been done by subject co-ordinators. Systems have also been established to monitor pupils' attainment and to set clear targets for improvement. These are relatively new and are not yet being used to full effect by all staff to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs.

56 Long-term strategic financial planning is good. Governors are fully involved in establishing spending priorities, which are clearly detailed in the school improvement plan. The day-to-day administration and management of the school is good. The school's secretary and the clerical assistant ably support the headteacher. They are courteous and welcoming to parents and visitors to their office and this makes a positive contribution to the good relationships that are typical of the school. The collection of money and ordering and checking of school equipment are efficient and ensure minimum disruption to teaching and learning. The very few minor recommendations in the latest auditor's report have been implemented. There are good links with the local education authority to ensure that best value is achieved when making improvements or ordering equipment. Effective use is made of information and communication technology to manage the school budget and to analyse assessment results.

57 The school is well staffed with teachers who are appropriately qualified for the age range. Teachers' initial and subsequent qualifications ensure that their collective skills cover all aspects of the curriculum. The school places importance on teachers updating and sharing expertise and all staff make good use of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning. An effective programme of in-service training tackles areas identified by the school as requiring improvement. The role of co-ordinators has also been developed since the last inspection; they now have clear responsibilities for managing their subject and providing curriculum support. Many have been appointed very recently but there are clear plans to develop their role of monitoring standards of attainment. There are very clear procedures for the induction of newly qualified and experienced teachers, providing good levels of support and guidance.

58 Classroom support staff throughout the school provide good, constructive help and support to teachers and pupils and are a valuable and positive asset to the school. They have a wide range of experience and expertise. They have good relationships with teachers and are well briefed on lesson objectives, working in harmony in the classroom. The number of support staff has been increased and their contribution to school life has improved since the last inspection. The caretaker, office staff, kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors all make an effective contribution to the good relationships and positive climate for learning within the school.

59 The accommodation is good. The headteacher and governors have managed the school well through the period of considerable disruption caused by the major building work to accommodate the school's growth to a primary school. As well as additional classrooms, the school has also benefited from the provision of a new library, a computer suite, and adaptations to create the Early Years Unit. The school is clean and comfortable and is well looked after by caretaking and cleaning staff. Outdoor accommodation is good. There are two playgrounds and a playing field. Children in the Early Years Unit have their own well-organised outdoor play facilities. Older pupils have access to an adventure playground.

60 The recently developed information and communication technology room has provided better opportunities for the development of information and communication skills throughout the school. The school library is organised effectively and is used well by pupils. There is a satisfactory range of fiction and information books which pupils make good use of to further their enjoyment of reading. However, resources to support learning are unsatisfactory in a number of subjects, especially science, design and technology and geography. The addition of Year 6 pupils next year will place further strain on resources and thus restrict the curriculum offered. The school is aware of these deficiencies and finance has been reserved to address them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 To improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

1. Raise standards of attainment in Key Stage 2, especially in English, science, information and communication technology and geography by:
 - ensuring that teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities;
 - raising teachers' expectations of the standards of handwriting and presentation;
 - improving the quality of written marking to provide clear guidance on how pupils can improve

(paragraphs 7,10,11,13,14,22,23,42,76,77,79,83,97,99,112,114,115,122,126)

2. Improve the arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum.

(paragraphs 31,53,90,103,129)

3. Make more effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in the classroom by:

- ensuring that teachers identify opportunities to use information and communication technology in their lesson planning;
- improving the range of software available.

(paragraphs 28,84,93,120,126)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve resources in science, design and technology and geography.
(paragraph 46)
- Ensure that the information for parents in the governors' annual report fully meets the statutory requirements.
(paragraphs 60, 100,111,116)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	49	31	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	164
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	11	15	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10]	10	8
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	25]	24	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (59)	92 (66)	85 (69)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	8
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	23	23	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (66)	88 (63)	81 (78)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	160
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	396,491
Total expenditure	393,219
Expenditure per pupil	2,023
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,104
Balance carried forward to next year	50,376

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	29	6	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	35	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	44	9	0	9
The teaching is good.	68	26	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	59	0	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	0	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	47	44	3	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	44	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	38	12	6	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62 When children start nursery, there is a wide range of ability, but overall attainment is below average. Children achieve well due to good teaching, a thoroughly planned curriculum, the caring, friendly, welcoming and happy atmosphere of the school's Early Years Unit and the teamwork of staff. Consequently, by the end of the reception year, children attain as well as expected for their ages, and their personal, social and emotional development is good. This gives them a successful start to their work in the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. Children in the reception class are taught by two different teachers who share the post; one teaches the first half of the week with a focus on reading, and the other teaches the second half of the week with a focus on writing.

Personal, social and emotional development

63 Very good teaching helps children to settle into routines and to learn how to behave towards others. Most children achieve as well as they can by the end of the reception year, and standards are better than expected for children of their ages. This is due to the high expectations that adults usually set for them and to the very positive relationships that permeate the life of the Early Years Unit. Teachers help children to feel confident to try to do things for themselves, such as pouring drinks for the group at 'snack time', taking the registers to the office and tidying away their own equipment. There is a strong sense of wanting children to enjoy their activities, as seen when children in the nursery were digging and planting outside. By the end of the reception year, children can work happily with several different adults, take part in formal lessons and take responsibility for their own belongings – such as reading bags and clothing. Their behaviour is very good overall, and it only deteriorates occasionally where teaching is not sufficiently rigorous. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a very good stepping stone towards helping them to become eager learners when they transfer to Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

64 Teaching and learning are good overall in the nursery and reception class, and most children attain the standard expected for their ages by the end of the reception year. Staff usually give a lot of time to making sure that children become good listeners and confident talkers with a wide vocabulary in each area of learning. They use the daily snack sessions very well to provide opportunities for children to practise talking about their own experiences. By the end of the reception year, most children can listen attentively to adults and other children, answer questions and communicate their thoughts and feelings to others. There are occasional lessons in the reception class, however, when opportunities to challenge children's thinking and to extend their talking skills are missed. Towards the end of the inspection, this resulted in an unsatisfactory lesson.

