

INSPECTION REPORT

SPENCER JUNIOR SCHOOL

St. Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117143

Headteacher: Mrs. Yvette M. Glacken

Reporting inspector: Natalie Moss
22685

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th October 2001

Inspection number: 193322

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Watson Avenue St. Albans Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL3 5HP
Telephone number:	01727 856262
Fax number:	01727 856355
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. J. McMillin
Date of previous inspection:	14 th April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	Natalie Moss	Registered inspector	English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9499	Phiroze Daruwala	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Art and design Provision for pupils with special educational needs Equality of opportunity	
27984	John Whitehall	Team inspector	Mathematics Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2200	James Stirrup	Team inspector	Geography History Music Physical Education Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JH

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Spencer Junior School is smaller than most junior schools. It caters for boys and girls in the 7 to 11 age range. There are 198 pupils on roll, compared with the national average of 243. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 19.3 per cent, broadly in line with the national average. One per cent of the pupils has statements of special educational needs, which is below the national average. 15.5 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, a proportion broadly in line with other schools nationally. The school is situated in St. Albans in Hertfordshire, in an area of mixed housing, ranging from owner-occupied housing to local authority housing. One-tenth of the pupils have English as an additional language, though only two are at the early stages of English acquisition and there is a wide ethnic mix in the school. Most pupils enter the school from the local Infants School with which the school has very strong links. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry, which is average overall for pupils of this age. The headteacher is new since the previous inspection and there has been a high proportion of new teachers to the school this term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Spencer Junior School offers an effective education to its pupils. Its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. Pupils attain above the national average in English by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven and attainment in mathematics and science is average. Standards in Key Stage 2 have continued to rise in English, have risen well in science and have remained at the national average in mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with many good features. The roles of subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped as yet and this has slowed down the improvement in standards. The school is aware of the need for improvement in the planning, co-ordination and monitoring of curriculum subjects and of the need for assessment to be used to help raise standards. Overall, the effectiveness of the school and the value for money it provides are judged to be satisfactory.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Pupils' relationships with each other are good, so that socially and racially diverse pupils work and play well together.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, including personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils.
- The school's support for pupils' welfare and personal development is good.
- The school's links with parents are good.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in mathematics, speaking and listening and writing.
- Teachers' knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) and the use of the ICT suite to improve pupils' attainment.
- The contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities.
- Assessment procedures, their use in raising standards of attainment and teachers' marking of pupils' work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. There has been a satisfactory level of improvement overall since then. Some of the findings from the previous inspection have been addressed well. However, there are some areas in which the school does not support pupils' attainment sufficiently. Schemes of work have been put in place which allow skills and knowledge to be taught in a structured way which ensures pupils' progress. Assessment procedures have been improved, especially the analysis of data and the subsequent targeting of pupils, but the results of these assessments are not being put to full use in raising standards of achievement, nor are they consistently applied across the whole curriculum. Teachers do not yet make consistent use of information for medium and short term planning, especially in writing and science and not all subjects are assessed. Provision for information and technology has improved and there is a satisfactory scheme of work, but teachers have not yet completed their training in the subject and the information and communication technology suite is not yet used to full advantage. Much has been done to extend the monitoring of the quality of pupils' work, but, like assessment, the information obtained is not yet fully used to raise standards. Since the previous inspection, standards in English have fluctuated between average and above average after an exceptionally good year in 1998, and fell to average in 2001. In mathematics they have remained in line with the national average for the last three years and they rose in science in 2001 from below average to above average, both nationally and when compared with similar schools. From evidence gathered during the inspection, inspectors judged standards generally to be in line with the national average.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards in the school are slowly improving, especially in science. In the 2001 tests for 11-year-olds, attainment was in line with the national average in English and when compared with similar schools, falling a little from the previous year. Attainment in the tests remained average in mathematics, nationally and when compared with similar schools, while science rose to above average, both nationally and against similar schools. This improvement owes much to the good management of pupils by teachers and to the good attitudes to work of the pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 6 are in line to attain average standards in English and mathematics and above average in science. The school did not, in the 2001 tests, meet the targets it had set for itself in English and mathematics and is unlikely to meet the extremely challenging targets it has set for 2002. Standards in all other subjects are average by the time pupils leave the school, apart from standards in music which are above average, as a result of the good specialist teaching provided by the school and the enthusiasm for the subject engendered in pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily overall, in line with their peers. However, by the age of eleven, pupils, including higher attainers, do not achieve as well as they should in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are good and make a significant contribution to their learning. They enjoy coming to school and work with interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in school and in the playground, with some awareness of the impact of their actions on others. There have been two exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils are generally thoughtful, caring and respect each other's values and feelings. They do not always show independence in their personal study skills. Relationships with one another and with adults are good.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

Overall, teaching was satisfactory. Teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and often better. There has been a high turnover in staff which in part has led to the wide variation in method and approach that currently exists. Insufficient monitoring by subject co-ordinators of teaching and its results has exacerbated this situation. Teachers' planning does not always ensure that pupils' acquire skills progressively. However, some good teaching was seen and some which was very good. Teachers manage pupils well, so that they concentrate and learn. Generally, teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. Teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is also satisfactory and these pupils progress in line with other pupils. Teachers' expectations of their pupils and what they can produce are sometimes too low, as is the use of time in some lessons, so that pupils' productivity and pace of learning is slow at times and too little effort is expected of them. More able pupils are beginning to make better progress, but planning for these pupils is not always implemented productively across the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It is well balanced, with good emphasis on some key skills, but insufficient emphasis at present on speaking and listening, writing and number. The range of activities offered outside lessons is good. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and clear targets for improvement are set for them. The needs of the more able are, however, not always appropriately met by extension work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision made for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. Appropriate targets are set for them and they are well supported throughout the school by classroom teachers and assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good overall provision for pupils' personal development. Many relevant opportunities are provided and the pupils are becoming thoughtful, caring and responsible young people. Moral, social and cultural development are good and spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's care for its pupils is good and provides them with warm pastoral support. Assessment is not yet fully developed because its results are not yet used to ensure a good match of activities to pupils' levels of attainment.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has good relationships with parents, who contribute well to their children's learning. The information provided for parents in their children's annual reports, whilst satisfactory overall, limits parents' involvement in and understanding of their children's achievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher manages well. However, she has only one senior management team member to support her and the majority of subject co-ordinators do not yet fully meet their roles satisfactorily in planning, monitoring and evaluating teaching and pupils' learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors are very supportive and keen to help the headteacher in shaping the direction of the school. However, although they are rightly proud of the pastoral strengths of the school, they do not all have a full understanding of the weaknesses of the school, such as in writing and the importance of subject co-ordination.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory and is now taking action in its areas of weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use is made of resources to improve pupils' standards. Accommodation is good and learning resources are adequate. The school has not yet addressed the problems of subject leadership because of changes of key staff in the past two years. The deployment of the school's finances is good and the school seeks to obtain the best value in its use of available finance.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The high expectations the school has of their children. • Their children behave well in school. • Teaching is good. • Their children do well at the school. • They feel comfortable with the way the school deals with questions or problems. • They way in which their children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school works closely with parents. • Leadership and management of the school are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children receive. • The quality of information they receive about their children's progress.

Inspectors broadly agree with parents' positive opinions of the school. There is concern amongst parents over the level of homework set. The school is about to introduce a new policy for homework, following detailed consultation with parents. Inspectors judged that the overall quality and quantity of information provided for parents are satisfactory. Parents have many opportunities for consultation with the school and are kept well informed of curriculum matters, but annual reports to parents on their children's progress sometimes lack clarity and precision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. For the last three years, up to 2001, pupils' standards in the national tests for eleven-year-olds have fluctuated at above or close to the national average in English, have remained in line with the average in mathematics and have risen to above it in science. Standards were in line with those attained in similar schools in 2001 in English and mathematics and above them in science. Overall, standards are average.
2. In English and mathematics, pupils' scores in the national tests for eleven-year-olds were in line with the national average and those seen in similar schools and in science they were above it. These results follow a pattern set in the previous three years where English has fluctuated between average and above average but standards in mathematics have remained average and standards in science have risen to above average. There has been considerable staff change during this time which is likely to have had a negative impact on standards and increased the difficulties of subject co-ordination. However, at the time of the previous inspection, standards were above the national average in English and mathematics, above average in science and at least in line with national expectations in all other subjects, though the 1998 cohort of pupils was an exceptionally able one. In most of the past few years, boys and girls have reached roughly equal standards. There has been a tendency for boys to outperform girls in English and mathematics, though not significantly. The 2001 results are broadly consistent with the findings of the inspection, that at the age of eleven:
 - attainment in English and mathematics is average nationally and in comparison with similar schools and above average in science;
 - there is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls;
 - there has been a generally rising trend in science and mathematics has remained at an average level, while English has fallen slightly, though it is still average.
3. A higher proportion of pupils attain at Level 5, above the standard expected of 11-year-olds, in English, mathematics and science. However, given the level of attainment on entry, inspection evidence indicates that higher attainers are still insufficiently challenged.
4. The school sets targets for pupils' achievements in the national tests, which are demanding in the sense that they can be reached only if all pupils work hard, but they are realistic because they are based on pupils' prior achievements, particularly their level of attainment on entry to the school. The school did not meet its targets in English in the 2001 tests, but met them in mathematics. It is on track to meet its targets in mathematics for the current Year 6, but is unlikely to do so in English, because of underachievement in writing.
5. When children join the school at the age of seven, their attainment is average overall, though there is a very wide range of ability. By the age of eleven, attainment is in line with the average in most aspects of English, mainly due to the effects in the last three years of the National Literacy Strategy and the intervention and booster classes the school has put in place. Attainment in mathematics is also average. Attainment in science is satisfactory and is steadily improving, with the use of investigative work and clear schemes of work. Progress in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education is satisfactory and attainment is in line with national expectation. Attainment in music, because of the school's commitment to and enthusiasm for this area of pupils' cultural development, is above average expectation.

