

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **KINGSWAY INFANT SCHOOL**

Watford, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117317

Headteacher: Mrs A Mitchell

Reporting inspector: Douglas Hayward  
21234

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 192340

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Approach Watford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD25 0ES
Telephone number:	01923 675005
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Pearce
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Doug Hayward 21234	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
Geoff Humphrey 9163	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and resources
Gail Robertson 24137	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?
Rob Isaac 23080	Team inspector	English Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kingsway Infant School is a small, two-form entry school for pupils from 5 to 7 years of age. It is situated in an established residential area on the northern outskirts of Watford in Hertfordshire. The majority of pupils come from the local area, which consists of a mixture of private and local authority housing. There is very little movement of families in or out of the area and the number of pupils attending this school, like others in the area, is gradually getting smaller. Currently 150 pupils attend the school, most of whom are white. There are 4 pupils (3 per cent) who speak English as an additional language. This is high compared with other schools, although hardly any of them require additional help to learn English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (14 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs (40 per cent) is above the national average, although there are no pupils with statements of special educational need.

Most children attend the nearby nursery school before starting at Kingsway. Those whose fifth birthday is between September and the end of February are admitted in September. Those with birthdays between March and the end of August are admitted in January. Tests given to pupils shortly after they start school show that levels of attainment are generally lower than in other schools in Hertfordshire, particularly in language, literacy and mathematics. The school is one of 20 schools currently taking part in a Hertfordshire literacy project with pupils in Year 1, aimed at raising standards in reading and writing.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

**This is a good school that makes a real difference to pupils' education. It helps them to make good progress from the time they start until they leave at seven years of age. It places great importance on pupils' standards in the 3Rs, as well as on how they work and play together, and how they treat each other. The school's results in national tests at seven years of age continue to improve each year. The good work of the school has been recognised by an 'Achievement Award' recently presented by the Department for Education for consistent improvement in children's achievements over the past five years. The award is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the whole school team. The school provides good value for money.**

#### **What the school does well**

- It provides good standards of teaching. Teachers are hard working and work well as a team. They have very good relationships with pupils and help to raise their self-esteem.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a very effective management team and are well supported by staff.
- It makes very good use of assessment information to help pupils make good progress.
- It places great importance on teaching pupils to behave very well and to have positive attitudes to their work.
- It provides very good teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs. Their work is very well planned and they have lots of very good support in classes and in small groups.
- It teaches a wide range of interesting subjects. Some of these, such as art, science, history and geography, have a positive impact on how pupils think about the world around them.
- It makes sure that all pupils have very good opportunities to be involved in all lessons and activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- The way in which the governing body monitors the work of the school.
- More challenging investigation work in mathematics and science.
- The use of information technology in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking, so that pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- The way in which classroom support assistants help pupils to make progress.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996 when it was judged to provide good value for money. Key issues identified in that report, such as teachers' planning and a wider range of activities to encourage the youngest pupils to experiment and investigate, have been successfully addressed. The issue of governors monitoring the standards and quality of work that the school achieves has not been fully resolved. At the time of the previous inspection there was one governing body shared with the junior school. A separate governing body for the infant school was only set up in 1999. The school's results in reading, writing and mathematics show a steady trend of improvement since the last inspection. Standards in several subjects, such as history, geography and information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection. The school has become much better at setting challenging targets for pupils to achieve and monitoring how much progress they make towards achieving them. Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour in lessons are now very good. Standards of teaching seen during this inspection were much better than in 1996. The school has successfully managed to maintain the good value for money it provided in the previous inspection and is in a good position to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

**Key**

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

The school's results show a steady trend of improvement over the last four years. In writing, pupils' results have improved dramatically and are a result of the school paying particular attention to the quality and range of pupils' writing. In mathematics the improvement has not been as rapid, but last year the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2<sup>1</sup> in national tests at the age of seven was slightly above the national average. Compared with their attainment in literacy and numeracy when they enter school at five years of age, pupils make good progress in these subjects. The school has worked hard to help more pupils attain the higher Level 3 in tests when they are seven years of age. In the 2001 tests there has been an improvement in results in all subjects at Level 2 and at Level 3. During the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were above average. Standards are well above average in art and they are above average in information and communication technology, geography and history. Standards are in line with expectations in music, physical education and religious education and below expectations in design and technology.

<sup>1</sup> Levels – by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who attain Level 3 are, therefore, above nationally expected levels.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They enjoy school and are interested and enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils develop into confident individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
Attendance	Satisfactory. It is the same as in most other infant schools. Almost all pupils arrive punctually for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection 44 lessons were observed. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Of the remainder 70 per cent were at least good, 32 per cent were very good or better and almost 10 per cent were excellent. This is high quality teaching that is found throughout the school. The teaching of literacy is consistently good and has a positive impact on how well pupils do. Teaching in numeracy is not quite as successful, although pupils' results in mathematics continue to improve each year. Not all lessons are as well planned; the teaching pace is slower and because of this pupils do not learn as much as they could. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and helps them to make good progress. The school plans very successful work for pupils of all abilities in small groups that help them to make good progress. Teachers use very good questioning to find out what pupils know and give them lots of encouragement and praise in lessons so that they believe they can do well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has worked hard to plan a good education for pupils that covers a wide range of subjects. It organises a good range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school to enrich learning. Children in the Foundation Stage <sup>2</sup> enjoy a stimulating and imaginative range of activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Work is carefully planned to match pupils' needs. They receive very good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the very few pupils with English as an additional language
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Teachers plan many very good opportunities for pupils to think and learn about the world outside school. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and how to behave well. They work well together and learn about their own and other cultures. The school celebrates pupils' achievements well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know their pupils well and support them in their learning. The school works closely with parents and listens carefully to what they say. It has very good methods for assessing how much progress pupils make in their work.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage – This was introduced in September 2000 and forms a separate stage of education for children from the age of three until they reach the end of the reception year.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is clear educational direction for the work of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and have brought about many improvements since the last inspection. There is very effective leadership of special educational needs. Subject co-ordinators work hard to improve standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The separate governing body for the infant school has only recently been formed and has not yet become the school's <i>'critical friend'</i> . Governors are enthusiastic, supportive and very keen to become further involved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully considers how it can continue to improve pupils' results. There are very good ways of monitoring the teaching and standards achieved.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget well to provide a good standard of education.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Forty-five parents (30 per cent) returned their questionnaires and nine attended the pre-inspection meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel that teaching is good and that their children make good progress.</li> <li>• They feel that the school works closely with them and listens to what they say.</li> <li>• They say that behaviour is good and that the school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• They say their children enjoy going to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few would like to see the school providing more homework.</li> <li>• A small number would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. The school places great importance on good behaviour and pupils enjoy coming to school. Homework is usually in the form of reading and occasionally links with other subjects, such as geography and information and communication technology. The reading diaries are not used well enough in every class to inform parents about the progress their children are making. The school organises a good range of visits and visitors to help make subjects even more interesting.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

##### **Children in the Foundation Stage**

1. After several weeks in the reception class children are given simple tasks to help find out how much they know about language and books, their understanding of number, how well they approach learning and their early social and physical skills. The amount that children know varies slightly from term to term and from year to year. Overall, however, the tests over the last three years show that most attain standards below the level expected for children at this age in Hertfordshire and in schools nationally. The tests also show that the children's understanding and experience of early language and mathematics are particularly low. This trend is getting more noticeable each term, despite the fact that most children attend a nursery before starting at Kingsway. Indeed, the school feels that children learn a great deal in the time they are at the nursery. Task scores also show that there are many children who have special educational needs and that there are few with above average attainment. For example, the tests for the current year's intake of children show that none of their scores place them in the top 30 per cent of pupils in Hertfordshire. In fact, eight of them (about a quarter) have such low scores that they qualify for additional funding for support through the school's budget share from the local education authority.
2. Despite these low scores at the age of five, pupils' results in national tests at the age of seven have improved for the last four years. Children under five make good progress. They benefit from caring, supportive teachers and well-planned lessons and activities. The progress that many children have made since they entered school has enabled them to have already achieved the *Early Learning Goals*<sup>3</sup> or to be well on course to achieve them by the end of the term.

##### **Key Stage 1**

3. The results of the tests and assessments in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above was above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well above average in writing, average in science and below average in reading and mathematics. In comparison with those in similar schools, results at Kingsway were well above average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics.
4. It should be remembered that the pupils who took the tests in 2000 had been identified by their results when they started school as a group requiring a great deal of support. Almost half the pupils were placed on the school's register of special educational needs and only 10 per cent were identified with above average attainment on entry. In view of these low scores when they were five years of age, pupils' scores at the age of seven last year show that they made good progress in reading and mathematics and very good progress in writing.
5. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the school does not consider pupils' low scores at the age of five to be any obstacle to successful learning. Despite many children starting school with significant gaps in their knowledge and experience, especially in

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<sup>3</sup> Early Learning Goals – these are targets for children by the end of the reception year. They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

literacy and numeracy, by the time they are seven most attain levels that are in line with those in other schools in the country and in writing their standards are much higher.