65 Children begin to enjoy books and stories from a very early stage in the nursery. When the nursery nurse told the story of the Three Bears, they were 'wide-eyed' with concentration and enjoyment and made a lot of progress. In the reception class, children take part in more formal literacy lessons where the teaching of reading in the first half of the week is very good. By the end of the reception year, children understand how letters and words convey meaning in books. They know how books and stories are organised, and use words such as 'title', 'end' and 'full stop' correctly. Many recognise a lot of the letters of

the alphabet and can read simple words. The school's work with parents does much to help children to learn to read with pleasure.

66 The focus on teaching reading and writing is often separated in literacy lessons due to the fact that the two 'job share' teachers work on different days. Children do not do as well with their writing in the second half of the week as they do with reading, although most understand the relationship between what they speak, write and read. In their writing lesson, children in the reception class attempted to draw or write their ideas about a familiar book. Most copied letters and words and a few attempted to write them by themselves. They did not learn as much as they could have, however, because the teacher did not focus her teaching time well enough, and only the group working with an assistant benefited from in-depth teaching. The school does not yet have a clear policy for teaching writing to ensure that children make the progress they could.

Mathematical development

67 Good teaching and learning help children to attain the standard expected for their ages by the end of the reception year. Adults usually seize upon opportunities to help children to learn to count and to understand mathematical ideas. This was seen at snack time when children counted the biscuits on the plates and found out if there were enough for all the children. In the reception class, children take part in formal numeracy lessons. Activities, such as estimating and counting how many cups it takes to fill a jug, help them to understand and use the words associated with mathematics. By the end of the reception year, most can count confidently at least to 10 and sometimes backwards. They can record their work by writing numbers – although not always correctly yet.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68 The curriculum for both indoors and outdoors is planned carefully to make sure that nursery and reception age children have a continually broadening experience of life. Consequently, they can think and talk about the world around them, and are keen to find out more for themselves. A fire engine and fire officers came to school recently, and during the inspection, children went for walks outside to find out more about minibeasts. Work, such as thinking about how toys move, stimulates their natural curiosity and prepares them well for their future National Curriculum science work. Similarly, when they use the computer and construct models from construction kits or from junk materials, such as the vehicles they made recently, this gives them a firm grasp of early technology skills. A lesson for children in the reception class, however, missed a lot of opportunities to prepare children for their work in geography. The planned work on early mapping skills did not provide the stimulus that young children need, and the teacher failed to use the follow-up time rigorously to meet the lesson objective as stated in the plan. In this lesson, children made too little progress considering their willingness to learn. Otherwise, teaching and learning are good and children attain the standard expected by the end of the reception year.

Physical development

69 There are plenty of interesting and exciting opportunities for children to develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors. Nursery children become increasingly confident to move about the unit and to handle a wide range of both large and small equipment. Tasks, such as handing out biscuits at snack time, provide opportunities for them to practise and to learn by their own mistakes. Reception children build upon this by completing finer physical tasks, such as sewing with needles and holding pencils and

brushes with greater control. Teaching in their gymnastics lesson is good because they learn to move and handle their own equipment safely, and they learn about the effects of physical exercise on their own bodies. They are good at experimenting with using their bodies to move in ways suggested by the teacher. They do not do as well in their games lesson. Although they enjoy the lesson and show that they can work in pairs co-operatively using small games equipment, the teacher does not do enough to build on the quiet working atmosphere and high expectations established by the teacher in their earlier lesson. Nevertheless, teaching and learning in the unit are good overall, and children reach the standard expected for their ages by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

70 Nursery and reception children enjoy working creatively in a wide variety of ways, such as drawing, painting and singing. In the nursery, children were thrilled by an opportunity to put their hands into a tray of flour and to make patterns in it – staff did not mind at all that the flour ended up on the floor and on themselves! Children enjoyed making up stories in the ‘pretend’ campsite. In the reception class, children choose to go into the book corner and use the books to pretend playing at ‘schools’. When they talk about what they have been doing earlier in their activities, they show how well they have used their senses when describing their likes and dislikes. Teachers are very good at making the most of such opportunities, and they understand the importance of making sure that children have opportunities to express themselves. Good teaching and learning help children to reach the standard expected for their ages by the end of the reception year.

71 There have been a lot of fairly recent positive changes in provision for the youngest children in the school. The Early Years Unit is now one of the main strengths of the school overall – even given the inconsistency in the quality of some of the teaching and learning in the reception class. Support staff contribute very well to the success of the provision. A particularly strong feature of the provision is the very good procedures for assessing children’s attainment and making sure that they learn the right things. The headteacher’s vision for the unit, her knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement, along with the obvious enthusiasm of staff in most of the lessons seen, all indicate that the school is likely to continue to improve provision even further in the future.

ENGLISH

72 Standards of attainment in English were reported to be broadly in line with the national average at the time of the previous inspection. The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 1997 were below average in reading and well above average in writing. However, results in both subjects declined significantly and were well below the national average in the next two years.

73 These results improved in 2000 although results in reading were below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, they were well below average. The results of the writing tests were in line with the national average and also in line with the average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection findings in Key Stage 1 indicate that standards of reading are improving and are now better than those achieved in recent years. Standards of writing are broadly in line with the national expectation. This improvement continues in Year 3. However, there is a significant number of lower attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5 and although they have made satisfactory progress since the end of Key Stage 1, the standards attained by these pupils are below the national expectation. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys.