6. The provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good and the standards these pupils achieve are broadly appropriate when their prior attainment is taken into account. The school works hard to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The good level of provision for educational needs has been maintained since the last inspection. The good provision helps and supports their largely satisfactory progress in class; where they work with learning support staff their progress is often good. Progress for pupils for whom English is an additional language is also broadly in line with expectations; this is achieved through the high level of support from teachers and support assistants, though they receive little specialist support.
7. Positive contributions to pupils' achievements are made by the effective ways in which literacy and personal development and citizenship are integrated into their work in other subjects.
8. Since the previous inspection in 1997, with the exception of the atypical year in 1998, standards have improved overall by the age of eleven in English and in science, though they have remained similar to previous years in mathematics. However, the lack of definition of the roles of subject co-ordinators, with consequent lack of monitoring and evaluation of subjects, is holding back the school's capacity to improve standards of attainment more rapidly.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Most parents, in their response to the questionnaire and in their participation at the pre-inspection meeting, were appreciative of the efforts made by the school concerning this aspect of pupils' development. Inspection findings confirm this perception held by the majority of parents.
10. The school is a harmonious and orderly community, where pupils behave well, in and around the school and show respect for environment, premises, displays and learning resources. Pupils are friendly and courteous. They are also trustworthy and helpful to one another and to visitors. In general, pupils are interested and well motivated in lessons. They listen attentively and are keen to answer questions raised by their teachers.
11. The school operates a rewards system for pupils who show consistent commitment to work and good behaviour or sympathetic attitudes towards their peers. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents approved of the standard of behaviour. The school is successful in implementing its whole-school behaviour policy. No unacceptable behaviour or harassment was observed during the period of inspection. There were one fixed term and one permanent exclusion during the preceding academic year. On the whole, pupils' purposeful attitude to school makes a positive contribution to their learning.
12. There are constructive relationships throughout the whole school community, with most pupils and adults working well with one another. A positive feature of the school is the friendly way in which pupils greet visitors. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident from the good relationships between boys and girls, who collaborate well when working together in lessons. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to mix with one another in the dining room and in the playground. They are sympathetic to the needs of people in less favourable circumstances than themselves, raising funds and making donations to a variety of charities throughout the year. For instance, pupils raised funds for local homeless people. Pupils with special educational needs behave well in and around the school. The provision available to these pupils, offered by their teachers and learning support assistants, is good. These pupils are considered as an integral part of the school community. They have a positive approach to all subjects of the curriculum and usually work with real commitment. They are capable of working both independently and collaboratively. Those pupils for whom

English is an additional language are also well integrated into the life of the school by both teachers and other pupils.

13. Pupils are eager to learn, but they are not always offered sufficient opportunities to learn independently or to take initiatives in lessons. Pupils are not always expected to complete the prescribed exercises in many lessons, and there are insufficient opportunities for them to go beyond that. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and in so doing contribute to the life of the school community. For example, pupils are asked to distribute learning resources at the start of the lesson and collect them at the end and return them to a storage place. Year 6 prefects befriend younger pupils when they are new to the school and look after them in the playground. Most pupils show the capacity to accept greater responsibility.
14. Pupils, in general, are keen to learn and are eager to come to the school. For the last reporting year, the level of attendance at the school was broadly in line with the national average. Pupils are, generally, punctual in arriving at the school in the morning and returning to their classes after the morning break and after lunchtime.
15. The impact of the various lunchtime activities and after school activities on pupils' learning is good. Such extra-curricular activities offer the pupils an opportunity to raise their self-esteem and self-image and to develop an aptitude to co-operate and collaborate with their peers. For instance, the school choir performed at the Mayor's Annual Civic Service and was congratulated on their good behaviour, as well as their singing. Also, the school's orchestra and recorder group visited the nearby infant school for a recital during the last summer term.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, teaching was satisfactory. Whilst teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and often better, there has been a high turnover in staff which in part has led to the wide variation in method and approach that currently exists. This situation is exacerbated by insufficient monitoring of teaching and its results by subject co-ordinators. In addition, teachers' planning does not always ensure pupils' steady acquisition of skills. Some good teaching was seen and some which was very good. Teachers manage pupils well, so that they concentrate and learn. Generally, teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. Teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is also satisfactory and they progress in line with other pupils. Teachers' expectations of their pupils and what they can produce are sometimes insufficiently high, as is the use of time in some lessons, so that pupils' productivity and pace of learning is slow at times and too little effort is expected of them. More able pupils are beginning to make better progress, but planning for them is not always implemented productively across the curriculum
17. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, none were judged unsatisfactory, fifty-six per cent were satisfactory, thirty-two per cent were good and twelve per cent were very good. This is an improvement on the time of the previous inspection, when a small percentage of lessons were judged to have significant weaknesses and, in the light of the high turnover of teachers in recent years, it is an impressive record. However, the quality of teaching varies considerably from teacher to teacher, largely due to the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators. The good and very good teaching enables pupils to learn well and this is having a positive effect on their standards.
18. During the last few years, there has been a turnover of more than 50 per cent of the school's teaching staff, so that the school, at the time of the inspection, had a number of new teachers, two newly-qualified teachers and one temporary teacher, as well as lacking a full

complement on the senior management team. Despite this, teaching was satisfactory overall, with much enthusiastic and thorough teaching seen.

19. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are generally satisfactory. Explanations are made clearly and teachers ensure that all pupils understand what is expected of them and what they will learn. Basic skills, however, are not always well taught, particularly speaking and listening, writing and some areas of mathematics. Planning is not always consistently well developed. Some teachers are well organised; knowing what each group of pupils is expected to cover and how this will be achieved. This clarity of planning aids teachers' confidence in teaching subjects which are not their specialisms and ensures a clear acquisition of skills as pupils progress through the school. When plans are well structured they also aid the classroom learning assistants to support pupils well. Where planning is weaker, pupils are unclear as to the outcomes of lessons and steady progress in subjects is hindered. Questioning is used skilfully by many teachers to challenge pupils to think through problems and to understand difficult ideas and the same teachers plan their questions at the right level for each pupil, with their different abilities in mind.
20. Most teachers use practical lessons, including investigations, satisfactorily. Some effective use is made of scientific method and of clear approaches to problem-solving, involving pupils in making their own hypotheses and deductions. Most teachers manage their pupils well, with good humour and efficiency, so creating an orderly learning environment for pupils. The quality of teachers' assessment of their pupils' learning is, however, sometimes unsatisfactory and does not help them to plan for improving pupils' progress. Marking of pupils' written work does not always give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their work. Homework is appropriately, though inconsistently, set. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. Teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is also satisfactory and they progress in line with other pupils. Teachers' expectations of their pupils and what they can produce are sometimes too low and the use of time is unsatisfactory in some lessons, so that pupils' productivity and pace of learning is less than it should be and insufficient effort is expected of pupils. More able pupils are beginning to make better progress, but planning for these pupils is not always implemented across the curriculum.
21. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. However, there is some lack of coherence in the methods used by teachers in ensuring that all elements of the National Literacy Strategy are taught securely and that there is clear progress throughout the school in the acquisition of skills. Pupils are not always encouraged to speak with confidence and a sense of appropriate style. Neither do they always write at sufficient length or with a sense of urgency and desire to finish a piece of work. This is particularly applicable to higher attaining pupils, who are achieving less well than they should in relation to their abilities. Teachers' individual planning is insufficiently monitored by subject co-ordinators to ensure continuity in pupils' work. In many lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and good teaching methods, but the pace of lessons too often drops when pupils are doing group or individual work. Work set is not always sufficiently challenging to extend higher attaining pupils. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and set appropriate standards of work for the majority. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not always aimed at helping pupils to improve their work.
22. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. The teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy carefully and follow its guidelines, apart from in plenary sessions, which are not always used to reinforce work completed in the lessons. Teachers use questions well to help pupils learn and to assess their knowledge. However, the pace of lessons is often slow and work does not always challenge the higher attaining pupils. Teachers devote much time to improving pupils' mental mathematics. Marking of pupils' work is good, encouraging and constructive.

