

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FAIR FIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Radlett

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117228

Headteacher: Mr D Helsby

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 193310

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Watford Road Radlett Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD7 8LU
Telephone number:	01923 856341
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Morgan
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Art and design Music Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 236 pupils on roll, aged between seven and 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, while the percentage identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, and 12 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in pupils' standards but most are achieving the level expected for pupils at the age of seven, including in English, mathematics and science.

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

Overall, this is a good school. Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in most subjects, including in English, mathematics and science, and the quality of teaching is mainly good. The headteacher provides staff with a clear sense of direction; and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a credit to the school. There is scope for improvement in some elements of leadership and management, and pupils do not achieve well enough in art and design and design and technology. Overall, however, the school's strengths greatly outweigh its weaknesses and it provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress and achieve standards which are above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards are also above those normally expected in Year 6 in history and religious education.
- The quality of teaching is mainly good, including in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher motivates his staff well, and ensures the school keeps a clear focus on pupils' basic academic skills and their personal development.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive and their behaviour is good.
- Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development and very good provision is made for their moral and social development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils feel secure and valued.
- Very good links are established with parents, and they hold the school in high regard.

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

- Pupils' achievements in art and design and design and technology are too low.
- The role of co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in most subjects needs to improve.
- Governors need to improve elements of their monitoring role to include focused visits to see the school in operation, and should have a clearer strategy for the use of funds not currently allocated in the school budget.
- Statutory requirements need to be met in design and technology and in pupils' annual reports.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound overall progress since the last inspection in 1997. The majority of weaknesses have been rectified and it is now a better school. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in 1997 but is now good; and pupils are making increased progress in science, information and communication technology (ICT), history and religious education. Weaknesses in the teaching in Years 3 and 4 are no longer evident, and pupils' handwriting skills and the presentation of their work are much improved. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is no longer unsatisfactory; and the initiatives identified on the school development plan are costed and have appropriate success criteria. However, weaknesses in the monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators, identified in 1997, still exist, and current standards are lower in art and design and in design and technology.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	A	B
Mathematics	B	B	A	B
Science	B	A	A	A

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

The table shows the school's results in 2001 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. These results were above the average results of similar schools in English and mathematics and well above their results in science. Over the last three years, the school's results in all three subjects have been above or well above the national average.

Inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve well from their starting points on entry to the school in English, mathematics and science. Current standards are above those normally expected in Year 6 in these subjects but they are not quite as high as in the last academic year. This is due to the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 classes, rather than to any reduction in the overall progress made by pupils.

Standards are also above those normally expected for Year 6 pupils in history and religious education, and are in line with national expectations in ICT and physical education. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' overall standards in geography and music. However, pupils demonstrate good singing skills, across the school. In art and design, pupils' standards are too low; and in design and technology pupils are not able to demonstrate appropriate standards because the subject is given insufficient attention.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form very constructive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks and respect each other's opinions. They respond positively to the opportunities they are given to take responsibility and to show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Years 3 - 6</b>
Lessons seen overall	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.*

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to make mainly good progress in their learning. Throughout the school, lessons are characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils, clear explanations of tasks, effective use of questions to probe pupils' understanding and good use of the time available. The teaching motivates pupils very strongly and they try hard to meet their teacher's expectations by concentrating well and persevering with their tasks.

Good, and sometimes very good, teaching in English, mathematics and science is a key strength of the school, and enables pupils to make good progress in these subjects. In ICT, good teaching enables pupils to make good progress from their low starting points on entry to the school; and in history the teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 but is very good in the older classes. Pupils benefit from good teaching in religious education, while the quality of teaching in physical education is satisfactory. Insufficient lessons were seen to judge the overall quality of teaching in other subjects. However, it is clear the teaching does not enable pupils to make adequate progress in their learning in art and design and design and technology, and that teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge in these subjects.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad curriculum which includes strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects, except for design and technology which is given insufficient attention.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are very well taught. And their progress is monitored well by the headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school provides well for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual development, good provision for their cultural development and very good provision for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where every child is valued as an individual and their welfare is a high priority. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development are mainly good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher motivates his staff well. He successfully conveys his high expectations for pupils' achievements, particularly in English, mathematics and science and in relation to pupils' personal development. He has good analytical skills, promotes a calm and positive atmosphere in the school, and develops constructive relationships with parents. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role well and makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Insufficient attention is generally given to the development of co-ordinators as subject leaders, particularly in relation to their key roles in monitoring subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are strongly committed to the school, rarely miss the regular meetings that are held and make a broadly satisfactory contribution to the leadership and management of the school. However, a lack of focused visits by governors to observe the school in operation sometimes restricts their awareness of the school's performance. Most statutory requirements are met, but the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology are not covered and pupils' annual reports do not include

	reference to the subject.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science carefully analyse the results of statutory and non-statutory tests, and these results are thoroughly discussed by the governing body. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, with valuable support from the local education authority, observe lessons and provide teachers with useful feedback on their performance. However, most co-ordinators do not monitor their subjects with enough rigour.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan, and spending is carefully monitored by the headteacher and the chair of the finance committee. While the school makes efficient use of the funds it utilises, it lacks a sufficiently clear and detailed strategy for the use of the considerable sums which carry forward from one financial year to another.

There are sufficient teaching and non-teaching staff, and resources for learning. There is satisfactory space in the school, and there are generous grounds.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What a few parents would like to see improved</b>
<p>Most parents believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school expects children to do their best;</li> <li>• the staff are easy to talk to;</li> <li>• there is a high standard of teaching;</li> <li>• the school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• children behave well and are encouraged to be mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>Some parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• homework to be set more consistently;</li> <li>• more information on their children's progress.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views although there is scope for improvement in some elements of leadership and management. There is no evidence to support the views of a minority of parents about homework as it is well used across the school to support and extend pupils' learning. The school provides regular opportunities for parents to discuss progress with staff and written reports give clear indications of strengths and weaknesses in all subjects except design and technology.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in pupils' standards but most are achieving the level expected nationally for pupils at the age of seven, including in English, mathematics and science. An exception is pupils' attainment in ICT, which is below average when they start at the school.
2. The results of the Year 6 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in English, mathematics and science in 2001 were well above the national average. In science, these results were well above the average results of similar schools, while the English and mathematics results were above the average results of similar schools. Over the last four years, the SATs results have been consistently above or well above the national average in all three subjects. Inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve well from their starting points on entry to the school in English, mathematics and science. Current standards are above average in these subjects in Year 6. They are not quite as high as in the last academic year but this is due to the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 classes, rather than to any reduction in the overall progress made by pupils in these subjects. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, or in the achievements of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
3. Most Year 6 pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. They express their ideas clearly and confidently, and are very aware of the need to adapt their speech and tone according to purpose and audience. For example, when they read fiction aloud they give convincing interpretations of characters by varying the tone, accent and volume of their voices. In discussions, they choose their words carefully for their precision, accuracy and impact. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions without reminders. Most Year 6 pupils read well. They read both fiction and non-fiction texts aloud fluently and with understanding, and they talk in an informed way about the techniques an author has used to engage the reader. For example, they recognise the way an author has begun a story very effectively through the use of onomatopoeia, simile and alliteration. In essence, most pupils are able to read as writers and write as readers. Standards of handwriting are high throughout the school, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected and they were unsatisfactory. Pupils' spelling skills are generally above average, across the school, and the highest attaining Year 6 pupils achieve an excellent standard. As pupils move up through the school, most develop a secure grasp of punctuation, and this is evident in the work of pupils of all abilities in Year 6. All pupils in Year 6 are able to match their writing to its audience, and the highest attainers achieve a very high standard in writing. For example, they are adventurous in their choice of words and in their use of imagery, and explore ideas on an emotional as well as intellectual level, whether in prose or poetry.
4. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, across the school, and this is reflected in their good standards in Year 6. In Year 3, pupils can accurately partition numbers using their knowledge of place value. Pupils build on this knowledge incrementally so that by Year 5 they can recognise fractions and percentages as proportions of a whole and have a secure understanding of decimals. This leads to pupils' good understanding of the equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages in Year 6. Most pupils demonstrate well-developed skills in logical reasoning and make

effective use of their accurate knowledge of number facts to solve a range of mathematical problems. Pupils make good use of mental strategies, including doubling, halving, approximation and estimation to solve increasingly complex calculations as they move up through the school. Pupils also make good progress when learning about space, shape and measures, and demonstrate above average standards in these elements of mathematics in Year 6.

5. In science, pupils achieve well both in the development of their scientific knowledge and in their acquisition of the skills of scientific investigation. For example, Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the circulatory system in the human body and can identify the main organs in the human body and in plants. They make good progress when creating periscopes and kaleidoscopes which demonstrate their knowledge about the properties of light, and when discovering the factors which affect the durability of conkers in conker matches. Their conker investigations demonstrate careful consideration of interesting variables, including the circumference, the length of the string, the elasticity of the string and whether the conker has been soaked in vinegar. Such experiments motivate pupils strongly and help them to achieve well.
6. In religious education, pupils make good progress and their standards are above those expected in Year 6. In ICT, pupils achieve well in relation to their low starting points at the beginning of Year 3, and demonstrate standards which are mainly in line with those expected nationally by Year 6. In physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress and their standards are average in Year 6. In history, pupils achieve good standards in Year 6 as a result of particularly effective teaching in the older half of the school. In music, insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about pupils' standards but it is clear that pupils sing well, across the school. In geography, there was also insufficient evidence to judge pupils' overall achievements. The limited amount of work seen provides some evidence of satisfactory standards but also suggests pupils' progress in the subject is spasmodic rather than systematic.
7. In art and design, pupils generally underachieve, mainly because teachers' expectations are too low and their subject knowledge needs to improve. As a consequence, pupils' standards are below those expected in Year 6. In design and technology, pupils make insufficient progress and are not able to demonstrate satisfactory standards because the subject is given too little attention and key skills are not taught systematically.
8. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make very good progress overall, particularly in English and mathematics and in work related to the targets in their individual education plans. When account is taken of their starting-points and the nature of their needs, most of these pupils achieve good results in the national tests at the age of 11. Indeed, many attain the standards expected of pupils of their age. In the case of pupils for whom English is an additional language, all make good progress in respect of their individual capabilities, and some are amongst the highest achievers. The most able pupils, including those identified as 'gifted and talented' make good progress in English, mathematics and science, and generally sound progress in other subjects. They attain standards which are above average, and sometimes well above average for their age in the national tests for English, mathematics and science at the age of 11.
9. The last inspection, in 1997, found that standards were above the national average in English and mathematics, and were in line with those expected in all other subjects in Year 6. Good standards have been maintained in English and mathematics and Year

6 pupils are now also exceeding the expected level in science, history and religious education. However, standards in art and design and in design and technology are below those found in 1997.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently very good. They enjoy school in all its aspects and they claim that 'learning is fun'. They listen carefully and with interest to staff and to each other, concentrate hard during lessons, whether directly supervised or working independently on tasks, and at all times make every effort to apply what they have previously been taught. It is very rare indeed for teachers to have to repeat any instruction or any key points of information during lessons. Most pupils assimilate 'new' knowledge and skills quickly, and draw on previous learning equally readily when asked to do so. They apply themselves conscientiously to tasks, whether working alone, in small groups or within whole class groups. All pupils try hard to reach the high standards expected of them by their teachers, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They know how well they are doing from the feedback they are given, and they take pride not only in their achievements, but also in their efforts. Pupils of all ages complete their homework willingly and well. They enjoy reading, and most pupils borrow books from the school library and classroom collections as well as reading books from the structured scheme materials available to them. Many pupils are enthusiastic participants in the extra-curricular activities and clubs offered by the school.
  