74 Standards of speaking and listening are generally similar to those found in most schools. There is, however, a wide variety of attainment in all year groups. Many children start the school with poorly developed language skills. Appropriately, the school gives high priority to improving speaking and listening skills in English lessons and in other subjects. The school has established a climate of mutual trust, and teachers constantly promote the pupils' self-esteem so that they are not afraid to express their opinions and join confidently in conversation. In all classes, well-organised opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in focused discussion in pairs, in small groups and in whole-class sessions. This enables the vast majority of pupils to achieve well. As pupils move through Key Stage 1, most pupils concentrate for longer and longer spells when listening to their teacher and to each other.

75 They are enthusiastic to respond to questions. Their answers show that they have understood the content of the discussion. Occasionally, when class management is not fully effective, some pupils do not listen well. By the age of seven, some higher attaining pupils are competent speakers and listeners. They use these skills well in discussion, in response to questions and in group activities. Most pupils listen well, both to their teachers and to classmates in discussions. Speaking skills are less widely developed. The vast majority of pupils confidently volunteer contributions to discussions. Higher attaining speakers express themselves in well-rounded sentences and organise their thoughts logically. Some pupils, although willing to speak, have difficulty in expressing ideas in sequence. Contributions are therefore limited to short phrases or single words. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. They are given regular opportunities to contribute in class discussions and are expected to speak clearly and thoughtfully.

76 Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to read and develop positive attitudes to books as they move through Key Stage 1. The early reading skills of associating letters and their sounds are taught clearly, and an appropriate range of graded readers is used effectively to promote learning over time. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils read confidently together from class books. They read with accuracy and fluency and their expression takes account of punctuation such as commas, full stops and question marks. Almost all are aware of differences between fiction and reference books and have sound skills in locating information by contents or index pages. When reading alone, most pupils use a range of strategies for decoding unfamiliar words. Systematic teaching of basic skills enables most pupils to use their knowledge of letters and their sounds particularly well to increase their understanding. Higher attaining pupils read accurately from appropriate texts. These pupils read with fluency and expression, and recognise a good range of complex words. They discuss their reading confidently and make valid comments on character and plot. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books, and are articulate in describing the plot and characters in their books. Many pupils read at National Curriculum level 2 and they reveal an improving range of wider reading skills. Lower attainers read familiar stories confidently but are hesitant when faced with new words and rely on adult support.

77 Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress but the standards attained by older pupils are below those expected for their age group. Higher attaining pupils read independently from a range of texts and other material, effectively deploying their comprehension skills. They read stories with fluency, expression and understanding, showing a good understanding of plot and character. They are able to discuss books they have read and express preferences. Many pupils read with reasonable confidence but are not expressive. Most pupils can talk about the text and discuss the characters and plot, although few express preferences or opinions in relation to the style of writing. A significant number are hesitant when reading aloud and do not have a clear understanding of what

they have read. They struggle with basic reading skills and have limited strategies to deal with unfamiliar words. Their understanding of the text is weak. Many have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly when discussing their reading.

78 Most have sufficient reading skills to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils' general reference skills are satisfactory. They understand and can use indexes and contents pages. They use dictionaries in their work with confidence. Older pupils know how to find information in non-fiction texts. The range of higher order skills, where pupils explain their preferences in reading and make reference to the text to justify their opinions, is underdeveloped. Weaker readers do not use enough strategies to help them read unknown words and have not read a wide range of books.

79 Pupils in Key Stage 1 write for a variety of purposes, including stories, poetry, letters and accounts. Many pupils place events clearly in order in their story writing. The majority of pupils can sequence sentences and understand the use of capital letters and full stops. When attempting longer pieces of writing many pupils are beginning to show some imagination and select words with care. Higher attainers have legible and consistently sized handwriting, but their work is a mixture of joined and printed script. Standards of spelling are in line with those expected for the age group. Simple, everyday words are usually spelt correctly and longer words are phonetically justifiable. Standards in handwriting and presentational skills are generally satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils acquire skills of letter formation and develop a simple script. Higher attaining pupils use a joined cursive script.

80 In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their range of writing across the curriculum in a number of subjects. They are able to write descriptions, instructions and reports. In story writing they consolidate their understanding of narrative structure and the importance of effective beginnings, but only the higher attainers provide sufficient detail for the reader. By the end of Year 5, higher attaining pupils are able to compose pieces of writing which demonstrate accurate sentence construction, punctuation and grammar. Pupils at this level introduce imaginative language into their story writing, which is organised into paragraphs. They are beginning to use the knowledge of connectives gained in literacy lessons to write in complex sentences. Their spelling usually obeys the rules. However, many pupils are struggling to write at the levels expected nationally. Their skills of punctuation and grammar are weak and they have difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly. Higher attainers show a sense of audience in their writing, make points clearly and use appropriate vocabulary and style. Lower attainers are less focused in their writing. However, with help they are able to develop their ideas in short sentences appropriately punctuated. Their spelling of high frequency words is usually correct or phonetically justifiable. At the beginning of the key stage, the pupils' writing and presentation of work are satisfactory. Most use a joined script and take a pride in their work. Presentation of work is less satisfactory in Years 4 and 5. There is a lack of consistency in developing handwriting skills and many pupils are still printing at the end of Year 5. This slows down their rate of working. Work is often completed carelessly with little thought to its presentation.

81 The overall quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. This makes a positive impact upon standards of work achieved and on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Basic skills are taught well and this helps pupils to make sound progress. Over 60 percent of the teaching seen in Key Stage 1 was good and the remainder was satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, 50 percent of teaching seen was good and the remainder was satisfactory.

