

INSPECTION REPORT

TUDOR JMI SCHOOL

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117109

Headteacher: Ms M Pearson

Reporting inspector: Mrs H Ranger
OFSTED No: 22223

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 June 2001

Inspection number: 193544

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior with nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Redwood Drive
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
Postcode: HP3 9ER

Telephone number: 01442 256294

Fax number: None

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Miss R Thorpe-Tracey

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22223	Helen Ranger	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Equal opportunities	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
31862	Julia Coop	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science History Geography Special educational needs	
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Religious education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tudor JMI School is an average sized community school with 189 full-time pupils aged between four and eleven. A further 24 children attend the morning nursery class. The majority of pupils come from white United Kingdom backgrounds. Twenty per cent are from various ethnic groups; most of these are from Pakistani families and do not speak English as their first language at home. An average proportion of pupils in the school (20 per cent) is entitled to free school meals. Sixty pupils (32 per cent) are currently on the school's register of special educational needs (a high proportion compared with schools nationally) and four of these have statements. When children enter the nursery, their attainment varies considerably but it is below average overall and is often well below average in key aspects of their language and social skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school gives its pupils a sound education. Pupils of all ages make at least satisfactory progress over time in relation to their attainment on admission to the school, although the oldest pupils who are now in Year 6 do not reach the national average standard. Teaching in all age groups is almost always at least sound and it is often good. The school is led and managed satisfactorily by the headteacher and governors and gives adequate value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables its pupils to have positive attitudes to school, to behave well and to relate well to others.
- Offers high quality guidance to pupils on their moral and social development.
- Gives children in the nursery a good start to their education.
- Ensures good support for pupils with special educational needs in both key stages.
- Has committed staff who work well as a team.
- Welcomes pupils of all backgrounds and capabilities and involves them fully in the life of the school.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved by pupils in both key stages compared with national averages in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage 2 in geography, history and religious education.
- The way that time is allocated to the range of subjects in the curriculum and how the national programmes of study are covered.
- The curriculum and facilities for children in the reception class.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety, including those for child protection.
- Pupils' levels of attendance and how better attendance is encouraged.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then it has made satisfactory progress in the main areas identified for improvement, although there is scope for further improvement in each of the aspects that were key issues at that time. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils rose considerably last year. Teaching has improved and there was more good teaching seen during this inspection than previously. The nursery is substantially better but there are now weaknesses in the provision for the reception class. The school has worked hard to improve its facilities and teaching in information and communication technology but this has happened fairly recently and not yet had a full impact on pupils' standards. Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development are better but not all school assemblies include an act of collective worship. Subject leaders do not yet monitor their areas of responsibility well enough to raise standards but the school has planned a programme to remedy this very shortly.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	A	A	
Science	D	E	A	A	

The school's results in 2000 for its oldest pupils showed a substantial improvement over previous years and exceeded the targets it had set for itself in English and mathematics. However, the improvement in results as a whole over the past five years has been below the national trend and targets are unlikely to be met this year. This is because of the very high number of pupils who have special educational needs in the class. The targets set for future years are satisfactory and are increasingly based on detailed information about pupils' prior attainment.

Inspection findings are that pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory over time in both key stages in relation to their low attainment on entry to the nursery and in a school that has high levels of special educational needs. In the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes), the oldest children attain standards that are well below those expected for their age in their language, creative development and personal development, and below average standards in mathematics, physical development and their knowledge of the world. At the ages of seven and eleven, pupils have made at least satisfactory progress over time but their attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is below average. In all other subjects, by the age of seven, pupils attain the levels expected nationally. By the age of 11, attainment meets expected levels in art, design and technology, music and physical education but is below expectations in geography, history and religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The vast majority of pupils behave well in the classroom and the playground. A small number has behaviour difficulties that occasionally cause problems for themselves and others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils relate well to each other and to adults. Their personal development is satisfactory.
Attendance	Rates are below the national average.

The school is, overall, a friendly, orderly and welcoming community with good relationships at all levels. The small number of pupils whose behaviour is poor at times is handled well by adults.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	good	good

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

All but one of the lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory. Forty-six per cent of the lessons were good, five per cent very good and three per cent excellent. Teaching is good in the nursery. It is currently satisfactory in reception but there has been disruption in staffing this year for these children. There are weaknesses in how the school plans and resources the curriculum for this age group and in how it supports children in the class with special needs. Teaching in English and mathematics is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This enables pupils to achieve effectively in literacy and numeracy. Teaching time is not used efficiently in Years 3 to 6 in geography, history or religious education. The needs of all pupils are generally met in both key stages, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English. However, at times, teachers' plans do not cater well enough for the most capable pupils; as a result, their learning is not as efficient as it could be. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and give them interesting and varied work that engages their attention and motivates them. Pupils put good effort into their activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All subjects are taught. However, there are weaknesses in the provision for the reception class and in how time is allocated to subjects across the school, especially in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The support for pupils with special needs is good in both key stages and offers activities that cater well for pupils' learning targets. The needs of children in the reception class are not identified or supported early enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is satisfactory support for these pupils from their teachers and classroom assistants. This is supplemented well by specialist teaching at times.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Attention to pupils' moral and social development is good. There is satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care for pupils is sound on a day-to-day basis but there are weaknesses in the administrative procedures for monitoring pupils' health and safety.

The accommodation places constraints on the range of learning opportunities available to the reception class, especially in practical and play activities. The way several subjects are planned and taught in Key Stage 2 means that the programmes of study are not covered well enough, especially in geography, history and religious education. In these subjects and in information and communication technology, not all statutory requirements are met. The monitoring of pupils' behaviour is good. Arrangements to monitor and improve attendance are poor and not sufficient to help reduce the current absence rates. The systems for checking routine health and safety matters are inadequate and staff do not have up-to-date training in child protection.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory; routine communications between home and school are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The new headteacher and senior staff have a sound vision for the future direction of the school and have started to implement this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors show commitment to the school and are supportive. They have a satisfactory knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school increasingly collects information on how well it is doing. The written development plans successfully communicate initiatives for the short-term but the longer-term strategic vision is less clear.
The strategic use of resources	Available funds are directed to areas of priority and their use is monitored satisfactorily.

There have been a number of staff changes recently and some disruption to pupils as a result. This situation is now stabilising; staff show a commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. There needs to be an increased sense of urgency in the way weaknesses in the school are tackled. The school seeks best value satisfactorily in its spending decisions.