23. The standard of teaching in science is generally good. Teachers show good knowledge of the subject, plan and manage classes well and lessons often move at a good pace. They ensure that pupils have secure knowledge of work done by the careful use of questions. Teachers use information and communication technology well to aid pupils' learning. They are able to give effective practical demonstrations to help pupils to understand new concepts. Sometimes the pace of lessons is too slow and teachers lose the interest of pupils, but generally there is a satisfactory level of investigative work in classes, which engages pupils' interest and ensures that they acquire scientific skills. Marking is thorough, with encouraging comments.
24. In information and communication technology, teaching is generally satisfactory. Planning has clear objectives and the curriculum covers a wide range of skills. Staff manage pupils effectively and provide a suitable range of activities to engage their interest and ensure secure learning. Pupils behave co-operatively and well in lessons and work safely and carefully with the computers. They find the subject involving and work is made accessible for all abilities.
25. Few lessons were observed in religious education, but what was seen was well planned and managed. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. They create and promote a reflective atmosphere in the lessons.
26. Teaching in art, from the few lessons seen and the work on display, is satisfactory. It is clear that teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and work hard to develop a wide range of skills and techniques in pupils' learning. Lessons are managed effectively and pupils enjoy their work, showing pleasure in achievement.
27. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory, effectively promoting new skills in pupils, interesting them in design and helping them to evaluate their own learning. Pupils work together co-operatively, approaching their tasks in a purposeful manner. They are introduced to a wide range of design ideas, many linked to other topics in the curriculum and ranging from food technology to working with mechanical equipment. It is not possible to make an accurate judgement about teaching, since few lessons could be seen during the inspection.
28. Few lessons could be seen in geography during the inspection, but in those seen teachers displayed good questioning skills, which challenged pupils and encouraged them to think for themselves and acquire knowledge and understanding. Teachers give graded work to different ability pupils, but do not always challenge the higher attaining pupils in writing fully in the subject. The lessons seen were well planned and organised, giving pupils the opportunity to research for themselves and to develop their geographical skills. In history, it was not possible to observe enough lessons to make an overall judgement on teaching, but pupils' work throughout the school shows that the skills of historical enquiry are not sufficiently taught and that knowledge is sometimes weak, so that too little progress is made in the subject.
29. The quality of teaching in music was good in all lessons seen, because of the expertise and encouragement of the teacher who takes all the music lessons in the school. All lessons were good. The teacher's expectations of pupils are high and they are provided with a range of challenging and demanding musical activities.
30. Lessons observed in physical education were satisfactory overall. Teachers plan well and are able to demonstrate skills for pupils' benefit. Lessons usually have a good pace and there is good emphasis on the acquisition of skills. Teachers are careful to observe health and safety issues.

31. Teaching for pupils with special education needs is satisfactory overall; the pupils receive appropriate support and are making satisfactory progress. Learning support assistants are briefed appropriately and generally participate with the pupils in their learning. The pupils' learning is most productive when support staff interact effectively, for example, in a Year 3 lesson the learning support assistant worked well with the pupils encouraging them to concentrate and reinforcing their skills in literacy. The planning for special educational needs is good, with a range of tasks to develop the pupils' learning, for instance in literacy and in encouraging appropriate behaviour. The individual education plans are detailed and comprehensive, and learning targets are generally specific. These plans are generally used effectively, but this practice is not always consistent across the school. For example, in some literacy and numeracy lessons the plans were not used to best advantage. The targets the pupils are set are measurable and reviewed frequently to indicate what the pupils are to learn next.

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

32. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which reflects the aims and objectives of the school. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and covers all areas of the National Curriculum and the agreed religious education syllabus used by the school. French is taught throughout the school. Teaching time is of an appropriate length, with a good balance between core and non-core subjects.
33. There are co-ordinators, policies and schemes of work in all subjects, but the subject co-ordinators' control and direction of their subjects is not always clear. The structure of the curriculum is clearly set out and the School Development Plan allocates responsibility, defines activities and states clear criteria for success. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies are in place, but implementation of these has not yet been reflected in improved standards. Opportunities for information and communication technology have improved since the last report.
34. Teachers' long, medium-term and weekly lesson plans generally provide clear guidance for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, the plans do not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. The school implements fully the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs have individual educational plans and have full access to the curriculum. Full access is also provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language, but little additional specialist support is received by them.
35. Equality of access and opportunity in the curriculum is sound. The school offers a broad range of purposeful learning opportunities that meet the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs. Pupils who have difficulties are given targets, either to improve behaviour or their skills in literacy. Generally, these targets are clear and are used effectively in lessons. Pupils are all offered the opportunity to play at least one musical instrument and a good percentage are taught to play two instruments before they leave the school. Those pupils who show a particular talent for music are offered good opportunities to develop their musical skills. Personal, social and health education is actively promoted in the formal curriculum and through assemblies and extra-curricular activities.
36. The pupils are supported in their learning and offered equal access and opportunity to the curriculum. When appropriate, pupils are withdrawn from classroom situations in small groups to concentrate on their learning, for example in literacy. Reviews are held regularly and pupils' learning targets are assessed. Effective consultation takes place between staff and parents as part of the review process. The pupils are supported in their learning and

have appropriate use of information technology, but the computer suite is not being used to best advantage to develop their skills further.

37. A good range of extra curricular activities is offered, covering a wide range of interests. There is a strong emphasis on music through choir and orchestra, but other types of activities are offered; these include sport, choir, orchestra and French. Activities such as choir, recorders, knitting, gardening, football and netball (taken by a parent) were observed in the week of the inspection.
38. The school promotes respect and understanding for diverse cultures, beliefs and languages. The pupils are taught the need for mutual respect within a diverse society and parents and governors contribute effectively to this aspect of the school's work. For example, during the inspection a parent governor led a very effective assembly about the Jewish faith and traditions.
39. There are effective links with the infants and secondary schools, ensuring a smooth transition between all stages of education. An overview of the curriculum is maintained by link governors in the core subjects, who report back to the governors' curriculum committee. They support the school well.
40. The provision for pupil's, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the school.
41. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school fulfils all requirements for a daily act of collective worship. There is no specific policy or planned provision for spiritual development across the curriculum, but pupils are offered time and opportunity for reflection in assemblies. For example, the pupils were encouraged to consider the feelings of the observer on the bank of the brooklet in the poem by F. Schubert and to relate those feelings to the music of 'The Trout Quintet'. Religious education lessons help pupils to learn about other people's faiths and to understand their customs.
42. Planned provision for pupils' moral development is good. A sense of morality underpins the ethos of the school, with the pupils having a clear sense of right and wrong. This is reflected in the rules for behaviour and code of conduct drawn up by the school. The good behaviour displayed by pupils is enhanced by the school rewards and sanctions system, with the emphasis being very much on rewarding good behaviour, rather than penalising bad. Moral issues are explored in a number of ways, through classroom sessions and in subjects such as geography and English. Assemblies again play an important part.
43. The planned provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils develop good social skills as they progress through the school. All members of staff, including both teaching and non-teaching staff, provide good role models for pupils. Pupils treat the school environment with respect, display good social skills in the dining area and are very courteous and polite to visitors. The school council is much appreciated by pupils, who feel that they make a positive contribution to the organisation the school. Pupils make regular contributions to school assemblies through their musical activities; the contribution of music is a strength of the school. The wide variety of extra-curricular activities offered by the school makes a significant contribution to the well being and spiritual and social development of the pupils. They co-operate well in group work in all subjects. The school is a very caring community, with pupils having a clear understanding of their own actions and how they impact on others. They are keen to help each other and offer good support to pupils for whom English is an additional language