11. These same positive attitudes are demonstrated in the attention pupils pay during assemblies when classes combine and when a very strong sense of corporate identity is evident, especially during singing. In other settings, and with very rare exceptions, pupils are polite, helpful, friendly and outgoing. They establish good, trusting relationships with all staff and with one another, and are generally supportive and considerate of others' needs when they work and when they play. For example, they co-operate constructively over the sharing of resources in the classroom and over the division of play areas in the playground. Behaviour is good. There is no evidence of the inappropriate behaviour of pupils in lessons as described in the last OFSTED report. Pupils move round the school in a calm, orderly way, stopping when necessary to let others pass, or politely holding open doors. When queuing in the dining-room or when answering questions during discussion, they take turns courteously, observing the normal social conventions. Occasionally exuberant, like all children, they are swiftly brought to order, responding quickly, for example, to requests for silence during lunch. Bullying is extremely rare, as are incidents of a sexist or racist nature, and any such incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. In religious education lessons and in personal and social education, pupils' contributions to discussion and their responses to questions demonstrate the respect they hold for religious beliefs and for those whose beliefs and opinions differ from their own. Most pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong acquired in part from home, in part from their schooling and, in some cases, also from their religious faith. They have an informed understanding of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, and most pupils are very aware of the impact of their actions on others. The few pupils in the school who have special educational needs related to emotional and behavioural difficulties respond very well to the school's provision for them and, with help from staff, are learning to manage and control their own behaviour effectively.
  
12. Often, in their writing, pupils reveal great sensitivity towards the feelings of others, towards the beauty of the natural world, and to the highest human aspirations. For

example, they write with empathy about the life of the poor in Victorian times; they describe convincing settings for stories with genuine feeling for the beauty of the landscape; and, in writing produced to accompany 'hope candles', they express their hopes for a safe, peaceful world where all humans and animals are treated with respect, where there is no war, and where animals and the planet are protected from wrong-doing. By the age of 11, most pupils have a well developed sense of moral and social responsibility, and this is evident in their actions. They enjoy taking responsibility for routine jobs in class and for wider responsibilities in the school. House-captains and their deputies, and members of the school council take their duties seriously and are very conscious of their responsibilities towards those they represent. Older pupils willingly and enthusiastically take care of younger pupils, for example by accompanying new entrants to lunch and showing them the expected routines. Pupils of all ages are particularly sensitive to the needs of those classmates who have special educational needs or EAL. They support these pupils warmly, make allowances when necessary, and give them every encouragement to succeed. When given opportunities to use their initiative, pupils respond very well, for example by organising activities to raise funds for charities.

13. Attendance at the school is good, being consistently above the national average in recent years. Pupils are seldom absent without explanation and the small number who had poor attendance records last year have now been successfully encouraged to come to school regularly. Registers are correctly completed and school sessions start promptly. Although the majority of pupils arrive in good time, in most classes a few pupils are still arriving as the register is being called.

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

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to make mainly good progress in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the teaching was mainly satisfactory. The last inspection found the teaching resulted in pupils making satisfactory overall progress in the school. However, weaknesses in teachers' skills in maintaining pupils' concentration and work rates in lessons, and in their subject knowledge in English and mathematics, meant that some classes in Years 3 and 4 made insufficient progress. These deficiencies have been rectified and the teaching in the lower half of the school is now mainly good. Across the school, teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of all lessons seen (just two out of the 45 lessons seen were unsatisfactory), and was good, and occasionally very good, in four fifths of all lessons.
15. Throughout the school, the teaching is characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers take care to encourage and support individuals, and value their opinions. As a consequence of the atmosphere of trust which is created, pupils feel confident when talking about their personal and emotional responses, for example in lessons in religious education, and are not afraid to take risks in their writing by being adventurous in their choice of words. The teaching captures pupils' interest and they try hard to meet their teachers' expectations by concentrating well and persevering with their tasks. Pupils are very well managed and there are high standards of discipline in lessons. This ensures that efficient use is made of the time available. Good use is made of homework to consolidate and extend what is learned in school.
16. Teachers develop pupils' own knowledge of their learning by explaining the learning objectives of lessons at the outset, and providing pupils with opportunities to discuss

their achievements at the end of sessions. They also ensure that pupils are well aware of their personal targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science, and tailor their teaching to address these targets. Teachers make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to assess their future needs, particularly in English, mathematics and science. For example, in science lessons observed, a well focused question highlighted a Year 3 pupil's misconception that the hardness of materials depended on their weight and led to a useful discussion, while probing questions helped Year 6 pupils to explain how their model periscopes and kaleidoscopes worked.

17. The quality of teaching is good, overall, in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. In history, the teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and is very good in Years 5 and 6. In physical education, the teaching is satisfactory overall and enables pupils to make sound progress. Insufficient lessons were observed to make secure overall judgements about the quality of teaching in the remaining subjects. Teachers have good subject knowledge in English, mathematics and science, and their knowledge is at least satisfactory in ICT, history, physical education and religious education. In art and design, design and technology, geography and music, inspection evidence from pupils' completed work, and from the limited number of lessons seen, suggests that some teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their confidence and expertise. The most urgent need is to increase teachers' knowledge in art and design and in design and technology, where pupils' standards are too low. The only unsatisfactory lessons observed (in art and design and in music) were not due to key weaknesses in the general teaching skills of staff but resulted from their lack of knowledge in these subjects.
18. All teachers plan their lessons carefully, across the curriculum, and the quality of their planning is particularly good in English, mathematics and science. In these subjects, individual lessons form part of coherent series of lessons to enhance pupils' learning over time. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented well and the school is making effective use of the local authority scheme of work for science. However, the lack of schemes of work in design and technology, geography, history and physical education mean that teachers' short-term plans are not securely supported by a rigorous longer-term strategy to ensure that pupils build incrementally on earlier learning as they move through the school. The need for more effective planning in design and technology is particularly marked.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, is very effective. Teachers are very aware of the range of needs represented by pupils in their classes and respond to those needs very well. They take particular care to involve pupils with special educational needs constructively and naturally in all activities, and they value the contributions the pupils make to discussions and to learning in the class as a whole. Sometimes, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons, they plan work specifically tailored to pupils' stages of development. Sometimes, pupils are withdrawn from mainstream classes for short periods of time to engage in intensive work related to the targets in their individual education plans. At other times, when teachers judge that common tasks are within the pupils' grasp, they provide help in the form of modified teaching materials or intervene directly to support the pupils through dialogue and guidance. Pupils are ably supported by classroom learning assistants or other support staff who are fully conversant with each pupil's progress and needs and well briefed about what pupils are intended to learn. Whether working with a group or supporting pupils in class, support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, not least because they monitor pupils' progress well and are able to identify weaknesses which

need to be addressed by teachers on future occasions. A programme to develop pupils' word skills with target pupils in Years 3 and 4, is taught well by the special educational needs support assistant and is having a marked impact on pupils' competence in spelling and reading. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are both precise and rigorous, with challenging but achievable targets. A real strength of the school's provision for special educational needs lies in the willingness and capabilities of all staff to respond flexibly and thoughtfully to each pupil as an individual and to sustain high expectations for each pupil in terms of academic achievement, behaviour and personal development. Nowhere is this more evident than in the very good support and teaching provided for those pupils with statements of special educational needs. The teaching of more able pupils is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and is otherwise mainly sound. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils receive fair attention and to avoid any gender stereotyping.

20. Effective use is made of the support teacher provided by the local authority service for pupils with EAL. Her limited time is allocated according to pupils' needs, while staff benefit from her expertise and guidance in their own work with these pupils. As in the case of pupils with special educational needs, teachers and support staff use effective teaching strategies and organisational arrangements to ensure that the pupils gain maximum benefit from lessons.

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

21. The school provides a broad curriculum, which gives a strong emphasis to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are being implemented well and are benefiting pupils' progress and standards. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all subjects of the National Curriculum, except for design and technology, which is given insufficient attention. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In most respects, the curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. This enables pupils to achieve standards that are higher than those expected in English, mathematics, science, history and religious education in Year 6. The curriculum and provision for ICT enables pupils to make good progress from their below average standards on entry. Strong features of the curriculum are the opportunities that are provided for pupils to apply the skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum. There are also good opportunities for pupils to acquire the key skills of self-evaluation and working with others. However, there are also some weaknesses in the curriculum. The most marked is the provision for art and design and design and technology, which result in pupils making unsatisfactory progress in these subjects. While evidence suggests the coverage of history and physical education is satisfactory, overall, the lack of schemes of work for these subjects means there is a danger that pupils' key skills are not developed progressively. In geography, there is clear evidence of pupils' spasmodic, rather than systematic, progress and this, in part, is due to weaknesses in long-term planning for the subject.
22. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, which includes provision for sex and drugs education. The school's value statement emphasises the importance of responsibility for self and respect and care for others, and this is reflected in the good range of opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in responsible decision-making. For example, there is a school's council, in which



pupils are actively involved in thinking about how they can improve the school. Pupils benefit from a very good range of educational visits, including residential visits to Kingswood in Year 4, Ilfracombe in Year 5 and the Isle of Wight and France in Year 6. These visits are used well to give depth and relevance to the academic curriculum and also to promote pupils' personal and social development. Visitors to the school are also used well in this regard, for example, a local resident responded to pupils' questions about what life was like in the World War II. A significant proportion of pupils receive music tuition from visiting specialist teachers. There is a very good range of after-school clubs which include sports and gymnastics as well as a computer club.

23. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy full access to the whole curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Where necessary or relevant, pupils receive support in the form of special equipment or resources, as well as additional help, advice and support from outside agencies. Support and guidance for pupils with EAL are provided by specialist staff from the local authority's EAL service.
24. The school has satisfactory links with the feeder infant school and pupils have the opportunity to mix with others in sporting activities. Pupils also benefit from the help given each week in games and ICT by boys from a local private school. Trainee teachers are frequently given placements at the school for teaching practice; and staff have been invited to talk at the University of Hertfordshire about their work in improving facilities for ICT at the school. However, the opportunities for sharing training or good practice with colleagues from other schools, in matters related to the curriculum, are limited.
25. The school sees itself as an integral part of the community and encourages pupils to participate in local activities such as the carnival and carol singing. Pupils visit the local places of worship, museums and art galleries, and use the environment for studies in history, geography and science. The school facilities are used by a large number of local groups and the school encourages them to share their interests with pupils. This not only raises a significant amount of income for the school but also introduces pupils to activities such as yoga and playing in an orchestra. The headteacher has a link business partner who advises on some aspects of school development such as creating a web site. Other business links include sponsorship of the school's ICT centre and funding for a weather station in the grounds. These community links make a valuable contribution to the richness of experiences for the pupils.
26. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements, and the provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, overall, with some good features particularly apparent in English, history and religious education. For example, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their hopes for their own future, and the hopes they have for their families, community and the wider world. This resulted in thoughtful responses, which included their hopes for world peace and an end to famine and poverty. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils reflected beyond the material world when they considered the things in life that were most precious to them, and concluded that the love and care of their families came top of the list. Literacy lessons include thoughtfully chosen texts, which result in pupils reflecting on ultimate questions about meaning, purpose and the human condition. For example, the reading of books such as 'Goodnight Mr. Tom' provoke a moving response as pupils respond to the dilemmas that the main characters find themselves in. Another popular choice is 'Flower Babies', which encourages pupils to think about the love, care and selflessness that goes in to being a parent or carer. History is used well to promote pupils' greater understanding of the

human condition, for example in considering how the Second World War affected the lives of young and old people in different ways. Although assemblies include opportunities for prayer, there is scope to take a less business like approach and to develop even more opportunities for quiet and thoughtful reflection on the main themes. Few examples of provision for the appreciation of the wonder of the natural world were seen during the course of the inspection, although discussions with the headteacher and co-ordinators confirmed that visits to places such as Exmoor are used well for this purpose. Nevertheless, the school could usefully consider where opportunities for pupils to reflect on the wonder of the world could be embedded into the subjects of the curriculum, to enrich pupils' everyday studies. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory overall and acts of collective worship did not meet statutory requirements.

27. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong, which is firmly rooted in the positive attitudes towards self and others that the school promotes. They are encouraged to apply these principles in a range of situations, for example, in thinking about how they should behave towards others, within their own families, and within the school. They also consider the constant struggles that exist between right and wrong, fairness and justice, and the dilemmas in making choices between them in their own daily lives. For example, there was evidence of pupils putting this knowledge to good use in the course of physical education, when they evaluated their work by considering how fair the rules had been, and how they might be adjusted to improve fairness the next time they played the game of bench-ball. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of moral issues in the wider world. For example, they consider the rights and wrongs of war, the behaviour of characters in books and the commercial aspects of Christmas. They also considered the issues of fairness in a world where poverty, famine and homelessness still exist.
28. Provision for social development is very good. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and their relationships with others on a regular basis in the course of lessons. Through opportunities to reflect on and discuss their own feelings, such as anger, sadness and joy, they come to understand the feelings of others, and develop an empathy with them. Pupils are encouraged to understand different perceptions and points of view in the course of their work in English, history and religious education, for example, taking different historical perspectives in their studies of the World War II, and in considering how people of different faiths have different ways of demonstrating their faiths. This is effective in promoting the values of mutual respect between pupils, which are evident throughout the school. The school actively promotes teamwork and the importance of working together. This is particularly apparent in physical education, for example, when pupils have to work together for the common good in the course of team games. In the course of their work on personal and social education, pupils have considered what it takes to be a good friend and in doing so have learned about the behaviours that they need to exhibit, such as trust and reliability, to make friendships work. Members of staff set very good role models and frequently share their own experiences and feelings with pupils. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on when they find relationships difficult and on ways in which these difficulties can be overcome. As a result of the school's promotion of a clear code of conduct, which includes the need to be thoughtful, courteous and polite, pupils are keenly aware of appropriate behaviour in a range of social situations. The school supports an appropriate range of charities, which contributes to pupils' awareness of their wider social responsibilities.

29. Provision for cultural development is good and is strongly promoted through the school's values of respect and appreciation of different beliefs and cultures. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to study a wide range of cultures, through their work in literature and religious education. Good opportunities to learn about the cultural traditions of other faiths represented in the British communities include Islam, Hinduism and Judaism and result in raised awareness of the significance of religious events and celebrations within those faiths. This helps pupils to develop a good understanding of the diversity of the society in which they live. A very good range of extra-curricular clubs, and regular educational visits, also enrich pupils' cultural development.
30. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. The school ensures that no child is excluded from any activity or visit on the grounds of cost. The school celebrates the diverse cultures and religions of its pupils and the visits to the Hare Krishna temple help pupils to appreciate the values and beliefs of some of their classmates in the school.

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

31. Fair Field is a school with a strong sense of community where care for each other underpins all aspects of school life. The staff are very good role models in their relationships with pupils, and invariably treat them with respect, kindness and encouragement. There are very clear expectations about behaviour and pupils know that their concerns will be listened to. This results in pupils feeling secure and developing high self-esteem.
32. The school has detailed procedures to ensure that pupils' needs are met. The staff know the pupils well and any concerns about their progress or behaviour are quickly addressed. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that pupils develop good relationships with each other and, where necessary, has employed extra help to allow pupils the opportunity to explore their feelings in greater depth. This results in a harmonious community where pupils learn to value others regardless of their abilities or background.
33. Child protection issues are well handled and all staff are aware of the guidelines to be followed if they have any concerns. The school monitors attendance satisfactorily and works closely with the education welfare officer to improve the attendance rate of the small minority of pupils who give cause for concern. However, there is scope to increase the emphasis on the importance of punctuality.
34. The school is very successful in promoting good behaviour and positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. Pupils are involved in drawing up rules of conduct for their classrooms and the high expectations set for behaviour in the school are consistently implemented. Pupils know what is expected of them and are also confident that they will always receive a fair hearing if they raise matters with adults. Incidents of poor behaviour, bullying or racist name-calling are rare and are invariably dealt with promptly and effectively with pupils being expected to reflect on their inappropriate behaviour. This encourages pupils to develop responsibility for their own actions and to have a sense of ownership and pride in the school.
35. There is a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education which includes appropriate coverage of drugs awareness, sex education and healthy eating. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their feelings and a sense of citizenship

is fostered through participation in the school council. Pupils learn about aspects of personal safety through visiting speakers, such as the police, and are reminded about safe practice in lessons. The oldest pupils benefit from learning first aid and cycling safety before they transfer to secondary schools.

36. The school's health and safety policy is implemented through regular site inspections and appropriate risk assessments are carried out. The school has no separate accommodation for medical treatment and the cramped space allocated for it in the school office is barely adequate to ensure appropriate storage of medicines. Records are maintained of incidents and accidents, although in some cases these are brief and unattributed. All staff have regular training in first aid and sound procedures are in place for ensuring safety on school visits. The school buildings and grounds are clean, tidy and appropriately maintained.
37. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are mainly good. The results of statutory tests for Year 6, and non-statutory tests in Years 3 to 5, are analysed, and the results used to set targets for pupils in English, mathematics and science. Comprehensive and thorough systems are used well to evaluate and track pupils' progress in these key subjects as they move through the school. Assessment procedures in other subjects are generally sound, although there is particular scope for improvement in art and design and in design and technology. The use of assessment to inform planning was identified as a weakness in the last inspection report. This has now been addressed. In most lessons, teachers' planning clearly identifies what pupils are to learn, and this enables them to assess pupils' standards and progress with clearly identified objectives in mind. Teachers' skilful use of questions to establish pupils' understanding and future learning needs are characteristic features of most lessons. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' work is regularly marked and includes the use of pertinent and constructive comments which motivate pupils and help them to improve their work.

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

38. The school has built up a very strong partnership with parents, and this is one of its key strengths. Parents have very positive views of the school and rightly hold it in high regard. The headteacher, staff and governors understand the importance of keeping the parents well informed and involving them as much as possible in the life of the school. Documentation is clear and informative, and the governors' annual report to parents includes a good review of the progress of initiatives in the school improvement plan. Parents are given a summary of the work to be studied through the year and guidelines on homework. They are also invited to the weekly assemblies where good work and achievements are celebrated. Consequently, they feel well informed about what is being taught and are clear about the school's expectations.
39. The headteacher uses the meeting for new parents well as a means of getting to know them, and this is a sound foundation for subsequent two-way informal contact between school and home. Parents are unanimous in their view that staff are easy to talk to and they particularly value the undertaking that they will receive feedback on any queries or concerns within two days. They find this open approach establishes a trust that the school is working in partnership with them and gives them the confidence to share concerns. The school regularly consults parents about matters such as homework, school uniform or behaviour. The headteacher's willingness to

listen to parents' views further reinforces their trust in the shared commitment to children's best interests.

40. Parents have regular opportunities, throughout the year, to discuss their children's progress and to talk about targets for improvement. Annual written reports give clear indications of pupils' attainment and areas for improvement. However, last year they failed to report on design and technology and this does not meet statutory requirements.
41. For their part, many parents make a regular commitment to working in school, for example, by hearing pupils read, assisting with swimming or helping in the library. Offers of help are always welcomed and the school uses parents' particular skills and expertise where possible to benefit pupils' learning. Parents are invited to share their cultural or religious celebrations with the pupils through the year. The flourishing parents' association runs well-supported events which raise significant funds to buy additional resources or improve the environment of the school. This successful partnership has a significant impact on parents' commitment to the school and is reflected in the positive way pupils approach all aspects of school life.
42. The school has established very positive links with the parents of children with special educational needs. They are informed of their child's needs when these are first identified, and they are involved in reviews of progress and the setting of new targets for their child each term. Parents are very supportive of the school's efforts to help their children. Many parents willingly support their children by getting involved in homework, by hearing their children read, and by reading with them.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

43. Governors are strongly committed to the school, and attendance at their regular meetings is very good. The governors include a range of astute individuals with particularly broad experience in business. They are especially effective in analysing the results of statutory tests, in fostering improvements to the school premises and in promoting the school in the local community. They work well with the headteacher to agree challenging but achievable targets for pupils' future results in English and mathematics in Year 6, and suggest useful adjustments to the draft school improvement plan they receive from the headteacher. However, while the governing body's contribution to leadership and management is satisfactory overall, it is often restricted by weaknesses in its formal procedures for monitoring the school's performance. The governing body also lacked systematic monitoring procedures when the school was last inspected. Evidence from discussions with long-established governors and with the headteacher, shows the governing body took action to improve elements of its evaluation procedures following the last inspection report. However, very significant changes in the personnel in the governing body, particularly in the last 18 months, have meant that early improvements have not been sustained. For example, there has been no governor with specific responsibility for literacy in the last 18 months, and the current numeracy governor has yet to observe the National Numeracy Strategy in operation in the school. The governors accept that, while the chair and vice chair of governors are regular informal visitors to the school, there is a lack of focused visits from governors to develop their awareness of the school's work. Weaknesses in the monitoring work of some teachers, in their roles as subject co-ordinators, mean they are not in a strong position to update governors about work in their subjects, and this further reduces the key information available to the governing body.