6. The school's results since 1996 show a steady trend of improvement overall each year in all subjects and at all levels. In the most recent tests in 2001 this trend has been maintained, in some cases quite significantly. For example, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 in reading has improved from 82 per cent in 1999 to 89 per cent last year and 93 per cent in 2001. In writing, the percentage has improved from 85 per cent to 89 per cent and then to 95 per cent over the same period. In mathematics, test results have gone up from 84 per cent to 95 per cent and then to 97 per cent in the current tests. Within the Level 2 range, results at the higher Level 2B standard have also improved significantly over three years.
7. The higher Level 3 results in reading have been maintained at about 35 per cent. In writing they have risen from 15 to 22 per cent and in mathematics they have gone up from 14 to 23 per cent. During the inspection, standards at the end of key Stage 1 were judged to be above average in reading, mathematics and science and well above average in writing. The school is successfully managing to maintain and improve standards for seven-year-olds.
8. The school has set up various strategies to help speed up pupils' progress and improve their results at the end of Key Stage 1. To do this it uses a number of assessments to form a view of the ability range of each group of pupils and to track their progress as they move through the school. Some of the assessments, such as those carried out within a few weeks of the children starting school are under the auspices of the local education authority; they identify areas such as literacy and numeracy that the school feels can and should be targeted for improvement.
9. The school also monitors the relative performance of boys and girls to establish any trends and it has recently started to monitor the attainment and progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups with English as an additional language. By setting targets in reading, writing and mathematics for individual pupils, the school can track their progress increasingly effectively. Its monitoring systems indicate that boys generally have much lower attainment than girls when they start school at the age of five. The differences between girls' and boys' results are also evident in the end-of-key-stage results. The school has tried to address this by increasing the level of support available for pupils in classes and small groups and by extending its range of reading books to make them more attractive to boys. The local education authority's analysis of the pupils' results at the age of seven compared with their baseline test results at five shows that the majority of pupils make *'two levels of progress'*. These showed that pupils did at least as well as, or better than, expected from their baseline scores in comparison with those in other Hertfordshire schools.
10. Many schools now refer to this eventual progress, in relation to what they could do when they started school, as *'value added'*. It indicates how influential the school has been in furthering the pupils' progress. There is very good evidence that work at Kingsway builds logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. The deputy headteacher's comparison of results from parallel classes indicates that there is little difference between the progress made in different classes within the same year group. This strongly suggests that shared planning and monitoring of standards of work ensure that pupils make consistent and equal progress. The school is now intent on further increasing the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in all subjects.
11. The school's use of a part-time support teacher has been extremely successful in targeting and supporting groups of pupils of different ability. These range from those who

require a lot of support with reading, writing and mathematics, to those higher attaining pupils who are able to suggest subtle changes of vocabulary in story texts; for example, 'struggling' instead of 'trying' and 'sniffed' instead of 'smelled'. The use of some ability setting has given additional focus to teachers' work and has provided pupils with more challenging work at their own levels of achievement.

12. The standards attained in literacy by pupils in Year 2 are above average. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been very effective in raising standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The shared planning that teachers have undertaken and their professional development have been well supported by lesson observations carried out by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Pupils' good literacy skills are apparent when they read for pleasure. Pupils of all abilities develop good strategies, based on a very sound knowledge of letter sounds, for reading unknown words; for example, identifying a part of a word, looking for clues in pictures or making an informed guess based on what has happened in the story so far. They develop a good understanding of alphabetical order and know why they would use contents and index pages in books. They have less knowledge of non-fiction books and their ability to read for information is not as good as when they read fiction stories.
13. Pupils make very good progress in writing and many achieve high standards by the end of Key Stage 1. It is apparent from the reception class, through Year 1 and into Year 2, in pupils' books and on wall displays that in their written work they make very good progress in handwriting, spelling, style and content. For example, at the start of Year 1 pupils write descriptions of their teddy bears. *'He is light yelow. With a black nos. and very foory with gloing iys. He is very fluffy and he is gray with pink eiras. He awas gets a cuddal.'* Later in Year 1 pupils are able to write descriptive poems about cold weather that were good enough in terms of expressive language to be published in an anthology of poems last year; for example,  
*A slippery walk*  
*Shiny walls*  
*Dead leaves*  
*Pond frozen*  
*Tress hypnotised*  
*Like black skeletons.*  
By Year 2, pupils are writing extended stories that are mature, sensitive, imaginative and written in grammatically accurate, neat handwriting. For example, *'One sunny, spring morning when it was lovely and peaceful and the birds were out singing, Lucy woke up with a humumgous yawn.'*
14. There are very good links between literacy and other subjects and pupils have many very good opportunities to write extended stories and descriptions; for example, in history, religious education and even linked to subjects such as art. Pupils in Year 1 had very good opportunities to write about what they would look like in a portrait after a visit to the National Portrait Gallery in London. *'In my portrait I would wear my best dress and I would have my best teddy bear in it with me.'* In science they write up an experiment on friction using very thoughtful and appropriate vocabulary. *'We started with a smooth, gentle ramp. When we tested the red car it went very fast. When we made it steeper the light car tumbled over when it touched the bottom'.* Pupils in Year 2 who visited the Museum of London linked to their history topic wrote, *'I spotted a diary but I could not read it because it was in different writing. I loved the skeletons. I spotted a coffin behind the glass and wrote about Samuel Pepys'.*
15. Standards in numeracy are above average. Pupils have rapid, accurate recall of number facts and use them well in their calculations. They use a range of strategies to work things out in their heads and their understanding of mathematical processes is good.

They are able to spot mathematical patterns and similarities. For example, one pupil in Year 2 quickly identified that all the numbers that had been chosen to count on from in a hundred square were 'odd' numbers, whilst another saw that 19 was '91 reversed'. Standards in science are above average. By the end of the key stage, pupils experience a wide range of scientific concepts, such as forces, circuits, change, life cycles and growth patterns. There are good opportunities to develop their understanding of a range of scientific concepts through experiments. However, in both mathematics and science there are too few opportunities to extend the more able pupils through a problem solving, investigative approach at a more challenging level.

16. In information and communication technology, history and geography, standards are above average. In music and physical education, standards are average and in design and technology they are below average. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus.
17. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are identified early and the school is very proficient at supporting them for as long as is needed. The overall provision is very well organised by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Some pupils make very good progress, having experienced a very limited range of opportunities before starting school. It is very clear that many children have a narrow vocabulary and this affects their ability to express themselves in English and in other subjects. For example, many pupils when they start school cannot name simple shapes such as 'squares' and 'circles'. In science they have to learn new technical language such as 'pushing' and 'pulling'. The school's systems for supporting these pupils are very good in classes and in small groups when they are withdrawn from classes. Pupils in Year 1 learn to extend the range of words that they use. For example, when completing the sentence, 'My best shoes are .....,', pupils with special educational needs were able to suggest 'trainers', 'black and white' and 'gone'. Teachers carefully plan work that matches their ability in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' individual education plans are good and contain clear, specific targets for improvement and their progress is regularly monitored.
18. The few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. There is only one pupil who is at an early stage of learning English. Many of the pupils make the same rate of progress as other pupils in their classes. A few have been identified as having special educational needs and support is provided in small groups. As yet the school does not record how it provides specific support for pupils with English as an additional language to ensure that they are fully included in the school's overall provision. However, it has recently started to track and record the attainment and progress made specifically by pupils from ethnic minority groups, some of whom have English as an additional language. The school's arrangements for allocating support from the part-time teacher for pupils of all abilities are very good. All pupils have an entitlement to high quality support in a wide range of subjects in their own classes and in small groups that work outside the classrooms.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

19. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. They enjoy school and are very interested in and enthusiastic about their work. The pre-inspection questionnaires show that all parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school. Almost all feel that the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.
20. When they start in the reception class some children find it difficult to follow school routines and disciplines. By their third term in school they are able to listen carefully to their teacher and to other children. They hold up their hand to answer questions,

concentrate well on their work and join in enthusiastically in lessons. Their social skills also develop well. A good example of children in the reception class enjoying their learning was observed when a group with special educational needs described and discussed, with confidence and obvious enthusiasm, the pictures in their early reading books.

21. In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils' enthusiasm for and interest in their work continues to develop. For example, in a music lesson pupils in Year 2 tried hard to improve their performance and took the lesson very seriously. In a physical education lesson they shared and explored each other's ideas and on another occasion showed great enthusiasm for a design and technology project. In Year 1, very good examples of excellent concentration and response were seen in history, art, numeracy and music.
22. Behaviour is very good. There have been no exclusions in the last 12 months. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and towards adults. Staff treat pupils with courtesy and respect and this is reflected in the confidence and trust that pupils have in their relationships with others. Pupils have a very good understanding of the effect that their actions can have on others and show respect for their opinions. A good demonstration of this was observed in a religious education lesson, where pupils used words like *'kindness'*, *'nice'*, *'gentle'* and *'generous'* to describe their attitudes towards others. Pupils behaved extremely well when they watched a class assembly in which pupils needed absolute silence in order to be heard.
23. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with special educational needs are totally included in the life and work of the school. There were no instances of bullying or harassment during the inspection. Neither adults nor the pupils themselves tolerate any form of unacceptable behaviour. Older pupils have caring attitudes towards younger ones and show sensitivity to their needs. There are some opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility; for example, returning registers to the office and helping to prepare and tidy up before and after lessons. These opportunities are limited, however, particularly in relation to making choices about their work and encouraging older pupils to work more independently.
24. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is also in line. Punctuality is good for most pupils. Overall, pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a positive contribution to their attainment and progress. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils develop as confident individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

25. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall and it promotes good and sometimes very good standards. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. In 98 per cent of lessons teaching was at least satisfactory. In 70 per cent of lessons it was good or better, in 32 per cent it was at least very good and in almost 10 per cent it was excellent. This is high quality teaching that is found throughout the school. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires thought that teaching was good.
26. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. In 1996, 8 per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory and no teaching was judged to be very good or better compared with almost a third of lessons in this inspection. In the previous inspection the teaching of pupils with special educational needs was good and it is now very good. Relationships between pupils and teachers, their secure subject knowledge and skilful questioning are still strengths of teaching. The marked

improvements in the quality of teaching are due to the following: some changes in staffing; the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies; the introduction of single age classes; and an increase in the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators.

