

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Bushey

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117391

Headteacher: Mr C Dobbs

Reporting inspector: Mr N B Jones
20973

Dates of inspection: 30 April - 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 192336

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Bushey Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD23 1SR
Telephone number:	020 8950 2350
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Munson
Date of previous inspection:	March, 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20973	Mr N B Jones	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Design and technology; Physical education; Religious education.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19692	Mr R Folks	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11472	Mr M Beale	Team inspector	English; Information and communication technology; Music.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
29989	Mrs P Goodsell	Team inspector	Science; Art; Geography; History; Special Educational Needs; Equal Opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ashfield is an average-sized junior school with 238 full-time pupils (130 boys and 108 girls) on roll. The school is situated in Bushey and caters for pupils aged seven to eleven. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. Around 8% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and although this number is increasing it is still below half of the national average. Most of the pupils are from white ethnic background with about a quarter from Jewish families. Around 10% of the pupils are from minority ethnic families and 10% from Service families. Twenty pupils have English as an additional language but only one of them does not speak English fluently. There are 53 pupils on the special educational needs register (which is broadly average) of whom five have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ashfield Junior School provides a sound level of education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. The pupils' attainment by the age of eleven is above average in English, mathematics and science but is average compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The quality of teaching and effectiveness of leadership and management are satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The pupils make good progress in reading, science and art.
- There has been an improvement in standards in information and communication technology since the last inspection.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides a caring and supportive environment. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is a strength of the school and is reflected in the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Many additional activities, such as musical tuition, extra-curricular activities and visits are provided.

What could be improved

- The pupils do not do as well as they should in writing. In addition, pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are of variable quality.
- The requirements of the design and technology curriculum are not being met.
- There is room for improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be more effective.
- Curriculum co-ordinators are given insufficient opportunities to improve standards in their subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of the last inspection, in March 1997, the school was rated as, 'a very good school that promotes high educational standards'. The school has not maintained its very high academic standards and the national tests indicate that standards have declined since then in English, mathematics and science in relation to the national trend. The quality of teaching has fallen from good to satisfactory since the last inspection. However, the school is still achieving standards that are above the national average and are in line with schools serving similar catchment areas. The school has successfully addressed some of the key issues raised in the last inspection report, but improvements have not been brought about in other identified areas. Standards in information and communication technology have been raised, subject policies have been agreed and implemented for some subjects and statutory requirements for the publication of the school brochure are now being met. However, the monitoring

and evaluating of teaching, with a view to improving standards, is not consistently carried out and the weaknesses identified in design and technology still exist.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	B	B	C
mathematics	A	A	B	C
science	A*	A	B	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows, for example, that while standards in English, mathematics and science were above average in the 2000 national tests, they were average compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Where A* is shown, the school's results were very high and in the top 5% nationally. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be well above the national average. Since then standards have fallen compared with the national trend. In the 2000 national tests the school achieved its own target for pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) for eleven year olds in English and came close to achieving it in mathematics.

The attainment of the pupils when they enter the school is above average in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that they make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave the school their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The school has raised its targets for the 2001 national tests for the pupils expected to gain Level 4 to 87% in English and 90% in mathematics. The school is likely to come close to achieving its target for English but for mathematics it may be too ambitious for the present Year 6 to accomplish. The pupils' attainment varies across the different aspects of English. In reading it is well above average, in speaking and listening it is above average and in writing it is only average. Attainment in writing is satisfactory overall but many pupils do not do as well as they should. The pupils with special educational needs are provided with good support and with work well matched to their needs; they make good progress towards meeting their targets. The results of the national tests over the last five years indicate that the attainment of the boys has been significantly lower than that of girls in English.

The pupils make good progress in science and their attainment is above average by the end of the key stage. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with the nationally expected levels. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be below average. In art, the pupils are taught a wide range of skills using a variety of media; they make good progress and their work is of a good standard. In design and technology, the standards of work are below that which would be expected nationally. There is insufficient coverage of the necessary programmes of study and the amount of time devoted to the subject is low. In the other subjects, the pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve at an appropriate level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are enthusiastic about coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around school is very good and it is generally similar in classes.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are of a high standard. Pupils work co-operatively in groups and share resources sensibly and fairly.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is higher than the national average.

Care and consideration for others is a key part of the school's ethos. Many pupils are able to take responsibility for their own work and effectively organise themselves. Behaviour at lunchtimes is good and a pleasant and social atmosphere is created in the dining area. There is one class where the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is not always satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall: 51	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 satisfactory. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in 45 per cent of the lessons observed, including eight per cent of very good teaching. Six per cent of teaching, across a range of subjects, was unsatisfactory. The work for pupils with special educational needs is well matched to their needs and identifies the small steps needed for them to make good progress towards meeting their targets.

The school has sound strategies in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills that enable the pupils to make satisfactory progress. There are significant strengths in the teaching of reading and this enables the pupils to achieve high standards by the age of eleven. The effective use of good quality texts in the Literacy Hour not only develops the pupils' reading skills but also enhances their enjoyment of books. Weaknesses in the teaching of writing result in a significant number of pupils not achieving as well as they should. The overuse of worksheets combined with insufficient opportunities for the pupils to extend their writing skills restricts their progress. Good teaching in science, characterised by challenging work, enables the pupils to make good progress. However, in one lesson, over-direction by the teacher limited the pupils' progress. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall and in Year 3 it is of a high standard because the teachers show great enthusiasm, ensure learning is carried out at a brisk pace and offer constant challenge to the pupils. Sometimes, in other year groups, questioning in the mental arithmetic session is too slow and is focused mainly on the middle ability group and results in the pupils' progress, particularly of the more able, being restricted.

The teaching of art is good throughout the school. Skills and techniques are well taught across a wide range of materials and media and results in the pupils achieving good standards. The good teaching of physical education skills in Year 3 and Year 4 enables effective learning to take place. The teaching of

information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection. The teachers now have good subject knowledge that enables them to confidently teach computer skills and also make good use of the computers to support their teaching in other subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall in all of the other subjects. However, there is little evidence of design and technology skills being taught.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally broad with a particular emphasis on reading. The amount of time the teachers spend teaching each subject does not always match the school's expectations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has good procedures for identifying, supporting and assessing the pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The one pupil requiring additional help is well supported and is making very good progress in learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	A strength of the school. The pupils' social and moral development are very well provided for. The school effectively promotes and fosters values such as honesty and fairness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support, guidance and welfare for all of its pupils.

There is insufficient coverage of the required programmes of study for design and technology and the amount of time devoted to the subject is low.

The school provides a good range of activities outside normal lessons that enrich the pupils' learning. It offers a range of sporting activities and there are also clubs for drama and chess. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. There are a good number of educational visits, both locally and further afield, together with a residential visit for the pupils in Year 6. The school has good links with the community, which make an effective contribution to the pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The well-respected headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and management overall. Insufficient opportunities are provided for subject co-ordinators to work alongside colleagues, in order to monitor standards and influence practice.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors show great commitment to the school and are actively involved in supporting developments through committees for finance, curriculum, premises and personnel. They are successful in fulfilling their statutory duties apart from ensuring that the programmes of study for design and technology are being followed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is effectively using information from the national and other tests to identify weaknesses and set targets for pupils. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning has not been effective in maintaining teaching standards at the good level found at the last inspection.

The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of time, staff, accommodation and learning resources. Good financial planning has allowed effective development of the site.
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The headteacher and governors apply the principles of best value consistently in their evaluation of the school's performance and expenditure. The school generally has sufficient staffing, accommodation and learning resources to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children enjoy school. • Standards of work are good. • The staff are very approachable. • The teaching is good. • The pupils' behaviour is generally good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements are inconsistent. • The early part of the reading scheme lacks stimulation. • Parents are not always well informed.