There are sufficient staff and practical resources for learning. The site is large and recently improved by the modifications to the Key Stage 2 area. The design of the Key Stage 1 and reception class section places constraints on pupils' learning owing to the open plan nature of this area and the cramped accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school and make good progress. • The teaching is good. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school is led and managed well. • Staff are approachable. • The school expects children to do their best. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The homework that is given. • The extent to which the school works closely with parents. • Information about how children are getting on.

The inspection team broadly agrees with parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors think that there is a satisfactory level of extra activities for pupils. Homework provision and the extent to which it supports pupils' learning vary considerably from class to class and the school's policy would benefit from review. The school currently has few initiatives to encourage parents to work more closely in partnership with it. Routine written communications such as newsletters are good. However, the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents omit important information and the annual reports on pupils' progress could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

i) Children in the Foundation Stage¹

1. Most children join the nursery at the age of three and their attainment varies considerably. Overall, it is below average, and well below average in aspects of their language and social skills. Children achieve well in the nursery but their progress slows in the reception class. In the reception class, progress is currently satisfactory but the disruption caused by staff changes has led to this group of children making unsatisfactory progress over their time in school. This is also due in part to the lack of stimulating resources and the extremely limited space available for children to learn through experiencing a broad and interesting range of activities within a structured 'play' approach. In particular, children with very immature behaviour or learning difficulties, who are unable to concentrate for more than a few minutes, become frustrated with this lack of space and stimulation. This in turn influences the progress they make in all areas of learning.
2. The children are likely to attain levels by the end of the year that are well below average in their personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in their creative development. Their attainment is below average in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development.

ii) Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology

3. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in recent years were well below average in English, mathematics and science between 1997 and 1999. There was a substantial improvement in 2000. Pupils attained levels in English that were in line with national averages and with the average for schools in similar areas. In mathematics and science, pupils' performance was well above the national average and the average for similar schools. A high proportion of pupils attained the higher than expected Level 5 in mathematics and science. Their performance was very good compared with their results as seven year olds. Girls did a little better than boys in English and mathematics and boys did better in science. The school exceeded the targets it set itself in English and mathematics. In spite of the improvements in 2000, the school's results have improved less rapidly over the past five years than the national trend.
4. Inspection findings are that the current group of Year 6 pupils attain levels that are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, given their low attainment on entry they have made satisfactory progress through the school. This group of pupils has very high levels of special educational needs, affecting two thirds of the class. These pupils often achieve well for their capabilities. Most of them reach Level 4 in each subject but relatively few this year will attain Level 5. There was no evidence during the inspection of variations in the progress made by girls compared with boys or by pupils from different ethnic groups. The school is unlikely to meet the challenging targets it has set for this year. Overall, pupils in Year 6 have low standards in literacy and numeracy and these have a negative impact on their attainment in other subjects of the curriculum.
5. In Key Stage 1 in 2000, pupils' performance was below the national average and the average for similar schools in reading and writing. In mathematics, results were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. In science, teachers' assessments

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and continues until the end of the reception year. During this stage, children's learning is based on developing their personal, social and emotional wellbeing, skills in language and literacy, mathematics development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and their creative development.

show results that were below average but an average number of pupils attained the higher Level 3 grade. These results were an improvement on previous years, when pupils' performance was within the lowest five per cent of schools nationally in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics.

6. Inspection findings are that the pupils currently in Year 2 attain below average levels in English, mathematics and science. This is because, while most of them achieve Level 2, a smaller than usual proportion reaches the higher Level 3. This year group of pupils has made satisfactory achievements over time in relation to their attainment on admission. A third of pupils in the group has significant special educational needs.
7. In both key stages, pupils show good listening skills. In Key Stage 1, speaking skills are average but they are below average in Key Stage 2, where not enough opportunities for structured talk are provided. Reading and writing are below average in both key stages. Attainment is similar in all aspects of mathematics in both key stages. Pupils' competence in applying mathematics and in number, shape, space, measure and, for the older pupils, in data handling, is below average. In science, pupils' factual knowledge of science topics is below average overall and there are particular weaknesses in Key Stage 2 in the pupils' understanding of scientific enquiry methods.
8. Over time, most pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress. However, sometimes the rates of progress made by the most capable pupils could be improved. They do not always have work planned for them that stretches and challenges them sufficiently. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Some at Key Stage 1 need help in naming objects or in establishing basic patterns of conversation in English. However, pupils become increasingly proficient in their use of the language, so that many at Key Stage 2 express themselves confidently when talking about objects they can see or about personal experiences, although they may still need support when discussing the more abstract ideas necessary for their understanding of mathematics or science.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers in the main school and achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their abilities. This is due partly to the effective support from classroom assistants, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. In addition, the structured programmes of literacy support piloted in some classes is having a beneficial effect on pupils confidence and skills.
10. In information and communication technology, pupils have made recent satisfactory progress since the opening of the computer suite. However, they attain levels below those expected nationally in both key stages.
11. In all four subjects, the school has failed to maintain the average standards identified at the time of the last inspection. This is for two main reasons. First, the way in which results are now collected nationally and the way they are compared with other schools have changed. Second, the current groups of pupils at the top of each key stage has significant levels of special educational need and, although their achievements are sound for their capabilities, their special needs have an impact on the standards they have attained.

iii) Attainment in the foundation subjects and religious education.

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Art and design	average	average
Design and technology	average	average
Geography	average	below average
History	average	below average
Music	average	average
Physical education	average	average
Religious education	average	below average

12. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain the levels seen in most schools in all the foundation subjects and religious education. In Key Stage 2, attainment is satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. In history, geography and religious education at Key Stage 2, pupils do not make sufficient gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills because too little time is given to each subject for them to cover the various programmes of study. Their below average literacy skills also depress their attainment.
13. These findings are similar in relation to the standards in Key Stage 1 identified by the last inspection. They represent a drop in standards in geography, history and religious education. In geography and history, this may be accounted for partly by the fact that the school, in common with schools nationally, has worked on a 'slimmed down' curriculum in the foundation subjects for the previous two years. However, it is also because of weaknesses in the way the curriculum is planned.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The school has maintained the high standards that were reported at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils come to school with good attitudes to learning, although a small number at both key stages have both unsatisfactory attitudes and unsatisfactory behaviour. Relationships among pupils, and between pupils and their teachers, are generally good and their personal development is satisfactory.
15. Children in the nursery slowly settle into school routines and are in the early stages of developing positive working habits. In contrast, children in the reception class often have very immature attitudes to their learning. They become easily distracted, sometimes ignore instructions and are unable to concentrate. However, they have experienced a number of staff changes that have affected the consistency of classroom management and reduced the children's understanding of what adults expect of them. Those with behaviour needs are not supported by specific and detailed programmes and have not yet learned to control their behaviour.
16. Pupils in both key stages have positive attitudes to their lessons. They are keen to learn, well motivated and interested in their work. They listen attentively to their teachers and many are keen to participate, asking and answering questions. They take part in discussions and often contribute their ideas, as seen in a Year 6 geography lesson when they offered interesting ideas in a lesson on rivers. There are, however, a few occasions in both key stages when pupils are talkative, noise levels rise and they lack concentration.
17. Overall, behaviour in the school is good. This is having a positive effect on life in the school and the learning that takes place. The vast majority of pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour expected and behave very well in lessons and around the school; however a small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties find it difficult always to behave appropriately in lessons. Teachers generally deal effectively with these pupils so that the flow of lessons is not seriously disrupted or affects the learning of others. Compared with the reception class, older pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are beginning to gain a more mature attitude to work because of the specific support they have received and their understanding of the behaviour targets set for them.