82 Teachers throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of teaching literacy and plan carefully within the National Literacy Strategy. Objectives are made clear to pupils at the beginning of each lesson, so that they concentrate and work hard for success. Teachers make very effective use of support staff who work well with groups of pupils, providing good support which helps their learning. Pupils with special educational needs also benefit from the support they receive in withdrawal groups and make satisfactory progress. Good relationships are established in all classes, and teachers manage pupils well with genuine praise and encouragement. This is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm to learn, their eagerness to contribute to lessons and their willingness to share ideas and equipment. Most teachers organise group tasks well to provide appropriate challenge for the different ability levels in the class. Sometimes higher attainers are not challenged as the 'extended' work provided is 'more of the same' rather than at a higher level.

83 The features of more successful teaching include good questioning skills, good lesson pace, high expectations and successful plenary sessions, which are used well to check on pupils' understanding and to promote self-esteem through positive feedback. Teachers use questions thoughtfully to help pupils extend their own ideas and are sensitive in modifying the pupils' answers to make teaching points to the class. In a Year 3 lesson for example, pupils looked at letters and diaries. The teacher's lively approach engaged the pupils' interest. The text was carefully chosen and developed a very useful link with their work in history. The teacher made very effective use of questions to assess pupils' understanding and to develop their vocabulary. In the written activities which followed, the teacher provided good support in helping pupils record their ideas. This enabled them to make good progress. In Year 1, the teacher made good use of a 'big book' about places to visit and her skilful questioning ensured a positive response from the pupils who were keen to contribute to the discussion. During a group reading activity, the teacher encouraged pupils to use a range of strategies to build words that they did not recognise.

84 Teaching is less successful when teachers fail to make full use of the opportunities to use their assessments of pupils' understanding and knowledge, to provide work that matches individual needs according to age and attainment. At times, teachers are too willing to accept written work that is poorly presented, especially from the older pupils. Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always provide sufficient advice on how pupils can improve their written work.

85 The strategies for teaching literacy throughout the school are effective and this is having a positive effect on the standards being achieved. Teachers throughout the school plan lessons in accordance with the National Literacy Strategy. This ensures a good balance of activities in the majority of lessons which include question and answer sessions, written activities and a review of what has been learned. The effective partnership between classroom teachers and support staff ensures that pupils targeted for additional help make good progress. The English curriculum is generally broad and balanced with a good range of interesting and relevant activities which stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils are encouraged to make use of their reading and speaking and listening skills to support work in other subjects across the curriculum. However, there is insufficient use of writing skills in subjects such as history and geography. Whilst some use is made of computers throughout the school to develop word-processing skills, the use of information and communication technology to support learning is unsatisfactory overall.

86 The subject is managed well by the curriculum co-ordinator. The school has effective systems in place to monitor the progress of pupils as they move through the school and good use is made of the National Curriculum tests to identify areas of concern

relating to individuals and classes. The information gained, however, is not always used to best advantage. A good start has been made in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This good initiative is beginning to raise standards in teaching and learning, although the impact of this has not yet been fully realised in some classes.

87 The school has made several improvements since the previous report in order to address the key issue relating to the raising of standards. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented. This has provided a useful structure to support teachers' planning and the development of appropriate skills and knowledge. A new reading scheme has been introduced to provide a clearer structure, and standards of reading at Key Stage 1 have improved recently following a decline. A new school library has been established. This is well organised and contains a satisfactory range of books. However, these will need further development as pupils begin to make more use of these facilities to extend their knowledge in subjects across the curriculum and with the addition of Year 6 pupils next year.

MATHEMATICS

88 Standards of attainment in mathematics were reported to be broadly in line with the national average at the time of the previous inspection. The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 1997 were above the national average. However, results declined significantly and were well below the national average in the next two years. The pupils tested in 2000 were an unusually bright year group, and test results improved considerably to well above national average, and much better than results in schools with a similar proportion of free school meals. There was little difference between the performance of girls and that of boys. The proportion of pupils failing to reach the expected level 2 was above average. However, an above average proportion achieved the higher level 3. The pupils in the current Year 2 are more typical of the school's intake, and the teacher's assessments indicate that the 2001 test results are on track to be in line with the national average, but with fewer pupils than last year performing at the lower levels. The inspection finds that standards are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 5. There are no national tests for pupils at the end of Year 5, but teacher's assessments suggest that most pupils have made good progress since they were seven when their test results were well below average.

89 Teachers have adopted the National Numeracy Strategy as a basis for planning their lessons, and this is a sound method of teaching in order to raise standards. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. The best teaching and learning are in Year 3, where the teacher seizes every possible opportunity to help pupils of all levels of attainment to build on their own previous learning. She encourages pupils to explore mathematical ideas for themselves and to discover things, as seen when they found out about symmetry by experimenting with folding paper and cutting out shapes – sometimes learning by making their own mistakes!

90 All teachers know the subject well, and lessons have clear and worthwhile purposes with work that builds thoughtfully on the previous lesson. Teachers often involve pupils in their own progress by telling them at the start of lessons what they are going to learn, and lessons usually make sure that they do so. Teachers mainly encourage positive attitudes towards mathematics, as seen in Year 1 where pupils know that their teacher expects them to be successful, and they respond by trying their hardest and working confidently when adding numbers together. In Year 4 not all pupils listen to their teacher well enough. This detracts from the overall quality of lessons, and the attitude of some pupils deteriorates.

91 In most lessons, teachers have the support of one, or sometimes two, teaching assistants. They usually take good advantage of this enthusiastic help by planning the use of the time carefully and preparing the assistants well for their work with individuals or groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs usually make steady progress in lessons, but the school does not allocate the same amount of support assistance time to mathematics as it does to English, and individual education plans do not always make proper provision for pupils' difficulties to be put right in lessons. Some pupils with special educational needs in Year 5 are withdrawn from mathematics lessons for extra help with reading, and this slows their progress in mathematics.