Inspectors' judgements generally support the parents' positive views. However, the quality of teaching is only satisfactory and although standards in English, mathematics and science are above average they are average compared with similar schools. Regarding the areas that parents would like to see improved, inspectors found that:

- The homework policy is not adhered to in all classes.
- The books from various reading schemes used in the classes of younger pupils are unattractive and lack stimulation.
- Sufficient information is provided for parents but on occasions there has been too little notice given of activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2000 national tests taken by the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that their attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science and is average when compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be well above the national average. Since then standards have fallen compared with the national trend. In the 2000 national tests the school achieved its own target for pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) for eleven year olds in English and came close to achieving it in mathematics.
2. The attainment of the pupils when they enter the school is above average in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that they make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave the school their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The school has raised its targets for the 2001 national tests for the pupils expected to gain Level 4 to 87% in English and 90% in mathematics. The school is likely to come close to achieving its targets for English but those for mathematics may be too ambitious for the present Year 6 to accomplish. The pupils' attainment varies across the different aspects of English. In reading it is well above average, in speaking and listening it is above average and in writing it is only average. The pupils with special educational needs are provided with good support and work well matched to their needs; which enables them to make good progress towards meeting their targets. The one pupil with English as an additional language who requires support, receives good assistance from staff, a parent and the other children and makes very good progress in learning English.
3. The results of the national tests in English over the last five years indicate that the attainment of boys has been significantly lower than that of girls.
4. In English, the pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment overall is above average by the age of eleven. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Teachers provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and as a consequence the pupils speak confidently, clearly and articulately. They listen carefully to questions and respond enthusiastically. Standards in reading are well above average. Pupils develop their reading skills at a fast pace, while at the same time developing a love of story and books. They use the sounds of letters very well to help them read unfamiliar words. The pupils clearly enjoy reading and do so with accuracy and fluency. They are able to retrieve and organise information from a variety of sources and use contents pages, an index and glossaries confidently. Attainment in writing is satisfactory overall but many pupils do not do as well as they should. The school is aware of this and has put in place appropriate strategies to bring about improvements. The extensive use of worksheets in literacy activities in some classes restricts the opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills sufficiently. Standards of

handwriting and presentation are unsatisfactory in some classes. Some pupils choose not to use joined handwriting and presentation of their work is not always tidy.

5. The pupils' attainment in mathematics is above average by the age of eleven. The progress they make varies as they move through the school but it is satisfactory overall. Particularly good progress is made in Year 3 where a stimulating and challenging environment enables pupils of differing abilities to learn well across all aspects of mathematics. The pupils' rate of progress slows down in the middle years of the school before increasing again in Year 6. Lack of challenge in some of the work has been a contributory factor in limiting the pupils' progress in the middle years. By the end of the key stage, the pupils have gained a good all round knowledge and understanding of mathematics and are particularly adept at number. In science, the challenge in most lessons enables most pupils to make good progress and their attainment is above average by the end of the key stage. They make predictions and hypotheses and they are well able to devise and organise fair tests and experiments to investigate these. Lesson observations and scrutiny of the pupils' work reveal that investigative skills are very well learnt. The pupils have a good understanding of life processes and living things, a good knowledge of the reproductive organs of flowering plants and of food chains and ecosystems.
6. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with the nationally expected levels. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be below average. The pupils confidently use various data to produce charts and graphs. The pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and by the time they leave the school their attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In art, the pupils make good progress in learning a wide range of skills using a variety of media and their attainment is above average. In design and technology, the standards of work are below that which would be expected nationally because there is insufficient coverage of the necessary programmes of study and the amount of time devoted to the subject is low. There is little evidence, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6, of pupils designing and evaluating projects or working with a range of tools and materials. The pupils make good progress in physical education in Year 3 and Year 4 because of the good teaching of skills and the very active and challenging lessons. In the other subjects, the pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve at an appropriate level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very good and these are strengths of the school. These findings are similar to those at the last inspection. Nearly all pupils show very positive attitudes to school and their work, and this has a beneficial effect on the standards they attain and the quality of learning. Care and consideration for others is a key part of the school's ethos. Throughout the school, pupils work well and respond positively to praise and encouragement. Pupils value one another and enjoy each other's successes. There has been one exclusion in the past year.
8. The school has a comprehensive behaviour policy. This clearly sets out expectations for behaviour and explains graded scales of rewards and sanctions. The policy is well understood by both pupils and parents. In one class, where the behaviour of a small group of pupils is not always satisfactory a new teacher has worked hard to establish an overall strategy that is mainly successful.
9. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school, a point confirmed by parents' responses to the questionnaires. They show real interest in their work in the classroom and become involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They relate well to one another and to adults in the school. They are polite and helpful and are pleased to talk to visitors. Pupils arrive at assemblies in an exemplary manner and listen to their teachers, guests and each other with interest and patience. Good relationships are evident in lessons where pupils work co-operatively in groups

and share resources sensibly and fairly. Behaviour at lunchtimes is good and a pleasant social atmosphere is created in the dining area.

10. Pupils develop good attitudes to learning. Within a caring and secure environment they gain confidence and settle to tasks very quickly. Most pupils concentrate when working independently and many pupils are able to take responsibility for their own work and effectively organise themselves when undertaking activities. During class discussions, they volunteer questions and confidently offer suggestions. Good examples of this were seen during the activities in Year 6 when pupils ask and answer thoughtful and demanding questions whilst taking the role of characters from the class text.
11. The initiative shown by pupils and their willingness to take personal responsibility is good. Many examples of pupils of all ages taking responsibility were seen during the inspection. In each class, a number of pupils are frequently involved in assisting the teachers in daily class routines. Monitors take attendance registers from the classroom to the office and older pupils organise the music for assemblies.
12. Attendance is above the national average. Punctuality is good and there is little evidence of lateness. Registers comply with statutory requirements and are neatly and accurately completed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in 45 per cent of the lessons observed, including eight per cent of very good teaching. Six per cent of teaching, across a range of subjects, was unsatisfactory. The last inspection report rated teaching as good overall with nearly a quarter of the teaching very good and none less than satisfactory. This fall in the quality of teaching adversely affects the pupils' learning and consequently their attainment. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning has not been effective in maintaining teaching standards at the good level found at the last inspection. Subject co-ordinators are given insufficient opportunities to influence the quality of teaching in order to raise standards in their subjects.
14. There are significant strengths in the teaching of reading and this enables the pupils to achieve high standards by the age of eleven. The effective use of good quality texts in the Literacy Hour not only develops the pupils' reading skills but also enhances their enjoyment of books. Weaknesses in the teaching of writing result in a significant number of pupils not achieving as well as they should. The overuse of worksheets in literacy activities combined with insufficient opportunities for the pupils to extend their writing skills restricts their progress. Good teaching in most science lessons, characterised by challenging work, enables the pupils to make good progress. The teaching of mathematics in Year 3 is of a high standard because the teachers show great enthusiasm, ensure learning is carried out at a brisk pace and offer constant challenge to the pupils. The pupils make very good progress in these lessons.
15. The teaching of art is good throughout the school. Skills and techniques are well taught across a wide range of materials and media, and results in the pupils achieving good standards. The good pace and progression of physical education lessons in Year 3 and Year 4 gives the pupils constant challenge and enables them to effectively learn skills. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection. The teachers now have good subject knowledge that enables them to confidently teach computer skills and also make good use of the computers to support their teaching in other subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall in all of the other subjects and this is reflected by the fact that nearly half of the teaching overall was judged to be satisfactory. Teaching is less effective where the pace of lessons is too slow and there is insufficient challenge, for example, in one Year 5 science lesson where the pupils were too teacher-directed.

16. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively implemented for the teaching of reading. Teachers plan activities thoroughly and manage their classes well. The questioning techniques used in the context of shared and guided reading sessions are very good, eliciting answers without determining them and maintaining the pupils' attention and involvement. A good example of imaginative teaching was seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson in which pupils were asked to think of some replacement lines for the last part of a chapter which would alter the content whilst retaining the form of the original. They responded well to this challenge. Pupils write for a range of purposes but there are too few opportunities for them to extend their writing skills by regularly drafting and redrafting stories and poems to refine and improve a piece of work.
17. The National Numeracy Strategy is being applied successfully in the vast majority of lessons. It is most effectively used in Year 3 where lessons include a brisk quick-fire mental arithmetic session, followed by group work at a challenging level and concluding with a class session to assess the progress made. The pupils remain alert and interested throughout the lessons and produce work of a high standard. Sometimes, in other year groups, the teaching is less effective and results in the pupils' progress, particularly of the more able, being restricted. This happens when the questioning in the mental arithmetic session is too slow and is focused mainly on the middle ability group and when pupils are not organised in ability groups for the activity session.
18. Planning for the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs is carried out well by the teachers. The work is well matched to the pupils' needs and identifies the small steps needed for them to make good progress towards meeting their targets. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of how to teach basic skills. They plan effectively, use a good range of teaching methods, and prepare further work to be carried out by the learning support assistants. The learning support assistants provide effective support and also assess the progress made by the pupils and report this verbally to the class teachers on a regular basis.
19. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very good. Throughout the school, the teachers have created a secure and caring environment in which pupils are valued. They maintain a good level of discipline through good control and a quiet, assured manner. However, in one class there are odd occasions when this control is not as good and the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils interrupts the flow of lessons. Classes are well-managed and resources well-prepared to ensure that lessons run smoothly. The teachers' planning is generally aided by useful schemes of work although this is not the case with design and technology. The lack of guidance for this subject has resulted in the required programmes of study not being fully covered and consequently the pupils' progress has been unsatisfactory.
20. There are satisfactory procedures for the assessment and recording of the pupils' progress and attainment. In most classes detailed records are kept of pupils' progress and these are used effectively to plan future work. There are some examples of good marking of pupils' work but the standard varies from class to class. Some teachers provide useful pointers for improvement but others offer insufficient guidance to help the pupils to improve. The teachers' expectations of the pupils' presentation of their work are too low in a number of classes and result in unsatisfactory standards.
21. The pupils are set homework on a regular basis and this is particularly beneficial in assisting the pupils' reading and spelling skills. However, in a number of classes, the amount set does not match the expectations of the school's homework policy. The shortfall is usually in mathematics. At the meeting prior to the inspection, parents rightly indicated that the homework arrangements were inconsistent.

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

22. The curriculum is generally broad and meets the statutory requirements to teach all National Curriculum subjects, except for design and technology. However, the amount of time the teachers spend teaching each subject does not always match the school's own expectations. The school provides a sound range of appropriate opportunities for learning within the curriculum enabling the pupils to make satisfactory progress overall. In reading, science and art the work is usually at a challenging level and the pupils make good progress. However, in design and technology, the programmes of study are not sufficiently covered and the pupils make unsatisfactory progress. In religious education, the school fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils have equality of opportunity in all aspects of the curriculum. This is well supported by the teachers of each year group planning together and then covering the same range of skills and learning opportunities in both classes.
23. The school has sound strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and the pupils are appropriately organised for learning in both subjects. In particular, the curriculum for teaching reading is well implemented and the pupils make good progress in learning to read. A key issue from the previous report was to develop a coherent and progressive scheme of work for information and communication technology; this has been fully addressed. The school continues to work on this area of the curriculum, and there is a clear framework in place for teaching and learning in information and communication technology and the pupils are now making satisfactory progress.
24. The school makes good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. The teachers and learning support assistants work closely together to ensure that the pupils' individual needs are met and that they have full access to the curriculum. There are good procedures in place for the initial identification and assessment of pupils' needs, and for the assessment of their overall progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. The pupils are taught in a mixture of situations, being withdrawn in small groups, taught individually or supported within the classes. Their individual education plans are reviewed each term and new targets are set. These provide small enough steps to enable good progress to be made. The school has carefully planned programmes in place that effectively support pupils with emotional and behavioural problems.
25. The school provides a good range of activities outside normal lessons that enrich the pupils' learning. It offers a range of sporting activities that includes football, netball and hockey and there are clubs for drama and chess. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. They can join recorder groups, a flute class and the choir. This is in addition to the tuition in a wide range of musical instruments for which parents pay. The teachers are keen to ensure that the pupils' musical skills are recognised and well used. For example, the pupils are encouraged to play in assemblies and to take part in events such as the Annual Festival of Voices at Wembley. The Countryside Club provides the pupils with enjoyable and interesting opportunities to learn about the environment and how to care for it. In this context, the school was the Year 2000 winner of the 'Improving School Grounds Award'. There are a good number of educational visits, both locally and further afield, together with a residential visit for the pupils in Year 6. The teachers work hard to provide such a good range of activities in order to meet the needs and interests of the pupils and this has a very positive impact upon the pupils' personal and social development.
26. There is good provision for pupils' personal and social education. The school governors have decided that there will be no sex education taught at the school but ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for the pupils to understand the developments that take place during puberty. Drug awareness is taught as part of the science curriculum. The school successfully fosters the pupils' initiatives and achievements, both in and out of school. Each year group's good work is recognised in turn at an assembly and in the classrooms. A Year 6 class has a 'hobby' notice-board where the pupils display information and artefacts connected with their out-of-school interests. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for many aspects of school life and provides good opportunities for pupils to do this. For example, the Year 6 pupils show new parents around the school and give presentations to explain how the school works and

what they have gained from being pupils. There are good opportunities for the pupils to get involved in fund raising for a wide range of charities and this plays a very important part in developing the pupils' social awareness. The school has planned work to teach the pupils about democracy and citizenship by holding elections within the school at the time of the General Election. The school also develops the pupils' awareness of road, and personal safety using the Stranger Danger programme. All of these activities enable the pupils to gain an understanding of the society in which they live and the positive part they can play in it.