44. The governors ensure that the school improvement plan is properly costed, and has clear success criteria, both features which were lacking when the school was last inspected. They also provide sound support, overall, for the financial management of the school. However, while prudent financial management has enabled the school to carry forward very considerable sums from one financial year to the next, over the last three years, the governors lack a sufficiently robust and detailed strategy for the use of these funds. This is a weakness which the governors and headteacher need to address with some urgency. The day-to-day administration of the budget is efficient and this is confirmed by a recent auditor's report. Spending is carefully monitored by the headteacher and by the conscientious chair of the finance committee. Governors ensure the school obtains value for money through expenditure on building work, and estimates are thoroughly considered. They use the results of statutory assessments as a key measure of the school's success in making effective use of its resources but limitations in their monitoring procedures mean they are not always well enough informed to judge the success of some spending decisions. Statutory requirements are met, except in design and technology which is given insufficient attention; and in reports to parents which do not include reference to pupils' achievements in the subject.
45. The headteacher motivates the staff well. He successfully conveys his high aspirations for pupils' achievements in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. He promotes a calm and positive ethos in the school, and provides staff with a good role model by clearly valuing pupils' personal as well as academic development. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour owe much to the conscientious work of the headteacher. The headteacher has good analytical skills. He studies the results of statutory and non-statutory tests very thoroughly, regularly collects pupils' books to evaluate their progress and helps teachers to target areas for improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. In his role as temporary mathematics co-ordinator, the headteacher has observed lessons and provided staff with useful feedback which has a beneficial effect on their professional development. He has successfully introduced effective procedures for the performance management of teachers, and has a secure awareness of their general teaching skills.
46. The deputy headteacher provides good support for the leadership and management of the school. She checks teachers' planning and provides useful feedback to staff. For example, she identified the need for Year 3 and 4 pupils to have more opportunities to develop their writing skills last year, and action was consequently taken to address this issue. She also observes teaching across the school, mainly in English, mathematics and science, and her written analysis of teachers' strengths and areas for development are perceptive. A weakness in the overall coherence of school monitoring is revealed, however, when the science co-ordinator is not made aware of the information gained from the science lessons observed by the deputy headteacher. This is somewhat indicative of the general lack of emphasis given to the monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators.
47. There are currently no subject co-ordinators for music and physical education due to recent staff changes, and there has been no design and technology co-ordinator for at least three years. The headteacher is temporarily covering the role of the numeracy co-ordinator until a new appointment takes up her post next January. In addition, two teachers are covering the work of the literacy co-ordinator since the teacher responsible for this important element of the curriculum has been absent for some months due to illness. At present, therefore, it is understandable that there are current weaknesses in the co-ordination of some subjects. However, an examination

of all available evidence shows that key elements of the monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators have needed improvement for some time, and current weaknesses are not wholly attributable to recent staffing difficulties. The last inspection found the monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators were not well developed, and the school has generally made insufficient progress in rectifying this situation over the last four years, particularly in relation to monitoring subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Indeed, even in these three subjects, there is no evidence of established subject co-ordinators reporting on any lesson observations in their subjects. All co-ordinators organise resources for their subjects efficiently and have an overview of planning. However, while the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science do analyse examples of pupils' work, most subject co-ordinators do not undertake work-sampling with sufficient rigour to identify strengths and to target areas for improvement. In addition, they do not prioritise the time they have free from their class teaching commitment, to observe teaching in their subject. The senior management of the school needs to ensure, at the earliest possible time, that there are co-ordinators for all subjects, and that they are given well-focused in-service training to enable them to develop their monitoring roles.

48. The school improvement plan has been formulated through sound leadership by the headteacher. The plan is well organised and includes detailed plans for the current year and outline plans until 2003. However, as stated earlier, there is no evidence of financial planning which takes account of the most effective use of the considerable sum which the school has at its disposal after its planned annual expenditure.
49. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are very effective. The SENCO is highly professional, extremely hard-working, and very well-informed about special educational needs work. She is energetic in her search for the best possible support for all pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, whether inside the school itself or from specialists and other external agencies. She is strongly supported in her endeavours by the headteacher, who not only helps to secure appropriate provision for pupils, but who also sets the tone of high expectations for pupils of all abilities. At the time of the inspection, the SENCO was experiencing a temporary change of role, having been 'recruited' to a post as full-time class teacher during a period of staff shortages. It says a great deal about the SENCO's dedication and organisational skills that special educational needs work has not been affected adversely by this change. So secure are the arrangements for teaching and for the co-ordination of special educational needs work that high standards of provision continue to be maintained. Teachers and support staff have had appropriate training in relevant aspects of special educational needs work, and support staff are deployed well. Teachers are appropriately involved in drawing up individual education plans for the pupils in their classes, with guidance and support, when necessary, from the SENCO. The special educational needs support assistant is currently 'deputising' for the SENCO in some of her duties and is doing so very capably. A support teacher gives excellent part-time support to a statemented pupil, and support for other pupils with very different needs, whether physical, behavioural or academic, is very effective. Resources for use with pupils with special educational needs are good, and there is a well-equipped room used as a teaching base. Those pupils who need modified or special equipment have it available and in use. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place. The special educational needs governor has a satisfactory oversight of special educational needs provision and makes sure that statutory requirements are met. Links with parents, with outside agencies and with schools from which, and to which, pupils transfer are well established and work to serve the best interests of the pupils. Provision for the few pupils with EAL is effective, and the school is fortunate to benefit from a limited

amount of teaching time, for some of these pupils, from specialist staff from the local education authority.

50. The school has a sound policy for equal opportunities and there are good guidelines for staff on how to put this into practice in teaching and learning. There is a strong culture of valuing each child and the school has effective procedures to monitor their progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science and in their personal development. These procedures enable the performance of different groups to be studied carefully. Although the school is on one level there are no plans to provide permanent access or special toilet facilities for wheelchair users.
51. The day-to-day management of the school is sound. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school. Despite recent staff changes and absence due to illness, there are sufficient staff and they have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Their subject knowledge is strong in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but evidence suggests some staff would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge in art and design, design and technology, geography and music. All classrooms are of adequate size and there is a good school hall. The school also benefits from its own swimming pool and from generous grounds. It is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff, and is enriched by attractive displays of pupils' work. Learning resources are sufficient for all subjects.
52. This is a school where the quality of teaching is good, overall. Pupils generally make good progress from their starting points on entry, and standards are above the expected level in Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, history and religious education. The school provides well for pupils' personal development, and their attitudes and behaviour are particular strengths. There are weaknesses in elements of the school's monitoring strategies and pupils should make more progress in their learning in art and design and design and technology. Overall, however, the school's strengths greatly outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides good value for money.

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

53. In order to raise standards and to improve elements of the leadership and management of the school, the following key issues should be addressed:
  - (i) Raise standards in art and design by increasing teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subject through well-focused in-service training; (see paragraphs 7, 17, 21, 78, 79, 81, 82)
  - (ii) Enable pupils to make better progress in design and technology by:
    - (a) ensuring the subject is given more attention and that teachers' planning improves so that statutory requirements are met and pupils' key skills can be taught systematically;
    - (b) providing well-focused in-service training to increase teachers' awareness and knowledge in the subject. (see paragraphs 7, 17, 21, 83)
  - (iii) Ensure the monitoring roles of most co-ordinators are improved to provide the school with a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects. (see paragraphs 47, 62, 77, 82, 83, 89, 96, 100, 104, 108)



- (iv) Enhance the effectiveness of the governing body by:
    - (a) governors making more visits to develop their understanding of the school at work;
    - (b) governors formulating a clear strategy for the use of funds not currently allocated in the school budget.  
(see paragraphs 43, 44, 48)
  - (v) Ensure that statutory requirements are met in pupils' annual reports by including relevant information about pupils' achievements in design and technology.  
(see paragraphs 21, 40, 44, 83)
54. In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in their action plan.
- (i) Establish coherent schemes of work to ensure pupils make systematic progress in their learning, across the school, in history, geography, music and physical education.  
(see paragraphs 6, 18, 21, 88, 96, 104, 108)
  - (ii) Provide in-service training to increase teachers' knowledge further in geography and music.  
(see paragraphs 17, 51, 89, 103)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	25	7	2	0	0
Percentage	0	24	56	16	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	236
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	56

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	29	31	60

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	29
	Girls	30	23	31
	Total	57	50	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (88)	83 (83)	100 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	28	28
	Girls	30	24	30
	Total	55	52	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (75)	87 (83)	97 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	215
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5
Average class size	29.5

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3.3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	528,475
Total expenditure	510,837
Expenditure per pupil	2,103
Balance brought forward from previous year	74,138
Balance carried forward to next year	91,776

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0

Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	134

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	41	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	56	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	11	3	2
The teaching is good.	58	39	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	49	13	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	23	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	47	4	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	66	30	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	41	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	43	10	3	3

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

### **ENGLISH**

55. Although there is a wide spread of attainment, most pupils aged seven attain the standard expected for their age in English when they enter the school in Year 3.
56. The school's results in English in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001 were well above the national average and above the average results of similar schools. They confirm a pattern of high achievement by pupils which has been reflected in good results for the past four years. In that time, the test results have shown only slight variations year-on-year, broadly reflecting the profiles of different year groups of pupils, always above or well above the national averages, and occasionally very high. In common with trends nationally, attainment in reading remains higher overall than in writing. No significant difference in the achievements of girls and boys is evident in the 2001 results.
57. Inspection findings broadly confirm the pattern of achievement shown by results in recent years. As a result of effective teaching, pupils make good progress in all aspects of English in Years 3, 4 and 5, and very good progress in the Year 6 classes. Pupils with EAL also make good progress year-on-year. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, make very good progress over time in relation to their starting points. Indeed, it is not at all unusual for pupils with special educational needs to make such gains in their command of English, particularly in speaking and listening and in reading, that they attain the standard expected of 11 year olds in the national tests in Year 6. This said, the particular profile of special educational needs represented in the current Year 6 classes makes it probable that the test results for the Year 2002 will be slightly lower than those of the previous year – a likelihood that the school has already identified through its rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, overall standards in the subject are above average in Year 6.
58. Most pupils in Year 6 are articulate. They express their ideas and opinions clearly and confidently, using spoken Standard English when it is appropriate to do so. Whether engaged in general discussion or talking about very specific subject content in English and other lessons, they choose their words carefully for their precision, accuracy and impact. With rare exceptions, they are keen to ask and to answer questions. Whether with their classmates, with staff or with visitors, within small or large groups or in front of the whole school, they speak clearly and with conviction. They are very aware of the need to adapt their speech and tone according to purpose and audience, and they do so accordingly. For example, when they read fiction aloud they give convincing interpretations of characters by varying the tone, accent and volume of their voices. During discussions, higher attaining pupils are able to develop and express a point of view coherently at some length and in considerable detail. Lower attaining pupils find it harder to organise their ideas and their language in the most effective order for its purpose : in their speech, as in their writing, they tend to experience difficulties constructing grammatically accurate complex sentences, and, when trying to develop a theme, they do not always express their ideas as logically or coherently as they would like. All pupils listen well. They are attentive and interested in assemblies, follow lessons well without having to have things repeated, observe the social conventions of turn-taking politely, and concentrate for considerable periods when necessary, for example during 'shared' work in literacy hours.