92 Teachers are good at asking pupils the right questions and urging them to explain and to improve their answers, as seen in Year 2 when the teacher asked pupils to be more precise with their explanations. In some lessons, teachers plan different work according to the varying needs of groups of pupils in the class, but this is not always the case. In lessons in Year 5, for example, some pupils are under-challenged and others struggle when they are all expected to learn the same things. In such lessons, teaching time is not used to best effect because the teacher does not focus detailed attention on any one group needing help to move forward. Work in pupils' books, especially in Years 4 and 5, indicates that teachers accept poorly presented work and that marking has little effect on ensuring that pupils improve. Homework makes only a small contribution to pupils' progress.

93 By the end of Year 2, all pupils can work with practical apparatus, such as counters and rulers or a programmable toy, and they can explain their work using the correct mathematical terms. Most can add and take away numbers at least to 20 and apply this to other work on estimating, money and measurement. They know the names of regular two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and understand terms such as 'sides', 'corners' and 'curved'. In their work in science, pupils record how far toy cars travel by showing the results of their experiments in a graph. The highest attaining pupils understand simple multiplication and division and can 'round' numbers to the nearest 10.

94 By the end of Year 5, there is a wide range of attainment. Pupils work with an adequate variety of equipment, but they do not often select the equipment they need for themselves because there is little in classrooms to enable this to happen. They sometimes apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, as in science when they measure and record information about their body parts in centimetres and when they use information and communication technology to make different kinds of graphs about animals. They investigate mathematical ideas, as in their lesson when they used pin boards and rubber bands in order to find solutions to problems set by the teacher. Most pupils can calculate accurately on paper, working with numbers, often to a thousand and beyond. They know what multiplication tables are, but not all are yet quick enough with their mental recall of these. Pupils solve problems involving money, length, decimals, fractions, negative numbers and probability. The highest attaining pupils sometimes have extra work, such as more advanced work in algebra, but at other times they over-learn things and make slower progress. Similarly, the lower attaining pupils often get their work wrong or do not complete it, and they clearly need more help than they receive. Although pupils attain satisfactory standards overall, they could do even better, including using computers more often to further their understanding of mathematics.

95 The management of mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers have set targets to reflect the National Curriculum levels they think that pupils should achieve by the end of this school year. The subject manager has collected a great deal of assessment information, including details about the progress of pupils and the targets for each class. Although teachers have identified what changes are needed in their teaching in order to

meet their targets, they have not yet found a way to make sure that day-to-day teaching always moves pupils closer towards achieving them. The mathematics policy needs updating and does not reflect current practice, but the school improvement plan includes an intention to continue to raise standards – although only by the end of Key Stage 1. The headteacher has a clear view of what needs to be done next and the school is well placed to improve pupils' performance in the future.

SCIENCE

96 Teachers' assessments of seven years olds over the last few years have shown most pupils to be achieving the expected level 2, but relatively few going on to reach the higher level 3. This is below the results achieved in most schools, but close to the results of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Inspection evidence reflects these results. Pupils are making good progress at the beginning of Key Stage 2. They continue to make good progress in their approach to investigations in the oldest two classes, but their knowledge of science facts is not as good as it should be and the attainment of the older pupils is lower than average. This is much the same as it was at the time of the last inspection.

97 During their time in Key Stage 1, pupils make sound progress from the standards they have reached in the early years. They continue to benefit from a strongly practical approach to the subject, improving their skills in handling equipment and making careful observations. They use appropriate scientific words such as 'opaque' and 'transparent' to describe materials and use them correctly. They appreciate that a test has to be made fair if the results are to be of any use. Some pupils can suggest what needs to be done to make an investigation fair, for example, dropping balls from the same height onto the same surface when seeing which one bounces most. By Year 2, pupils are measuring in centimetres and recording their results reasonably accurately in tables.

98 In Key Stage 2, teachers build on the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject that has been established earlier in the school and continue to develop pupils' investigative skills satisfactorily. Pupils strengthen their understanding of how to make comparisons fairly, although they do not use the technical vocabulary of 'control' and 'variable' to describe what they are doing. When faced with a new situation they use their existing knowledge well to predict what might happen and are particularly good at discussing ideas. Pupils' knowledge of science does not develop as well as it should during the key stage. Standards are higher than usual in Year 3, where pupils have a good understanding of the functions of different parts of a plant including the role of leaves as a 'factory' making food out of water and carbon dioxide when sunlight shines on the chlorophyll. Most pupils in the class can link this process to the need for water to be transported from the roots through the stem and so appreciate how all the systems have to be healthy to work together effectively. Older pupils can remember work that they have done recently fairly well, such as the different ways seeds can be dispersed, but they are less secure on earlier work such as the differences between solids, liquids and gases. There are some surprising gaps in what they know, for example, the temperature at which water freezes and the conventions used to draw an electrical current.

99 Pupils have consistently good attitudes to science. They concentrate well in lessons and are often enthusiastic about their work. They take care with equipment and are very aware of the importance of respecting living things, for example, collecting minibeasts carefully and returning them to their habitats after studying them. Pupils work particularly well together discussing ideas and carrying out investigations.

100 Teaching is good overall. All teachers are successful in maintaining pupils' enthusiasm for the subject by making it lively and interesting. The most successful lessons also ensure that pupils learn well by having clear objectives, a good sequence of activities for the pupils and sufficient time for them to explore their ideas and record their findings appropriately. In some lessons, there is too much emphasis on raising enthusiasm and not enough on consolidating learning through good quality written work. Teachers know the subject well and place an appropriate emphasis on investigative work. Lessons often have a strong element of discussion, with teachers using questions effectively to ensure that pupils understand the work. The answers from pupils are received well and corrected sensitively when necessary. These oral responses sometimes demonstrate a better understanding of the subject than pupils show in their written work. This could be a problem for pupils in Year 6 next year when their attainment in the subject is assessed through the written tests.