18. Pupils play well together on the playground and no deliberately aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. However, documentary evidence indicates that a number of incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour do occur both in lessons and at playtimes. These are dealt with well by the staff. Around the school, pupils are friendly and polite. There have been no exclusions in the current year, a reduction since the previous inspection.
19. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, despite the number of staff changes. There are harmonious relationships between pupils from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Pupils of both sexes and of different races mix very well and relate well to cultures different from their own. This is in response to the positive images the school provides of the cultures within its community and the measures it takes to promote full inclusion of its pupils. Most pupils settle to work quickly and work well independently, in pairs and in small groups. They co-operate and collaborate well together, sharing equipment and resources sensibly when working together, as seen in Year 6 when pupils shared oil pastels sensibly in art. Pupils generally respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was illustrated in religious education where pupils in Year 2 listened with respect when their teacher talked about the Jewish faith.
20. Pupils throughout the school respond well to the opportunities to perform tasks in the classroom and around the school. Year 6 pupils help younger ones at lunchtime and conscientiously help clear away. The 'Tudor Owls' are keen representatives on the school council. They appreciate the active role they play in the decision making process in the school and their involvement in improving the school's facilities. Pupils also learn to appreciate and care for those beyond the school by organising a fortnightly sale of cakes, partly on behalf of a national charity.
21. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. There has been a further decline in the current year, with the levels of absence being well above the recent national average. This has a significant effect on the learning of many pupils. A variety of contributory factors affect overall attendance figures; these include pupils staying at home for health reasons or family circumstances and pupils who take extended holiday. A significant factor also is the lack of procedures to monitor attendance and follow up absence. Registers are not always carefully marked or reasons for absence correctly recorded. The incidences of unauthorised absences have risen considerably since the previous inspection and are well above the national average. The majority of pupils arrive punctually for school, although a small number are regularly late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Many of the pupils in the school, particularly those with significant special needs, need skilful teaching to enable them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points on admission. They receive this. As a result their learning is at least sound over time and is often good. Evidence of teaching over time as seen in pupils' work, and taking account of recent staffing changes, indicates that teaching in all age groups has been at least sound and at times good.
23. In the 39 lessons seen during the inspection, only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Forty-three per cent of lessons were judged satisfactory, 46 per cent were good, 5 per cent very good and 3 per cent excellent. Teaching has improved overall since the last inspection.
24. The quality of teaching in the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage and the subjects of the National Curriculum based on the lessons seen and other supporting evidence is as follows:

AREA OF LEARNING	QUALITY OF TEACHING
Personal, social and emotional development	Satisfactory
Communication, language and literacy	Satisfactory
Mathematical development	Satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory
Creative development	Satisfactory
Physical development	Satisfactory

National Curriculum subject	Quality of teaching Key Stage 1	Quality of teaching Key Stage 2
English	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art and design	Good	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	(Insufficient evidence)	(Insufficient evidence)
History	(Insufficient evidence)	(Insufficient evidence)
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

25. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is variable. In the nursery, it is consistently good. A caring and secure atmosphere is provided and good relationships promoted with children and their parents. A high priority is correctly given to the early development of children's language and social skills. Teaching in the reception class is currently satisfactory following the very recent appointment of a new teacher. However, the disruption caused by changes of staff this year and the limitations of the accommodation have led to weaknesses in the provision for this age group. The current teacher has to work very hard to provide interesting and varied activities that are suitable for the class.
26. Teaching is good for pupils with English as an additional language and well directed towards the particular needs of pupils. Those entering the school are assessed promptly, often with the help of a home language speaker. Those at Key Stage 2 who have become proficient in conversational English are offered sustained support in small groups to improve particular skills in literacy and numeracy. The support teacher uses her teaching time thoughtfully and effectively to ensure that pupils derive maximum benefit from her expertise.
27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in general is satisfactory and is good in the key areas of English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers have adapted the national strategies well to provide a variety of interesting tasks matched to pupils' abilities. These strategies are effective because they better support the learning of pupils with limited attention spans who enjoy and benefit from the variety of practical activities. In addition, the commitment and professionalism of the classroom assistants, who work with pupils with special educational needs throughout the school, support learning well. Overall, however, the use of a variety of strategies to support the different learning needs in other subjects is less well developed. For example, pupils have limited opportunities to work alongside and learn from their more able friends. Sometimes the work set is the same for all pupils; this is often too difficult for less able pupils who do not complete the work. There is often an overuse of worksheets in subjects such as history and geography, which are not matched to pupils' abilities and which less able pupils are unable to read or complete. As a consequence, pupils copy out work that has little meaning to them.

28. Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge is sound in most areas. Several lack confidence and knowledge in information and communication technology but have very recently started a programme of additional training that is making a positive contribution to their expertise and to pupils' progress. The school gives a high priority to teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It has successfully adopted the methods of the national strategies in both areas. Pupils in both key stages have daily practice and extension of their skills.
29. Teachers' day-to-day planning is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have clear objectives for their lessons and often share these profitably with the pupils. In the best lessons, these are referred to during the course of the lesson and used at the end to determine how much progress has been made. In most lessons, the planned activities cater for the full range of attainments. However, learning is not always as good as it could be because the needs of potential higher attainers are not always addressed. Activities do not challenge these pupils enough and they are too often asked to do routine tasks that do not extend their learning. This may be one reason why few pupils currently achieve above the level expected for their age. Teachers' expectations in this respect need to be higher. Pupils in Key Stage 2 would benefit from increased opportunities to practise and extend their speaking skills.
30. Teachers' methods are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. They give clear explanations and engage pupils' attention. Teachers give good attention to the specialist vocabulary for each subject. They use question and answer sessions well in many lessons. This helps to develop pupils' skills in listening and speaking and often enables them to extend their answers to questions. It is particularly effective in Key Stage 1. There are high expectations of how pupils will behave and most classes are managed well. Adults provide consistent, patient guidance and this encourages good behaviour. Good relationships prevail and there is a pleasant atmosphere for learning.
31. Support staff make an important contribution to pupils' learning and are effectively deployed by the teachers. Practical resources are used well and support learning. Teachers do not always use time well. Most lessons move at a reasonable pace and there were examples of the very rigorous use of time in Year 1 which led to pupils making rapid progress. However, some lessons are too long; literacy and numeracy 'hours' often run on to use up the 'extra' time in sessions. Other sessions are too short to achieve effective learning; this was seen in physical education in particular. The time devoted to teaching geography, history and religious education overall is inadequate.
32. Teachers assess pupils' on-going progress satisfactorily. Oral feedback is given to pupils on their work and teachers mark work regularly. In the best examples, marking informs pupils clearly how well they have done and what they should do next to improve. Target-setting with individuals is at an early stage. Where pupils are aware of their targets, they respond well in trying to meet them.
33. Homework is used inconsistently across the school and expectations are not communicated clearly to pupils or their parents. It usefully supports learning at times in practising basic skills such as reading or spelling. However, the amounts and quality vary considerably between classes with the result that pupils' learning is not fully supported by the work they do at home.

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

34. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum but does not meet its statutory requirements in information and communication technology at either key stage, or in history or geography at Key Stage 2; some aspects of each of these subjects are missing from the school's curriculum. Swimming remains an optional subject for pupils in Years 3 and 4, an arrangement criticised at the time of the last inspection. There are some weaknesses, too, in provision for art and religious education at Key Stage 2, because not all aspects of these subjects are taught in sufficient depth.

35. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good in the nursery. All the recommended areas of learning are covered at an appropriate level. The curriculum is unsatisfactory for children in the reception class because they have no secure play area readily available and because the current use of the accommodation gives them too few opportunities for play, practical and quiet activities.
36. The curriculum in both key stages shows some imbalance in the time allowed for each subject. While the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are each allotted a proportion of curriculum time in excess of national averages, the time for the other subjects is barely sufficient for each to be taught effectively. Adequate time is allocated to information and communication technology, but, as at the last inspection, not every aspect of the subject is taught. Furthermore, time allocations are not well distributed, especially at Key Stage 2. For example, geography, history and design and technology are taught for only one term each year. This means that there are considerable periods of the school year when these subjects are not studied and pupils do not therefore have the opportunity to build steadily on the knowledge and skills they have previously acquired. The school has not examined the contents of the history curriculum with sufficient care to determine when each of its strands should be taught. During the inspection, for example, the theme 'Britain since the 1930s' was being taught in each class at Key Stage 2 without sufficient consideration of how progression across the key stage could be achieved or duplication of the topic avoided in the future.
37. The day-to-day time allocation for lessons is not always judicious and the timetable is not well scheduled. For example, some physical education lessons are too short for pupils to develop their skills in sufficient depth. The time allowed for religious education, particularly at Key Stage 2, is not adequate to ensure that pupils acquire the depth of understanding expected by the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus, and is below that recommended.
38. The school employs appropriate strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Lessons are generally planned effectively, although the initial whole-class sessions for literacy are sometimes longer than intended and this leaves pupils short of time to practise the skills they have been shown. The school is beginning to use literacy skills more widely across the curriculum, although they are not yet used extensively to support work in subjects such as history and religious education. There is scope for teachers to plan more opportunities for pupils to speak at length and to give them greater guidance in their choice of literature.
39. The school provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. While pupils of average attainment are offered sufficient learning opportunities, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to demonstrate what they know and understand.
40. Good provision is made for those with special educational needs; these pupils are well supported in their work. The policy for special needs is good and has clear aims and objectives. All the requirements of the Code of Practice² are met. Pupils are fully included in the life of the school and have access to the full curriculum. Pupils are supported within class and this is a beneficial approach. Positive programmes of support for literacy piloted in some classes have been particularly successful. They not only assist in improving pupils' basic skills but participation in the programme has developed pupils' confidence. This then ensures that they are more willing and able to participate in other areas of the curriculum. Provision for younger children in the reception class with special needs is unsatisfactory. Currently their needs are not being met and they do not benefit from relevant support. This is in part due to unsatisfactory accommodation, insufficient resources and to the difficulties in staffing during the year.
41. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. For example, those in the early stages of language acquisition receive concentrated

² Code of Practice – this gives advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

support. Those beyond the first phases of learning English at Key Stage 2 are offered help to develop their understanding of more abstract concepts and to improve those skills necessary for good progress in numeracy and literacy.

42. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal and social education, both through 'Circle Time'³ and through the informal opportunities that arise during the course of the school day. Members of staff adopt a common approach towards the subject, taking time to counsel pupils when the situation demands and ensuring that pupils learn general rules from particular incidents. Stories told in assembly sometimes reinforce well-rehearsed rules for acceptable behaviour. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about the dangers of drug misuse. In accordance with the relevant statutory requirement, the school has properly considered its provision for the teaching of sex education.
43. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Children take part in such activities as football, netball, choir and recorder. An Urdu club is attended by pupils from various ethnic communities. The school is fully involved in competitive sports with other schools and makes satisfactory use of visits to enrich the quality of pupils' learning. These include a biennial residential visit for the oldest pupils.
44. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This represents an improvement on the standards reported at the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and has improved in quality since the last inspection. During Circle Time, for example, pupils are offered opportunities to reflect on aspects of life which cannot easily be explained; in art lessons, they wonder about the beauty of intricate patterns and colours of shells and plants that they are drawing. Sometimes young pupils are captivated by their study of the natural world in science or are visibly affected by the teacher's enthusiasm for a mathematical discovery. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were amazed by the beauty of the script in the Torah and marvelled at the size of the mezuzah in a lesson on Judaism. At Key Stage 2, older pupils are sometimes given specific opportunities in religious education lessons to reflect on spiritual matters but such discussions sometimes cause confusion and lead pupils to speculate or try to apply reason to questions well beyond their experience. Most acts of collective worship are of good quality but a minority of assemblies do not meet the requirement for a daily act of worship to take place.
45. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral education, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are enabled to have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong and this is reinforced both through stories in assembly and through incidental teaching that may arise from occasional departures from the good behaviour that is almost always in evidence around the school. Staff intervene promptly when misdemeanours occur, ensuring that the school's code of conduct is reinforced and reminding pupils of the needs and feelings of others. Teachers provide a very good model for their pupils, valuing their ideas and showing genuine understanding for their feelings. This ensures the development of a mutual respect between teacher and pupils that facilitates the school's moral teaching.
46. Equally good provision is made for pupils' social development. Pupils are given opportunities to collaborate when working on group projects; for example, by sharing tools and materials in design and technology lessons. Those in Key Stage 1 are provided with well-established routines, independently clearing materials and equipment away from their work area before returning to their class base. Pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to show initiative in clearing the dining hall; some support children under five at play during the lunchtimes. The school council, the 'Tudor Owls', acts as a forum for pupils' ideas and considers suggestions for improving school policies. Through this, pupils begin to learn to exercise responsibility for others, representing their views and reporting back on decisions taken.

³ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils should feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

47. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The local environment is well used to support learning in geography and science but there is scope to improve its use to enrich the curriculum for history and religious education. For example, while some pupils have visited St. Albans Abbey, there are no regular visits to places of worship used by the different faith groups represented at the school. Pupils sometimes listen to music derived from different cultural traditions but this is not planned systematically. Members of the local community occasionally visit the school to enrich pupils' understanding of history but this aspect of the curriculum is capable of further development. There are few planned opportunities for pupils to experience live drama or music, although authors are sometimes invited to share with the pupils their experiences of writing poetry or prose and instrumental groups visit occasionally.
48. The school collaborates fully with local secondary schools to ensure that pupils make a smooth transfer to the next stage of their education. All local schools take part in a transfer day when Year 6 pupils visit their prospective schools. In addition, the school has developed close working relationships with its nearest secondary school whose staff invite Year 5 pupils to visit and in turn visit this school to liaise with staff and pupils. The youngest secondary pupils also visit the school to meet Year 3 pupils and to read stories they have written for them. The headteacher works closely with colleagues in other primary schools and the school participates in district athletics meetings and other inter-school sporting events.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The school continues to provide a caring environment that meets the wide variety of personal and educational needs of the pupils in the school. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and are committed to providing a high standard of care.
50. While day-to-day care is apparent, more structured procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare have not been fully established. Child protection is taken seriously but formal arrangements are not in place to ensure that all staff are clear about procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. The school recognises local guidance but has no policy or documents clearly explaining procedures. The new headteacher has begun training to raise her awareness of procedures but staff, including new staff, have not received any recent training. The school is aware of the need to comply with statutory requirements for health and safety but has no up-to-date policy and has not established clear procedures to ensure that regular checks of the site and premises are carried out. A recent check of the site took place but issues and action were not systematically documented. Equipment such as electrical items and apparatus for physical education is checked annually. Day-to-day first aid and care for pupils who are unwell are not fully in place. No member of staff has had recent first aid training; only the more serious incidents and accidents to pupils are recorded and parents are not routinely notified in the event of a head injury. Arrangements are in place, however, to ensure that staff are aware of pupils in their class with any medical conditions.
51. Pupils' personal development is supported well through the caring atmosphere in the school and the good relations that exist between teachers and pupils. Despite the turnover in staff, class teachers know pupils well and understand their individual needs and difficulties. They use this knowledge to monitor pupils' personal development informally and discuss any issues that arise with the headteacher. There are, however, no more formal systems for teachers to record or monitor pupils' personal development. Pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and rewarded in assemblies and the 'well done' board in the reception area.
52. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are poor. The school is not yet using any systems to monitor attendance and follow up absence. Registers are not regularly checked and there are no systematic procedures for taking action on occasions when explanations have not been received. Unexplained absences are not routinely followed up, so that pupils are absent for days without the school's knowing the reasons. The school has no routines systems to identify the number of pupils with unsatisfactory and irregular patterns of attendance. The school does, however, work closely with the education welfare officer; although some pupils with unsatisfactory patterns of attendance are identified, this is not sufficient to reduce the high

levels of absence. The systems for dealing with pupils who are late and finding reasons for absence lack any rigour.

53. The school has effective procedures to promote good behaviour. The headteacher and class teachers have a shared commitment to promoting high standards of behaviour and are working hard to meet a range of behavioural problems. Pupils know the standards of behaviour expected and are aware of the consequences of any inappropriate behaviour. The school has clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and a consistent system of sanctions. Staff are very clear about the strategies to follow and manage behaviour very well. This has a strong influence on the high standards of behaviour in the school, although it is not always effective for a small number of pupils in the school. Teachers discuss any concerns with the headteacher, who records all serious incidents. There is no standardised system for class teachers to record or monitor incidents of inappropriate behaviour but, where necessary, individual behaviour programmes are introduced. The school has good strategies for dealing with any incidents of harassment or bullying.
54. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring academic progress are satisfactory, overall. These have been recently introduced and continue to be developed. Teachers are beginning to collate test results in English, mathematics and science to track overall progress, to set class targets and predict the expected results in the National Curriculum tests. This system is not yet refined sufficiently to track or identify individual pupils who need support or who would benefit from a more challenging learning programme. In other subjects, teachers assess pupils against National Curriculum levels to gain a broad picture of standards in each subject. This is an appropriate development but is not yet consistent or accurate enough. Currently there are no recent portfolios of pupils' marked and assessed work to aid teachers in this process. Co-ordinators do not have a clear picture of how individual teachers assess their subjects; they do not monitor teaching or marking regularly. Thus, they are not sufficiently aware of the true attainment and progress of pupils relative to National Curriculum levels.
55. The support and guidance for pupils in the school with special educational needs are good. The support pupils receive from the dedicated team of classroom assistants is a strength and ensures that pupils are fully included in all activities. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are specific and relevant and most pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve. External agencies are used well to benefit these pupils. The school fully and effectively implements the provision as specified in pupils' statements of special educational needs and ensures that relevant advice and guidance are provided, especially for those pupils with more specific learning difficulties. Older pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are also supported well to develop more mature attitudes to learning. However, criteria to identify and support young children in the Foundation Stage are not well developed. As a result, children who clearly have learning or behavioural difficulties are not all appropriately placed on the special needs register. The children already identified do not benefit from more detailed diagnostic assessments in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and to inform the planning of specific programmes. These weaknesses need to be rectified.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The vast majority of parents are happy with what the school provides, as at the time of the last inspection. Parents who attended the meeting and returned the questionnaire felt their children liked school and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. They are happy with their children's progress, feel the school has high expectations, teaching is good and the school well led and managed. Many feel comfortable approaching the school, feel behaviour is good and consider that they are kept well informed about progress. The inspection findings support many of the positive views parents have of the school. A minority of parents did not feel the school works closely with them. Other areas of parental concern related to the levels and consistency of homework and the range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence does not support the issue parents raised about activities outside lessons as they judge these to be satisfactory. Inspectors share some of the parents' concerns about

the quality of homework and the extent to which the school encourages close relationships with parents.