44. The quality of the provision for cultural development is good. A parent governor led an assembly explaining the Jewish festival of Succoth. The opportunity was used to inform the pupils of aspects of the Jewish faith. The cultural dimension is extended through religious education, music, history, art and geography. Music from various cultures is explored and life in a school in St Lucia is compared to that in Spencer School.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The provision for ensuring pupils' welfare is good. The positive situation found at the last inspection has been maintained. The school provides a safe, secure and purposeful environment for learning. All staff are caring and know the pupils well. The school cares for all its pupils by making appropriate provision for their varied needs and by providing suitable guidance and support. Staff and other adults in school serve as good role models for pupils through working co-operatively in classrooms, welcoming visitors and being polite in their working relationships with one another.
46. The school provides purposeful teaching and learning by being open and by listening to and valuing what pupils, parents, teachers and others have to say to support the school community. This, together with the school's inclusive ethos, promotes an environment where pupils feel secure and valued. Parents recognise this support and feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence supports this view.
47. The school's procedures for child protection are good. The deputy head is responsible for implementing these procedures. The school follows the child protection and safety requirements established by the local education authority and all staff members are aware of how to identify and act on child protection issues. The school provides a safe environment.
48. The school's ethos instils openness, understanding and tolerance, as well as trust between teachers and pupils. Good rapport exists amongst the pupils. This positive ethos is supported by the implementation of the school's policy on behaviour, entailing Golden Rules for conduct and discipline. Pupils' good efforts and work are recognised and rewarded. Lunchtime routines are well established and mid-day supervisors work effectively to ensure that lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion. Procedures to eliminate the rare occurrence of unacceptable and oppressive behaviour and harassment are good. Any form of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, is promptly dealt with. Due emphasis is given to equality of opportunity and to developing confidence in pupils.
49. Special educational needs provision meets statutory requirements and has regard to the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The school has already addressed the new requirements, which come into force in 2002 and has updated documentation in preparation for the changes. There is good liaison with other schools to maintain support for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and to review pupils' progress. There are good links with outside agencies. Care and support for pupils identified as having special educational needs are good, and all staff are committed to the pupils.
50. The previous inspection report identified teachers' assessment of pupils' work against national levels as an area for further improvement and development. Although the school has made good strides in improving assessment and monitoring procedures, they are not applied consistently in all subjects of the curriculum. As a result, teachers are unable to make consistent use of this information for their medium term and short term planning.
51. The school has so far established a suitable system of tracking pupils' progress in reading and writing skills. In mathematics and a few other non-core subjects, such as design and technology, information and communication technology and in religious education, the

school carries out the end of year assessment only. The school does not, however, carry out any assessment or analysis in the remaining non-statutory subjects. Formal tests are done in science. Although these are not formulated by QCA, they are used to inform planning.

52. Books and pupils' records are monitored by subject co-ordinators each term. There is clear guidance on planning and using assessment in day-to-day work, but its application is not consistent throughout all subjects of the curriculum. The school's procedures for assessment are in general not consistent across the various subject areas and, therefore, the usefulness of assessment is limited. The school is aware of the importance of raising staff awareness of assessment and monitoring procedures and there is a greater commitment to the use of data and other test results to help to raise pupils' levels of achievements. The school uses standardised QCA tests to assess pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. For assessing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in science, the school has devised its own tests. The use of data and other test results to help and advise in the next stage of pupils' learning is still being developed and refined. Individual pupils' progress is tracked by using pupils' acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. A portfolio containing a pupil's assessed work is kept and continuously updated.
53. At the parents' meeting and through the questionnaire, most parents expressed the views that their children are happy and feel secure within the calm, caring and orderly atmosphere of the school. Existing whole school policies for support and welfare are being reviewed, revised and up dated as an on-going plan for school improvement to ensure that the needs of pupils, including their educational attainment and physical development, are met and that pupils are looked after and supported on a day-to-day basis. The school provides a calm, harmonious and purposeful environment, enabling pupils to make full use of the available learning opportunities.
54. The school is very successful in promoting the well-being of the pupils. It has established a comprehensive health education policy, which incorporates sex education and drugs awareness, enabling pupils to acquire a sound knowledge of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils in each year group have a weekly group lesson in which such topics as looking after the environment, relationships and citizenship are frankly discussed by pupils.
55. The school has drawn up a draft of a whole school policy on homework, in consultation with staff, parents, pupils and governors, which entails the use of a homework diary by all pupils, to be signed by parents and teachers and checked weekly.
56. The headteacher, a designated governor and the caretaker carry out the annual risk assessments based on the local authority guidelines. Routine health and safety checks are done twice a year. The medical facilities are good. The school has sufficient teachers and support staff who are trained to administer first aid to pupils.
57. In keeping with its ethos, the school promotes a caring and supportive atmosphere. Pupils like coming to the school and this is confirmed by the fact that the level of attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils, in general, are punctual in arriving at the school in the morning. The school takes appropriate action in following up the absences that have not been explained by parents, in liaison with the educational welfare officer. The school has established good liaison with the local comprehensive schools where most Year 6 pupils enrol for their next phase of education. The process of induction for both the pupils and their parents is planned with sensitivity and care. Similar procedures are observed for incoming Year 3 pupils from the neighbouring infant school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school maintains a strong, positive and purposeful partnership with parents. Parents are appreciative of the school's Open Door policy. The school listens to parents, invites and considers their views and responds promptly to their concerns. This is a strength of the school. It enhances parents' confidence and trust in the headteacher and staff.
59. Parents are always welcome to consult the headteacher and teachers regarding any issue about their children which causes concern. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting stated that they were made to feel welcome right from the beginning and found the headteacher very approachable. In response to the questionnaire, some 97 percent of parents indicated that they would be comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem.
60. One of the striking features of the school is the weekly meeting between the headteacher and a small group of invited parents and their children in the school. This type of relaxed and informal discussion, aptly known as 'Focus Group Teas', enables the headteacher to discuss pupils' work and school life in general. Turn by turn, all parents are given this additional opportunity for a group discussion with the headteacher during the course of the academic year. These meetings are generally well attended by the parents.
61. At the beginning of each term, the school provides parents with details about the curriculum matters to be covered by each class. This enables parents to support their children's learning at home.
62. The school has established a home/school agreement and is about to introduce a whole school policy on homework. Parents were consulted on both occasions and their valuable input was incorporated in the final versions of these policy documents. Parents, generally play a good part in supporting their children's learning at home. This commitment on the part of the parents has a positive impact on pupils' progress overall.
63. There are good links with parents and carers and consultation is used well to review and discuss pupils' progress at regular intervals. For example, the parents of pupils with special educational needs are part of the review process and their knowledge and views of their children's learning are taken into account. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is well qualified, and has designated time to manage and support the work of the school in special educational needs. The management of this aspect of the school is good and the co-ordinator has clear ideas about the requirements of pupils, how to support staff and pupils and areas for development. The register for special educational needs is maintained efficiently and administration is thorough and well managed. There is a member of the governing body, who has special responsibility for special educational needs within the school. The governor offers positive support and maintains a good interest in the work of the school.
64. Parents are kept well informed about the school's work through newsletters and formal and informal meetings. They also receive written reports, which they are able to discuss at the consultation evening in the summer term. Pupils' annual reports to parents include aspects of their personal qualities and teachers' evaluation of academic attainments and progress. Although these reports, on the whole, are satisfactory, they lack clarity and depth in each subject and fail to provide a clear and detailed picture of pupils' attainment and progress.
65. The Spencer School Parent-Teacher Association has a dedicated group of parents who work together to raise funds for the school and organise social events for the school community. It provides a good range of resources for the school and the social events

develop positive relationships among parents. The Parent-teacher Association donated some £4000 towards the school's Millennium library.

66. The school values highly its links with parents and the community. It continues to develop a variety of links with the local community, which make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. It has been successful in developing purposeful links through the Allotment where pupils have the opportunity to grow different types of vegetables and flowers. Towards the end of the last academic year, the performances given by pupils during the Music Week focused on music and dance through the ages. Local secondary schools send their pupils for work experience. The school has a special link with local school for deaf children. The school works closely with St. Albans School. Pupils from that school do their community placements by helping younger pupils of this school with their reading skills. This is seen by the school to be beneficial in giving pupils opportunities to interact with a wider section of the community.
67. The governors' annual report to parents is presented in the autumn term. The school prospectus is a clear and concise document. It includes the school's aims, rules and a brief account of its policies and curriculum details.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. Overall, the quality of the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be very good, management has undergone many changes and is only now, with a relatively new headteacher, beginning to reach stability and to make progress. The school has achieved Investors in People status since the previous inspection and has been successfully re-assessed in 2001.
69. The competent and dedicated headteacher, appointed since the previous inspection, has been in post since 1999. At the moment, until next term, although there is a supportive and committed deputy headteacher, there is no other member of the senior management team. There has, in the last few years, been a turnover of over 50 per cent of the teaching staff. Many subject co-ordinators are new to the post this term and some subjects have no co-ordinator. The headteacher, in addition to her own responsibilities, is currently teaching, sharing a class for part of the week and co-ordinating two subjects on a caretaker basis. This has allowed her too little time or opportunity to address some of the issues identified at the time of the last inspection. She has implemented many measures to attempt to address them during her time as headteacher, but has, as yet, had little time to monitor their success or to see that staff are consistently following practices she has instituted. She is acutely aware of the school's immediate priorities and is determined and committed to achieving her aims.
70. The chair of the governing body and her colleagues are committed to the well-being of the school and are keen to help shape its future development. However, though they recognise the many pastoral strengths of the school, they do not always have a clear understanding of some of its weaknesses, particularly in curriculum issues, such as writing, or in the area of subject management and monitoring. Their responsibilities, such as in their annual report to parents, are fulfilled. They are helping to develop performance management. Overall, they fulfil their role satisfactorily.
71. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are satisfactory, because of the efforts of the headteacher, but have been made difficult by the personnel problems. The rapid succession of teachers and senior management has made consistency of training and practice almost impossible. Most management responsibility is taken by the headteacher.