27. The provision made for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. It is a strength of the school and is reflected in the very good attitudes pupils have to school and the very good behaviour seen during the inspection. The school effectively promotes and fosters values such as honesty and fairness and is effective in teaching pupils the difference between right and wrong. The teachers make sure the pupils are aware of the disciplinary code that includes the development of a sense of personal responsibility for actions, and as a result, the pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The pupils have many opportunities in lessons and at other times to work together co-operatively and to compete fairly. This was seen, for example, in the mental and oral warm-up to a mathematics lesson, when the pupils played a card game in groups and supported each other's efforts whilst striving to give their answers quickly and correctly. The adults in the school provide very good role models for the pupils, who learn courtesy and respect in their dealings with adults and one another.
28. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactorily promoted throughout the school. In class work, assemblies and acts of worship, there are opportunities for the pupils to reflect upon the spiritual dimensions of life and the school makes good use of the teachings of Christianity, Judaism and other world faiths to support its provision. The school grounds are well used to promote a love and awareness of the natural environment. The school works well to promote the pupils' knowledge of their own culture although opportunities to consider those of others not represented in the school are more limited. In music, the school provides the pupils with opportunities to listen to and appreciate a range of styles and forms. Work done in art lessons successfully ensures that the pupils learn about a good range of western artists and art forms, such as Surrealism and Impressionism. In Year 6 literature sessions when the pupils learn about the play of 'Macbeth', they begin to appreciate the rhythm of language and ways to use it in writing their own 'spell' poems. This work was complemented by a visit to watch a production of the play by the 'Shakespeare for Kids' company'.
29. The school has good links with the community and these make an effective contribution to the pupils' learning. A significant number of local organisations make use of the school premises outside school hours. The school has close relationships with many local churches covering a range of denominations. Many educational visits are made to local theatres, art galleries and museums and to places of environmental interest. The school is also a corporate member of the Bushey Art Gallery and Museum. Last year, the School and Home Association organised and ran the Bushey Quarter Marathon and the school enters a float in the Bushey Carnival. Fund-raising is undertaken for local hospitals and hospices and most recently for the Peace Hospice. There is liaison with the local fire brigade and police services.
30. Close relationships exist with the main feeder school. These take many forms and a good example is the shared Home/School Agreement. Pupils from the Infant School make regular visits to the Junior School for concerts and familiarisation visits. Joint consultation on a range of matters such as holidays and educational television programmes are an indication of the close liaison. There are many secondary schools in the area and the school keeps in touch with all of them in order to keep parents informed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has good arrangements for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils. It is a caring organisation and looks after the pupils well. These are similar findings to the last inspection. The school provides a safe and secure environment for the pupils who are well known by the staff. Class teachers provide the main care and support for their pupils but this is well supported by the rest of the staff in the school, especially at lunchtimes. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory and first aid arrangements were seen to work effectively during the inspection.
32. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The promotion and monitoring of good behaviour is effective and the procedures for the elimination of oppressive behaviour are very good and work very well in practice. Strategies to encourage racial harmony are effective.
33. Parents, who attended the meeting prior to the inspection, felt that the comments on the annual pupil reports were truthful and accurate.
34. The overall procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress on an ongoing basis are satisfactory but they are not consistently applied. This was also noted during the last inspection. There has recently been a thorough review of these procedures to ensure that all staff are familiar with them and have a shared understanding of how they should be implemented. As a consequence, improvements are taking place. In mathematics, there are useful systems in place, but only in a few classes.
35. The school has begun to make good use of the data it has collected to look at the progress of different classes and different groups of pupils. The results of annual national tests in all year groups are analysed thoroughly to identify trends in standards. The analysis of results forms the basis for future planning and target setting. Progress towards these annual targets is regularly and meticulously recorded on tracking sheets. Common weaknesses are identified and these are used to set targets for future work. For example, as a result of end-of-year assessments in English, greater emphasis is currently being placed on teaching pupils specific writing skills. There is a good system of predicting national curriculum attainment levels based on prior attainment since the start of the key stage, and to identify pupils who do not appear to be on track to meet these predictions. The special needs co-ordinator keeps good records that track the academic and personal development of pupils with special educational needs. Support is directed effectively to pupils who need it.
36. Careful records are maintained for individual pupils in most classes and these are used to set targets for them. Teachers use a range of methods of ensuring that pupils understand these targets and have regular opportunities to review them. In some classes they are written in workbooks and pupils are generally very clear about their targets and what they should do to achieve them.
37. The use of marking to help pupils improve is evident in some classes but not all. Accordingly not all pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve on a daily basis. Work is regularly marked, but there are few opportunities for pupils to reflect on marking and to use it to improve their work.
38. The pupils with special educational needs receive highly effective support from both teaching and support staff within the school. There are good arrangements in place to make use of support from external special educational needs staff and other agencies. All statutory requirements with regard to special educational needs are carried out and good additional support is provided for the pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are good procedures in place for monitoring the pupils' academic progress and personal development, for example, all the pupils contribute to the review of their individual education plans and in the setting of their new targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents are satisfied with the school's links with them. There is effective support for the children's learning at home and parents' involvement with the work of the school is satisfactory.
40. Although parents have no major concerns, they queried the inconsistency of homework arrangements and the standard of information provided for them. The inspection evidence indicates that there is some inconsistency in the setting of homework and that not all of the teachers are complying with the homework policy. Although sufficient information is provided for parents, on occasions there has been too little notice given of activities. Parents were quite rightly concerned about books in the early part of reading scheme lacking stimulation. The annual pupil reports were felt to give useful comments.
41. Only a few parents help in school but there is a very active School and Home Association which organises numerous events during the year, which are both social and fund-raising. These are of considerable help in raising funds for the school, which have most recently been used to buy playground and computer equipment.
42. The school works well in partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are invited to contribute to the regular reviews of the progress their children are making and are kept informed of the targets set for them. Suggestions are given to parents by the school staff about support that can be given at home to extend the work being done in school and parents are supportive of this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. At the time of the last inspection, in March 1997, the school was rated as, 'a very good school that promotes high educational standards'. The school has not maintained these very high academic standards and the national tests indicate that standards have fallen since then in English, mathematics and science in relation to the national trend. However, the school is still achieving standards that are above the national average and are in line with schools serving similar catchment areas.
44. The well-respected headteacher's leadership has enabled the school to successfully address some of the key issues raised in the last inspection report, but improvements have not been brought about in other identified areas. Standards in information and communication technology have been raised, subject policies have been agreed and implemented for some subjects and statutory requirements for the publication of the school brochure are now being met. However, the monitoring and evaluating of teaching, with a view to improving standards, is not consistently carried out and the weaknesses identified in design and technology still exist.
45. The school is effectively using information from the national and other tests to identify weaknesses and set targets for pupils. In this context, writing has been identified as a weakness and appropriate strategies have been put in place to bring about improvements. Targets are set for individual pupils on an annual basis and the tests are proving very useful in helping to assess whether enough progress is being made by the pupils as they move through the school. The school's planning for improvement gives a good focus for the school's development over the next few years. However, there are significant proposals, designed to bring about improvements, which are not being implemented. For example, the opportunities for subject co-ordinators to work alongside colleagues, in order to monitor and improve standards by influencing practice, are not being provided. The means for enabling the headteacher to be fully aware of the standards of work in each class are not effective enough.
46. The governors show great commitment to the school and are actively involved in supporting developments through committees for finance, curriculum, premises and personnel. All major

decisions, including development planning and policy making, are considered and justified by the governors, before being implemented. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to school and is kept well informed of developments. Governors are successful in fulfilling their statutory duties apart from ensuring that the programmes of study for design and technology are being followed.