27. A major factor behind the success of these pupils in making such progress from low levels of achievement when they start school is the teachers' high expectations of them. No matter that the majority of pupils start with attainment that is below average, it is not perceived as any obstacle to achieving high standards. The way in which the school has consistently improved its results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 emphasises teachers' expectations of what can be achieved rather than looking for reasons why pupils cannot do well. The school has to make pupils believe that they are capable of achieving high standards and rewarding them when they do well.
28. The successful ways in which teachers promote pupils' self-esteem can be seen in all lessons. The praise that pupils enjoy is one of the reasons they enjoy coming to school. Pupils talk about what they can do well and how good they are at doing certain things, rather than talking about what they can not do. This confidence, positive attitudes and high self-esteem comes from the high quality teaching of pupils of all abilities. For example, a teacher working with a class of pupils in a numeracy lesson commented to them, *'You are giving really good answers today!'* The ways in which she constantly reminded them how quick and accurate their answers were raised their confidence and their belief in what they could do. Another teacher working with a small group of pupils exclaimed, *'Wow! We've got some nice answers here!'* when she looked at their writing. They often ask other members of the class or group to confirm that a pupil has done particularly well and so improve that pupil's standing with his or her peers. For example, *'Don't you think he's done that really well?'* and, *'Tell the others what you've got, because I love your answer!'* From the reception class to Year 2 the use of praise by teachers and classroom support assistants, such as, *'Good girl! Excellent! I'm so proud of you! What a star!'* can be heard repeatedly, whatever the activity. In turn, pupils know that their efforts and ideas are highly regarded and valued.
29. Teachers' good use of questioning was identified in the previous inspection as an area of strength and it remains so. The best lessons invariably start with a brisk question and answer session in which the teachers pose searching questions to find out what pupils know. Their questioning adds pace and urgency to the lesson. For example, in a good literacy lesson the teacher's careful framing of questions such as, *'Do you think these children would have had a magical adventure?'* made pupils think very carefully about the text. Her supplementary question, *'Was it all in their imagination?'* drew out even more thoughtful responses. The teacher made sure that open-ended questions did not preclude any pupil from offering opinions or suggestions. Rapid questioning during a very good design and technology lesson revised the visit to an adventure playground that the pupils had made the previous week and that was to be the starting point for their work. *'What are they made of? What moving parts were there?'* and *'How was the frame fixed?'* were all questions aimed at priming the pupils to think carefully about how they were going to make their own *'playground models'*. They also use questioning well during the course of the lesson to find out what pupils understand; for example, *'Why did the author spell the title that way?'* in a very good literacy lesson and *'By heating it what are we going to change? What are we going to measure?'* in a very good science lesson. These detailed questions enable teachers to make accurate assessments of whether pupils have learned what was intended or whether further teaching and explanation are required.
30. Many pupils start school with a very limited vocabulary. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very carefully use precise subject terms to encourage pupils, in turn, to

become more adventurous about the language they use. For example, in a very good music lesson the teacher developed a range of 'sound' words to capture rain sounds, such as 'drip-drop', 'splosh' and 'squelch'. In a good literacy lesson the teacher encouraged pupils' use of descriptive vocabulary by focusing on enriching words like 'exhausted' rather than merely 'tired'. One of the particularly notable features of teachers extending pupils' vocabulary is the work they do with pupils who have special educational needs. They are taught to be adventurous and to use their knowledge of parts of words to make new, descriptive words.

31. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, some of whom are demanding and expect frequent attention from adults. Some are 'hard work' to teach and it is the teachers' success at achieving good behaviour in their classrooms that has such a marked effect on pupils' willingness to learn and to conform to the school's expectations of good behaviour. Teachers try hard to make sure that learning is appealing, that they capture pupils' attention and interest and that learning is enjoyable. They are good at getting pupils to respond. They listen carefully to what pupils have to say and are quick to praise and reward good behaviour. They have high expectations that pupils will behave well and enjoy a firm but fair relationship in which humour is often an important part.
32. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, but not as effective, there are times when lesson objectives are not carefully planned so that assessment of what has been learned is more difficult. The pace of lessons drops and the difference in the rate of learning between satisfactory and very good lessons is clearly apparent. Lesson timing is not as carefully planned and plenary sessions at the end of lessons are not long enough to revise the work that has been taught. Satisfactory lessons allow pupils too much time to become distracted and to avoid playing a full part in them. In short, there is no pressure on them to achieve high standards in the same way as there is in very good lessons.
33. In the previous inspection teachers' marking was identified as being good. It was noted that marking often provided teachers with information that enabled them to take pupils on to the next stage of learning. In this inspection it was found that the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. The best examples of marking provide written comments that refer specifically to the content of pupils' work. Too often, however, marking consists of single words or short phrases that do not provide any constructive information about what the teacher finds to praise or what the pupil should do to improve. The deployment of classroom support assistants was also praised in the previous inspection. In this inspection it was noted that they have a good rapport with pupils and are very keen for them to succeed. However, there were frequent occasions when support assistants were not fully involved in the planning of pupils' work and opportunities to assess the progress they were making were missed. For example, during lesson introductions, pupils with individual education plans were not targeted to assess, for example, their ability to respond to teachers' questions or to concentrate for lengthy periods of time.
34. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in withdrawal groups and in class is never less than good and is often very good or excellent. It is effective because of the very well planned variety of activities that reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Learning is made fun and the teacher with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs has an excellent relationship with them. Praise is used very well for the improvements they make. Pupils are desperate to do well. They feel secure and valued, knowing that the teacher emphasises the importance of them contributing ideas and suggestions rather than the merit of 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Day-to-day assessments are used very well to move these pupils forward in their learning. Class teachers effectively use the targets in their individual education plans to further these pupils' learning.



35. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 16 per cent of parents indicated dissatisfaction with the amount of homework the school sets, but did not add written comments to indicate how they felt the school's provision could be improved. Pupils take home spelling and reading books regularly and sometimes pupils take home assignments to complete that support the work they do in school. The school has recently become involved in trying to establish closer and more purposeful homework links with parents. The pupils' reading diaries are often untidy and not cared for. They do not indicate that parents or the school regard them highly and opportunities to develop a dialogue between home and school regarding assessments of pupils' reading are missed.

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

36. The quality of the curriculum is good. The school provides a varied and wide range of learning opportunities that make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. It has successfully managed to maintain a broad curriculum since the previous inspection. The school curriculum has some very good features, such as the provision for art, the opportunities for swimming lessons, the quality of school assemblies and the way that it makes sure that it includes all pupils in all activities.
37. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a stimulating and imaginative range of activities. The Key Stage 1 curriculum is good in its range and quality. In addition to studying the core subjects, pupils study a wide range of other subjects. The religious education lessons meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and are well planned. The allocation of time between subjects is appropriate. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good provision. Subject policies and schemes of work take account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Throughout the school, gifted and talented pupils are identified quickly and the provision for them is good. All pupils have genuinely equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
38. There are good policies and schemes of work for all subjects. There are good strategies in place for teaching literacy and numeracy. An effective, well-structured programme of personal, social and health education enhances the curriculum. Links with a partner infant school and the nearby junior school are effective and pupils in Year 2 have good opportunities to get to know the junior school before they start there.
39. A significant number of parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that they feel the school does not provide a wide range of activities outside lessons. However, pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, which include football, gardening and recorder clubs that enrich the opportunities to learn. The school also organises a good range of educational visits to places of interest. These include visits to the National Portrait Gallery, the Chiltern Open Air Museum and the Museum of London, all of which pupils find very enjoyable and informative. Pupils and teachers increasingly make educational visits to places around the world via the school's link to the Internet. Teachers also use the local environment well in lessons to help pupils learn more about science and geography.
40. The contribution of the community to the school's curriculum is satisfactory. The school's good links with community organisations, such as the *'Fischer Family Trust'*, provide opportunities to raise standards.
41. The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The arrangements that teachers make for pupils' spiritual and moral development are very good. Teachers promote social development well and cultural

development satisfactorily.

42. The headteacher, staff and governors are successful in meeting the school's aims. Working together, they create a caring ethos for all pupils and are very successful in including all of them educationally. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their work, in their growing self-confidence, and in their relationships. Teachers work hard, and with considerable success, to help pupils develop positive self-esteem. They plan lessons for many pupils to experience success and they ensure that the contributions that pupils make to lessons and at other times are valued. There is also a sense of shared respect between teachers and pupils.
43. Teachers help pupils to gain a greater awareness of the wonders of the world through science lessons where they study growing plants, as well as through art. Art portfolios display an unusual and interesting focus upon life. Pupils create lovely rubbings of autumn leaves on colour-washed paper using colour-matched crayons. Pupils empathise with small creatures. They write about, *'the spider's web sparkling on the window'*, and, *'we watched the spider watching us'*. Photographs of a school visit to the Chiltern Open Air Museum spoke of pupils, *'taking a trip into the past'*. Teachers help pupils with low self-esteem by adopting a positive attitude to all their achievements, using praise extremely well and celebrating achievements in a variety of ways, such as *'good work stickers'*. In their everyday dealings with pupils, teachers and other adults show concern for their welfare. Consequently, pupils feel valued members of the school community.
44. Acts of collective worship are often very thoughtful times. Teachers use many suitable themes to help pupils to reflect upon their experiences. The choice of music for the start and end of assemblies is stirring or reflective as appropriate. Religious education and other subjects in the curriculum such as geography and history help pupils to reflect upon the lives, feelings and beliefs of others. These can range from explorations of the teachings of Jesus to discussions of the thoughts expressed by the diarist Samuel Pepys. The school meets statutory requirements in its daily acts of collective worship. The bright, colourful displays in classrooms and around the school help pupils to learn to care and show respect for their school and their teachers because respect is shown for their own work.
45. Teachers promote moral education very well throughout the school. They highlight the moral values which permeate the school's life. They help pupils to make good decisions based squarely upon the principles which distinguish right from wrong. Teachers provide very good role models. School rules, displayed in classrooms and corridors, remind pupils of what is expected of them and they contribute effectively to their moral development. Some displays, though, contain too many rules and thus lose impact. Teachers discuss how to act considerately with pupils in assemblies and in discussion groups known as *'circle times'*. Pupils also gain a sense of right and wrong through home school agreements.
46. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop positive relationships and a better social understanding. A wide variety of school visits help pupils to relate positively to one another and to their teachers. They learn how to adjust their behaviour to suit different occasions and how self-discipline is important. During lessons there are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and co-operatively. The school helps pupils develop a sense of responsibility through the appointment of special helpers for playtimes, lunchtimes and class activities.
47. Teachers create satisfactory opportunities for pupils' cultural development. The curriculum in subjects such as geography and religious education enables pupils to become aware of the traditions of different world cultures. Teachers take the opportunity

to raise pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage and that of others. Pupils in Year 1 recently enjoyed learning more about special books and special places of worship and celebrated that successfully in a special assembly. Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to experience the culture of contemporary Britain. Visitors enrich pupils' cultural understanding; for instance, by appreciating art. Pupils have had few opportunities to improve their understanding of non-Christian religious traditions through meeting visitors of other faiths.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