72. Standards have risen a little since the previous inspection, but slowly. Subject co-ordinators are not always clear about their roles and responsibilities and there is too little continuity in the planning of some subjects throughout the school. Teaching, planning and pupils' work are not always monitored regularly or effectively and staff have too little chance in some subjects to receive the appropriate guidance and support to raise standards. These factors lead to some unsatisfactory planning and coverage of targets.
73. The school is beginning to make use of available data in evaluating its own performance. Data has been collected and analysed and used to implement some initiatives to contribute to the raising of standards.
74. The governing body have demonstrated a good understanding of the school's finances and have supported the school's educational priorities through the school's financial planning. The school has a healthy balance and careful plans as to the priorities for expenditure. The management plan drawn up by the headteacher is detailed and thorough and contains criteria by which to judge the success of spending decisions. Budget decisions in the past have been analysed to ensure that they are designed to improve pupils' attainment.
75. All funds received for specific purposes, such as funds to support pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately. There are satisfactory internal systems to ensure the safety of funds and to check and balance day-to-day transactions, competently managed by the school's administrative officer. The school seeks to obtain good value for its money when making purchases of supplies and equipment, and spending of finance has been carefully monitored.
76. There are still insufficient permanent teachers, so that, at present, the headteacher and a temporary teacher are sharing one class, though measures have been taken to ensure that a full complement will be in place for next term. All teachers in the school have had appropriate training for this phase of education. However, there is, at present, too little experience in subject management and whole school planning to facilitate the raising of standards. Good use is made of support staff to help targeted pupils to make progress. The school's provision for the professional development of staff and for performance management is satisfactory, though made difficult through the high turnover of staff in recent years.
77. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is well qualified and has designated time to manage and support the work of the school in special educational needs. The management of this aspect of the school is good and the co-ordinator has clear ideas about the requirements, how to support staff and pupils and areas for development. The register for special educational needs is maintained efficiently. There is a member of the governing body, who has special responsibility for special educational needs within the school. The governor offers positive support and maintains a good interest in the work of the school.
78. The accommodation is generally good and ample for supporting all areas of the curriculum, though it is in need of repair and renovation. The school has a good new information and communication technology suite, although this is presently not used fully to support the curriculum. The accommodation is managed effectively to provide pupils with a range of appropriate learning experiences and to allow for individual and small group work as well as whole class teaching. The buildings are kept in a good state of cleanliness. This, together with the bright and spacious classrooms and attractive displays of pupils' work, ensures that the school provides a stimulating environment for the pupils.
79. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory and they are good in mathematics. However, some atlases and science materials are outdated and there are not enough resources in history and geography. Information technology resources are not yet, being very new, used

as well as they could be. Outside resources such as museums and a residential centre are used effectively to enrich the pupils' learning and to develop their personal and social skills.

80. ICT is beginning to be used sufficiently to monitor school and test data, helping to help chart individual pupil progress towards specific curriculum targets.
81. Though expenditure per pupils is high compared with the national average, standards are slowly rising and there is some good and some very good teaching. Management is satisfactory and, overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. In order to further improve the quality of education, build on the strengths of the school and rectify weaknesses identified in the inspection, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Further improve standards of attainment by:
 - providing more planned opportunities for speaking and listening and writing across the curriculum;
 - implementing the National Literacy Strategy with more consistency and stringency throughout all classes;
 - undertaking a numeracy audit in mathematics and drawing up a specific Action Plan for mathematics.
 - ensuring training for teachers in information and communication technology and planning greater and more productive use of the computer suite.(Paragraphs 2, 4, 19, 21, 22, 36, 78, 84, 85, 87, 88, 91, 94, 95, 98, 112, 123, 130).

- (2) Address the weaknesses in the management of the school by:
 - ensuring that management responsibilities are shared effectively and reported on efficiently;
 - developing and defining the role of subject co-ordinators in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, of teaching and of pupils' work.
 - ensuring that subject co-ordinators have appropriate opportunities to develop knowledge and expertise in their subject areas and professional skills in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.(Paragraphs 8, 16, 17, 21, 33, 52, 69, 71, 72, 76, 90, 98, 102, 125, 130, 149).

- (3) Improve the procedures and the use of assessment by:
 - implementing consistent assessment procedures throughout the subjects of the curriculum;
 - using the results of assessment to help teachers to plan future work and to raise standards of pupils' attainment;
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work.(Paragraphs 20, 21, 50, 51, 52, 88, 102, 106).

Minor issues which should be addressed by the governors and the school are:

- improving pupils' productivity through higher expectations and better pace in lessons;
(Paragraphs 13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 88, 96).
- improving the standards of higher attainers in core subjects through more appropriately challenging tasks.
(Paragraphs 3, 16, 20, 21, 22, 28, 34, 84, 88, 112).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	13	28	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	28	59	0	0	0

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

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)	0	198
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	42

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	27	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	15
	Girls	21	19	24
	Total	34	30	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (84)	70 (76)	91 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	21	20	23
	Total	30	31	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (73)	72 (80)	81 (82)
	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	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	12
Chinese	0
White	163
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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	1	1
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)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	24.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	435980
Total expenditure	449691
Expenditure per pupil	2355
Balance brought forward from previous year	30357
Balance carried forward to next year	16646

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	198
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	28	8	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	42	3	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	53	4	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	55	12	3	4
The teaching is good.	40	49	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	41	13	4	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	26	0	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	41	45	6	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	47	45	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	46	4	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	29	4	0	0

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

ENGLISH

83. At the age of 11, pupils' results in the 2001 tests were in line with the national average and also when compared with similar schools. The trend over time indicates that the results for eleven-year-olds have fluctuated between above average and average over the last three years, but are now meeting the national average. There was no evidence during the inspection of difference in performance between boys and girls.
84. The standards of pupils' work seen during inspection were similar to the pattern of test results. Pupils enter Year 3 of the National Curriculum with broadly average levels of literacy. There is a high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Many lack confidence in their speaking and listening skills. Pupils have benefited from the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over their time in school because of well-organised and focused support, as do those for whom English is an additional language. Higher attaining pupils do not yet make satisfactory progress, although recent initiatives put in place to extend them to their full potential are beginning to be productive, except in standards in writing.
85. Pupils' progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory for the majority, but too many pupils remain hesitant and unable to express themselves with clarity or a sense of appropriate tone. However, pupils listen well to the teachers' advice and some demonstrate growing confidence in interacting and making active contributions to class discussions and expressing their opinions. This was clearly to be seen in a Year 5 lesson observed on texts from Tudor times, when the pupils were encouraged by the teacher and eager to share their ideas on how people lived at that time. However, many pupils find it difficult to speak audibly and sufficiently clearly to engage the interest of an audience, particularly in a formal situation. There are insufficient planned opportunities, such as drama and debate, to enable pupils to speak at length and to use a variety of expression and vocabulary.
86. Pupils overall attain satisfactory and often good standards of reading by the age of eleven. There is good emphasis on the teaching and learning of letter sounds and blends, so that pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds to help them to tackle unfamiliar words. Most pupils make good progress as a result of a comprehensive system for teaching phonics which is combined with other support aimed at developing pupils' sight vocabulary and fluency. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and embark on structured literacy programmes, with realistic short-term targets. The range of reading material is extended as pupils move through the school, and more able readers throughout the key stage can choose books freely. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. Many pupils talk with enthusiasm about favourite books, but their critical appreciation of a range of books and authors is sometimes limited. While lower attaining pupils still interpret their reading literally, average and higher attaining pupils show a growing understanding of underlying meaning. Most pupils can identify more than superficial meaning and learn to appreciate the subtleties of humour in good quality children's fiction. Pupils learn to use dictionaries and other reference books in most classes and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing the skills of skimming and scanning and making meaningful notes. Most pupils understand how books are arranged in libraries and how the contents and index can point the way to specific information. Many pupils are able to use non-fiction books to locate and retrieve information. Pupils make satisfactory use of their reading skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The process of home-school reading is well established and has a positive effect on pupils' interest and attainment. Guided reading sessions, when skilfully structured, enhance pupils' progress in reading. Most pupils learn that reading offers both enjoyment and information and they are beginning to appreciate the

qualities of different texts, as seen in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were encouraged to experiment using a novel, 'I Am David' as a model for writing a playscript, as part of a unit of work on different styles of writing.