47. All members of staff are aware of procedures for identifying, assessing and providing for the pupils with special educational needs and parents know who are the main points of contact in the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the school's overall approach to review procedures and documentation for the pupils' individual education plans is thorough and well organised, and that there is consistency in the support of pupils with special educational needs. The governing body is supportive of, and has a good overview of the work done by the school with the pupils with special educational needs.
48. The quality of the school's financial planning and budget monitoring is good. The school secretary works very closely with the headteacher and the chair of the finance committee to monitor spending and to provide the full governing body with regular information about the school's financial position. The headteacher and governors apply the principles of best value consistently in their evaluation of the school's performance and expenditure. Good financial planning allows effective development of the site, for example in the proposed development of a new computer suite. Funds specifically earmarked to support the provision for pupils with special educational needs are effectively used. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology both within the curriculum and to support administration.
49. The school has sufficient, suitably qualified teachers to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and to meet the needs of all pupils. The teachers have a good balance of expertise and experience. However, there is an imbalance in the allocation of responsibilities, with one teacher having the difficult task of managing four major subjects and aspects. The qualifications and experience of the support staff are appropriately matched to the demands of the curriculum. Teachers and support staff work well together to provide good support to pupils throughout the school and particularly for pupils with special educational needs. This partnership has a positive impact on learning and helps ensure pupils make appropriate progress.
50. The school has good arrangements for meeting the professional needs of staff. The training undertaken is clearly focused to support the priorities of the school development plan and to improve the quality of teaching. For example, the school has made effective use of training opportunities to prepare staff for the current national initiatives in literacy and numeracy. Relevant and effective training is also provided for volunteers and teaching assistants, particularly in teaching reading. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good and arrangements for the development of performance management are in place.
51. There are generally sufficient resources to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. Subject co-ordinators have built up many good collections of resources to support work in all subjects apart from design and technology. Computers are well used in all classrooms. Resources are stored well and are easily accessible to teachers and pupils. These resources promote learning and help pupils engage with their work. The library is not well stocked and is underused by the pupils. However, all classrooms have good collections of fiction and non-fiction books and teachers supplement these further with loans from the Schools' Library Service. The books from various reading schemes used in the classes of younger pupils are unattractive and lack stimulation. They do little to promote good levels of interest or a love of books and reading.
52. The school is situated on a large, attractive site and the premises and grounds are sufficient to deliver the full range of the national curriculum. The lower hard play area, which was criticised in the last report, has been resurfaced and is now in good condition. The school caretaker does a very good job of keeping the school well maintained and cleaned to a very high standard.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards and the quality of provision further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- ***Improve standards in writing and ensure that the pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work is of a suitably high standard**
(Paragraphs 2, 4, 14, 16, 20, 30, 45, 53, 58, 59)
- **Ensure that the requirements of the design and technology curriculum are fully implemented.**
(Paragraphs 6, 19, 22, 44, 46, 79, 81)
- **Improve the quality of teaching.**
(Paragraphs 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 37, 44, 45, 68, 81, 103)
- **Make the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning more effective in improving the quality of teaching and in raising standards.**
(Paragraphs 4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 30, 34, 39, 44, 45)
- **Enable curriculum co-ordinators to play a more active part in raising standards in their subjects.**
(Paragraphs 45, 61, 69, 75, 81, 91)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the homework arrangements follow the school policy.
(Paragraphs 21, 33, 40, 59)
- ***Provide more stimulating reading material for pupils in Year 3 and Year 4.** (Paragraphs 40, 51, 62)

* Indicates action already planned, either in writing or informally, by the school.

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

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	8	37	49	6		

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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		53
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English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	25	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	32	36
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	55	55	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (91)	86 (83)	95 (94)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	32	37
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	56	55	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	86 (86)	95 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	8
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	5
White	217
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	113

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-00
	£
Total income	473,832
Total expenditure	465,059
Expenditure per pupil	1,829
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,559
Balance carried forward to next year	15,332

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	46	4		
My child is making good progress in school.	30	56	4	4	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	59	12	6	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	41	32	11	
The teaching is good.	31	56	7	4	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	41	25	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	27	7	1	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	42	4	6	3
The school works closely with parents.	31	50	13	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	34	14	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	56	7	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	39	11	4	1

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

ENGLISH

53. The pupils' attainment in English in the 2000 end-of-key-stage national tests was above the national average but equivalent to that found in similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level (Level 5) was above the national average. The school's results are lower, compared with the national average, than they were at the last inspection and standards are no longer well above the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils' attainment, by the age of eleven, is well above average in reading, above average in speaking and listening but only average in writing.
54. Teachers provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. There are many opportunities in whole class discussions at the beginning of the Literacy Hour and in introductory sessions to other subjects. Pupils speak confidently, clearly and articulately. They learn to use appropriate language in all other areas of the curriculum. They are able to discuss their work and explain their ideas to the teachers or other adults. Drama is well used in the school and particularly so in Year 6. In both Year 6 literacy lessons, drama techniques were impressively used to help pupils explore the motives and personalities of characters from shared texts. The responses from pupils were thoughtful, perceptive and imaginative. Subsequent writing on similar themes was equally impressive.
55. Pupils are given many opportunities to listen to and respond to materials that are shared in reading sessions. They listen carefully to questions and respond enthusiastically. They are given time to explain their ideas and to give interpretations of what they have read. For example, pupils in a Year 3 lesson took great delight in sharing their story endings with classmates and read them accurately and with very good expression, whilst pupils in a Year 4 class greatly enjoyed the opportunities to read from the class novel. In response to skilful questioning about a sports report, pupils in a Year 5 literacy group gave answers that recognised the intentions and bias of the journalist and were able to respond thoughtfully to the ideas of others in the class. Again, stimulated by demanding questions from the teacher, pupils in a Year 6 group were able to make sensitive responses to situations that involved ethical and moral choices after they had read the story of the 'Paperbag Prince'.
56. Pupils develop their reading skills at a fast pace, while at the same time developing a love of story and books. There is an appropriate emphasis on the continuing development of the younger pupils' phonic skills within the Literacy Hour and the pupils use these skills very well to help them read unfamiliar words.
57. Pupils clearly enjoy reading very much and read with accuracy and fluency. This is fostered well by teachers' choices of good quality texts in the Literacy Hour and the emphasis they put on helping pupils to enjoy stories. In one lesson, for example, pupils listened intently as the teacher used the story of the 'Butterfly Lion' by Michael Morpurgo to improve vocabulary and to extend their understanding of different lifestyles. Pupils are given many opportunities to read quietly and ample reading materials are available to them. Teachers keep a careful record of the books read and pupils are encouraged to comment on these and, occasionally, to review what they have read to inform others. They read book reviews from the 'coolreads' website and compare their own interpretations of different texts. By the time pupils leave the school nearly all are confident readers. They describe their preferences for certain types of books and identify their favourite authors and poets. Many pupils use the skills of inference and deduction in their reading. By Year 6, most pupils make use of appropriate phrasing that demonstrates a sound grasp of meaning. They outline the plot of a story, speculate about the motives of the characters and

appreciate quite subtle humour. They are able to retrieve and organise information from a variety of sources and use contents pages, an index and glossaries confidently.

58. Attainment in writing is average overall but pupils, particularly the average and more able, do not do as well as they should. Pupils write for a range of purposes producing poetry, descriptive accounts and letters but there are too few opportunities for them to extend their writing skills by regularly drafting and redrafting stories and poems to refine and improve a piece of work. Standards in spelling are average but should be higher. In some year groups, particularly Year 4, teachers spend too long testing spellings and giving dictations for the same purpose. This severely restricts opportunities for pupils to write in an extended way and does not promote good spelling. The accompanying extensive use of worksheets in literacy activities in some classes restricts the opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills sufficiently. However, examination of pupils' books shows a definite improvement in standards in Year 6. In these classes greater use is made of shared and guided writing teaching techniques in areas such as persuasive writing, poems, reviews and playscripts. The direct teaching of writing and the modelling of effective writing is helping to raise standards.
59. Standards of handwriting and presentation are unsatisfactory in some classes. Some pupils choose not to use joined handwriting and presentation of their work is not always tidy. The work in draft books in some classes is particularly poorly presented.
60. The quality of the teaching of English is satisfactory with good features in reading, speaking and listening, drama and some writing lessons. Where teaching is good, the teacher has high expectations, effective pupil management and ensures good pace to the lessons. The teachers are also confident, ambitious and use their good subject knowledge to challenge and extend pupils further. Marking of pupils' work is generally satisfactory but not all teachers' comments make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and this is used to inform further planning and to assist in setting individual and group activities and individual and class targets. Very good use is made of classroom assistants to support pupils' achievements and they are well informed about lesson plans and learning objectives.
61. Up until very recently the subject has lacked effective leadership. However, the new co-ordinator is very well informed and extremely hardworking. She has already given an effective lead in analysing weaknesses that are reflected in the results of assessments. Effective action is now being taken to ensure that the wealth of evidence gathered in such analysis has a subsequent impact on what is taught. Monitoring of colleagues' teaching, with a view to improving standards, is planned but has not yet taken place.
62. The resources for the teaching of literacy are satisfactory. They include a good range of class texts and guided readers. Effective use is made of computers to support learning and teachers are confident in guiding classes in the appropriate use of information and communication technology. These include the use of programs for checking spelling and editing text. Whilst book resources in classrooms and adjacent areas are well stocked, the main school library is under-stocked. Reading scheme books used in Years 3 and 4 are unattractive and unlikely to promote good reading habits.