101 Documentation to support the subject has recently been revised to match national guidelines. This identifies a good route through the subject which should ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are avoided in the future. The subject manager is relatively new to the school but very experienced and capable in the role. Resources for the subject are being re-organised and stored centrally. Extra equipment will be needed to cover the subject adequately, particularly with the extra year group next year and some of the systems for storage need improving to ensure that equipment is kept in good condition and is easily accessible.

ART AND DESIGN

102 During the inspection, no lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and only two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. Evidence from these and from examples of pupils' earlier work indicates that achievements in art are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 5.

103 A range of media including drawing materials, paint, printing, modelling and collage work is provided during the year. Pupils also have opportunities to study the work of other artists and apply this to their own work. Pupils develop an understanding of colour mixing, and the selection of appropriate materials. They express themselves through drawing and painting and modelling and use simple techniques with developing control. They are taught to observe closely, carefully drawing what they see, for example when producing portraits of themselves or classmates.

104 The quality of teaching observed at Key Stage 2 was good. It has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Work is both challenging and enjoyable, and pupils are encouraged to think about the quality of their work and how they can improve it. Lessons are well planned and prepared with good introductions and clear instructions. Pupils have positive attitudes; they listen carefully and demonstrate enjoyment and independence in carrying out art activities and approach their work with confidence. In Year 3, for example, pupils had used the Internet to explore the work of Andy Goldsworthy. The teacher made very effective use of pictures of his work to discuss the materials used in the sculptures and the feelings that they aroused. Pupils responded confidently and went on to develop their own designs and sculptures reflecting a range of emotions. Unfortunately, pupils with special educational needs miss this very effective lesson because they are withdrawn for extra help with reading. This means that they do not have an equal access to the art curriculum.

105 Teachers' planning reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study and supports learning in other subjects. In Year 5, investigations of containers combined elements of art (observational drawing) with design and technology (looking at the materials used and the manufacture of containers).

106 Management of the subject is satisfactory. Effective use is made of national guidance to support teachers' planning. The school has adequate consumable resources for art and is developing a collection of reference materials concerning artists and their work. Resources to support three-dimensional work are limited. The co-ordinator has monitored pupils' work to ensure that there is a progression in the development of skills as pupils move through the school. Art has had a low priority recently as the school has concentrated on the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The co-ordinator has identified the need to review the school policy for art and to provide training for staff who are lacking confidence or skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107 It was only possible to see two lessons of design and technology during the inspection. From talking to pupils and examining their work, standards are broadly in line with what is normally found at Year 2 and in Year 5.

108 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed an understanding of the properties of wood and card as a result of models they have made. They know how to fasten them together and sometimes draw plans of what they are going to make. In a Year 2 lesson pupils used construction kits very effectively to explore how wheels and axles worked. Their models were imaginative and generally well made. Pupils worked very well together, sharing the kits very amicably and exchanging ideas about how they would make their models. They recorded what they had made with sketches and added labels using the correct terminology to point out features such as pivots.

109 By Year 5, pupils have developed their skills in using tools. They cut thin sections of wood reasonably accurately to produce well-made frameworks, and understand mechanisms such as levers and cams. Before making a model involving a cam they have explored the way it would work using a prototype of card which they could easily alter. They have also sketched their preliminary ideas, although this is not a strong feature of their work.

110 The small amount of teaching seen was good. Teachers know the subject well and explained things clearly to the pupils. Practical activities were managed successfully and pupils were encouraged to think about the work by effective questioning. For example, in Year 5 their understanding of materials was extended by questions which encouraged them to think why different materials had been chosen to make containers and how they had been constructed.

111 Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and particularly enjoy it when they make things. They appreciate the way the subject is taught and the opportunities they have to explore their own ideas.

112 The school has recently revised the way it teaches design and technology by adopting the national guidelines. The timetable provides just about enough time to cover these requirements but some of the construction work is likely to be rushed. The plans

should ensure that pupils meet a range of different materials, although there is currently little work done with textiles. The school's cook makes a good contribution to the subject through her voluntary 'cookery club' on Friday afternoons. There is not a wide enough range of tools and materials for the subject. Storage is also inadequate; tools in particular are not properly stored so that pupils can choose which to use.

GEOGRAPHY

113 Standards of attainment are at the expected level by the end of Key Stage 1, but lower than expected for the oldest pupils in the school.

114 By the end of Year 2, pupils can explain some of the differences between their own town of Borehamwood and the Scottish island of Struay. They recognise that people earn their livings in different ways in the two places, and that the shops and houses vary, reflecting the different needs of the people. They understand the idea of a map and can use a local street plan to show their route to school and identify local features.

115 These skills and pupils' knowledge of geography are not sufficiently developed in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 5 do not use maps confidently; they are unsure about scale, are not familiar with the conventional symbols used to identify features on Ordnance Survey maps and are surprisingly unsure of the compass directions. From work they have done in the locality they recognise the different types of transport systems, but have not linked the issues of easy access to the places where facilities like supermarkets are situated.

116 Because so few lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a valid judgement about the quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy their work in the subject, but their written work is too often untidy and not demanding enough at Key Stage 2. Teachers in the oldest classes are not ensuring that pupils produce good enough work and marking does not help them know how to improve their work.

117 Work in geography is guided by a scheme of work based on the national framework for the subject. This has been produced recently and so has not had time to fully affect pupils' progress. Aspects of the subject that are supposed to have been covered, particularly pupils' skills with a map, have not been properly learnt. The subject manager does not check this coverage either by looking at planning or pupils' work. Resources are inadequate to support the subject, particularly a good range of maps to match the work covered at Key Stage 2. Overall the management of the subject needs developing.

HISTORY

118 Since the last inspection, the school has adopted new national guidelines about the curriculum and this has improved lesson planning. The attainment of pupils is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2, and by the end of Year 5; this maintains the position at the time of the last report.