87. The combination of a structured literacy hour and some good teaching has had a beneficial effect on pupils' technical skills in writing. Throughout the school, common spelling patterns are sufficiently stressed. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to think about the overall structure of their writing, such as the setting, characters and plot when writing stories. However, though the scope of writing is extended well and standards are satisfactory, the majority of pupils lack fluency in their writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes, including narrative, description, letters, instructions, and other forms of writing. They grow in competence in spelling and punctuation. By the age of 11, pupils are introduced to the main features of specific genres, for example magazine reviews, reports, newsletters and autobiographies. An example of interesting writing was seen in a good Year 3 class, where pupils were completely engaged in writing a story on 'A Noise in the Night', using their imaginations well. Although a minority of pupils still find it hard to express themselves clearly in writing, most pupils, and the higher attainers in particular, are able to interpret and comment sensibly on texts that they read. However, there are not enough examples of sustained story writing with good attention to developing characters and plot, and written work is often brief. The amount and quality of written work in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education are often not great enough to support literacy skills as well as they might. The use of information technology to word process, re-draft and edit is still insufficiently developed. Standards of handwriting are satisfactory, though presentation is often untidy.
88. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, ensuring satisfactory progress over time. There is a variation of method and understanding of the principles of the National Literacy Strategy across the school. Many teachers across the school have a generally secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and ensure that its different elements are covered. However, the lack of coherent planning and methodology in the subject results in unpredictable levels of progress, with classes repeating work done earlier in the school or working at levels inappropriate for their age. Not all teachers challenge pupils to speak with confidence, nor do they ensure that pupils write at sufficient length to help them to reach their full potential. This affects the ability of the higher attaining pupils, in particular, to express themselves in written work with speed and accuracy. Many teachers are firmly focused on the need to improve writing skills, but are only just beginning to stress the importance of the quantity of work produced to improve standards. There is little monitoring of teachers' planning to guide teachers in the provision of continuity of work for pupils. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and good planning and teaching methods, which inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are usually well motivated, but the pace of lessons is often allowed to fall during the group or individual work sessions of the literacy hour. Work set is often matched well to the full range of pupils' abilities and this leads to satisfactory progress by most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, but is not always sufficiently exacting for higher attaining pupils. The management of pupils' behaviour is at least satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and encourage good manners and social skills. In general, pupils behave very well and concentrate on their work. Teachers set appropriate standards for the majority and maintain a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs. However, they do not always challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently to work towards higher levels in speaking, reading and, especially, writing. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not always constructive and does not guide pupils on how to improve.

89. The National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactorily introduced into English lessons. Most teachers understand the basic structures and use the recommended pattern. However, planning is completed individually, so that continuity is not always assured. Teachers build on pupils' previous learning and extend it satisfactorily. However, there is little excitement to be found in the teaching of the subject and too little use of literature and poetry to encourage pupils' interest in the power or beauty of words. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, receive effective support and specific language skills are practised and reinforced by the designated staff. This good quality support boosts their self-esteem as well as enhancing their skills.
90. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. There is a no systematic programme of monitoring teaching and learning or of planning. There has been insufficient emphasis on structured planning through effective forward planning to address the weaknesses in the subject, particularly in speaking and writing. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory and are beginning to target and track individual pupils. The school's resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum and the school works hard to interest pupils in the subject by means of visits and other extra-curricular opportunities.

MATHEMATICS

91. The provision for mathematics is satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place but insufficient attention has been focused on the development and use of plenary sessions. Teachers have a sound understanding of their subject and lead discussions in a purposeful manner; however, the approach to whole class teaching frequently lacks pace.
92. At the age of eleven in the 2001 national tests, standards were broadly in line with the national average and also average when compared with similar schools. Results are similar to those in science and below those in English. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls. The results over the last four years have remained below the national trend. Pupils enter the school with attainment close to the national average. Progress across the Key Stage is satisfactory.
93. The standard of work in lessons observed and in the scrutiny of books is in line with the results of the national tests. For example, pupils in Year 6 understand the concepts of mode, median and mean from data in their own surveys. They determine the mode and median, but calculation of the mean causes them more difficulty. Another group is able to double numbers confidently and can halve even numbers greater than two, but many are unable to continue the sequence using negative numbers. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 can perform calculations involving two mathematical procedures in questions based on real life situations. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can demonstrate the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
94. In Year 6 they can add two numbers with one decimal place but in Year 3 they struggle to add two numbers to make twenty. Pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. They can operate numbers effectively, even when they have little understanding of English. There is an improved use of information and communication technology, compared with that seen in the previous inspection. For example, Year 6 pupils use a computer program to record and analyse data from their own surveys. Scrutiny of the pupils' books shows that they have not yet undertaken any mathematical investigations so far this year.
95. There are examples of the enhancement of mathematical skills in other curricular areas. For example, science and geography books display data in the form of tables, bar charts and graphs, simple number calculations occur in science lessons and numbers are counted in

French lessons. A more co-ordinated approach would consolidate pupils' understanding of concepts and enrich the provision of the other subjects

96. The standard of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good and is similar to that at the time of the previous report. The teachers have secure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and follow the guidelines effectively. The plenary session does not always reinforce the main learning objectives. Teachers lead class activity with targeted, carefully thought out questions, enabling pupils to learn at a satisfactory rate. For example, careful probing allowed pupils in Year 3 to develop an understanding of the properties of prisms. The pace of lessons is frequently slow, causing pupils to drift off task and work is not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils are made aware of lesson objectives and in the more effective lessons they are encouraged to compare what they have achieved with the lesson's objectives. Many lessons are directed to improving mental strategies. For example, Year 6 pupils were taught to solve addition problems by rounding numbers to the nearest hundreds and tens and then adding. Some chose to practise this technique when given the opportunity for independent learning, but others fell back on repeated addition or were unable to complete the task. The marking of books is of a good standard, with encouraging comments and corrections clearly set out. Pupils in one Year 6 group were encouraged to evaluate their own learning.
97. The response of pupils is good. They show interest and have good relationships with other pupils and with their teachers. They settle down to work quickly and respond well to the teacher's questions and to opportunities for independent learning.
98. The day-to-day management of the subject is satisfactory, enabling teachers to plan their lessons competently. The need to raise standards by a specific, comprehensive action plan based on the school development plan, incorporating the National Numeracy Strategic Audit, to develop teaching and learning in mathematics is recognised, but not yet fully achieved. There is little monitoring of teaching or scrutiny of pupils' books to help to improve standards of teaching further. Pupils' progress is tracked comprehensively, using end of year test results, but assessment data is not used to gauge the effectiveness of learning. Data is not generated frequently enough to enable teachers to set short-term targets for pupils.

SCIENCE

99. By the age of eleven in the 2001 national tests, standards are above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The results are above those in mathematics and in English. These results show a rise in standard from the previous year. Results over the past four years have fluctuated above and below the national trend, but are now rising. Pupils enter the school with a level of attainment close to the national average. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Overall, progress across the key stage is satisfactory.
100. The standards of work in lessons observed and in the analysis of pupils' work is similar to that seen in the 2001 tests, above the national average. Pupils in Year 6 understand how the heart circulates the blood around the body and can suggest reasons why an increased heart rate is related to the level of physical activity. Year 5 pupils can explain how oxygen from the blood is used by the body's organs to return carbon dioxide to form de-oxygenated blood. Other pupils are able to allocate correctly the name of an animal to its class, linking that class to a general list of properties. Pupils in Year 3, after observing a demonstration involving solids, liquids and gases, can define their properties. They begin to show an understanding that all matter is made up of particles that behave differently in different states. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. They take full part in the lesson activities, but show more limited understanding of the more difficult concepts.

101. The standard of teaching is good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, show good management of their classes and frequently deliver lessons at a brisk pace. They use effective questioning of pupils, using it to explore their previous knowledge and to explain new ideas. Learning is enhanced by the use of information and communication technology to enable pupils to interact and learn independently. Teachers give effective demonstrations. For example, pupils in Year 3 are able to see how gas generated by raisins in lemonade can cause a balloon placed over the neck of a bottle to inflate, helping them to have a fuller understanding of the properties of gases. Occasionally, the pace of a lesson is too slow, resulting in inattention from pupils and reducing the effectiveness of learning. Marking is thorough, with encouraging comments. Pupils undertake a sufficient amount of investigative work to encourage their deductive skills. Pupils at the end of Year 4 perform a series of investigations and Year 6 pupils understand the requirements for fair testing. The standard of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
102. The management of science is satisfactory. An effective scheme of work is in place and teachers co-operate well and share ideas. The scheme of work identifies national curriculum references, learning objectives and relevant activities. Lesson plans are not always detailed or structured to facilitate pace. There is little evaluation or monitoring of teaching and assessment is made only at the end of the year, based on the school's own system. At present assessment is too infrequent to ensure that pupils may be tracked effectively. The curriculum is not monitored and reviewed to ensure its relevance in continuing to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