MATHEMATICS

63. The results of the 2000 national tests at age 11 indicate that the pupils' attainment is above average nationally but is average compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. These results are not as high as at the time of the last inspection, in March 1997, when the pupils' attainment was judged to be well above average. Inspection findings confirm that standards in mathematics have steadily declined since 1997 and attainment is now judged to be above the national average. The main reason for standards being lower is that the quality of teaching which was rated as good at the last inspection is now judged to be only satisfactory. The school just

failed to meet its target for pupils achieving Level 4 in 2000 and inspection evidence indicates that the more ambitious target for 2001 is unlikely to be achieved.

64. The progress the pupils make varies as they move through the school but it is satisfactory overall. Particularly good progress is made in Year 3 where a stimulating and challenging environment enables pupils of differing abilities to learn well across all aspects of mathematics. Their mental ability with a wide range of number facts is particularly impressive. The pupils' rate of progress slows down in the middle years of the school before increasing again in Year 6. Lack of challenge in some of the work has been a contributory factor in limiting the pupils' progress in the middle years. Pupils with special educational needs receive sufficient support to enable them to make suitable progress.
65. Other subjects are used well to support the development of mathematics. For example, computers are used effectively in the teaching of number and angles. Science lessons include negative numbers in relation to temperatures and a variety of graphs are used to represent results from investigations.
66. By the time the pupils leave the school their attainment is above the national average. In lessons observed in Year 6 the pupils were able to estimate and then measure angles accurately. Their knowledge of acute, obtuse and reflex angles is good and they are able to solve quite complicated problems involving the angles of triangles and quadrilaterals. The pupils respond well to the work provided which is at a challenging level for each ability group. The pupils gain a good all round knowledge and understanding of mathematics and are particularly adept at number. They have quick recall of multiplication tables, a good understanding of decimals and have a firm grasp of the strategies needed for computation.
67. The quality of teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons the teachers show great enthusiasm, ensure learning is carried out at a brisk pace and offer constant challenge to the pupils. This style of teaching creates a very good working atmosphere in both Year 3 classes and enables the pupils to make rapid progress in learning to add and subtract two and three digit numbers. In these lessons, the National Numeracy Strategy is appropriately applied to include a brisk quick-fire mental arithmetic session, followed by group work at a challenging level and concluding with a class session to sort out any problems and consolidate and assess the progress made. The humour of the teachers and the use of exciting resources ensures that the pupils remain alert and interested throughout the lessons and not only produce work of a high standard but also enjoy the challenge.
68. Weaknesses in teaching relate mainly to the lack of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils. On occasions, the questioning in the mental arithmetic session is too slow and is geared too much towards the middle ability group. This leads to the more able pupils not having their knowledge and understanding extended. In one lesson the pupils were not organised in ability groups for the activity session which meant that the teacher had to spend time teaching individual pupils rather than being able to resolve common problems for a whole group at a time. Although the best teaching uses the plenary session at the end of the lesson to sum up all that has been achieved and to assess progress, not all lessons do this. This means that problems encountered by some pupils are not resolved and consequently they make unsatisfactory progress.
69. The mathematics co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge and is a very good practitioner. However, her expertise is insufficiently used to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in the subject or to raise standards through the school. A useful action plan has been produced to guide the development of the subject. The annual testing of pupils enables progress to be monitored on a yearly basis. However, there is no uniform method of recording the pupils' attainment as they move through the school. This lack of information makes it very difficult for teachers joining the school in mid-year to plan appropriate work for pupils of differing ability. Some of the pupils are given mathematics homework, but the setting of homework varies from class to class.

SCIENCE

70. The 2000 national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2, indicate that pupils' attainment is above average when compared with all schools and in line with standards attained in similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that pupils of differing abilities generally make good progress and by the age of eleven their attainment is above average. However, there has been a gradual decline in standards since the last inspection, when standards were well above the national average.
71. The pupils develop a good range of strategies for conducting scientific enquiries. They are aware of how to plan experiments and obtain evidence by making appropriate observations and measurements. Their ability to use results in order to draw conclusions and suggest explanations is well developed. In Year 3, the pupils investigate wet soil samples by weighing them before and after drying them to check how accurate their predicted weight loss is. Year 4 pupils discover which material is best for insulating a shopping bag and they also investigate solids and liquids to find out if all solids dissolve in water. Although Year 5 pupils have some opportunities to predict the outcome of experiments, such as how the surface area of water affects the rate of evaporation, the range of scientific enquiry is more limited than in the other year groups.
72. By the age of eleven when planning their investigations, the pupils have a very good understanding of a fair test. They pose questions, predict possible outcomes of their experiments and form sensible hypotheses as to why things might happen. They have a good knowledge of electric circuits and the purpose and uses of conductors and insulators. They are able to identify which common materials are resistant to electricity and which ones conduct electricity. The pupils' drawings and diagrams show a good knowledge of electric circuits and the symbols used to represent them. The pupils have a good understanding of life processes and living things. They also have a good knowledge of the reproductive organs of flowering plants and of food chains and ecosystems. The pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary when they describe and evaluate their investigations. They present their findings well in a good range of forms such as tables, graphs, pictures and diagrams.
73. The quality of teaching is good. Where good or very good teaching is seen, the teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and make sure that the pupils are clear about what they need to know and be able to do to undertake investigations and draw conclusions from them. The teachers' medium and short term planning is thorough. It sets clear learning objectives that are well matched to the pupils' needs. The teachers ask challenging questions and encourage the pupils to talk about their work and to explain their own ideas. This was done particularly well in Year 3 when the teacher skilfully supported the pupils in developing their understanding of a fair test. In Year 4, the teachers build on the pupils' previous knowledge of fair tests to design their experiments and ensure that the pupils make progress in learning to make sensible predictions of the outcomes. Good use is made of the learning support assistants to aid the learning of the pupils with special educational needs, and this enables the pupils to make good progress. As part of the revision programme for Year 6, a learning support assistant works effectively with groups of pupils to correctly place the model bones and internal organs of a human. Her good questions and encouraging manner enable the pupils to confidently complete the task.
74. Where the teaching is less effective, it does not sufficiently challenge the pupils' thinking and, as a result, the pupils' progress towards understanding the key scientific ideas is slower than it should be. In one Year 5 lesson, too much of the work was teacher-directed and the same work was covered by all of the pupils in the class and this limited the opportunities for the more able pupils to attain the higher levels.
75. The science co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning and ensures that suitable resources are available for the delivery of the planned curriculum. However, she has no release time outside of

her class commitments to bring about improvements through the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning. The school has introduced good procedures for assessment in science, but the information is not always used effectively to plan work for pupils of differing abilities.