119 When taking account of the small amount of pupils' previous work along with the lessons seen, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in both key stages. The lesson in Year 2 was good, however, because the teacher used resources carefully in order to encourage pupils to think hard and to compare seaside holidays in the past with holidays nowadays. Pupils listened attentively to the teacher and worked very hard when discussing

their ideas in pairs. By the end of the lesson, they were able to make sensible suggestions about why things have changed over time.

120 The current work in Year 3 about Britain during World War Two is making a very good contribution to pupils' ability to empathise with people of the past. The teacher brings history 'alive' for the pupils by her own enthusiasm and by her ability to motivate pupils to do their best by planning a variety of different ways for them to learn. The strong focus on teaching skills, as well as knowledge and understanding, helps pupils to take a keen interest in what happened in the past and to want to find out more. In their lesson, pupils learned about what happened to evacuee children by listening, discussing, looking at photographs and artefacts and by making their own 'pretend' labels that would have been attached to them as children being evacuated. This very good teaching makes a considerable contribution to the standards that pupils attain and to their very good attitudes towards the subject. Pupils' behaviour and response to teaching are not as positive in Year 4. This spoils a well-planned lesson.

121 It was not possible to see a lesson in Year 5. In discussions with pupils, however, they demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of life in Britain in Victorian times and in the period following World War Two. They used terms, such as 'technological advances' and 'ration books' and talked with enthusiasm about their previous lessons. Pupils' understanding of the order of the passing of time is satisfactory, and most can place the periods of history they have studied previously, such as Roman, Tudor and Victorian, in the correct order. They know where and how to find evidence of what happened in the past, including using CD-ROMs, books and artefacts, and asking other people. Pupils' previous work in their books, however, is often carelessly completed, and teachers, particularly in Years 4 and 5, do not set high enough expectations about this. Pupils have too few opportunities to use computers to research information or record their ideas.

122 The school's co-ordination of provision for history is satisfactory. The subject has not been a recent priority for school improvement, although the subject manager has plans for several initiatives to begin next term. She is aware of where there are shortages of resources and has started to collect samples of work from pupils in each class. The co-ordinator does not yet have, however, an accurate understanding of what standards and teaching throughout the school are like, but intends to evaluate provision more closely in the near future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123 The school has recently installed a suite of 15 computers in a dedicated room. Classes are now using the computers regularly and standards are rising rapidly. Lessons in the computer room are taught well, but this dramatic improvement in provision has not yet had time to bring pupils up to the expected levels of achievement in all aspects of the subject. The current Year 5 pupils are achieving appropriately in using the computer to communicate information, particularly changing the appearance of a document by altering the style and layout of the text and importing pictures. They have produced interesting advertisements for the job of headteacher in this way. They have not reached the expected levels in handling data or in monitoring and control. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards which are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. They are confident with the computer, can start programs, save their work and know the conventions of using a mouse to operate the program.

124 The school has recently adapted the national guidance for teaching information and communication technology to produce a scheme of work for the subject. This provides clear guidance and should ensure that pupils meet all aspects of the subject progressively and develop their skills appropriately. Teachers are planning their use of the computer suite carefully, using this guidance effectively. Lessons have clear aims and pupils develop their skills in the computer suite appropriately. Work in the suite is made even more effective by the support of a technician who works successfully with the pupils as well as ensuring that the equipment functions correctly.

125 Teachers are developing their information and communication technology skills through specialist courses and almost all are confident with the equipment and pass on their skills successfully to the pupils. Teachers support pupils well in the computer suite, explaining tasks clearly, making sure everyone understands and giving individual help when it is needed.

126 Pupils concentrate well in information and communication technology lessons and work well together, often helping each other and sharing ideas when they work in pairs. They use the equipment carefully, and have the confidence to tackle new programs and explore how they work.

127 Although the school is making good progress with information and communication technology as a separate subject, there are weaknesses in the way information and communication technology is used in other subjects. Computers in classrooms are not often used as part of lessons and pupils do not often have the chance to practise their information and communication technology skills they have learnt in different contexts. There were exceptions to this in a Year 3 science lesson where two pupils used a CD-ROM to research information about plant nutrition, and in Year 4 mathematics where pupils were extending their understanding of angles by using a Lego program. However, there are too few examples of this happening.

128 The school has made good use of its recent extra funding for information and communication technology and standards are improving. There are plans for interesting development, including exchanging information with other schools using e-mail. Subject management is satisfactory and resources are now generally good.

MUSIC

129 Staff believe that the last report judged standards from a very narrow range of work taught by a visiting specialist teacher, and that standards were not as high as suggested. Since that time, the teaching of music has been re-organised and class teachers now usually take their own lessons. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 5 is in line with national expectations. This indicates that their level of achievement is satisfactory overall and that standards in the school are likely to have been maintained since the last inspection. It was not possible to see a lesson in Year 2 and no overall judgements were made about standards, teaching and pupils' learning by the end of Key Stage 1. The lesson in Year 1, however, was well taught and pupils learned to listen carefully, sing songs with expression and in two parts, and to understand the idea of rhythm in music.

130 Teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, although satisfactory overall, are good in Year 3. This is because the enthusiastic teacher plans lessons thoroughly to make sure that pupils have a wide and varied musical programme that is enjoyable as well as challenging. Consequently, pupils' response is very good; they work together co-

operatively and sensibly. They improve their performances with playing the recorder, extend their use of musical terminology and express their feelings and ideas about likes and dislikes thoughtfully. Unfortunately, pupils with special educational needs miss this very worthwhile lesson because it is planned at a time when they go out for extra help with reading. This means that they do not have an equal access to the music curriculum.