103. The attainment of eleven-year-olds in art and design is at the expected level for their age. This has been maintained since the previous inspection, when attainment in art was judged as satisfactory. By the time the pupils reach the age of eleven, they are developing their ideas through their artwork. They are able to produce collage and montage effects and are developing their skills in sketching. For example, they observe facial characteristics closely and reproduce them, using different media, such as charcoal. They study human movements and use these to create montage depicting motion.
104. The school benefits from a visiting artist and this has resulted in pupils having good experiences in exploring and trying out techniques, such as those of African art, which supports work being undertaken in other areas of the curriculum. An exhibition of this work was displayed in the St. Albans library. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils have the opportunity to visit the 'Portrait of a Nation' exhibition at Hatfield. Pupils in Year 4 use their sketchbooks to record their observations of figures, repeating patterns and landscapes. They also study and reproduce still life, for instance, of leaves and plants. In Year 3, photographic evidence shows that the pupils are involved in three-dimensional work using recycled materials. In Years 3 and 4, pupils also have good opportunities to look at the work of different artists, for instance when visiting the National Gallery, when they consider the works, of Holbein, Van Eyck and Monet.
105. Although not many lessons could be observed in art during the inspection, from previous work and displays around the school, it was possible to judge teaching as satisfactory. In lessons observed, teaching was sound and the pupils learned at an appropriate level. Teachers have a secure knowledge of art and offer a variety of learning experiences to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and techniques. In a Year 5 lesson, the class teacher was well informed about art and design and explained different techniques to the pupils, with an explanation of how they are applied. The lesson was managed and organised effectively and resources were ready and made available. The pupils enjoy art, apply themselves well to the tasks set and their attitudes to the subject are positive. They show appropriate behaviour in lessons. All pupils are encouraged to be involved in artwork. Those pupils

identified as having special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are supported appropriately.

106. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The headteacher is at present acting as co-ordinator and monitors art through lesson observations. The headteacher also holds a 'focus group tea', when parents and pupils review work done, including that in art and design. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place, based on national guidelines. Resources are sufficient, made accessible and generally used effectively. Assessment and recording take place at the end of each term, but the assessment of pupils' progress is not sufficiently detailed or used enough to inform future planning. However, art is used effectively in other areas of the curriculum and there are good cross-curricular and cultural links. For example, pupils use information and communication technology to develop patterns and rotational symmetry in mathematics and they study the influence of Ancient Greece on art. An open day is held, when artwork is displayed and exhibits include tie dying, foil masks, and colour palettes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards in design and technology are average by the time the pupils are eleven. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. It was not possible to observe many lessons for design and technology during the inspection. However, from evidence of past work, it was possible to assess that standards are at the expected level. All pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily and are encouraged to participate in the range of learning experiences offered.
108. The standards are the result of the sound teaching, the effective promotion of design and the encouragement given to the pupils to make contributions to their learning. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson; the pupils were well motivated, shared their ideas well and were aware of the next steps in completing their models. The lesson, a follow-up from previous work, encouraged the pupils to work together co-operatively. They engaged in their tasks purposefully and worked together well, showing good levels of maturity and respect.
109. The pupils make sound progress and are learning to evaluate their work. In Years 3 and 4 they are using their skills effectively to develop ideas in design, using pneumatic systems to make 'moving monsters'. Light, electricity, materials and fabric are also investigated, and within the two-year cycle the pupils make pop-up books and explore packaging designs. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils make Tudor slippers from their own designs, look at Aztec shelters and moving vehicles, as well as toys from the Victorian era, which link the subject to history in the curriculum. Food technology and healthy eating are a feature for all year groups. There is generally appropriate use of information and communication technology for all year groups, for example, using databases and designing 'monsters'.
110. There are long, medium and short-term plans for design technology, which are linked to national guidelines. Over each term a balanced programme of activities is provided. Design technology is used well in relation to other aspects of the curriculum, for example, work in three-dimensional design, making models and slippers to link with work in art. Design technology is being effectively managed by the recently appointed co-ordinator. The curriculum has been reviewed to offer a greater balance of work. For example, units of work are visited more frequently to ensure greater continuity for the pupils. Medium term plans are monitored and work is reviewed at the end of each term. There have been some lesson observations, but this is a relatively new initiative.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Whilst it was only possible to observe two geography lessons during the period of the inspection, these lessons, as well as a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents, indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and attain standards in line with expectation for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make progress in line with other pupils. The subject is taught as part of a two-year rolling programme. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.
112. Pupils in Year 3 display a simple yet effective understanding of the education offered to young people on the island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean and are able to draw comparisons and see the similarities between their lives of children on St. Lucia and their own school life in St. Albans. The good learning which took place in these lessons was enhanced by the teachers' good questioning skills, which challenged pupils' initial responses and encouraged them to think in greater depth, enhancing knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs were given additional support by the teacher and a prompt sheet to support them in their learning. Some of the higher attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently to write in an independent manner, as they were restricted by the worksheets, which provided only for short responses.
113. Pupils in Year 4 were also involved in project work on St. Lucia, drawing up a possible itinerary for a tourist to the island. They made use of simple mapping skills as they plotted a route between each of the places on their imagined itinerary. Whilst pupils were provided with the opportunity to work in an independent manner and to develop simple research and reference skills, their findings and the actual itinerary were recorded on the same worksheet, with no allowance for the ability of individual pupils.
114. Although the scheme of work used by the school provides for pupils to engage in all the required elements of the National Curriculum for geography, examination of pupils' work indicates that some of the topics are covered in a superficial manner. There is an over-reliance on these worksheets which only require a brief response, sometimes no more than a drawing, with an added short sentence or two. This does little to challenge higher attaining pupils, who are capable of writing at length and enhancing their literacy skills.
115. Most pupils approach their work in a positive manner and work with interest and sustained concentration. This is a significant factor in the satisfactory learning which takes place within individual lessons.
116. Whilst it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the basis of two lesson observations, those lessons observed were well planned and organised, with opportunities for pupils to develop relevant skills. Teachers, however, appear to have too low an expectation of potentially higher attaining pupils, and do not challenge them appropriately by providing them with work which matches their abilities.
117. There is a policy for the subject and a satisfactory scheme of work. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in a number of field trips, both locally and further afield, to support them in their learning.
118. The role of the subject co-ordinator is under-developed. There are no assessment and recording procedures for the subject and the co-ordinator for geography has no opportunity to monitor teaching. The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development.

HISTORY

119. It was possible to observe only one history lesson during the period of the inspection. This, together with a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and an examination of teachers' planning documents, indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and attain standards in line with expectation for their age by the age of eleven. Pupils with special education needs and those for whom English is an additional language make progress in line with other pupils. This is achieved through the good support provided by both teachers and classroom assistants.
120. The subject is taught on a two-year rolling programme. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.
121. In the single lesson observed in Year 6, pupils were seen to be working in groups in putting together small booklets on various aspects of Tudor life. The sound progress made in this lesson in this lesson was enhanced by the opportunity for pupils to work both with independence and in a collaborative manner when necessary and to develop and use reference and research skills. The lesson was well resourced, with pupils accessing the Internet in order to retrieve information. All of these factors strengthened learning and contributed to the positive attitudes that pupils showed towards their work.
122. The examination of pupils' work indicates that they have a satisfactory understanding of chronological order and change over time. They have knowledge of famous people and events in history and come to an understanding of cause and effect.
123. Whilst pupils explore all the necessary history topics in the history curriculum, some of them are dealt with in a superficial manner and are approached without real depth and substance. Much of the work is produced on worksheets, which require only brief responses and do little to challenge more able pupils. Occasional opportunities are provided for pupils to write in an empathetic manner, such as on 'A life in the day of a Greek slave'. Examination of pupils' topic books indicates that most pupils take a positive approach towards their work and that work is well set out and presented.
124. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching on the basis of the single lesson observed. This lesson, however, was well planned, organised and resourced. Good support was given to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
125. There is a good range of history books, but there is a limited range of artefacts to support individual topics. There is a policy for the subject and a satisfactory scheme of work. The role of the subject co-ordinator is currently under-developed, with limited opportunities for monitoring the teaching of the subject and to put into place effective assessment and recording procedures. There are occasional opportunities for pupils to visit places of historical significance. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. It was only possible to observe a few lessons in information and communication technology during the inspection. However, from evidence in pupils' work files it was possible to assess standards to be at the expected level at the age of eleven. At the last inspection, standards were judged as just in line with the expected level and pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. The progress has been satisfactory since then in addressing the key issue which was identified and provision for the subject has improved, which has benefited pupils' learning.