48. The support and guidance given to pupils and the care taken over their welfare are good. Teachers and support staff know and understand their pupils well and care for their personal and academic needs in a sensitive and supportive way. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting, and those who returned questionnaires, confirmed that they are pleased with the care and support provided for their children by the school.
49. Health and safety procedures are good and include satisfactory arrangements for first aid. Child protection procedures are effective, with all members of staff well trained and alert to the needs of all children. The headteacher is the designated child protection co-ordinator and has close links with all appropriate outside agencies.
50. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is provided through the curriculum. Hand washing before meals and after visiting the toilet or practical activities is a well-established part of pupils' normal school routine. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity through all aspects of the educational, recreational and welfare provision.
51. The policies and procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are very good. The management of behaviour is consistent throughout the school and any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with effectively and sensitively. The policies and procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance and punctuality are good. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are very good and have been very well maintained since the last inspection.
52. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and recording their progress. These start with children under five when they start school and find out whether they attain the levels expected of them nationally by the end of the reception year. They continue through Key Stage 1 until they transfer at the age of seven. The school uses the information from assessments very constructively.
53. The school carries out additional testing at regular intervals to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers analyse the results of these tests and set realistic targets for pupils. These targets are then regularly reviewed. This target-setting makes a very positive contribution to teachers' decisions about what to teach next.
54. The school keeps detailed information on pupils that it uses very constructively. It knows, for instance, about the ability range of each year group of pupils so that it can plan its support for them accordingly. Assessment information, provided by the local education authority and based on pupils' attainment when they start in the reception class, gives the school an indication of the difference it makes to pupils' attainment by the time they are seven in comparison with other schools in Hertfordshire.
55. Teachers maintain good records in English and mathematics of what pupils understand and the skills they develop. The school is preparing to extend the tracking of pupils' attainment through the introduction of computerised assessment. Teachers hold

common expectations of attainment because the school keeps good portfolios of pupils' marked work. Teachers identify targets for pupils' individual academic development and this helps them make progress from day to day. The assessment co-ordinator uses assessment data well to check pupils' progress. Pupils who need different forms of support are identified early and their progress is monitored closely. The success of the school's assessment procedures to identify weaknesses and then plan appropriate support is plain to see in the success many pupils achieve in national tests.

56. The school is very effective in assessing and monitoring pupils who have special educational needs. These assessments are used as a basis for good quality support in classes and in small groups. Work based on these assessments is very well targeted and includes academic, social and behavioural needs. The breadth of assessment results in support that is well focused on pupils' particular needs.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

57. The view of almost all parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, and those who returned questionnaires, was that the school works closely with them, listens to what they say and is well managed and led. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views.
58. The school works hard to promote a close partnership with parents. Good information is provided every term on the curriculum, topic work and other school activities. Curriculum workshops have been organised, but have been poorly attended. The home-school agreement clearly defines the expectations of the school, the parents and the pupils. A copy of the school behaviour policy is also provided for all parents. The school has recently participated in the '*Flying Start*' pilot scheme, which is a literacy programme involving parents and children during their first year in full time education. The school is successfully using the recently introduced mathematics games library, which it is strongly promoting among parents and their children.
59. The pupils' annual progress reports meet statutory requirements. They cover all subjects and provide clear information on what pupils know and understand. They include very helpful comments about pupils' emotional and social development. Parents have three opportunities a year for formal meetings with their children's class teachers. Attendance at both autumn and spring term consultation evenings is monitored to ensure all parents are seen. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed termly when parents attend to discuss their children's progress. These have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
60. There is no formal parent teacher association, but groups of parents do support the school and help to organise fundraising and social events such as the disco for pupils in Year 2 just before they leave at the end of the year. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school, and their contribution to their children's learning at school and at home, are satisfactory. The school has maintained the effective partnership with parents which was reported after the last inspection.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and management and clear educational direction for the work of the school. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and all but one key issue have been successfully addressed.
62. The school has a clear sense of purpose and commitment to improvement that is shared by all who work in it. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 98 per cent of parents quite rightly acknowledge that the school is well managed. The staff and governors share the headteacher's view of the schools direction; she aims to achieve a high quality of education for all children. The school has clear and appropriate aims which are reflected in its daily life, as well as being evident in school documents and its priorities for development. The good work of the school has been recognised by the Department for Education and Employment which recently presented an '*Achievement Award*' for consistent improvement in children's achievements over the past five years. The award is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the whole school team.
63. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, with whom she works closely and who plays a significant part in the running of the school. Together they are very effective in implementing change and in monitoring and evaluating external and internal test and assessment results to measure the extent of the school's improvement.
64. There is a good programme for monitoring the teaching and learning. It involves the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Monitoring is carried out through direct observation of lessons, a careful study of curriculum planning, work sampling and discussions with teachers. The headteacher conducts teachers' professional development interviews on a regular basis. Targets are agreed and regularly reviewed as part of the school's monitoring programme. The information from this process is used effectively to inform the training needs of staff and school development needs.
65. The involvement of the governing body in the schools management is satisfactory. The governing body at the last inspection served both the infant and junior school; this is not now the case. The infant school has its own fairly recently formed body of governors who are keen and enthusiastic. They have established an effective committee structure to oversee the work and life of the school. Meetings are well organised with agendas and minutes and they make good use of their experience of management outside the world of education in personnel, finance, buildings and management decisions. They are playing an increasingly significant part in the school's management, but are at an early stage of monitoring the standards and the work of the school. They do not yet fully act as a '*critical friend*'. The previous inspection key issue regarding management required the governing body to develop formal procedures to enable governors to monitor the standards and quality of education that the school provides. This has not yet been fully addressed. However, the governors recognise the importance of their role in this aspect and have now identified it as an area for improvement.
66. There is very good and effective management of special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans are very precise with clear targets that can be assessed to see the progress made. The governor for special educational needs is involved in the special educational needs provision and gives good support to the school. Classroom assistants are well trained, capable and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. However, the way in which classroom assistants are deployed is less effective. For example, during literacy and numeracy sessions they are not fully engaged in supporting pupils during the whole class teaching time and were observed carrying out mundane

tasks; for example, cutting out shapes for the next lesson. All school staff contribute towards the school's positive ethos for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, which has a considerable impact on maintaining their self-esteem and confidence.

67. The school is making good use of all available resources to achieve good standards of work and the good standard of education it provides. The budget is planned initially by the head according to the educational priorities identified in the school development plans and long-term priorities. The finance committee of the governing body is ably chaired and all governors receive regular, up-to-date financial information, which places them in a strong position to consider spending alternatives. Prudent financial management has produced a financial reserve that has been identified to cover the school's future budget shortfalls due to the fall in pupil numbers. The school receives financial grants under the standards funds for schools. These are used well for the purpose intended and staff appreciate the positive impact they have on their teaching and pupils' learning. The governing body is fully conversant with the 'best value' principles.<sup>4</sup>
68. The day-to-day financial control and administration are good and have been maintained since the previous inspection. The office staff are most able and efficient and provide a welcoming first contact with the school.
69. The match of teachers and support staff to the requirements of the National Curriculum is good. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and there are very good procedures to assist teachers new to the school. The temporary teachers deployed in the reception classes, for example, have been very well supported. The school provides a very good support programme for newly qualified teachers and for the training of new teachers. There are good opportunities for the professional development of all staff. The national performance management policy is implemented effectively.
70. The standard and quality of accommodation are very good. The hall, dining area and spare classroom are very well deployed for physical education, music and for teaching small groups of pupils. The school is very clean and well maintained. There is a wide range of good wall displays that celebrate pupils' achievements, stimulate interest and record the different types of activities that pupils enjoy.
71. The site is attractively landscaped and provides hard-surface and grassed areas for games and recreation, and also a climbing and activities area. There is a secure environmental studies area with a pond. The site benefits from a number of mature trees that provide shade and an attractive outlook from many classrooms. Externally the building is in satisfactory condition, but many windows are overdue for a coat of paint.
72. The range and quality of learning resources are good and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The main weakness is the lack of wheeled toys to enable children in the reception classes to fully develop their control skills. The quality, quantity and range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library and classrooms is satisfactory, but the central library area does not provide a stimulating environment that promotes an interest in literature.
73. Taking into consideration
- the children's low attainment when they start school
  - the good quality of teaching that the school provides
  - the attainment of children and pupils at the ages of five and seven
  - the consistently improving trend in results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1

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<sup>4</sup> 'Best value' – Schools are accountable for balancing *costs* (in terms of economy and efficiency) and *effectiveness* (in terms of their performance and the quality of what they provide). To achieve this schools need to show that they apply 'best value principles' in making decisions about all their activities, but especially how they manage their financial resources.

- the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- the good quality of leadership

the school still provides good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

74. In the context of its strengths, and in order to maintain and improve the good quality of pupils' learning and the consistent improvement in national tests results when the pupils are seven years of age, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1)** review the part played by the governing body in the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure:
    - a. that the governing body is fully informed about and involved in the work of the school, including the school development plan and the monitoring of standards, in order to fulfil its role as 'critical friend' to the school;  
**(paragraph 65 of the main report)**
  - (2)** review lesson planning in mathematics and science to ensure:
    - a. that planning includes regular opportunities for challenging, investigative tasks especially for higher attaining pupils;  
**(paragraphs 15, 100, 104, 111)**
  - (3)** ensure that full use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) by:
    - a. ensuring that all staff are trained to take full advantage of ICT resources;
    - b. extending the use of ICT in other subjects to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are fully used;  
**(paragraphs 97, 104, 139)**
  - (4)** review the quality of teachers' marking to ensure:
    - a. that greater consistency is achieved between teachers in the marking of pupils' work;
    - b. that marking offers advice about how work can be improved, and that it forms part of the target setting process for pupils in order to raise their attainment even further;  
**(paragraphs 33, 97, 111)**
  - (5)** review the role of learning support assistants to ensure:
    - a. that they are deployed in classes to have the maximum impact on pupils' learning;
    - b. an evaluation of their training needs is carried out;
    - c. that adult support for pupils with special educational needs is carefully focused in lessons.  
**(paragraphs 33, 96, 105)**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

39

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
10	26	36	26	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	150
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	24	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	30
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	52	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (80)	90 (83)	93 (83)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	31	30
	Girls	23	24	23
	Total	52	55	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (81)	95 (83)	91 (81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	-
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	108
Any other minority ethnic group	-

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR –Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: YR - Y2**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	-	-
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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999 / 2000
	£
Total income	331,727
Total expenditure	324,884
Expenditure per pupil	1,900
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,812
Balance carried forward to next year	24,655

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate 30%**

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	45

#### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	50	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	45	14	2	0
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	46	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	48	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	70	28	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	25	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	35	16	7	7

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

75. There were no children under five years of age in school at the time of the last inspection. The quality of education for children in the Foundation Stage is good and provides them with a good grounding for the next stage of their education. Children under five are taught in two reception classes. They are admitted into school either in the September or January before their fifth birthday.
76. The induction into the reception classes is a very good feature of the school's work. Parents and children are very well prepared for starting school. Meetings and visits to the school are well organised and purposeful. Consequently, children and parents have the confidence to come and begin the home-school partnership necessary for successful learning.
77. The curriculum offered is good. It is broad, balanced, stimulating and interesting and comprehensively covers all areas of learning, including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The emphasis is on good quality experiences in children's learning. Parents are fully informed of their children's work and progress through informal discussions and formal interviews. Although children have a wide range of abilities, their attainment on entry shows a high percentage of levels below those expected of children at this age nationally and throughout the local education authority. Parents are expected to support their children in learning at home, through encouraging an interest in and love of books. The week's expected learning and experiences to be offered are written and placed on the windows of the reception classes for parents to see. Overall, all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They benefit from the lively, supporting teachers and well thought out learning opportunities provided. Most children are well on course to attain the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year and a very few are in line to achieve beyond that.