57. The school has established satisfactory links with parents; however the initial good relationship with parents attending the pre-school group, the mother and toddler group and the nursery is not being extended fully. There are few initiatives to encourage parents to work more closely with the school either in school or at home. Many parents have very little involvement in the life of the school. A small 'Friends of Tudor School' group arranges fund raising events which provide additional resources for the school but no parents help in the classrooms or around the school. The school is not ensuring that all parents receive a copy of the home-school agreement.
58. The school is committed to the involvement of parents from minority ethnic communities in the education of their children and the life of the school generally but the rich variety of cultures represented by parents is underused as a resource. The school has a bi-lingual home-school worker who forms some links with parents. The weekly sewing and computer clubs for Pakistani mothers are a positive start but there are few other opportunities to involve parents of all cultures in the learning process. The school translates important sections of the newsletters into Urdu. Other documents are not being translated and, although an interpreter can be made available at meetings, this is not routinely available.
59. Parents are fully informed about and involved with the individual reviews of their children who have special educational needs. Parents who have concerns are able to meet and discuss issues with relevant staff, who ensure that advice and guidance is provided from outside agencies if required. Parents are generally happy with the support they receive.
60. Parents make a limited contribution to their children's learning at home. Most pupils are encouraged to take reading books home regularly but this is not consistent throughout the school. A few parents do share reading with their children at home. Reading records are in place but are not being consistently used by either parents or teachers as a regular method of communication. Several teachers set homework but a regular pattern of homework has not been established for all classes. Parents recently received information about homework; however, the leaflet was complex and did not provide any specific details about the work their children will receive each week.
61. Information provided by the school for parents is satisfactory, overall, but has some shortcomings. Newsletters every two weeks keep parents informed about school matters, key dates and forthcoming events. The prospectus contains basic information about the school but, together with the governors' annual report, does not include all the information required. The school provides parents with very little information about the curriculum and the work being taught in lessons. This considerably reduces opportunities for those parents who want to be involved in their children's learning at home. Curriculum focus meetings are not a regular feature in the school. Parents have received brief information on the topics being covered and a system for ensuring that parents receive comprehensive details of topics and work being taught in lessons is being developed. The headteacher is also planning a reading workshop for new parents. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress through two formal parents' evenings. This year the new headteacher is introducing a third optional meeting for parents to discuss reports with the class teacher. Annual written reports provide information on what pupils can do and include brief targets for future learning; however their current computerised format does not ensure that parents are fully aware of the progress their children have made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. Since the last inspection, some aspects of the school's management have improved. Other areas are not as strong, owing to the changes in personnel and the relative inexperience of several of the current staff. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The new headteacher has been in post since the beginning of this school year and has led the

school successfully through a period of staff changes. New staff have been appointed and inexperienced staff inducted well into the school. The head has correctly identified several areas in the management of the school that need improvement and has made a satisfactory start with these. She is supported well by an able deputy and the staff work well as a team under their leadership. This team is gradually developing its vision for the future of the school but this is not yet clearly in place. There are clear educational aims for the school. These are evident in its ethos and its commitment to improvement. There are relatively few up-to-date written policy documents and no evidence that these have existed in recent years, particularly in relation to aspects of health, safety and pupils' welfare.

63. The headteacher has led the staff and governors in producing detailed and relevant development and action plans for the current year. This is appropriate for the situation in which so many staff are new to the school. The longer-term view is not yet established sufficiently. Initiatives in the one-year plan are clear and contain outline costings and indications of how success will be judged. However, priorities are not identified to indicate the most urgent or important areas for development compared with other areas which are to be improved more steadily over time. Staff have made reasonable progress in achieving their goals in the plan this year. The current establishment of staff shows a commitment to continuing improvement and the capacity to succeed. There is, however, not enough sense of urgency apparent to make rapid progress in areas identified for development.
64. All staff have responsibilities delegated to them. However, the most experienced carry heavy workloads because there are several newly qualified, unqualified or inexperienced staff in the school who do not yet take substantial responsibilities. Subject leaders are at an early stage of monitoring their subjects in practice. The school has planned a promising programme of monitoring to start very soon that should support the drive to raise standards. The senior staff carry out a sound programme of monitoring of overall standards and of the quality of teaching in the school. They increasingly use their analyses of pupils' results in tests to set targets for improvement.
65. The provision offered to pupils with English as an additional language is well managed. The school staff works closely with the visiting support teacher to ensure that her time is well used. They plan together the areas of learning to be taught and discuss the teaching techniques to be employed. Teachers and support staff collaborate well to make certain that pupils' needs are regularly assessed and that provision is revised and amended appropriately.
66. The school's special needs provision is led well by the headteacher. Although she has not had extensive training in this field, she has received relevant advice and support from outside agencies and has ensured that the standard of provision has been maintained in the school. However, owing to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, there is a need to ensure that relevant training and development of her own and the staff's expertise is undertaken to improve the quality of provision. This is especially required in relation to the more effective identification and support of the youngest children with special educational needs.
67. The governing body includes several very experienced members and has been successful in recruiting governors to most vacancies. There is an appropriate committee structure and governors are active and supportive. They satisfactorily question what the school does and give direct support to aspects such as the development of the premises and increased security. The chair and vice-chair of governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, governors have not yet ensured that all statutory requirements are met in the school curriculum, in the prospectus and annual report for parents and in the health and safety arrangements.
68. The school has responded well to the national initiative for performance management. Its policy and procedures are in place and an appropriate timescale has been agreed for staff development to be reviewed. There are satisfactory arrangements for staff training which focus both on the needs of the school as a whole and on the needs and wishes of individual staff.