59. As a result of effective teaching year-on-year, most pupils in Year 6 read well for their age. They read both fiction and non-fiction texts aloud fluently and with understanding, and they talk in an informed way about the techniques an author has used to engage the reader and to create certain effects. More importantly, most pupils are adept at applying what they have learned through reading and discussing the work of real writers to their own writing and to the work of others. For example, in lessons seen, pupils recognise and explain the impact of a story opening in which onomatopoeia, simile and alliteration are used to good effect to engage the reader. Furthermore, they talk confidently about a number of ways used by authors to open stories. In essence, they read as writers and write as readers. Throughout their time in the school they are taught to learn about different types of texts by reading and discussing them. They are also given ample opportunities to apply what they have learned when they are encouraged to write in different styles and forms for a wide variety of purposes. All pupils read regularly and with enjoyment. Encouraged by their teachers, most read both fiction and non-fiction for pleasure in school and at home, although their independent choices in reading are not always as challenging or varied as they might be, and few read fiction beyond the work of the few most popular contemporary authors. Lower attaining pupils read books appropriate for their age and capabilities reasonably competently. Their phonic awareness is usually sound, and this enables them to achieve a degree of fluency. However, while they usually understand the plot and the relationships between different characters, they do not always understand the meanings of unfamiliar words, and they sometimes struggle to understand deeper meanings which are implied rather than stated explicitly. Pupils of all abilities in Year 6 know how to locate information in the school library and in reference books, and all have acquired a range of strategies for extracting relevant information from different kinds of information texts in connection with their work in subjects such as history and science as well as in English.
60. Standards of handwriting and presentation are high throughout the school. These aspects of English were judged to be below average at the time of the last inspection, but are now a strength. Overall, standards of spelling are above average in all age groups, and the most able pupils in Year 6 achieve an excellent standard. As pupils move up through the school, most also develop a secure grasp of punctuation, and this is evident in the work of pupils of all abilities in Year 6. By the time they are 11, the highest attaining pupils achieve a very high standard indeed in all aspects of their written work in English and throughout the curriculum. The knowledge about language which they have been taught, and which they have mastered, empowers them as writers: their technical control of language, form and style remains secure in writing of all kinds. At the same time, inspired by the craft and creativity of authors they have studied, and encouraged by their teachers, they are willing to take creative risks. For example, they are adventurous in their choice of words and in their use of imagery, and they explore ideas on an emotional as well as an intellectual level, whether in prose or poetry. Many of these strengths also characterise, though to a more limited extent, the work of lower attaining pupils. These pupils apply themselves wholeheartedly to the written tasks they are given and try very hard to use the skills they have been taught. Their work is not as weak technically as is sometimes the case with lower attaining pupils of this age, and they are usually able to match content and vocabulary well to the intended purpose of their writing, punctuate well and spell most common words accurately. Weaknesses are related more to structure, organisation and overall coherence. For example, they sometimes lose their thread and leave gaps in both the language and logic of writing they are attempting to develop; sometimes their work lacks interesting or necessary detail; sometimes, a pupil may simply not have mastered the art of combining several ideas successfully



within a complex sentence; and, sometimes, a pupil may not have a very secure grasp of the grammar of written standard English.

61. The teaching of English is mainly good, and is very good in Year 6. Teachers in each year group draw on their combined strengths when planning lessons. This co-operation results in well structured sequences of lessons which meet the needs of all pupils. All teachers are very aware of the need to provide appropriately challenging work for pupils with special educational needs, for more able pupils and for the few pupils for whom English is an additional language. They use questioning to good effect to challenge pupils at different stages of development during discussions, and they organise group activities well so that they are able to support pupils in ways which match their needs. Common strengths of the teaching include: consistency in the teaching and learning strategies used across the school as a whole; high expectations in terms of performance and behaviour; good subject expertise; a very clear focus on what pupils need to learn; and the rigorous pursuit of planned objectives during lessons. Feedback to pupils, whether in lessons or through written comments on their work, is particularly effective: it clearly identifies strengths in pupils' performance, but also gives very clear guidance as to how work can be improved. In addition, every pupil is helped by having individual targets (regularly reviewed) to work towards in their writing. All teachers give due emphasis to the development and practice of routine skills such as handwriting, spelling and the use of punctuation, and all set high standards for the presentation of work, and develop pupils' specialist and general vocabulary very well. In their own use of language, and by 'modelling' reading and writing, all teachers set high standards to which pupils aspire. The good relationships that exist between staff and pupils play an important part in pupils' development. Teachers and support staff win pupils' trust and, with it, their commitment to learning. A consequence of this trust is pupils' willingness to take risks when venturing opinions about what they read or when making language choices in their own writing. The links between reading and writing are used to good effect in all years, although the teaching of writing is most effective in Years 3 and 6. All pupils are taught to learn the craft of writing in part, at least, from the work of real writers. Evidence from lessons and from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that some teachers give insufficient attention to helping weaker pupils to use grammatically accurate written forms of English when this is appropriate, to combine ideas successfully within complex sentences and to achieve overall coherence in extended pieces of writing. Overall, however, the teaching of English is a real strength with few weaknesses.
62. At the time of the inspection, the English co-ordinator was absent on extended sick-leave. The high degree of common purpose and the consistency in the approaches to the teaching and assessment of English found in the school point to purposeful leadership of the subject by a skilled co-ordinator who is also a much-respected classroom practitioner. During her absence, oversight of the subject is being capably maintained by the deputy headteacher and a Year 4 teacher, both of whom are also very good teachers of English. The use of assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance, whether of individual pupils or of cohorts, is effective: weaknesses are addressed systematically. The monitoring of pupils' individual progress and of the performance of different groups and cohorts is also a strength. (For example, it has enabled staff to enhance the performance of boys in both reading and writing.) The monitoring of teachers' planning is well established, and regular audits of resources have led to appropriate investments such as the purchase of books to promote reading for pleasure and of books with a particular appeal for boys. The priorities for development in the subject action plan are relevant and have also been usefully informed by lesson observations carried out in 2001 by the adviser from

the local education authority, working alongside the literacy co-ordinator, and by lesson observations by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. However, there is no evidence of lesson observations which have been written by the literacy co-ordinator and this element of the co-ordinator's work need further development.

63. Overall, resources are satisfactory and are used well. All pupils are taught to use the school library, and most use it well, although its location in a mobile classroom outside the main body of the school means that it is not as accessible for research purposes as might be desirable. Visits and visitors enrich curriculum provision in English, while parents make a particularly constructive contribution through their support for the home-school reading partnership. School drama productions have a long tradition and an excellent reputation. The use of drama through the curriculum is less well established and is an area of the school's work which could usefully be developed. Cross-curricular links, for example between English and history, are used to good effect to develop pupils' skills as readers and writers.
64. Criticisms raised in the last OFSTED inspection have been addressed. Standards of handwriting and presentation are now strengths; pupils are now taught to draft and edit their work - and do so well; progress in reading is generally good; there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Having put in place effective measures to improve pupils' progress in reading, there remains scope for the school to influence the range and the level of challenge in pupils' independent reading.
65. There is evidence to show that there has been some monitoring of the teaching of English in the past, both by the English co-ordinator (with the local education authority adviser), and by senior staff in the context of performance management. There remains scope for this aspect of the leadership and management of the subject to become an integral part of the co-ordinator's role.

## **MATHEMATICS**

66. The results of national tests for 2001 were well above national results and above those of similar schools. The school has maintained high standards in mathematics since the last inspection and been particularly successful in improving the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standards for their ages. Results for 2001 show that the school met the targets that it set, further improving standards at age eleven. There is a broad range of attainment on entry to the school but most are achieving the standard expected for their age. As a result of the consistently good teaching, pupils make good progress across the school. Inspection findings show that although the current Year 6 contains an increased percentage of pupils with special educational needs, standards are above those expected nationally.
67. The school places a particular emphasis on the teaching of basic number. It is underpinned by the national numeracy guidance and the school's thorough framework for planning. This ensures that as pupils move through the school, they become increasingly skilful in making accurate calculations using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and that they are able to use a well-developed mathematical vocabulary to articulate their mathematical reasoning and to describe the strategies that they use to solve problems. In Year 3, pupils can accurately partition numbers using their knowledge of place value. They build on this knowledge incrementally so that, by Year 5, pupils recognise fractions and percentages as proportions of a whole and have a good understanding of decimals. This leads to a good understanding of the equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages

in Year 6. Pupils make good use of a range of mental strategies such as doubling, halving, approximation and estimation to solve increasingly complex calculations, often involving more than two operations, in their head. Higher attaining pupils are particularly competent in recognising the patterns and relationships that exist between numbers and are able to use this understanding to devise mathematical strategies and to check their answers. For example, younger pupils recognise odd and even numbers and number sequences, based on counting in multiples of numbers up to ten, and understand something of the relationship between this and continuous addition. Older pupils can identify the factors of a given number, recognise ratios and proportions and can identify prime and square numbers. Pupils who achieve average to above average levels also have well developed powers of logical reasoning and make very good use of their accurate knowledge of number facts to solve an increasing range of mathematical problems. For example, Year 6 pupils are able to calculate the number of times they blink in a given number of hours, based on their knowledge of how many times they blink in a minute. They can also calculate the distance that an aeroplane can travel in a minute, given the amount of time it takes to complete a journey of a given length. The school has found, from its own analysis of results, that although they have a good technical grasp of basic number facts and operations, a small minority of pupils do not achieve at average levels and above because their skills in recognising patterns and relationships and in applying their basic skills to solving practical and theoretical problems, are not fully secure. The evidence of the inspection tends to support these findings but also shows the school is being effective in addressing the issues as part of its ongoing drive for higher standards. It is placing even greater emphasis on the application of mathematical skills and plans to introduce a new scheme, which gives improved guidance to teachers.

68. Shape, space and measure are taught well so that pupils systematically build on their ability to recognise the names and properties of simple two-dimensional shapes when they enter the school. In Year 4 they are able to identify the names and properties of more complex three dimensional shapes, for example, they deduce the names of a hexagonal prism, say how many vertices it has, and calculate and describe its faces. As they move through the school they increase their understanding of the properties of more complex shapes and accurately measure their angles. By the time they reach Year 6 they can calculate the area and perimeter of triangles, rectangles and composite shapes. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of measurement are developed well in Year 3 where pupils learn how to estimate and measure time, weight, length and capacity. As they move through the school, pupils refine their skills and knowledge of metric measure, and link this with their understanding of decimals. This enables them to carry out accurate calculations using units of weight and capacity in the course of their practical and theoretical work. They also apply this knowledge in the course of their work in science, geography and history.
69. Pupils' good skills in data handling are evident in their skills in collecting information by tallying, and their ability to use this information to construct charts and graphs. Good use is made of ICT for this. For example, a Year 5 class has collected information about children's favourite colours and produced pie charts, line graphs and bar charts to show the results. Pupils have also set up an active cell with the correct formula as part of the process of setting up a spreadsheet to help them in the calculations needed to work out the price and quantities of ingredients needed for a party for a given number of guests.
70. The school has good procedures to ensure an inclusive curriculum in mathematics. Suitable learning challenges are set for all pupils to ensure that they make progress

and there are good arrangements to ensure that potential barriers to learning and assessment are removed. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mathematics, and they are well supported by special educational needs assistants. In addition, the arrangements that the school makes for setting in mathematics ensures that work can be more closely matched to pupils differing needs and abilities. Pupils with EAL are provided with the help they need according to their level of language acquisition. As a result, they are able to work at levels commensurate with their abilities, have full access to the curriculum and make good progress. All teachers ensure that a range of extension activities is available for more able pupils and this enable them to achieve well.

71. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall, and includes very good teaching in Year 6. This contrasts with the situation when the school was last inspected, and the teaching was satisfactory. Teaching has improved since the last inspection because all teachers now have a good subject knowledge which is based on a thorough understanding of the mathematics Programmes of Study and the numeracy guidance. Marking and the use of assessment to inform planning have also improved, with the result that pupils are now given constructive guidance on how to improve their work, and tasks provide an appropriate level of challenge for the different levels of ability in each set. Planning is good, throughout the school, and includes clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils so that they have a good understanding of the purpose of the lesson. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and an atmosphere in which all pupils are expected and encouraged to do their best is instilled in all classes. Planning is precisely based on a clear understanding of what pupils can already do and what they need to learn next, and teachers use this knowledge to inform their highly skilled discussions with pupils. Explanations and demonstrations are clear, and good open questioning techniques encourage pupils to think for themselves and apply their mathematical skills to a range of situations. This ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning because they are working at the edge of their capabilities, and are interested in the work provided. Pupils are very well managed and very good use is made of the time and resources that are available for learning. Homework is used well to support the work that pupils do in school. It is regularly set and consistently marked.
72. The school's assessment procedures are good. They include the use of optional national tests, which are used to give information about individual progress and achievement, and are systematically analysed to raise school improvement issues. Opportunities for ongoing assessment are built into short-term planning and are used well to inform future work. Procedures for assessment and record keeping allow pupils' progress to be tracked as they move through the school. Pupils are involved in setting and reviewing their own targets, and parents are also involved in this. The leadership and management of the subject are fully secure in the hands of the headteacher, pending the appointment of the new co-ordinator. The school has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject as a result of good monitoring by the headteacher. Resources for mathematics are sound.

## **SCIENCE**

73. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in pupils' standards in science but most are achieving the level expected for their age. The results of the Year 6 statutory tests in 2001 were well above the national average in science and were also well above the average results of similar schools. All pupils reached the expected standard in Year 6, and about two thirds of all pupils exceeded this level. Good

standards have been maintained in science over a number of years, and the 2000 results were also well above the national average.

74. Inspection findings show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most able, achieve well in science, as a result of effective teaching across the school. Current standards in Year 6 are above average. They are not quite as high as in the last academic year but this is a result of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 classes, rather than any reduction in the overall progress made by pupils in the subject. Standards have improved since the last OFSTED inspection, when they were average in Year 6.
75. In Year 3, pupils make good progress when planning and conducting simple experiments to test the strength of different papers and to discover materials which have the best thermal insulating properties. They have a satisfactory awareness of the need for fair testing, and achieve well when learning about forces and motion. In Year 4, pupils understand that light travels in straight lines and the higher attainer can explain clearly how shadows are formed. The vast majority can confidently describe materials as either transparent, translucent or opaque; and all make good progress when learning about the growth and nutrition of plants. Year 5 pupils generally have a secure understanding of the key characteristics of solids, liquids and gases, and the middle and higher attainers can explain the causes of condensation and evaporation. These pupils understand that condensation and evaporation are reversible processes which are an important part of the water cycle. Most pupils are able to identify a good range of properties which show that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. For example, they know that a saucepan is often made of stainless steel because it is 'durable, non-flammable, rigid, waterproof and is a good heat conductor'. In Year 6, pupils can identify organs such as the petal, stamen and stigma in various plants and most can describe the key functions of these organs. They understand how the earth's movement creates day and night, and know the reasons why we have different seasons. They make good progress in developing their investigation skills, for example when creating periscopes and kaleidoscopes which enable them to test their knowledge of the properties of light, and when discovering the factors which affect the durability of conkers in conker matches. Their conker investigations demonstrate careful consideration of interesting variables, including the circumference, the length of string, the elasticity of the string and whether the conker has been soaked in vinegar. Such experiments clearly motivate pupils strongly. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the circulatory system in the human body. They are aware of the importance of healthy eating and the dangers of smoking, in relation to condition of the heart. Across the school, pupils present their work in science very well, and this contrasts with the situation when the school was last inspected, when the work in some classes was untidy and demonstrated a lack of care.
76. The quality of teaching is mainly good in science, and is sometimes very good in Year 6. As a consequence, pupils make good overall progress in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the quality of teaching and pupils' progress were both satisfactory. All teachers have secure subject knowledge, plan their lessons well and ensure that pupils have a good range of opportunities to develop their investigation skills as well as their scientific knowledge. Teachers are effective in developing pupils' scientific vocabulary and their explanations and instructions are clear. They have high expectations of pupils' potential achievements, ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged by their tasks and motivate them strongly to do their best. As a result, pupils listen attentively, concentrate on their tasks and behave well in science lessons. Skilful questioning techniques are

characteristic features of most lessons. For example, in Year 3, the teacher used a pupils' misconception, that the hardness of materials depended on their weight, as an effective teaching point and probing questions helped Year 6 pupils to explain how their model kaleidoscopes worked. The marking of pupils' work provides valuable feedback which benefits their learning, and they are set well judged targets for improvement in the subject. An area for further development is the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science, and this is recognised by the school.

77. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning and organises resources for the subject efficiently. She has provided her colleagues with useful guidance to promote pupils' investigation skills and has recently developed her awareness of pupils' progress in the subject by looking at samples of work from each class. A strong feature of her work is her knowledge of the results of teacher assessments and tests in science, and she has been particularly rigorous in analysing pupils' test papers to discover the knowledge and skills they need to acquire to achieve even more highly. A relative weakness in her monitoring role is the fact that she has yet to observe science teaching in the subject, and she has no specific programme for future observations, despite some time being available when she is not teaching her class. Although a few science lessons have recently been seen by the deputy headteacher, the co-ordinator has not received feedback on these and this is a weakness in the coherence of whole-school monitoring procedures. There are sufficient science resources, and they are well organised.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

78. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in art and design and their standards are mainly below those expected for pupils of similar ages, including in Year 6. There are isolated examples of good work but pupils generally underachieve in the subject. These judgements are not as favourable as those made in the last inspection, when standards were found to be in line with the national expectations in Year 6.
79. In Year 3, pupils undertake basic colour mixing exercises, but there is no evidence that they have further developed their painting skills through work which enables them to interpret the world around them or to use their imagination. In Year 4, pupils experiment with pencils, pastels and crayons to create lines which they associate with particular moods: for example, a short zig-zag line to represent anger. However, this work is not sufficiently extended by teachers to ensure it makes a significant contribution to pupils' artistic understanding or skills. In Year 5, pupils have made sound progress when learning about the work of William Morris and their designs, based on the shapes of leaves, demonstrate satisfactory and sometimes good standards. However, these pupils derive limited benefit from copying pictures of Victorian life from books, and their drawing skills are generally below average for their ages. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate good standards when creating bold designs which reflect their learning about the work of Clarice Cliff, and there is evidence in pupils' sketch books of a minority who have the potential to achieve highly in art. However, the painting and drawing skills of most pupils are underdeveloped. In a lesson observed, for example, a significant proportion used rulers to create their drawings, and their representations of children on the playground were mainly typical of work usually achieved by younger pupils. Year 6 pupils have enjoyed creating collage pictures of owls and interpretations of African masks, but these also represent unsatisfactory achievement for their ages.

80. Pupils enjoy art lessons but, when asked about their perceptions of their own skills and achievements in the subject, a significant proportion show they lack confidence. This was also evident in the unnecessary use of rulers and rubbers in the Year 6 lesson mentioned earlier.
81. In the two lessons observed in art and design, in Years 4 and 6, the quality of teaching ranged from barely adequate to unsatisfactory. In themselves, these observations do not provide enough information to judge the overall quality of teaching in the subject. However, when linked with the detail gathered from a careful analysis of pupils' standards and progress, the combined evidence strongly indicates important weaknesses in the teaching, across the school. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge needs to improve and the expectations of pupils' potential achievements in art and design need to be raised. As a consequence, teachers' assessments of pupils' standards are not always reliable. At present, evidence suggests that pupils require more specific and informed guidance and instruction to improve their standards, and there should be more emphasis on the rigorous development of pupils' key skills in the subject. In general, there is insufficient work which is based on the observation of the natural and made world. Tasks which require pupils to copy illustrations or photographs, for example of objects from the 1930s, are a poor substitute for the direct observation of artefacts which could be obtained without great difficulty. Weaknesses in teachers' confidence and subject knowledge are particularly evident when pupils are given little guidance about how to improve their drawing skills, and when they lack the expertise to develop the sound ideas included in the scheme of work which most are now using. In the lesson observed in Year 4, for example, pupils required more informed guidance to build on their awareness that the colour of pictures can affect the moods they create.
82. The art and design co-ordinator took on her role about a year ago and inherited no specific information about the subject from previous monitoring procedures. She is keen to develop the subject, knows there is scope for improvement and has audited and organised resources efficiently. In addition, she looks at teachers' planning and has successfully encouraged most staff to utilise the useful scheme of work produced by the local education authority. As yet, she has not undertaken a systematic analysis of pupils' progress or standards in the subject and has not observed any art and design lessons. Since she has some time when she is released from her class teaching duties, it is important that she now prioritises time for these key monitoring activities. She would benefit from clear guidance from the school's senior management to help her develop her monitoring role, and appropriately recognises that staff require in-service training to increase their knowledge and skills in the subject. Resources for art and design are sound.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

83. Pupils make insufficient progress in this subject and their standards are too low because it receives too little attention in the school. There is no evidence of teachers' planning, and no samples of pupils' completed work were provided for examination during the inspection. There is no scheme of work for the subject, and statutory requirements to cover the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology are not met. Assessment procedures also require improvement in the subject. The school is attempting to provide pupils with opportunities for work in design and technology through work which arises from links with other subjects, but this does not provide a coherent programme to develop pupils' key skills. Indeed, when Year 6 pupils made periscopes in their science lesson to demonstrate their

understanding about light, their construction skills lacked precision and were below average. During each summer term, the school states that it usually provides a block of four days when design and technology is the key focus. However, this was not organised in the last academic year, due to staff changes. Pupils' annual reports, at the end of the last academic year, did not contain any references to their progress or standards in the subject, so do not meet statutory requirements. There has been no co-ordinator for design and technology for at least three years, and there is no evidence of monitoring strategies for the subject. The last inspection found pupils' progress in design and technology, and their standards in Year 6, were satisfactory.