**Personal, social and emotional skills**

78. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are below those expected when they enter school. They make good progress and the majority have appropriate personal, social and emotional skills and will attain the Early Learning Goals. Children play and work well together and are generally polite to adults. They are able to work on tasks as a group; for example, during clearing away time in pairs and playing a game. They show a positive attitude to their work. This is particularly true when resources are well organised in advance and when the children have the benefit of additional adult support. They concentrate for extended periods; for instance, when they are involved in a '*listening meditation*' lesson. Children listen to the story and music being played and later discuss their thoughts and feelings during this magical time. They are able to work independently on the computer, taking turns and explaining the function of the keyboard to each other. They show very good attitudes when engaged in practical tasks such as working in the sand or going for walks in the school grounds. Role-play in the butterfly house or secret garden, however, can be noisy and occasionally boisterous.
79. There is, however, a significant minority of children who are badly behaved and disrupt lessons. They might refuse to join in the lesson or call out during lesson instructions and ignore the teacher's requests. The good management of these children by staff and the clear expectations they set for good behaviour ensure that inappropriate behaviour is kept to a minimum. On the occasions when some children are not inclined to co-operate potentially difficult situations are often quickly defused. While teachers' expectations are made clear, they do not force children into situations from which there is no solution other

than confrontation or aggression. Children are well aware of the reasons why they should wash their hands before lunch and tidy away their belongings. They walk quietly to the hall and dining area so they do not disturb others and know the routines for lunch and snack times. They are able to talk about their feelings when they open their treasure boxes and find the treasure they had made inside the box. The school places a very strong emphasis on this area of learning and children are clear about what is right, what is wrong and why.

### **Language, literacy and communication**

80. Children enter school with attainment that is well below that expected for their age, particularly in conversational skills, the range and depth of vocabulary and hand control for writing. The planned range of activities promotes children's language and literacy skills well. All children make good progress and by the time they are five many reach the expected levels, but only few exceed them. Children listen well in small groups and as a whole class for an acceptable period of time. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes as a group activity. They readily talk about their experiences and demonstrate an increasing vocabulary. For example, they say what they saw in the school grounds when on a mini-beast hunt. They describe the colour, size and look of creatures such as spiders and ladybirds. *'I saw a ant go fast under a stone' or 'I saw a spider in the web'.*
81. Children are encouraged to recognise and write their names. They are taught the necessary skills for reading, but were observed on only a few occasions reading and handling books. The reception classes have only limited designated book areas with soft furnishings to help entice children to select a book and enjoy reading in comfort. Most children can re-tell a simple story using picture clues and act out stories they have been read. Children are expected to take home a book to share with an adult and have an enjoyable time together. However, the home-school diaries contain little information to guide parents on helping their children to develop specifically at the stage they are at. In their writing they use pictures, symbols and familiar words well to communicate meaning, showing an awareness of some of the different purposes of writing. Most children are beginning to form upper and lower case letters correctly. Some can copy words and have started to write independently. Computers and tape recorders are used effectively to encourage children to enjoy reading and writing.

### **Mathematics**

82. Pupils' knowledge of mathematics on entry is well below that expected for their age, particularly their lack of mathematical vocabulary. Teachers support learning in mathematics with a wide variety of resources and experiences and no opportunity is lost to reinforce number work in a variety of ways. Children make good progress in counting skills, number recognition and mathematical language. Most are able to count well beyond ten. They know names of common shapes such as triangles, circles, squares and rectangles. They begin to use non-standard measures in capacity and volume and learn to compare size; for example, the length of their foot, then grade them from smallest to largest. When supported by an adult they play simple number games appropriately. Children use their knowledge and understanding of number position and size. For example, they add different numbers together to make nine and begin to record what they find out. Many children will reach the expected levels by the time they are five, but very few will exceed them.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

83. Children's attainment in this area of learning on entry is low. Many good opportunities are provided for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, early morning registration time, break time and lunch time are used well as opportunities to talk about families, homes and past and present activities in their lives. Children show some understanding of the wider features of their community, such as

local shops. They learn to explore their world. They investigate leaves, looking carefully to see whether they look like 'boats' or not and help their teacher to draw up a classification table. They investigate different materials and then classify them looking for similarities; for example, 'both materials are smooth'. Children have good experience of using technology. They freely use the computer and demonstrate how to use a mouse to draw pictures. Children learn about their teachers' homelands and know many facts about Australian animals such as the kangaroo and koala bear. Teachers consistently provide opportunities for children to understand their world through well-planned creative activities that stimulate their senses. Despite the progress they make, most children are not expected to gain the expected standards by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

84. Children's attainment is that expected nationally on entry to the reception classes except in their hand control. They explore sound in an imaginative way, listen intently to the teacher, singing or taped music and join in appropriately. Children love singing and join in the actions, although this proves too much of a challenge for some of them. In a range of creative activities, children show evident enjoyment and developing skills in their responses to what they see, hear, touch and feel. They explore a wide range of materials; for example, sand, paint, crayons, felt, pastels, glue when they draw, colour and stick. Children use their imagination and colour boldly in their pictures. They look closely at the work of artists, including Van Gogh, and try hard to copy pictures such as his 'Painted Vase of Hollyhocks'. There are many opportunities for children to experience role-play and they do so imaginatively, often reflecting stories they have heard; for example, 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. The role-play clothes and resources, however, have a 'tired', well-worn appearance and are not very imaginative. All children are on target to attain the expected levels by the time they finish the reception year.

### **Physical development**

85. Children are well developed physically and most on entry to school have reached the expected levels. They have immediate access to the playground, but, due to a lack of wheeled toys and helpers, classes make insufficient use of the outside area. The reception children take part in the school physical education programme and use the outside adventure activity area. Children's ability to control their limbs and movements is well developed and teachers provide good experiences for them to explore the body's potential, such as climbing and jumping. By the time they are five, most children can run, jump, climb and skip safely and confidently. They use the activity area climbing frames well to jump from and stretch and balance on. They are aware of space and do not bump into each other. Most show reasonable control of small equipment, such as balls and ropes. Children carefully use scissors and different materials and equipment to finely join boxes, paper and pieces of wood together, although their hand control for writing and for intricate creative activities is less well developed.

### **Teaching**

86. The teaching of children in the foundation stage is good. The school has employed two good, recently-qualified Australian teachers to teach the reception children. They are happy and enthusiastic teachers who have helped the children to make good progress. There are many good working relationships between staff and children. Staff provide good role models and have appropriate expectations of children's work and behaviour. Activities are well planned and tasks well matched to the needs of the children. Activity plans build well on what children already know and can do, but do not always have clear learning objectives. Teachers have a clear understanding of how young children learn and know what will interest them. A wide range of resources is available, although some are well used and need replacing. The teaching promotes the Early Learning Goals and provides a good foundation for the National Curriculum.

## ENGLISH

87. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. Results in the 2000 national tests showed that the percentage of pupils who attained Level 2 was above average in reading and average in writing. However, results at the higher Level 3 were better in writing than in reading. They were below average in reading and well above average in writing. In comparison with those in all schools, results at Kingsway last year were average in reading and well above average in writing. Compared with those in similar schools, results at Kingsway were well above average in writing, but below average in reading. This is because few pupils attained Level 3 in reading.
88. There has been a consistent upward trend in writing over the last four years. There has also been an upward trend in reading results as well, but it has not been as pronounced or as consistent. It is because the pupils' understanding of what they read does not develop at the same rate as their ability to read the words on a page. In this year's tests, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and Level 3 in reading and writing increased again. This shows that the school's improvement has been maintained for a further year. Teachers have achieved good progress in establishing predominantly good standards of literacy in recent years. Most pupils enter the school with below average language skills. They quickly learn to read and write because they receive good teaching. Boys, though, have not done as well as girls and this is in line with the national trend. In response to this finding the school has introduced reading books deliberately designed to appeal to boys. An analysis of results attained by pupils from different ethnic groups shows few differences. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior learning. A significant minority of pupils make very good progress. Lower attaining pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the skilled support they get as well as through their own hard work. Higher attaining pupils also attain well and make good progress. The few who are identified as gifted or talented make good progress in becoming literate because they are provided with suitably challenging work.
89. Most pupils listen very carefully. They concentrate very well in lessons and respond eagerly to the questions or instructions they are given. Pupils speak well and articulate their views simply and boldly. They are happy and confident with adults and put great trust in their teachers. They give their views candidly and articulately. Through work in many subjects, pupils broaden their spoken vocabulary and by the end of the key stage are capable of using a good range of words to talk about their work. Many pupils can adapt their speech to suit formal and informal occasions; for example, when answering their teacher's questions in class. Most can speak clearly and expressively. They learn to read with good expression. Standards in role-play and speaking in public are less well developed because pupils have few opportunities to practise and improve them.
90. Pupils' standards in reading are above average by the age of seven. Teachers place a strong emphasis upon reading and give pupils good opportunities to read to themselves, in groups and to the teacher and other adults. This helps most to achieve well. Many pupils read and understand both fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils are able to use a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. A significant minority of pupils read fluently, enjoying their own choice of fiction as well as graded reading scheme texts. They use phonic skills as well as context and picture clues to help them to read simple texts independently. When pupils share reading in class with '*Big Books*' it helps them to become aware of simple aspects of grammar such as the use of tenses, singular or plural nouns and the structure and layout of fiction and non-fiction books.
91. Few pupils remain hesitant readers and those who do, receive very good individual support. These pupils lack a good awareness of phonics, with some unsure how to read new words, but they catch up fast. By the age of seven, pupils improve their skills in reading and an

increasing number in each year group read independently both for pleasure and to obtain information. At the Foundation Stage, reading standards are average, yet in Year 2 they are above average. Pupils can predict, with increasing sophistication, how a story may unfold. Those with special educational needs make good progress in reading. Most pupils have average research skills. They are able to use indexes to locate and use information for their topic work. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 use satisfactory techniques when searching for information in non-fiction books. They have a good understanding of the features of reference books such as the contents page and the index. Pupils have a less sure understanding of how books are classified in libraries or how to search for particular books. Classrooms are stocked with attractive, well-displayed books, but the school library has a number of books that are old and in need of replacement. Pupils use books well to help with research in other subjects as well as to read fiction. Teachers boost the home school partnership through the links they make with parents to help children read. These links are strong in some classes, but are underdeveloped in others, where pupils' diaries contain little information about their interests and progress in reading.