69. The school's priorities are soundly supported through its financial planning and suitable links are made between the budget and the school's development plan. Financial controls are satisfactory and ensure that any specific grants are used for their designated purpose. However, the most recent audit report made a considerable number of recommendations to improve financial practices. While it is clear that some of these have been acted on, the headteacher and governors are not sufficiently aware of how successful or unsuccessful they have been in improving all areas where recommendations were made. Governors regularly monitor the budget through information provided by the headteacher and the bursar. The principles of 'best value' are increasingly applied by staff and governors, who question what the school does, assess how well it performs and try to achieve good value in their day-to-day spending. With the new headteacher's appointment, information technology systems are increasingly being used to support the work of the school in general but these have not been well established in the past in areas such as pupils' records, monitoring of attendance and the creation of policy documentation.
70. There are sufficient staff employed but the school has had to make recent appointments of unqualified staff to fill vacancies for the youngest children; these have been successful additions to the staff team. A full team of qualified teachers has been secured for next term. The classroom ancillary staff are competent and make a valuable contribution to pupils' education.
71. The accommodation is cramped and its open plan design not suited to the school's current needs. The modifications to the Key Stage 2 classrooms in recent years have been largely successful and provide a better environment for these pupils. However, it is difficult to ventilate the new rooms adequately. In the recent warm weather they have been uncomfortably stuffy and this does not help pupils or staff to work efficiently. The school has tried hard to make good use of part of its library to provide a computer area but this is very small and acts as a through route in the school. The Key Stage 1 and reception class area places considerable constraints on pupils and staff. Noise transfer is a constant problem, the class 'home bays' are too small and the communal areas easily become very busy and crowded. These problems have a particular impact on the children in the reception class who do not have enough space for practical and role-play activities and are unable to achieve the quiet space they need for them to sustain settled behaviour. They have no access to a secure outdoor area unless they use the nursery area, which is not near their own room. The general outdoor area is spacious and used well in dry weather. The hard surfaced play areas are comparatively small and most lack shade in hot weather.
72. Levels of practical learning resources are satisfactory overall. However, the number of computers available is low and this is having a negative effect on pupils' progress in information technology skills. There are limited stocks of group reading books, tools for design and technology and books to support religious education. In mathematics, textbooks frequently have to be shared and some day-to-day mathematics equipment needs to be replaced. Musical instruments are limited in range and quantity and some are in a poor state of repair. There are too few resources for the reception class because there is nowhere to house additional items and some of the existing resources are in poor condition.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. To build on the school's strengths and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- raise standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by:
 - ensuring that the needs of the most capable pupils are met by activities that challenge and extend them;
 - ensuring better consistency in teaching English at Key Stage 2 and raising teachers' expectations of pupils' spoken contributions, handwriting and presentation;
 - planning more activities to develop pupils' skills in scientific enquiry, especially in Key Stage 2;
 - ensuring that pupils develop a full range of skills in information and communication technology to satisfy statutory requirements and support the demands of the wider curriculum;
 - building on the existing good practice in the assessment of pupils' progress to plan more efficiently and to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils where appropriate;
 - training staff for the planned programme of monitoring by subject leaders to make this effective in raising standards.

paragraphs 3 – 11, 28 – 29, 32, 54, 64, 90 – 116 and 135 - 139

- raise standards in geography, history and religious education in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that enough time is spent on these subjects for the programmes of study to be covered and the end-of-key-stage expectations met;
 - reviewing current planning arrangements to improve progression in pupils' learning;
 - making best use of pupils' time and encouraging continuity in learning by reviewing how the units of work are taught across the year and how they link to other work, especially in literacy.

paragraphs 12, 13, 24, 27, 34, 36 – 38, 127 – 134 and 148 - 153

- raise overall standards and efficiency in pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that appropriate time is allocated to each subject and that time is used flexibly according to the demands of different activities within subjects;
 - reviewing the organisation of the school day to check that lesson time is used to the full in line with the school's agreed priorities.

paragraphs 31, 34 and 36 - 38

- improve the progress of children in the reception class by:
 - ensuring that children receive their entitlement to the full curriculum, especially in the areas of play, physical development and creative activities;
 - implementing procedures for the early identification of special educational needs and ensuring that these needs are met;
 - making better use of the current accommodation to enable play, practical and quiet activities to take place;
 - taking all opportunities to improve the accommodation for this age group.

paragraphs 1, 2, 15, 25, 35, 40, 55, 66, 70 – 72 and 74 - 89

- improve procedures for pupils' health and safety by:

- training staff and governors in good practice;
- setting up systems to record and monitor health and safety routines;
- ensuring as a matter of urgency that all adults working in the school are familiar with relevant child protection procedures.

paragraphs 49 – 50, 62 and 67

- improve pupils' attendance and how it is encouraged by:
 - setting up more rigorous arrangements for how registers are marked and checked;
 - analysing patterns of absence and how these can be improved;
 - encouraging pupils and their parents to support the school's moves to improve attendance.

paragraphs 21 and 52

Other issues that should be considered by the school:

- improving the partnership with parents in their children's learning by clarifying the school's expectations for the completion of homework, providing clear information about the curriculum and by ensuring that the school's documents for parents contain all the information required by law.

paragraphs 33, 56 – 61 and 67

- improving the quality of the written development plans by making the school's priorities for urgent or important action clear and by including a longer-term view of proposed developments.

paragraph 63

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	5	46	43	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	189
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	35

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	8	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	5	6	3
	Total	17	18	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (42)	78 (31)	65 (85)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	6	6	8
	Total	18	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (42)	78 (85)	87 (69)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	14	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	6
	Girls	11	11	13
	Total	15	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (54)	80 (68)	95 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	6
	Girls	11	11	13
	Total	15	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (64)	65 (64)	70 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	24
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It includes information volunteered to the school by parents and does not cover all pupils.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	387,748
Total expenditure	389,709
Expenditure per pupil	1,929
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,202
Balance carried forward to next year	3,241

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	46	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	46	7	6	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	32	13	13	9
The teaching is good.	63	28	9	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	41	10	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	32	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	34	9	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	40	43	10	6	1
The school is well led and managed.	41	47	3	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	7	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	37	25	13	12