84. There are sufficient resources for the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

85. As a result of timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any geography lessons. A limited amount of work produced by pupils in each year group, earlier this year was available for scrutiny. Overall, however, the amount of evidence available is insufficient to support secure judgements about the standards achieved by pupils or about the quality of teaching.
86. Evidence from teachers' medium-term plans for geography, and from the range of work seen, suggests that geography is not given as much emphasis in the curriculum as history.
87. Samples of work on weather in Year 4 indicate that at least some planning has been based on the programmes of study that pre-dated National Curriculum 2000. Poems about weather in pupils' folders in this year group also suggest that the coverage of geography Programmes of Study, and the time spent on geography, have been 'diluted' by cross-curricular work. The limited amount of work available for scrutiny in Years 3 and 5 shows that there has been some progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding of Radlett as a settlement and about the development and changes in settlements over time. Pupils in Year 5 benefited from a residential visit to the Devon resort of Ilfracombe and drew some comparisons between this locality and that of Radlett. While their written work appears to lack both rigour and depth, pupils have clearly understood some of the significant differences between the contrasting localities, and there is clear evidence from work in Year 3 and Year 5 that pupils' mapping skills have improved over time, however spasmodically. Other work undertaken by pupils in Year 5 demonstrates a satisfactory level of factual knowledge about rivers. Pupils have clearly learned how rivers are formed, have some understanding of ways in which rivers are used by people, and are aware of the dangers of pollution. However, the main emphasis in written work is on the names and locations of major rivers on maps of the British Isles, Europe and the world and this reflects the need for teachers to develop their understanding about the key elements of pupils' learning in the subject. Map-work also features prominently in the work on Kenya produced by pupils in Year 6. Pupils demonstrate the ability to locate Kenya on a map, and they label continents and major world countries such as China and India accurately. Using an outline map of Kenya, they use conventional mapping symbols and a key to show the location of cities, major towns, railways, lakes and mountains, and they label Kenya's neighbouring countries. Again this work is of only limited value. Work on the lives of three Kenyan children living in different parts of the country has given pupils insights into the influence of climate and location on human activity and has also allowed for some comparisons to be drawn between life in Kenya and life in Radlett.



88. The range of work from different year groups shows that pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of places and of geographical patterns and processes over time, and that they also develop enquiry skills. What is clear, however, is that learning in geography is a spasmodic rather than a systematic process. As at the time of the last inspection, the absence of a reliable scheme of work means that, with only a small amount of curriculum time dedicated to the subject, systematic, planned progression in geographical skills remains insecure. The school has improved resources for geography since the last inspection and now has a satisfactory range. However, there is little evidence in the work seen to suggest that ICT is used as well as it should be to support work in geography, for example through data-handling and to promote geographical enquiry. All pupils benefit from visits to places of geographical interest, although the quantity and quality of pupils' recorded work does not adequately reflect the depth and range of studies described by staff.
89. Geography has not been a high priority for development in the school in recent years. There has been no recent training for staff, and the work seen suggests that some teachers' expertise in the subject may be insecure. The co-ordinator, responding to criticisms in the last inspection report, rightly prioritised the development of resources, and also sees teachers' medium-term plans for the subject. However, her strategies for monitoring the subject are generally underdeveloped since samples of pupils' work have yet to be analysed to assess their progress and standards across the school, and no geography lessons have been observed by any staff. Priorities for development remain: the development of a reliable scheme of work which ensures progression in key geographical skills; staff training for those teachers who have an insecure grasp of the subject requirements; and the development of the co-ordinator's role to include more rigorous monitoring of standards and of teaching.

## HISTORY

90. Evidence from the lessons observed, from the scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning points to attainment which is above average by the time pupils reach the age of eleven. Overall, pupils make sound progress in history in Years 3 and 4, and good progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils develop a secure understanding of chronology and of dates and terms relevant to the periods of history they study in all year groups. For example, pupils in Year 3 know that the Trojan Wars began in 1250 BC and that the Parthenon was built in 420 BC. They know that Hermes was the messenger for Zeus, and that he accompanied the souls of the dead to the 'underworld'. They are able to use secondary sources of information satisfactorily to find out about the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece. However, their knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences of events, their understanding of the different ways in which the past is represented and their appreciation of the similarities and differences between different periods of history are at an earlier stage of development.
91. In Year 4, pupils demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of distinct periods in history and make sound use of historical enquiry when they examine artefacts from the Tudor period. They use the evidence available satisfactorily to deduce what the objects were used for, and are then able to compare the objects with their modern equivalents, noting any significant similarities and differences. For example, they observe that the Tudor toys and other artefacts are made from natural materials such as cloth, leather and wood, whereas many modern products are made from plastic and other man-made materials. They also observe that, while electricity plays a big

part in our lives today, people in Tudor times had to rely on fire as their main source of 'power' for lighting, for heat and for cooking. Through the construction of a Tudor time-line, with dates showing the successive reigns of Tudor monarchs, pupils reveal their growing understanding of chronology. In well written accounts, they show a sound grasp of the circumstances that led to the end of Plantaganet rule and the beginning of the Tudor period, and they give brief, satisfactory explanations of some of the historical consequences of the defeat of Richard the Third at the Battle of Bosworth Field. They understand the part played by Henry the Eighth in the dissolution of the monasteries, and they write telling accounts of the changes that transformed Henry, over time, from a 'dazzling young prince' to a cold-hearted old man.

92. Pupils in both Year 5 classes make very good progress in lessons where they investigate the living conditions of the poor in Victorian times. They use a number of secondary sources to very good effect to identify the links between living conditions and disease. Most pupils demonstrate the ability to interpret and collate information well from different sources of evidence. Higher attaining pupils reveal a level of competence which is above average for their age when they then devise laws designed to solve the problems they have identified and write speeches expressing their concerns and their proposals for 'new' acts of parliament. These pupils have clearly understood the consequences of poor living conditions in Victorian times. More importantly, they have used enquiry skills very well to find out answers to historical questions for themselves, have developed a high level of awareness of different perspectives on events and conditions, and are able to understand why, and how, changes in social conditions and in health care occur over time.
93. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a level of knowledge and understanding of historical interpretations which is above average for their age. They talk knowledgeably about an extensive array of sources of evidence which enable us to find out about the past. They also reveal a good understanding of the reasons why some people and some sources of evidence might present a perspective on events which is biased by personal experience, conviction or allegiance.
94. The teaching of history is sound in Years 3 and 4, and very good overall in Years 5 and 6. All teachers plan their lessons well, enjoy the subject and communicate their enthusiasm to their pupils. Evidence from the lessons seen and from the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that teachers' expertise in the subject is stronger overall in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. In particular, these strengths are demonstrated in the emphasis placed on the development of all key historical skills, including enquiry, and in the depth and detail of research pupils are expected to undertake. An additional strength in the teaching in Year 5 is the provision of a range of different tasks at challenging levels for pupils of all abilities, including those pupils with special educational needs as well as the most able. All teachers encourage pupils to answer historical questions. In Year 6, the teaching seen is particularly effective in requiring pupils to raise questions of their own.
95. It is clear from the work seen that pupils enjoy history, and the school further enriches pupils' experiences and understanding of the subject by arranging visits to centres of interest such as Verulamium, St Albans Abbey and the St Albans museum, while workshops held in school, for example on 'Britain since the 1930s' also help to bring history to life. There is evidence of some use of ICT to support work in history and the school is building up its ICT resources for the subject.

96. Since the last inspection, the school has largely moved from a 'topic' based approach to history to a more rigorously subject-based approach with appropriate links to subjects such as English. There are, for instance, some fine examples of empathetic writing related to historical contexts, and the kind of reading research undertaken in the Year 5 lessons and described above also makes a strong contribution to the development of higher order reading skills. There is now an outline scheme of work and brief written guidance to help teachers with their medium-term plans. There are also many good medium-term plans to which different teachers have contributed year-on-year. However, there is still no definitive and reliable scheme of work which will ensure that pupils build progressively on their competency in the key historical skills as they move up through the school. The co-ordinator is a very good teacher of history and is well able to advise and support her colleagues. She monitors teaching plans specifically to ensure that coverage is relevant and adequate. However, she has not undertaken a rigorous analysis of samples of pupils' work from across the school, and has not observed teaching in the subject, although some time has been made available when she is not committed to teaching her own class. As a consequence, she is not in a strong position to know how well plans are interpreted or what emphasis is given to key skills. The school's own resources for history are satisfactory, and there are useful outside links, through staff, with other sources of relevant artefacts.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

97. No teaching of information technology was seen in the last inspection. However, pupils' standards were found to be satisfactory in Year 6. Since then, the school has made effective progress in improving its equipment, including the recent introduction of 16 new computers to the computer suite, and provision is now good. This has ensured that the school has kept up-to-date with developments in technology and it is now better equipped to ensure access for all pupils to the updated National Curriculum requirements. On entry to the school, standards in ICT vary but, overall, are below those expected for seven year old pupils. They make good progress and attainment is broadly in line with the standards expected for pupils by the end of Year 6.
98. Pupils in Year 3 have positive attitudes to ICT and, as a result, quickly acquire the basic skills to select and change the type, size and colour of fonts as they learn to use word-processing tools to share and communicate their ideas to others. These skills are developed further in Year 4, where pupils edit their work, using tools such as cut and paste, to amend their writing and change the position of text. They later learn to change images on the screen by placing them in different positions, and to combine text with graphics, for example, in a poster designed to warn of the dangers of fireworks. Year 6 pupils are currently learning to use the 'Powerpoint' program to present information about their school in interesting and exciting ways using a multimedia approach. In the course of lessons, they explored different ways of organising slides, and used WordArt, to produce sophisticated text designs, together with illustrations. This resulted in clear and eye-catching headlines, which pupils explained in terms that showed good awareness of their intended audience. The project will culminate in the design of a school website. Pupils are introduced to the use of the Internet to find things out in Year 3. They develop their skills progressively to make increasing use of ICT to find things out as they progress through the school. For example, in Year 4, they confidently use the Internet to research the work of famous authors such as Roald Dahl. In Year 5, they use computers in the course of history to increase their knowledge of Victorian times. Older pupils also make sound

use of their ICT research skills in geography, for example, to make comparisons between the climate in the United Kingdom and that of France, and to find out facts about Kenya. Pupils have used computers to develop their pattern making ideas in the course of the art and design work, for example, by designing a cover for their personal, social and health education books. Pupils in Year 5 enter data on screen with increasing confidence, and this helps them to produce pie charts, bar and line graphs to illustrate their results. They also begin to make use of spreadsheets to support their work in mathematics, for example, they enter a formula and note what happens when one of the variables is changed. The school's provision for control technology, which was criticised in the last inspection, is now improved and is satisfactory. Pupils have access to programmes such as 'Logo', 'Mission control' and 'Where's Lucy?' and there are well-established plans to extend this provision further to support work in science and design and technology involving the use of sensor equipment.