ART AND DESIGN

76. The pupils make good progress and by the end of the key stage they attain above average standards. This is because they have access to a wide range of materials and media and the teaching of skills and techniques is good. The work seen in lessons, and the work exhibited around the school, is colourful, interesting and generally well displayed. In some cases it is related to the topics being studied in other curriculum areas such as English, history and religious education. On other occasions it refers to different styles and traditions in art. This provides the pupils with good contexts for their artwork. There are examples of work in the style of Impressionists, Tudor portraits and Buddhist patterns. However, standards at the school have fallen since the last inspection when they were found to be well above national expectations. This is, perhaps, because there is less time available for teaching the subject.
77. The pupils confidently mix colours using a variety of media and when painting or using pastels they successfully blend new shades. The youngest pupils use brushes with skill and care to create delicate and detailed paintings of spring blossom. They know about the work of famous artists such as Cezanne and Van Gogh, and make clay plaques showing sunflowers. As the pupils move through the school they have opportunities to weave using wools. They talk knowledgeably about different painting techniques used by the artists they study, such as, Monet and Seurat. The Year 5 pupils use vibrant colours to make mosaics in the style of the Aztecs and are enthused by a parent, who is an artist, to produce sculptures using a modelling medium. The older pupils demonstrate good observational skills that enable them to accurately draw flowers. They make good use of sketchbooks to try out ideas and improve upon them, for example, when they learn about Surrealist artists such as Dali, Escher or Magritte. Year 6 pupils use a good variety of media to extend their work on pattern and design when creating an attractive display on the theme of the Willow Pattern.
78. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers prepare materials and other resources well. They have secure subject knowledge and provide the pupils with a good range of media and art forms. The lessons are well managed; the pupils try new techniques and use different materials to achieve the effects that are suggested to them. The subject is well co-ordinated and learning support assistants and parents provide good support. The subject makes a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development because it provides them with opportunities to study art from western cultures and periods. However, opportunities to study art from cultures other than their own are limited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. Only one design and technology lesson took place during the week of the inspection and the pupils made satisfactory progress in this Year 4 lesson. However, the evidence from the teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of a small amount of pupils' work indicate that standards of attainment are below that which would be expected of pupils nationally by the age of eleven. Despite a number of weaknesses being identified at the time of the last inspection, standards in design and technology were judged to be satisfactory. Currently, there is insufficient coverage of the required programmes of study and the amount of time devoted to the subject is low. There is little evidence, particularly in the two older year groups, of pupils designing and evaluating projects or working with a range of tools and materials. The only planned project for Year 5 is very teacher-directed and the limited extension of the pupils' skills in Year 6 results in the pupils making unsatisfactory progress.

80. The design and technology that has taken place is often linked to the pupils' work in other subjects. In this context, the pupils have made Viking longships and weather vanes in Year 3, model vehicles in Year 4, Tudor houses in Year 5 and cross-stitch Hannuka cards in Year 6. Over and above this, Year 3 pupils designed and made effective marble runs. In the one lesson observed, the Year 4 pupils were designing a puppet ready for making later. The teacher appropriately established what the pupils already knew and understood, before helping them to develop their ideas.
81. There is no co-ordinator for design and technology who would be responsible for ensuring that the programmes of study are being followed, that resources are adequate and to see that the subject is successfully developed. The school does not have a scheme of work for the teachers to use to ensure that there is suitable coverage of the subject and that there is progressive teaching of skills for the pupils as they move through the school. There are insufficient tools and materials to extend the pupils' skills of designing, making, evaluating and modifying.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

82. By the end of the key stage, the pupils attain the standards expected for their age in both subjects and they make satisfactory progress. The standards attained in geography are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, but in history, they are now not as good. The same amount of time is spent on both subjects, and some topics contain elements of both areas of the curriculum. The teachers' planning for history shows that the pupils have good opportunities to learn historical facts, but fewer to consider how the past influences the present. In addition, inadequate use is made of a range of information sources. For example, in two lessons the pupils were asked to design a leaflet for a theme park illustrating the ways in which people have communicated over time. The activity lacked challenge and made no use of information that was readily available. In some year groups, the delivery of the geography curriculum is planned with too long gaps between topics which makes it more difficult for the pupils to build on their geographical knowledge, skills and understanding.
83. In geography, the pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of their village. They develop fieldwork skills by observing the way in which buildings are used and successfully record the information on outline maps of the area. In one lesson in Year 3, the pupils completed a plan of their classroom and had an opportunity to use an aerial photograph of the school to identify changes in the buildings since it had been taken. The Year 4 pupils made good progress when they studied the pathway of a river. They used their knowledge to explain different features and confidently used specific geographical vocabulary. In the same lesson pupils used the computer to undertake research into rivers. The Year 5 pupils compared different environments such as polar regions, deserts and rain forests. They made a comparison between features of life in Bushey and on the Pampa Grande in Peru. During the summer term, Year 6 pupils make an educational visit to Charmouth to study geographical and environmental elements of a contrasting location to the one in which they live. In preparation, they made good use of maps to plan the route, and work out the distance using a variety of scales.
84. In history, the pupils gain a good knowledge of the chronology of events although they are not always able to explain why events happened. In Year 3, good work was seen when the pupils studied the movement and settlement of the Vikings. The teachers prepared three evidence bags and the pupils had to investigate the contents and deduce their source. These skills were developed when the pupils used photographs of Viking artefacts and tried to work out what they were made of and used for. The Year 4 pupils collected first hand evidence from their grandparents about recent developments in transport. In Year 5, the pupils study the Tudors and they can describe and explain some features of Henry VIII's reign, including the fact that he had six wives because he wanted a male heir to the throne. By the end of the key stage, the pupils have completed a topic on the Second World War. They study how and why the war began and

gain an insight into life in Britain at that time through learning about rationing, evacuation, the blackout and air raid shelters.

85. The quality of teaching in geography and history is satisfactory. The teachers use national guidelines to ensure that the pupils gain the required knowledge. The teachers make good use of visits to local places and further afield to enhance and support the pupils' learning. Both geography and history lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. The subject co-ordinator for both history and geography has recently been appointed and has not yet had the opportunity to be involved in the development of the subjects. However, he plans to monitor and evaluate learning in the subjects and review the way in which the timetables for the delivery of history and geography are organised in order to raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

86. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with the nationally expected levels. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be below national expectations and the progress of most pupils was deemed unsatisfactory. A good level of provision is now in place and the school is in a strong position to raise standards even further. There are several contributing factors to the improvements in standards. The school's curriculum has been successfully brought in line with the national curriculum recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There has been an improvement in computer hardware and software and all pupils now have regular access to the direct teaching of ICT skills.
87. In carefully planned ICT lessons pupils are taught new skills and are given the opportunity to practise them during the following week. Evidence from current and recently undertaken work shows that by the end of Year 6, pupils enter data and use the information well to produce charts and graphs. They can use an interactive encyclopaedia to download information to support their work in history and geography and skilfully manipulate a screen turtle to draw different plane shapes. Pupils in Year 5 quickly learn to use a drawing program to produce accurate plans of their classroom and Year 4 pupils make confident use of a branching database to identify different fruits. Most pupils make use of a word processor in written work and they can change font styles, colours and sizes for appropriate effect. Many opportunities are given for pupils to draft and redraft text on the computer and keyboard skills are well developed. Inputting text is fast and accurate. Pupils of all ages use the Internet and many can communicate by e-mail.
88. ICT is used well to support the teaching and learning in other subjects. During the inspection, pupils were using work in ICT lessons to complement their work on pattern in art, on rivers in geography and in preparing a range of written reports. Good use is made of ICT in literacy and numeracy lessons.
89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. The level of teachers' competence and confidence, which were criticised in the previous report, have been effectively raised through successful in-service training and the recruitment of enthusiastic teachers. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This enables them to plan exciting tasks and helps during practical sessions when trouble-shooting skills are needed quickly at the computer. Teachers give clear introductions to lessons and provide written step-by-step prompts to help the less confident pupils access programs independently. Careful planning and high expectations of behaviour are seen in the lessons where at any one time only half the pupils are engaged in working with the teacher at the computer. In the lessons observed, well-designed tasks succeeded in complementing the computer-based work and pupils concentrated well when working independently.
90. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The governing body, headteacher and new subject leader, through considered decision making, have improved and re-deployed

computer resources to maximise their use. They have effectively raised the profile of the subject since the last inspection.