92. Attainment in writing is above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Teachers set accurate individual targets for improving pupils' early writing because they effectively analyse their baseline assessments on entry to the school. Pupils' writing improves steadily as they grow older. They become competent in constructing and punctuating sentences such as, *'One sunny day in the afternoon, the inspector of lighthouses came to see if there were any mice running around'*.
93. Most pupils write in sentences that start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Standards in spelling are satisfactory, with pupils able to use their phonic skills and their knowledge of common words to write legibly with some mistakes. Pupils learn to write in a variety of formats, including historical reports, diaries, stories and poetry. Many understand how to adapt style to suit different audiences. They show an awareness of audience, for example, when they write: *'... the birds were out singing cheerful songs when suddenly Lucy's alarm clock went BRING! BRING!'* They speak honestly and without guile when they write about a visit: *'I loved the skeletons. I spotted a coffin behind the glass and wrote about Samuel Pepys'*. By Year 2, many can write at some length.
94. Standards of handwriting throughout the school are very good. Most pupils achieve a legible, regular, joined style of writing by the end of Year 2. Pupils learn to draft and redraft their writing usually using a pen, but more rarely on a computer. Most have a good written vocabulary. They learn how to use adjectives, verbs and nouns to give their writing interest and colour. They develop a secure understanding of the conventions of different types of writing. Pupils have a good understanding of the rules of grammar. By Year 2, most are able to incorporate these into their work and occasionally standards are very good. By the age of seven, pupils experience writing for a real audience that is wider and more varied than the people in the immediate school community. Pupils in Year 1, for example, wrote letters to famous people such as the Prime Minister and their local Member of Parliament and received positive responses. Older pupils also become more aware of the needs of different audiences when they read their work back to other pupils.
95. Teachers create strong links between their work in other subjects and their studies in literacy. They plan collaboratively for writing and, as a result, pupils have an improved range and balance of writing experiences. Although pupils write narratives and letters, they also compose poetry and other imaginative forms of writing such as descriptions of mythical monsters. Pupils' writing benefits from the display of stimulating language materials, such as labels, captions, extracts from texts, vocabulary lists, class books and portfolios. These often include examples of pupils' own writing and pupils acquire a growing sense of audience and pride in the celebration of their achievements. The best displays include writing activities



related to work in many areas of learning. These displays help pupils to appreciate writing as a means of communication in a range of contexts.

96. The quality of English teaching is good. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy in a very effective way and this has played a key role in raising standards in reading and writing. Teachers have built a good knowledge of how to teach English consistently from year to year and they have received good guidance from the subject co-ordinator. Lessons start crisply. Pupils listen carefully from the start, respond accurately and steadily gain basic skills and a deeper understanding. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, both in the short term and through each year. They tell pupils what they are going to learn and at the end they review what pupils have achieved. Consequently, pupils know what is expected of them and develop a good understanding of how to learn. Occasionally, however, learning objectives are not stated clearly and the relevance of lessons is less obvious. Teachers usually assess pupils' reactions skilfully and develop their thinking through careful questioning. This successfully encourages pupils to think deeply, to consolidate what they have learned and to become more mature. Teachers do not always make enough use of support assistants, especially during lesson introductions, to support individual pupils.
97. Teachers use a good range of ways to teach pupils. Classroom activities are often purposeful and interesting and this motivates pupils to want to concentrate and do well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and encourage them to have high expectations of themselves. Lessons develop at a good pace and pupils complete a good quantity of work. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and accurately in many ways and have a good knowledge of how well they are doing. They provide pupils with achievable targets in individual target folders. Most pupils take these targets very seriously and do their best to meet them. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their written and spoken work and that of their peers in plenary sessions as well as when they work alone. Teachers then know how to help pupils to improve further. Teachers mark work regularly, although it varies in quality and often does not provide pupils with guidance about how they could improve. Relationships are usually very good and, as a result, pupils feel secure, are unafraid to ask questions and learn willingly from their mistakes. Teachers occasionally use computers to support learning in English, using word processing to assist with editing and presentation and educational games to help improve reading and spelling standards. The use of information and communication technology is helping pupils to reach a wider range of audience, but this is not a consistent feature of learning. Pupils have good opportunities to read and write during their work in other subjects.
98. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs through carefully planned work that meets their changing needs well. These pupils then need less help as they progress through Key Stage 1. The subject is led well by an able and experienced co-ordinator who plans, evaluates and guides the work of the school very effectively. The work of colleagues has been monitored, but not enough time has been allowed for this valuable practice.

## **MATHEMATICS**

99. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are above those expected for their age. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 has steadily increased over the last four years and in national tests last year it was slightly above the national average. Standards last year were below those in similar schools and this is because few pupils managed to attain the higher Level 3. In this year's tests in mathematics the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 has again increased, as has the percentage reaching Level 3.
100. The school is aware of the need to improve results at Level 3 still further. There is sometimes too much dependence on filling in worksheets and there are not always

enough opportunities to extend the more able pupils through a problem solving, investigative approach at a more challenging level. However, it should be remembered that children start at Kingsway at five years of age with very low scores in basic mathematics tests. This means that they have very limited mathematical vocabulary; some cannot name, for instance, a square or a circle. They have very little experience of practical mathematical play, filling containers with water or counting items up to five or ten. Test scores at five years of age indicate that between a quarter and a half of all children who start school have special educational needs and that only about a quarter attain above average scores. In this context the school's results in mathematics are commendable. They are the result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the target setting for individual pupils and the teachers' monitoring of progress to achieve them.

101. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100. They can tell and write the time in numbers and in words and know the properties of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. Teachers have tried to develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary, which has been identified as an area of weakness. Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate mathematical language, such as *'earlier'* and *'later'* in their work on time and *'tallest'* and *'shortest'* in their measuring. They are quick to see mathematical patterns in groups and series of numbers and many of them are developing quick, accurate and alternative ways of working sums out in their heads for the oral and mental part of the numeracy lessons and explaining their methods. For example, they double numbers to add  $5+5+7$  or to add 19 to a number they count on 20 in tens and then take away one. One pupil adding  $15+15$  explained, *'You've got two tens and two fives. If you add the two fives you get an extra ten to add to the tens you've already got'*. Pupils have good opportunities to record their answers in numbers on whiteboards, although there are few occasions when they are able to write their own problems or to tackle problems that are written in words.
102. While the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall, it could be better and there is some difference between classes. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good and not all the elements of very good teaching are followed in lessons where pupils' progress, although satisfactory, could be made faster. There is too much variation in the clarity of lesson objectives. In the best lessons they are precise and are shared with pupils at the beginning and end of lessons. This ensures that the pupils are clear about what they should learn. It is then easier for the teacher to make accurate assessments to decide whether pupils understand and can move on to new work or whether they need more practice. In good and very good lessons teachers use questioning very cleverly to find out what pupils know. Quick-fire questioning involves all the pupils and ensures that the lessons are brisk and pupils are interested. The pace of some mental sessions is not brisk enough to add urgency to pupils' responses and thus improve the speed at which they are able to work sums out in their heads.
103. This element of additional pace is also lacking in some lessons because teachers do not give pupils enough indication about how long they have to complete a task. For example, by using sand timers that give a clear indication of how much time they have left, concentrate pupils' minds and, additionally, add pace to the lesson. The plenary sessions are often rushed and have no real focus. Teachers do not make clear to pupils what their contribution to the plenary will be and too often these sessions merely repeat what has already been discussed without time for reflection or highlighting what needs to be remembered, such as new ideas and vocabulary.
104. There are several very good displays showing how effectively links can be made between mathematics and information and communication technology. Pupils gather information about their height, hair and eye colour and display this data in the form of pie charts and

block graphs. They pose questions to find out if there are any conclusions that can be drawn about the data and print the results independently using a colour printer. Unfortunately, computers were not seen in use in any numeracy lessons. There has been some difficulty finding programs that will complement the work that pupils do in lessons and staff hope that problems of managing computers in lessons will be addressed in their forthcoming national computer training.

105. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has attended recent and relevant courses. Whilst acknowledging the significant improvements in end-of-key-stage tests over the last four years, and the good progress pupils make from the time they start school, she is aware that further improvement can be made. One area for further development involves the way in which support assistants can have the maximum impact in classes. At present they play only a limited role in assessing pupils' progress during the lesson introduction and are not deployed to play a purposeful teaching role.
106. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they are very well supported in small groups and in classrooms by the support teacher and support assistants. Their individual education plans include targets for numeracy, although these are not as precise as those for literacy. When they started school in 1998/1999, 25 per cent of the current group of pupils in Year 2 were identified with special educational needs. Nevertheless, in the most recent national mathematics tests, only 3 per cent of pupils did not achieve the national Level 2 average. The school's very flexible arrangements for teaching pupils across the whole ability range are very effective. For example, there has been setting by ability to enable teachers to focus planning more clearly. Occasionally, pupils identified with particular talents are able to join classes of older pupils to provide additional challenge. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and standards are rising. There is every indication that results will continue to go from strength to strength.