99. Teaching in ICT is good. Lessons are well prepared, and routines and procedures are very well established to ensure that pupils make the maximum use of the time that they have in the computer suite. Suitable learning challenges are set in lessons to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In order to give higher attaining pupils the challenges that they need, teachers set extension tasks that are well matched to individual needs. Pupils with EAL benefit from working with more experienced language users in their class and also have good support from assistants who give help with communication when it is needed. As a result, they are able to work at levels commensurate with their abilities, have full access to the curriculum and make sound progress. Although teachers make good use of the computer suite's facilities to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum, classroom computers were under utilised during the inspection.
100. The management and leadership of the subject are good. The work of the co-ordinator has had a significant impact on the improvements that have been made in the subject. The school has adopted the 'Northern Grid Scheme' and the co-ordinator is developing precise guidance on learning objectives for lessons, the software that can be used, and how work might be linked to other subjects of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has the expertise and experience to support her colleagues and has worked hard to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to teach the curriculum. They have grown in confidence as a result of the training she has given. She has carried out well focused monitoring of pupils' work to evaluate the effectiveness of provision, for example, in ensuring progression in the use of Excel, Word, and the Internet. She has made good use of her findings to inform her work in supporting teachers' planning. More now needs to be done to monitor teaching and learning through observing lessons. There is a good range of ongoing assessment and record keeping procedures in place, including self-assessment by pupils. Accurate summative assessments are being developed in Years 3 and 4 and are being extended to Years 5 and 6.
101. Resources for the subject are good and the school has plans to extend them further to ensure even more effective links with other subjects. The school is aware of the need to improve the ventilation of the computer suite, which becomes very warm now that it houses over 30 computers. There is scope to review the provision and use of equipment for whole-class teaching in the computer suite, and to ensure that the teacher is not out of sight of the pupils when giving instructions, visual demonstrations and explanations. There is also a need to ensure that classroom computers are fully utilised.

## MUSIC

102. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe three music lessons during the inspection, one in each of the two Year 5 classes, and one lesson in Year 4. In addition, singing was heard during daily assemblies. Insufficient evidence is available to make an overall judgement about pupils' standards in music, as a consequence. However, it is clear that pupils' singing skills are a strength, across the school. They sing enthusiastically, with clear diction and good control of pitch and dynamics. Their singing in assemblies contributes significantly to the overall quality of the occasions. Their good singing skills were also evident in the three lessons that were observed, while their skills in using musical instruments to create percussion to accompany their singing, in both Year 5 lessons, were broadly satisfactory for their ages. A significant number of pupils receive instrumental teaching by visiting teachers from the Hertfordshire music service, and evidence suggests these pupils achieve well. The last inspection also praised pupils' singing and found that overall standards in music were in line with those expected in Year 6.
103. From the evidence available, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of teaching or pupils' progress in the subject. In the last inspection, the music teaching was always at least satisfactory and was often good, but the few lessons seen in the current inspection suggest the teaching is now likely to be less effective, overall. This is not surprising, since music was taught by specialist teachers in the last inspection, and this continued until the end of the last summer term when the specialist music staff left the school. Now that class teachers are teaching the subject, there is evidence of inconsistency in the teaching, and that some require in-service training to increase their confidence and expertise in music. For example, while singing was well taught in one lesson, the quality of teaching in the other two lessons observed ranged from barely satisfactory to unsatisfactory. The deficiencies in these lessons were not due to key weaknesses in the general teaching skills of staff, but to their lack of subject knowledge which meant they struggled to provide pupils with sufficiently informed guidance and instruction.
104. At present, there is no music co-ordinator, but a new member of staff, who is to take up her post after Christmas, is likely to have the expertise in the subject to provide teachers with welcome advice. Teachers require more detailed guidance in the form of a comprehensive scheme of work for the subject. Although the outline lesson plans, left by the previous co-ordinator, are proving useful, they are often too general to provide the detailed guidance the teachers currently require. The school is well resourced for music.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. During the inspection, lessons were seen in games and dance. No lessons were seen in gymnastics and swimming. However, the evidence from teachers' planning and pupils' records shows that pupils receive their entitlement to the full statutory curriculum, and that standards in physical education are in line with those expected in Year 6. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior achievement.
106. Pupils work hard and enthusiastically in games lessons, for example, practising their throwing, catching and shooting skills in netball. They enjoy applying the skills they

have learned in other formal games such as bench-ball, played indoors. Particularly notable features are pupils' ability to work as team; to negotiate rules and tactics; pupils' self-evaluation skills, which they use constructively to improve their work; and their sense of fairness which ensures that all those involved play by the rules. This is a result of the emphasis that the school places on the development of these skills and values from an early stage. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils were challenged to work as a team to transport two mats from one end of the hall to the other, without setting foot on the floor. In the course of the exercise they learned to take account of each other's needs by ensuring that each mat was placed within the reach of smaller members of the team. They also had to co-operate together as they moved the mats towards their destination. They demonstrated a clear understanding of fairness throughout, and took care to abide by the rules, returning to the start if one of the team placed a foot on the floor, without being told to do so by the teacher, and without any blame being attached to the member of the team who had made the mistake. They used opportunities to evaluate their work well, and made improvements in their performance based on more efficient ways of working together. Pupils' team working and skills and their skills in self-evaluation also make a positive impact on the progress that they make and the standards they attain in dance. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils worked in groups to develop a dance sequence in response to beats of four or eight. They co-operated well to devise agreed routines, evaluated their own and each other's work, and worked hard throughout the lesson. As a result, they produced innovative sequences involving at least three different movements. Pupils, throughout the school, are taught to swim in the school's pool and they achieve well as a result of this provision.

107. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in physical education. There are a number of strengths, such as the teaching of team building, and the good opportunities that are given for self-evaluation. The organisation and management of pupils are very effective. Routines and procedures are well established and, as a result, the time that is available for teaching is used efficiently and there are no unnecessary interruptions. Where weaknesses occur in teaching it is because there is insufficient precision in learning objectives and, as a result, interactions with pupils are not sufficiently focused on the development of specific skills. There is good attention to health and safety. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and have established a work ethos, which encourages pupils to try hard. They are keen to do their best in lessons and behaviour is good. The school has good procedures to ensure an inclusive curriculum in physical education. The open ended nature of tasks allows access to the curriculum at a range of levels and ensure that all pupils make progress. There are good arrangements to ensure that potential barriers to learning and assessment are removed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by special educational needs assistants who work alongside them, giving support to movements where necessary. Pupils with EAL benefit from working in groups alongside more experienced language users in their class. They are also given additional support according to their needs. As a result, they are able to work at levels commensurate with their abilities, have full access to the curriculum and make sound progress.
108. The school provides a broad and appropriately balanced curriculum for physical education. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is effective in enriching this provision. It includes netball, football, rounders, gymnastics, and fencing. These additional opportunities make a valuable contribution to the standards that pupils achieve in lessons. Pupils also visit an ice skating rink and are taken bowling, which further widens the physical education curriculum. A range of useful literature and schemes is provided to support teachers' planning for physical education but it is

inconsistently used and, as a consequence, planning is not always sufficiently precise to guide teachers on how to coach pupils in the development of skills. A clear whole-school scheme of work, which gives coherent and precise guidance in each aspect of physical education, should be drawn together. The subject has no co-ordinator at present and this is a situation that the school should rectify at the earliest opportunity in order to secure the future development of the subject.

109. The school has a good-sized hall, which is well used for gymnastics, games and dance. There is an extensive field which includes an outdoor play area equipped to develop pupils' physical skills through opportunities to run, jump, climb and balance. The hard play areas are of good size and are used for games both in summer and winter. The school has its own swimming pool and this has a major impact on the progress that pupils make and the standards that they attain in swimming.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the standards expected for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age. This is due to a well thought out curriculum, which is embedded in the values of respect and thoughtfulness for others that permeate the school. This ensures good opportunities for pupils to reflect in depth on complex issues, and the ways in which they are made meaningful, in the context of the major world faiths. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were in line with the standard expected in Year 6.
111. The clear Programme of Study that the school follows involves a concentrated study of each major faith. Wherever possible, visits are made to places of worship, such as the local church and the Regents Park Mosque. Pupils also learn about the major religious leaders, the ways in which religious beliefs affect the way in which people live their lives, and some of the stories and symbols that are important to believers. This results in pupils developing a good understanding that religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian and that other principal religions are also represented in their community. They celebrate the major festivals of the Christian year, such as Christmas and Easter, and know the key features of the stories behind them. They are also well aware of festivals in other religions such as Diwali and Hannukah. Pupils' own faith backgrounds are valued in the school and they are encouraged to share their traditions and beliefs with others in the class.
112. A particularly strong feature of religious education lessons is the way in which pupils are expected to think for themselves and to make connections between the stories that they hear to the way that it impacts on their own everyday life, the life of their own family and the local community, and the implications for the wider world. For example, in learning about the significance of Advent to Christians, pupils in Year 5 reflect on their own aspirations for the future, their hopes for world peace and their hopes for a fairer world in which poverty and famine are things of the past. In learning about the importance of Hannukah to Jews, Year 3 pupils reflect on the things that are especially important to them and that they would want to fight to retain. Material items are mentioned but, in most cases, pupils are concerned with matters beyond the here and now, such as the love of their family. These aspects of religious education make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
113. Teaching in religious education is good, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection when the teaching was satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured with good preparation of books, materials and resources to

illustrate often complex ideas. There are good relationships between teachers and their pupils and, as a result, an atmosphere of mutual respect is created in lessons. Pupils are not afraid to respond in personal terms, often drawing upon their own beliefs and faiths, to the issues that are being discussed, knowing that their ideas will be respected and valued. A significant feature of the best teaching is the teachers' own depth of knowledge of the subject matter. This results in very good explanations, which draw on background information, and clear demonstrations. There is also very good use of open questions to check pupils' understanding, to help pupils reflect on what they have heard and to encourage them to contribute their own ideas.

114. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in religious education. They are effectively supported by classroom assistants, and teachers are skilled at asking questions and designing activities which ensure that they can take part. Pupils with EAL are appropriately supported by classroom assistants where necessary, and are fully included in lessons so that they make good progress at levels commensurate with their capabilities. All pupils, whatever their faith backgrounds, are able to take part in lessons.
115. The subject is well managed by the deputy headteacher. She has good subject knowledge and is well placed to support and advise other members of staff. She monitors planning and samples work. There is now a need to develop further her role as the co-ordinator for religious education by checking the effectiveness of the schools policies and schemes on teaching and learning through lesson observations. The school provision for religious education is appropriately based on the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Good links are made with other subjects of the curriculum when appropriate. For example, in literacy there is good use of well-chosen text to promote debate on religious issues. Assessment procedures are appropriately built into medium-term planning. There are sufficient good quality resources for the subject and effective links are made with the local community to give greater relevance to the curriculum. For example, pupils visit local places of worship in the course of their work, including a Hindu Centre, and the local Christian ecumenical team visit the school.