131 Some pupils with special educational needs in Year 5 are also withdrawn from their music lesson. Other pupils respond very well to learning to sing a round in two and three parts, and their behaviour is very good – considering that there is not enough challenge for some. The previous work of pupils in Year 5, when they worked with the Year 3 teacher, however, gave them a chance to show what they are really capable of. They worked together in groups to compose songs that they later performed for others. They shared their ideas about how the words, tune, rhythms and performances could be improved. This work also made a very good contribution to their spiritual, social and cultural development, and improved their attitudes to music enormously. When asked, pupils in Year 5 have only a limited knowledge of different kinds of music or of music from other periods and cultures. They have not had opportunities to learn to use computers to enhance their learning because of a shortage of software.

132 About 15 pupils in Key Stage 2, mainly girls, attend the extra-curricular choir. Their performance is of a high standard, and the teacher improves the quality of their singing significantly in a short period of time. Pupils sing with feeling, joy and a sense of determination to do even better. About eight pupils are at the early stages of learning to play the clarinet, also as an extra-curricular activity. The tutor helps them to overcome their initial difficulties with blowing. The school does not always take advantage of opportunities for pupils to sing together in assemblies, but there are plans to introduce this more frequently.

133 The subject manager is well aware of what standards and teaching in the school are like, and knows where there are still shortages of resources. She makes a good contribution towards improving provision. Further staff training is planned in the near future because some staff still lack the confidence to teach music, although a new published scheme will be used shortly to help teachers to focus their teaching more clearly.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134 During the inspection, lessons observed included dance, athletics and games. Other evidence was gathered from discussions with teachers and a scrutiny of teachers' planning and the scheme of work. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 5 are in line with those expected nationally. They are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

135 The school provides a well-balanced programme of physical activities throughout the year which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, participate in gymnastic activities and respond to music through dance. Pupils in Key Stage 1 also have swimming lessons.

136 In Key Stage 1, pupils develop control, co-ordination and balance and have an awareness of space and the need to use it well as part of their physical education activities. They develop skills in the use of small apparatus, including catching, throwing and hitting a ball.

137 In Key Stage 2 these skills are further developed and pupils perform with increasing competence. They also develop skills involved in playing games and develop athletic techniques. Pupils in Year 5 class were able to move appropriately in response to music. They made good use of the space available and worked hard to improve the quality of their movement, using variations of speed and direction. Pupils have a clear understanding of the benefits of vigorous exercise and the effects of exercise on the body. The opportunities provided for teamwork and a sense of fair play support the development of pupils' social skills.

138 The quality of teaching observed in both key stages was good. Teachers plan appropriate activities for all areas of the curriculum using the guidelines in the scheme of work. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and contain appropriate warm-up activities. In the most effective lessons, teachers offer plenty of praise and immediate feedback to the pupils. Teachers set appropriate challenges, provide clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop skills. Questioning is used effectively and use is made of pupils as exemplars of good practice. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' performances to help them to improve. Relationships and class management are good. This results in safe, controlled lessons where pupils listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. Teaching is enthusiastic and this is reflected in pupils' response. They clearly enjoy lessons. They are very co-operative when working in groups and are reliable and sensible when putting out or storing equipment.

139 A satisfactory range of extra-curricular physical and sporting activities is planned throughout the year and supports the physical education curriculum. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills in football, netball and gymnastics.

140 Curriculum management is satisfactory. There is a policy in place, although this is due to be updated. The school follows national guidance to support curriculum planning. Teachers' planning has not been monitored by the co-ordinator, although this is planned for the near future. There is a good selection of apparatus and equipment to meet National Curriculum requirements. The school has a spacious hall that enables all gymnastics, dance and indoor games to take place. Outdoor facilities consist of playground areas and a playing field. Pupils also have access to a stimulating adventure playground. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 5 meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They learn successfully about the nature of religious belief through major world faiths and develop thoughtful, perceptive and questioning attitudes as a result of sensitive, skilled teaching.

142 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils, through learning about Christianity and Judaism, know that religions have special books and key figures. They link stories to festivals, for instance, when thinking about Jesus' birth at Christmas. Through stories, festivals and traditions, pupils become aware that some people believe in a god. They understand the symbolism of the cross and know that the Bible is the holy book of Christians. They visit the local church and understand that it is a special place for Christians. Pupils enjoy learning about major religious festivals such as Christmas and Easter. When they looked at artefacts connected to the Jewish faith, pupils showed great respect and were also able to comment on the comparisons and similarities between them and artefacts used by the Christian religion.

143 Pupils in Key Stage 2 build up their knowledge of major world faiths: Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. By Year 5, they understand that religious belief is very important to some people and can have enormous effect on their lives and on the lives of those around them. They develop a deeper knowledge of Christianity through stories of events in the life of Jesus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through both key stages. They acquire a growing awareness of what it means to be a Christian and of the role of the religion in their society. They develop an awareness of and sensitivity towards other faiths through knowledge of their main beliefs, festivals and traditions.

144 The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. All teachers take care to build good relationships with the pupils. They plan lessons well and at a level appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. A lesson in Year 1 provided good preparation for a visit to the church. The teacher made effective use of a range of artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils were given confidence to respond to the teacher's questions and also to ask their own. As a result, their knowledge and understanding was increased and they made good progress. Through careful use of praise and encouragement, teachers establish calm and supportive atmospheres in their classes where pupils have confidence to reflect, and consider issues in depth. The teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to think independently and achieve well. In Year 5, for example, pupils were encouraged to consider the key questions relating to their lives, and how different religions can help people to find answers. Classroom support staff work closely alongside class teachers. They are well informed and frequently provide support to reassure or extend pupils' thinking. They contribute significantly to the pupils' good achievement. Well-focused discussion promotes speaking and listening skills effectively. However, the range and quality of written work is limited, especially in Key Stage 2.

145 The curriculum co-ordinator has a good overview of the school's achievements. She has very good subject knowledge and is able to provide support and guidance for colleagues. Curriculum planning is satisfactory and relates well to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Assessment is in the early stage of development and is the co-ordinator's next priority.