## SCIENCE

107. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average and all pupils make good progress. This is an improvement since the 1996 inspection, when attainment was in line with the national average and progress was satisfactory. In the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 was average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 was also average. Standards were about the same as those in similar schools. The difference in the teacher-assessed results and those standards observed during the inspection is because they refer to different groups of pupils.
108. At the end of Year 2, pupils understand the change that takes place in materials by heating and cooling and know that in some cases change is irreversible. Nearly all the pupils in the current Year 2 classes can explain the attributes of fair testing. Many make reasonable predictions about the outcome of a test. For example, when heating bread in a toaster for different lengths of time one pupil explained, '*The longer the bread was in the toaster, the smaller and harder it would get until it became black.*' Pupils in Year 1 know there are many different ways of making sounds. They listen carefully to a tape recording of natural and man-made sounds and correctly guess the source. They can easily distinguish between high and low sounds. In their previous work they showed they are fully aware of their senses, when one wrote;  
*I smell with my nose  
I like the smell of coffee  
I taste with my tongue  
I like the taste of chocolate  
I hear with my ears*

*I like the wind sound  
I see with my eyes  
I can see balloons  
I feel with my fingers  
I like to touch my Mum.'*

109. Pupils make good progress in science work. The youngest pupils are encouraged to make simple predictions about the outcome of events, such as how well their seeds will grow when put in different conditions. In Year 2, when testing the force needed to make a toy car move, pupils predicted that if you lift the ramp the car would travel further along the surface. These pupils analysed their results and drew a graph to show how far the car travelled on different surfaces. They appreciate the variety and number of different animals that live in the wildlife area and that different habitats attract different creatures. They learn simple classification to help them identify the mini-beasts.
110. Pupils made good progress in recording their work. In Year 1 pupils are given opportunities to record their results in a logical way, guided by the teachers' standard layout for work. In Year 2 they learn to build their own tables, write text and draw charts to record their work. They use graphs to compare data, but only limited use of information communication technology was evident in lessons.
111. The quality of teaching is good overall and at times it is very good. Teachers' planning is very good in most instances and builds systematically on pupils' previous learning. In the best lessons, teachers are very well organised and learning objectives are made clear at the beginning and referred to throughout the lesson. Teachers make good use of resources and they motivate pupils to enjoy science. However, there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils to think scientifically and so question their investigations. Some teachers ask skilful questions that encourage pupils to reflect upon their learning; for example, '*Why do you think this seed has not started to grow in the cupboard? It is warm there and we have watered it.*' Work is marked on a regular basis, although in many instances teachers are marking the literacy content rather than the scientific objective of a piece of work. There is only limited target setting in science for pupils to achieve either individually or as a group.
112. Pupils enjoy their work in science. They show keen interest and enthusiasm and are keen to contribute ideas for discussion. They are well aware of how important good behaviour is in experiments and the need to observe safety rules. Science contributes well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. For example, they show their amazement at the growth of their seeds, understand the need to take care of their environment and work well together in group activities.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

113. Art is a strength of the school. The way in which teachers display children's completed work shows how much emphasis is put upon developing pupils' creative ability. The school has improved pupils' good standards found in the previous inspection. The standard of pupils' art is well above that expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress as was found in the previous inspection. Their work includes sketching, observational drawing, drawing from imagination, painting, weaving and three-dimensional work. They are encouraged to experiment with different media and materials. Pupils in all classes use a range of techniques, including work generated on computer. They use very careful control with charcoal, chalks, pastels and paints. Pupils in Year 2 successfully produce impressive collages in natural materials such as twigs, seeds and leaves. Then they complete very detailed observational drawing of the finished collage. They carefully select the natural

materials for colour, shape and texture and record these with the use of different mark-making techniques and the beginning of good shading. Pupils in Year 1 show their evident enjoyment and love of creativity in their weaving project. They decide upon size, colours, texture and materials taking care the weaving blends are pleasing to the eye. They make their weaving interesting by adding a three-dimensional effect with the use of loops and twigs.

114. From the evidence provided by pupils' work in classrooms and by work kept to show progress it is clear that pupils are building on and extending their techniques and skills. In Year 1, pupils learn to colour mix effectively by adding white or other colours. They look carefully at the work of Charles Rennie MacIntosh and try to produce their own curved and straight line work, firstly in pencil and then traced over in inks. This helps their hand control and trains the eye to pick out great detail in what they are looking at. They paint wonderful self-portraits after visiting the National Portrait Gallery. They learn that the style of painting and capturing expressions is as important as the facial details of eye, nose and mouth positions. In Year 2 the drawings of the daffodil bulb show how pupils have progressed. The fine roots are sketched delicately, while the shoot is given strength through the effect of shading and lighting. The work becomes large, lively, colourful, expressive and full of spirit.
115. Pupils' artwork is well linked to other areas of the curriculum whenever possible; for example, in English and geography. They make tie-dye raindrops to link with their 'rain' vocabulary in English and add umbrellas to the collage of Japanese ladies in their study of Japan. The drawings of Japanese temples and the woodcarvings are faithfully reproduced in a large class display celebrating the Japanese culture week
116. Pupils show their enjoyment in art lessons and talk enthusiastically about the lessons. They work carefully, become very involved and concentrate for protracted periods of time. They work well as individuals in pairs or as a class group.
117. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and some excellent teaching was observed. Teachers provide a high level of challenge and there is a good balance between teaching techniques and pupils' freedom to experiment. The quality of teachers' questioning is very good; for example, *'What is the weaver trying to do? Look closely at the texture.'* *'If you are looking at colours what would we see in your weaving?'* Art lessons are well organised and resourced and make a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
118. There is no art co-ordinator at this time, but the policy and scheme of work are excellent and all teachers follow the good ideas of previous years. There are good visits out of school to galleries so that pupils can appreciate the work of famous artists through first hand experiences.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

119. Standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1, although they are higher in Year 1 than in Year 2. Standards of work and the progress pupils make are not as good now as they were when the school was last inspected. Some of the weaknesses identified in design and technology then are still evident now. For example, there are still inconsistencies in the quality and range of the work that pupils experience as they progress through the school and the quality of teachers' assessments of what pupils have done. The school recognised at the time of the last inspection that it needed to improve the subject and it was included as a priority for staff training. However, this school, like many others, has concentrated to such an extent on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills that design and technology has been rather neglected.

120. The pupils in Year 2 have completed some satisfactory work on making a 'coat of many colours' for Joseph. Good links were made with information and communication technology when pupils used computers to draw, colour and then print off their designs. They tried different ways of joining materials together; for instance, by sewing or using paper clips and treasury tags. Unfortunately, the teachers suggested all these methods to them and they had no opportunity to try their own ideas and learn from their successes or failures. They also made small 'wheeled vehicles' using shoe boxes. They carefully used drills to make holes for axles that they cut accurately with hacksaws. However, they did not work individually or in groups to draw up their own designs of what they wanted to do and all the finished products looked much the same.
121. This lack of experience in designing their own items, and suggesting which tools and equipment they need to make them, are major weaknesses in the work of seven year olds. Another weakness lies in their ability to evaluate how well made they think their finished items are and how they could improve them. These are important elements of their design and technology work because they provide pupils with a chance to learn from previous work and give more able and talented pupils a chance to try to use a wider range of materials and tools.
122. Pupils in Year 1 were making models of playground equipment, resulting from a visit they had made to a nearby adventure playground. They had obviously enjoyed their trip and had learned a great deal about the items of equipment there. They knew, for instance, that 'frames have to be strong to take children's weight' and that 'it has to be stuck down so that it doesn't fall over'. This work was closely linked to their own experience and was much more real and meaningful for them. They used scissors to cut straws, cardboard and pipe cleaners very accurately. In another lesson, pupils used a range of tools very safely to cut material for their 'finger puppets'. In both lessons very good teaching encouraged pupils to use their own ideas to create their own 'equipment' and puppets without placing restrictions on how they went about making them. The results were original, creative and very different from each other. In one lesson the teacher made very good use of the school's digital camera on their 'playground visit' to revise what they had seen. Very careful questioning by both teachers made pupils think in detail about the task so that time was not wasted when they went to their tables asking what they had to do.
123. Pupils enjoy the subject and work sensibly and safely together. Pupils in Year 2 talked enthusiastically about what they would have liked to have added to their wheeled vehicles. For instance, some of them said they would have liked working headlights. When they considered how they would do that they realised that there were many potential problems regarding electrical circuits that would have to be overcome. The more able pupils were able to use their scientific knowledge to suggest ideas about simple and parallel circuits. Work of this nature provides real challenge and makes their design and technology more interesting, enjoyable and worthwhile.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

124. Standards of attainment in geography at the end of Key Stage 1 are above expectations and all pupils make good progress. No lessons were observed and, therefore, judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, planning documents and discussions with the subject co-ordinator and pupils. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
125. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the physical and human features in the locality. They know the features that were man-made and those that were natural. They have a very good

understanding of simple co-ordinates and use them to find locations on the '*Lighthouse Keeper's*' map. They understood the need to put a clear key into the map. They learn the importance of clear instructions when reading maps by giving instructions to a programmable robot. They make their own maps of the wildlife garden, carefully drawing features such as paths, the pond and fencing.

126. In Year 1 pupils realise the change that will take place in a small town if a toy factory opens. They make up maps of '*before*' and '*afterwards*', showing how the busy streets become congested with traffic and spare pockets of land are filled with houses and flats. They study leisure facilities and write what additional leisure pursuits they would like in Watford; for example, '*It would be better if you have a swimming pool near home or pony rides*'.
127. All pupils learn about the wider world from '*Bobby Bear's*' travels. They learn to answer questions such as '*What will Bobby Bear need to pack in his suitcase if he goes to Spain?*' Bobby Bear, in turn, sends postcards to the school and on his return photographs are studied of his visit. In this way pupils develop a good understanding of the main features of their own environment and gain knowledge about other places in the world. They quickly learn geographical skills such as using maps, photographs and globes to find information.
128. It is not possible to make a judgement on teaching as no lessons were observed. However, an analysis of planning documents suggests that teachers have a good understanding of the subject and have identified the necessary skills pupils need in order to succeed. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of the wider world.