127. The curriculum for information and communication technology is now appropriate and covers the necessary requirements. The subject is integrated well with other aspects of the curriculum, for example, using computers to design and make three-dimensional models in design and technology.
128. The pupils make sound progress in their information and communication technology work. In Years 3 and 4 they are using their skills effectively to develop ideas in designing 'monsters'. Their skills in using data and files are developing well, and they can explain their procedures correctly. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are learning to handle data efficiently and to create their own pie charts and spreadsheets. Work displayed shows that pupils have used computers to calculate the cost of a trip to the cinema, to measure the lengths of shadows on a sundial to create a line graph, and they have developed pie charts to illustrate their favourite foods.
129. Teaching is sound overall, with generally clear planning and broad coverage of all aspects of the curriculum. Staff manage pupils effectively and provide a suitable range of activities. Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to participate and to develop their own ideas about spreadsheets, accessing information and using formulae. In the computer suite, pupils behave well, co-operate productively and use the computers with care. Pupils are all encouraged to be involved in computer work and those pupils identified as having special educational needs, as well as those for whom English is an additional language, are supported appropriately.
130. The co-ordinator for information and communication technology manages the subject effectively. There is a draft policy in place and guidelines for the curriculum. Pupils are helped to evaluate their work in information and communication technology each term, but as yet no monitoring of work or lessons takes place. The co-ordinator has also provided a help pack for staff, but although staff overall have a reasonable knowledge about information and communication technology, there are some gaps in their expertise. The co-ordinator is at present organising further training for staff. The computer suite is of benefit to the school and the pupils' learning. For instance, pupils use search engines on the Internet to research information about other areas of the curriculum, such as the Aztecs in history. However, the suite is not being used frequently enough to develop, reinforce and consolidate the pupils' skills. For example, in Year 3 pupils do not always use the computer suite during their information and communication technology lessons.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

131. French is taught to all pupils, at a conversational level, and adds greatly to their social and cultural development. They greatly enjoy their lessons, which are well taught, brisk in pace and accessible to all abilities.

MUSIC

132. Whilst it was only possible to observe two music lessons during the period of the inspection, these lessons, plus observation of the choir, recorder club and singing in assemblies indicate that pupils make good progress in the subject and achieve standards above those expected of pupils of a similar age. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) likewise make good progress. Standards in music have improved since the last inspection.
133. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 displayed good singing skills as they sang calypsos, as part of a good unit of work on Caribbean music. Pupils sang as a group before moving on to singing in two-part harmony. Pupils displayed a sound knowledge of pitch, rhythm and beat and interpreted the lyrics of the song in a sensitive manner. The teacher accompanied the songs

on guitar with pupils adding additional accompaniment on both tuned and untuned instruments. The good progress in this lesson was enhanced by the very positive attitude that pupils brought to their work and their sheer pleasure in singing.

134. Pupils in Year 6 responded well to some demanding music as they worked on an original piece of Elizabethan dance music. This complex piece of music, with over-layered harmonies, effectively challenged pupils' musical skills and reflected the high expectations of teachers. Pupils were able to read the piece of music using good formal musical notation skills and interpreted it on a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments. The final success of the performance at the end of the lesson owed much to the fact that every pupil is taught to play the recorder.
135. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and approach them in a positive and enthusiastic manner. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to play musical instruments and treat them in a sensible manner.
136. Examination of the scheme of work indicates that pupils are provided with a range of imaginative musical activities, with work often centring around a common theme or topic. Opportunities are provided for pupils to compose and perform their own music. Pupils listen to appraise the work of modern and classical composers both within lesson time and assemblies. A good example of this was observed in one assembly with the theme of nature and the natural world being explored through Schubert's music, in particular his composition, 'The Trout'. The piece was played on tape and also by the school recorder group.
137. The quality of teaching in all lessons was good. Indeed the progress and standards achieved by pupils owes much to the expertise and enthusiasm of the single member of staff who teaches all the music lessons. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and provides them with a range of challenging and demanding musical activities.
138. All pupils in the school learn to play the recorder as part of the curriculum. Nearly half of the pupils in the school receive extra unsubsidised musical tuition in either violin, cello, flute, trumpet or drums. The school has an orchestra and a well-attended choir. There is also a recorder group. The school choir regularly sings both in school and in the local community. The choir has sung in St. Alban's Cathedral and has been represented at the Festival Hall in London. There is an annual music week with all pupils being provided with the opportunity to take part in large-scale musical productions.
139. The school has a policy for music and a good scheme of work. Music is led by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Resources for the subject are good with the school having a separate music room. Pupils have worked with professional performers and an amateur.
140. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development and is a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language make progress in the subject and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age. Standards were judged as good at the previous inspection.

142. Pupils in Year 3 display satisfactory balancing skills appropriate to gymnastics. Progress is made by refining skills over time and focusing on the combination of arm and leg movements to make up a series of balancing activities.
143. Good cross-curricular links were observed in a dance lesson as pupils in Year 5 worked on a number of Tudor dances appropriate to the aristocracy and the country classes. A group of pupils engaged in the more refined 'Pavanne', whilst in a humorous manner the rest of the class worked on a country-dance, 'The Clog Brawl'. The pupils certainly enjoyed these dance activities and gave them their full attention.
144. Pupils in Year 6 were seen to focus on those attacking and defending skills associated with netball and worked at improving their shoulder and chest passes. The satisfactory progress in this lesson was enhanced by the teacher's emphasis on the need to work in an unselfish manner and to work together as a team in order to achieve success.
145. All pupils are given the opportunity to visit the local swimming baths in Year 5. Local swimming instructors give very good support to pupils, with the result that virtually all pupils fulfil swimming requirements by the end of the Year 5. The good progress in the single swimming lesson observed was enhanced by the pupils' good self-discipline. They listened with interest to coaching points and clearly focused on the skills to be developed.
146. Examination of teachers' documentation indicates the pupils are given the opportunity to respond to all of the elements of the National Curriculum for Physical Education.
147. Pupils display real pleasure in their PE activities. The majority of pupils work with good self-discipline and self-control. They work well together in pairs and small groups and are aware of the need to work as a team.
148. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced. Opportunities are provided for pupils to demonstrate good practice. Lessons are generally well paced and active, with teachers providing pupils with the opportunity to refine skills through repetition. An appropriate amount of time is spent on warm-up activities with teachers making pupils aware of health and safety issues.
149. There is a policy for the subject and a satisfactory scheme of work. The school is well resourced for the subject. However, the role of the subject co-ordinator is under-developed. Pupils have access to a large hall as well as hard-surface areas and playing fields. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including football and netball. Pupils engage in inter-school sporting competitions. The school has also been involved in a number of one-off projects in dance and tennis. A sports project in school has also provided pupils with the opportunity to engage in a number of sporting activities. All pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a residential holiday, where they engage in water sports, abseiling, archery and orienteering.
150. With its emphasis on the need to work both independently and collaboratively the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. It was only possible to observe two religious education lessons during the period of the inspection. These two observations, plus a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and achieve standards in line with the expectations and demands of the agreed syllabus adopted by the school whereas standards were above expectations at the time of the previous inspection.

152. Pupils in Year 4 display a clear understanding of the celebration of Sukkot, (when Moses and his followers were cast out into the desert) in the Jewish faith, and were able to write about it from a factual point of view. Pupils' understanding of the spiritual nature of Sukkot, was reinforced in a very good assembly later in the week when a parent-governor came into school to talk about her faith and the importance of Sukkot both within the family and the Jewish faith as a whole. During a good question and answer session many pupils, throughout the whole of the school, were able to identify the artefacts using during the celebration and recognised their symbolic nature and function.
153. Pupils in Year 6 display a sound understanding of the story of Rama and Sita in the Hindu faith and recognise the common features it shares with other religions, the battle between Good and Evil. In a very good Candle Time, with pupils quietly sitting around a lit candle, pupils discussed with the teacher the nature of people who bring light into our lives. These ranged from world political leaders to people who suffered for their moral and religious beliefs and on to 'my mum'. There was a real spiritual dimension to this part of the lesson with pupils listening to and valuing each person's contribution to the lesson.
154. Much of the pupils' work in religious education is of an oral nature, with limited opportunities for pupils to make an extended written response to the areas of work they study in their lessons. Examination of the agreed syllabus used by the school and pupils' written work indicates that pupils are given the opportunity to explore and extend their knowledge and spiritual understanding both of Christianity and other world faiths. Pupils consider the prophets, festivals, celebrations, stories and practices of world religions and come to a simple understanding of the concerns and philosophies shared by them and how they impact on our daily lives. School assemblies make a valuable contribution to the development of religious education, with the focus during the period of the inspection being on Harvest Festival and the need to care for each other.
155. All pupils approach their work in religious education in an interested and committed manner. They listen to and respect each other's beliefs and are sensitive to other people's feelings.
156. Whilst it is difficult to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching on the basis of two lessons observed, the lessons in question were well planned, organised and managed. Teachers create an appropriate environment in which sensitive issues can be openly explored and discussed. This was certainly the case during Candle Time in Year 6. Teachers use good open-ended questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding and try to encourage all pupils to make an active oral contribution to lessons. Sound support is given to pupils with special education needs and those who use English as an additional language and these pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject.
157. There is a policy for the subject, with teachers in parallel classes interpreting the agreed syllabus in an effective manner by planning together to ensure similar provision. There is a satisfactory range of artefacts to support the teaching of each individual religion.
158. School assemblies, visits to places of worship and visitors to the school make a valuable contribution to the subject. The subject in turn makes a useful contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.