91. The scheme of work assists teachers to plan ICT lessons well but planning in other subjects does not show consistently when and how ICT will be used in classes. The subject leader has begun to check the planning for ICT lessons but has not yet had the opportunity to assist teachers develop skills further by observing their teaching. A useful assessment and recording system, based on selected learning objectives, is in place in some but not all classes. Some teachers mark pupils' work with useful comments but in general day-to-day assessment is not used consistently.

MUSIC

92. During the inspection it was only possible to observe the teaching of four music lessons. Further evidence was obtained from an examination of pupil's reports, teachers' long and short term planning, photographs, displays and discussions with staff. This evidence shows that the pupils make generally satisfactory progress. The majority achieves standards that are in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. At the time of the last inspection the pupils' attainment was judged to be above the national expectation. Standards dipped slightly during the time when statutory requirements in music were suspended but the school is now well placed to raise standards once again. Most pupils have positive attitudes to music and approach tasks with enthusiasm.
93. Pupils enjoy music and are developing a good understanding of musical terms such as tempo and phrasing. Pupils in Year 3 lessons enthusiastically sing songs around a space theme. They copy and create a range of rhythmic patterns and accurately follow a visual score. Pupils in Year 4 improvise rhythmic patterns maintaining a steady beat and are beginning to understand how changes in duration within music, can be used to create a desired effect or mood.
94. Singing in assembly by younger pupils is very good. They sing tunefully with a real enthusiasm. Older pupils, however, do not sing as well. Many avoid singing altogether and some appear rather embarrassed by the task.
95. The curriculum is broad and balanced and all elements including composing, performing and appraising are successfully addressed. Pupils enjoy listening to music and playing instruments. They listen carefully and thoughtfully and find great pleasure in creating their own music. Pupils are very aware of the need to respond to each other and are keen to clap, play or sing. They appraise each other's performance in a friendly, helpful manner and appreciate different contributions to the lesson.
96. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument in lessons taught by either members of the teaching staff or peripatetic specialists. The pupils have opportunities to learn to play an impressive range of string, woodwind and brass instruments and they make good progress. These instruments are then played in small orchestras during school assemblies or performances to parents. The school also provides many good opportunities for pupils to perform in the community with pupils from other schools and this makes a significant contribution to their social and moral development. The school contributes actively to local music festivals and the Festival of Voices at Wembley Conference Centre. The pupils also sing carols at the Harlequin Shopping Centre at Christmas. These opportunities significantly enhance the quality of pupils' learning
97. The quality of teaching in individual lessons is satisfactory. Teachers plan effectively, set realistic objectives and the pace of lessons is brisk. In all lessons observed, good use was made of a range of good quality percussion instruments. However, the use of taped singing to accompany the pupils singing results in some of the older pupils not bothering to join in.
98. The co-ordinator has much enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. She has produced a detailed scheme of work that colleagues find easy to follow and the range of untuned percussion

instruments has been greatly increased. She has a realistic view of the current position of her subject and is aware that music now requires greater emphasis in the overall curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. Lessons were observed in dance, games, gymnastics and swimming and teachers' planning indicates that athletics is also included in an appropriately broad physical education (PE) curriculum. Although pupils make satisfactory progress overall much of the teaching in Year 3 and Year 4 is of good quality and the pupils make good progress in these year groups. By the age of eleven the pupils are likely to achieve the national expectations in PE. Standards have been maintained at a similar level to the last inspection.
100. In lessons in the lower half of the school the pupils make good progress in learning to control a ball with a hockey stick in a games lesson, in compiling a travelling sequence based on flight in gymnastics and in creating a routine of movements in dance. The sensible and responsive way the pupils follow instructions, put out the large apparatus and collaborate in groups is a feature of these lessons. Only games lessons were observed in the upper half of the school. In these lessons the pupils learned throwing and catching skills with mixed degrees of success. The progression in the development of skills was far less marked than in the lower half of the school and the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils in one lesson led to unsatisfactory progress being made.
101. After consultation with parents, a swimming programme is arranged to cater for the less competent and non-swimmers. This normally means that a relatively small number of pupils, mainly from the lower half of the school, have regular swimming lessons at a local secondary school. The lessons, taken by staff from Ashfield, are well planned and are effective in helping to build up the pupils' confidence in the water and in enabling them to learn the basic swimming strokes. By the time the pupils leave the school over 90% of them are able to swim at least 25 metres.
102. The quality of teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory but is satisfactory overall. All of the teaching observed in the lower half of the school was good. Here, the teachers have good subject knowledge, are confident, and teach with a great deal of enthusiasm. Particularly notable is the good pace and progression to the lessons which gives the pupils constant challenge and keeps them active throughout the lessons. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils and make good use of demonstration to praise and encourage good practice. In weaker lessons, in the upper half of the school, there is insufficient teaching or improving of the pupils' skills and occasionally the poor behaviour of a few pupils prevents the class moving onto more challenging work.
103. Teachers in each year group plan a suitable range of activities for their pupils. However, there is no school overview to ensure balanced coverage of each aspect of PE over the key stage or scheme of work to enable suitable progression in the development of the pupils' skills as they move through the school. This is particularly evident in the upper school. The pupils have the opportunity to practise their football, hockey and netball through extra-curricular clubs. They also take part in inter-school matches in football and netball.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. The pupils make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave the school their attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Similar judgements were made during the last inspection. The pupils study Christianity and Judaism plus a different additional major religion in each year group. They learn about a range of festivals linked to Christianity and other religions, particularly Judaism. Stories from the Bible and other religious faiths are used to

develop their religious understanding and they begin to relate these to their own lives. The younger pupils learn about the signs and symbols associated with religious artefacts and buildings and enhance their studies through a visit to a local church. Visits by a Vicar and a Rabbi help the older pupils to gain a greater understanding of the shared roots of Christianity and Judaism.

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teachers adopt a variety of approaches in order to stimulate and then retain the interest of the pupils. In a Year 3 lesson on the interior of churches, the teacher brought the subject to life by the good use of visual aids and her own enthusiasm. However, the progress of the pupils was limited because of the short amount of time allowed for the lesson. In Year 6, the involvement of the pupils in adding sound effects to the story of David and Goliath created great interest and aided their retention of the main features of the story. On the odd occasion when a story such as, 'The Prodigal Son' in Year 4, is merely read by the teacher and then written about by the pupils, their understanding of what is quite difficult subject matter is not enhanced.
106. The school has produced a suitable scheme of work based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. There are sufficient religious artefacts to support the scheme but insufficient resource books to provide ideas to assist the teachers with their planning. The co-ordinator provides valuable informal support to colleagues with their planning and the development of the subject.