## HISTORY

129. Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection. Judgements are based additionally on a scrutiny of pupils' work, planning documents and discussions with pupils and co-ordinators. Standards of attainment in history at the end of Key Stage 1 are above expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was judged to be broadly in line with national expectations and progress was satisfactory.
130. Pupils in Year 2 study the '*Plague*' and '*The Great Fire of London*'. They write factual accounts and research books to find out further information. They show a good understanding of the situation during the Great Fire, one pupil wrote in her diary, '*Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. At 4 o'clock my wife and I decided to go out of the city. We left our home in Seething Land. We didn't have time to change into our clothes so we travelled in a cart in our nightgowns. I had my wig on*'.
131. They study famous people such as Florence Nightingale and learn of the conditions in hospitals when she was alive and why she was so unusual. The understanding comes in their writing. '*Florence wanted to be a nurse. In those days it was yuky and in broken buildings, she cleaned everything up. She was very brave*'.
132. Pupils in Year 1 understand the importance of first hand evidence when they study photographs of Bournemouth a hundred years ago. They quickly identify the differences between then and now concentrating on different means of transport and clothes. They study teddy bears of today and yesterday. They make very thoughtful comparisons between bears and are good at spotting similarities and differences. They write, '*The old teddy has one eye. He is dirty. He is worn out. He has stuffing coming owt. The new*

*teddy is not worn out and he has two eyes. He is smooth you can poot him in the washing machine'.*

133. Pupils study the development of bicycles and compare old cycles with their own. A visitor brought many examples of old bikes to the school to show the pupils. *'Mr Paine showed us one (a bike) it had no pedals it was wooden you had to push it. The Penny Farthing had one big wheel in front and a small at the back. It was hard to ride'*. Pupils looked carefully at these examples and made detailed sketches of the bicycles.
134. Pupils' attitudes to history are good and this is partly due to the way in which history is made to come alive through as many direct experiences as possible through handling artifacts with care and by visiting places of interest.
135. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was good. Good links were made between history and geography when pupils study the seashore, coastal features and seaside of one hundred years ago. Teachers use a range of resources imaginatively and link history well to other subjects such as design technology, art and English. History makes a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average overall. There are good examples of all the required elements of the National Curriculum, such as word-processing, control technology and data handling. Standards are higher now than in the previous inspection. Despite the small number of computers available in school and the limited availability of computers at home for a significant number of pupils, they are confident and skilful when loading, saving and retrieving programs and talk knowledgeably about what they have done. They send e-mails and access the Internet to find information about a school topic from a commercial source. Many pupils talk about using their parents' mobile telephones at home to send text messages and know that they can order goods using their family's personal computer.
137. Pupils' good standards are the result of the very good teaching of the basics and the use of correct vocabulary in lessons where they really do learn new skills. Work is challenging and pupils are expected to think carefully about what might happen, rather than being told that it will happen. Good links are made between ICT and other subjects so that pupils learn that computers have many practical applications that can make their work easier to do and to understand. For instance, they use a program that turns the information they have gathered about themselves into colourful bar graphs and pie graphs so that they can decide for themselves which is easier to read and has the greater impact. They said, *'We entered our data on to a data base and then we asked the computer questions'*. They find out more information about *'frogs'* from Internet sources in a shorter time than they would ever be able to find out from reference books, but some of it is too difficult for them to understand. In short, they learn the value and the pitfalls of ICT in the modern world.
138. Teachers use ICT very effectively with pupils of all abilities. Higher attaining pupils have opportunities to work independently and use their existing skills to apply to work in school. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have excellent opportunities to use a programmable robot, decorated as a pirate with eye patch and hat, to find their way around an *'island'* searching for treasure by giving it instructions to move in different directions. One of the very good features of that lesson was the way in which the enthusiasm generated by using the robot made a positive contribution to pupils' literacy skills. For example, pupils using the robot at first had to use descriptive words about the *'voyage'* to the island, such as, *'One stormy, windy day the Jolly Roger was*



*being tossed up and down by the waves. The ship was pushed onto the rocks by one enormous wave.'*

139. Pupils use computers to word-process 'book covers' for their books about themselves. They use CD-Roms to find out information about the Great Fire of London and they use the programmable robot to compose tunes with notes of different pitch and length. Despite this apparent widespread use, computers were hardly seen in use in lessons during the inspection and not at all during literacy and numeracy lessons. The problems that teachers face are twofold. One is knowing which programs are particularly suitable and the other is being able to manage pupils' use of computers during lessons. The staff are soon to take part in a national training program and plan to focus on finding the answers to these particular problems during their training.

## MUSIC

140. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age, which is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. In Year 1 and Year 2, when pupils learn to play untuned instruments they develop an understanding of new terms such as 'pitch', 'rhythm' and 'beat'. Most pupils can sing in tune. They are beginning to understand how changing the amount of volume affects the way a song sounds. In Year 2 most pupils can successfully make up their own musical notation or sound pictures to describe sounds they make. Pupils in Year 2 explore concepts such as pitch, duration, rhythm, timbre and structure with some success.
141. Pupils' singing in assemblies is generally tuneful. In Year 2, many pupils are able to draw inventive pictures of the sounds made by untuned percussion instruments, such as the 'cabasa' or the 'guiro'. Many can identify by name an assortment of percussive instruments. Other pupils learn more about dynamics through good teaching. They show pleasure in reading and composing music. Pupils in Year 1 make very good progress and achieve above average results in performance through very skilled teaching. By the end of lessons their performance in using percussion instruments in-the-round has improved and they are getting better at judging how good their efforts are. Pupils use a programmable robot to compose music of different pitch and use tape recorders to record their performances. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make satisfactory progress relative to their prior attainments.
142. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well and react with enthusiasm. Pupils have been taught to handle musical resources with care and do so.
143. Teaching is usually at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers explain their aims and objectives clearly and provide good individual guidance for pupils. They also promote literacy skills well through good use of the language of music. The quality of teaching is further enhanced by the deployment of a specialist teacher. The music curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular opportunities to learn to play the recorder and 25 pupils are currently involved in lunchtime activities. The subject is soundly led. The school uses the new national scheme of work, which provides a focus on the development of skills and knowledge from year to year. This is reflected in what pupils can do. They have only limited opportunities to celebrate through music the diversity of cultures represented in the world. Teachers and pupils use a wide range of good quality instruments which have a positive impact on pupils' work.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. Standards in physical education are average and they are very much the same as at the time of the last inspection. No gymnastics or games lessons were timetabled during this inspection. It was only possible to observe dance lessons where pupils give good performances, thinking carefully about how they interpret different musical sounds into slow and fast movement and different body shapes.
145. The main reason for the skilful way in which pupils interpret the music is the good teaching. Teachers give clear instructions and insist that pupils dress appropriately for the lesson and move around carefully so they do not bump into others. The choice of music is good and gives pupils lots of scope to experiment with different body shapes and movements. Teachers encourage those pupils who do especially well in the lesson to show their performances to others. This is good teaching because it gives others good ideas, although pupils did not have opportunities to comment on how they think others' performances could be improved. In these lessons pupils join in enthusiastically. They listen carefully to instructions and give time and thought to doing as well as they can.
146. The policy for physical education has been reviewed and assessments of the progress that pupils make are under way. Pupils have opportunities to take part in gymnastics and games lessons, as well as having opportunities to learn to swim or to improve their swimming. The school is well aware of good health and safety procedures in lessons. Pupils are gradually given more responsibility as they get older to move large apparatus around the hall for gymnastics lessons. The school is aware that some pupils are less well co-ordinated than others and takes advice from outside agencies such as occupational therapists about how best these pupils can be involved.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions at the age of seven are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils are developing a good understanding of Christianity, as well as of other world faiths such as Judaism. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 become increasingly aware of issues associated with human existence through classroom studies. They understand, for example, that people should always try to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have a growing understanding of the value of prayer in worship. They learn a lot about religions when teachers provide high quality artefacts such as a range of sacred texts. Pupils have identified buildings special to different world faiths, such as 'churches', 'synagogues', 'gurdwara', 'mosques' and the 'mandir'. Some are able to describe mosques as, 'looking like the Millennium Dome'.
148. Pupils write of Jesus' deeds and show some understanding of his teachings when they write that, '*Jesus loved children. Jesus said do not steal*' and, '*He helped deaf people to hear*'. They also recognise that Jesus performed miracles, '*which are things that nobody else can do*'. They have learned that churches have such things as a font, stained glass windows and the Cross, either through regular church attendance or when going on visits organised by the school. They can cite the miracle of the loaves and fishes. They use computers to design a new 'coat of many colours' for Joseph. Pupils know that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but that Jews do not share that belief. They know that the Bible is made up of the Old and New Testaments. They recall a number of facts about Islam, such as that the recitation of prayers takes place on prayer-mats and readings from the Qu'ran occur after hands are washed. Lessons have been enriched when Muslim pupils have brought religious artefacts such as a prayer-mat and a shawl into class. Pupils' written work is generally very limited in quantity. They have learned about the objects associated with world faiths. They know what the Jewish Torah is and that it is kept in a synagogue and write that, '*Jewish people have a special book called*

*the Torah*'. Pupils know that the Qu'ran is the special book of the Muslim Faith. In a school assembly, a pupil in Year 2 was able to recognise that, '*although the special books are different, people are the same*'.

149. Class discussions are sometimes searching and developmental in terms of personal understanding and identity. Pupils ask, '*If I do not belong to a group (such as Cubs or Brownies) am I nothing?*' They understand the teaching of Jesus to love your neighbour when they say that if a younger pupil were to fall over in the playground, they should help them back up. They are developing the ability to know themselves and their families more deeply when they write, '*My Mum is always there for me*' or '*My Dad is important to me*'.
150. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is effective, lessons are well organised and well timed, and teachers match the work carefully to the abilities of different groups. Teachers help pupils to reflect upon life and to develop a greater understanding of themselves. Teachers plan insufficiently for pupils to visit synagogues, mosques and churches of different denominations as part of their lessons.
151. Subject leadership is satisfactory. There has been little monitoring of teaching or standards. The school's planning provides a basis for good guidance in that the Hertfordshire scheme of work and the locally agreed syllabus are referred to. The guidance for assessment is available, but its use in lessons is at an early stage of development. The artefacts used to assist religious education are good in terms of sacred objects and writings. The strongest element of the school's provision for religious education is in the way teachers and pupils show respect for each other as well as for the faiths of different cultures around the world.