Figures may not total 100% owing to rounding

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

74. The quality of the provision in the nursery is a strength of the school and has much improved since the last inspection. The school admits children to the nursery on a part-time basis, after they have their third birthday. The class is housed in a temporary classroom. The room is spacious and adequately equipped. However, the book area has not been sufficiently developed to provide a quiet and comfortable space, where children can sit and enjoy listening to a story or look at a book without being disturbed by the noise from other activities.
75. An experienced nursery nurse, supported by additional three members of staff, currently leads the nursery. Together they form a highly committed team who work hard to plan a stimulating and enriching learning environment. Before entry, the majority of children have already attended the playgroup, which uses the same building. This ensures that the children, already fully familiar with the room, are happy and settle quickly into the orderly routines.
76. Children transfer to the reception class in two phases in September and January. The classroom is some way away in the main school building, which makes the sharing of good practice and resources very difficult. In addition, the area used by the reception class forms part of a shared Key Stage 1 'open plan' bay. Space is very limited and, although staff have tried to assign an area for creative and practical activities, the unsatisfactory quality and limited range of equipment mean that these children do not have access to the full statutory Foundation Stage curriculum. In addition, the very close proximity of older pupils and the inevitable noise and disruption this creates makes it very difficult for these young and, as yet, immature children to concentrate on their activities. As a result children do not make satisfactory progress in this class.
77. The range of attainment on entry is wide and varied but, overall, it is below expected levels and well below the levels usually seen in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, creative development and personal and social development.
78. Overall, teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Teaching in the nursery is consistently of a good standard. Staff have worked hard to provide a range of structured yet interesting activities. They have a friendly and caring approach, combined with high expectations and insistence of good behaviour. This leads to the children feeling increasingly confident and secure and has a beneficial effect on their learning.
79. Children in the reception class have had several different teachers this year, which has had an unsettling effect. At the time of the inspection, the class had been taught for a few days only by a student teacher who is soon to be qualified. She has had to work very hard to establish structured routines and provide interesting activities for the children, who are finding it very difficult to concentrate in the restricted space available. She has been very effectively supported by part-time classroom assistants. The high numbers of children with special educational needs in this class, who have not previously been identified, together with the immature personal and social skills, make this a challenging situation. Despite this teacher making a satisfactory and energetic start, and appropriately adapting planning to create structured and more stimulating practical activities, these have not been in place long enough to have a positive effect on learning, which is currently unsatisfactory.
80. The very recently appointed co-ordinator, who is not yet teaching in the Foundation Stage, is very aware of the areas of weakness in the provision. In addition to the urgent need to improve the reception class accommodation, the recording procedures, for example, are in the very early stages of development. There is scope to develop more extensive systems, that are matched to the Early Learning Goals, track development and achievement and follow children throughout the Foundation Stage. Closer links are needed between the nursery and reception staff to develop these systems and to plan a balanced, two-year cycle of topics to ensure that there is a continuation and progression between the two classes. In addition, there is a need to

improve the system for the identification and support of children's special educational needs which is currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is clearly committed to developing and improving the situation but lacks relevant and recent training, which is required if she is to implement the required changes. In addition she is co-ordinator for three other subjects which all require development. This is a heavy workload and support will be needed if she is to develop the provision effectively.

Personal, social and emotional development

81. There is good provision for this within the nursery. Staff have created a secure environment with high levels of care. Children know what is expected and staff have established clear and relevant routines which children respond to well. For example, during snack time, staff insist on the children washing hands, sitting properly, taking turns and saying 'please' and 'thank you', which leads to good personal and social development. Music is used to signal 'tidy up time' and children without asking help with this, taking pride in their efforts. They walk quietly to the school hall for activities and respond well to instructions.
82. In reception, as already indicated, these routines have not been established. Standards are well below expected levels. Children find it very difficult to settle to work within the very limited space and noisy environment. As a result, a significant number have very low levels of personal development. Many cannot sit and concentrate for more than a minute, cannot walk quietly around the school and are unable to work or play without high levels of support. The majority of the children will have to make significant progress and have high levels of support before they attain the Early Learning Goals in this area.

Communication, language and literacy

83. The nursery staff work hard to plan experiences that develop children's language skills. Aware of the low levels of attainment many children have as they arrive in the nursery, staff spend much time, talking, questioning and interacting with children in all of their activities. In the morning activities all staff sit with groups and encourage talk. For example, children, trying to guess what was in a bag, were encouraged to feel and describe the familiar everyday item. Responses such as 'hard' were effectively developed through conversation so that a child progressed to exclaim, 'It's tickly and bristly', before revealing a toothbrush. Children with English as an additional language are fully involved in these rich learning activities and, in addition, benefit from individual support ensuring that they make satisfactory progress.
84. In the reception class, although the staff work hard to interact with children, using puppets to stimulate language for example, many children are reluctant to respond. Even in small group activities outside the class bay, because of the noise from older pupils, children find it difficult to concentrate. There is no area where children can play imaginatively, or carry out 'pretend writing activities' for example. Noise from other classes makes it difficult for children to interact with each other and listen to staff. As a result, children have very low levels of skills and cannot listen or respond appropriately to instructions or stories. The majority are attaining standards well below those expected and have not made sufficient progress since leaving the nursery.

Mathematical development

85. There is good provision for this area of learning in the nursery. One of the strengths is the way in which staff promote mathematical skills through a structured programme of work. This includes the use of conversation and intensive interaction that supports everyday activities. Water play, for example, is used effectively to support the development of early concepts such as 'full' or 'empty'. Every opportunity is used to develop counting skills by, for example, counting the fruit at snack time or the jam tarts children made. The story of 'Ten in the bed' is used effectively to develop counting on and counting back from 10. Consequently children make good progress. In the reception class children also can count to 10, with more capable children able to combine two and sometimes three small numbers using practical apparatus. Children have made better progress in this area of learning because of the practical nature of the activities which motivates them more. However, again, the lack of space and resources

means that children have had very limited opportunities to make as much progress in other aspects, such as measuring, balancing, or using water to develop concepts of capacity. As a result, children are attaining below average standards in this area of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Children in the nursery benefit from a rich variety of activities that promote learning well, using all of their senses. As a result children make good progress, enjoy the experiences and concentrate well. When making fruit salad for example, children used their sense of taste and smell to describe the fruit; clearly stimulated, they persevered with the tasks of chopping and mixing until long after the other children had finished their activities. However, children in this age group do not have access to a computer to use as a matter of routine. In the reception class there was very limited evidence that this area of learning has been promoted, although children do have access to the computer suite where they are encouraged to use a mouse. Because of the limitations in resources, children are attaining below average standards in this subject.

Physical development

87. The nursery makes good provision for physical development. Children not only have access to an outside play area with a variety of wheeled toys for example, but regularly use the school hall. They have plenty of opportunities to use pencils, crayons, scissors and paintbrushes to develop their hand co-ordination. Children enjoy games in the hall listening carefully and moving with control and imagination across the room. Sensitive support from staff encourages reluctant children to participate; because of this happy and supportive environment, they grow in confidence and make good progress. In the reception class, children do not have access to a safe, secure outdoor play area where they can develop their skills. Although they have activities in the school hall and can use the nursery occasionally, children's immature behaviour reduces the quality of these experiences. Many cannot move around large spaces with control or an awareness of others. Some can use body parts to balance small objects but this is not well developed. Most can use pencils and crayons and with support can cut out simple shapes, but because these activities are not regularly available, progress is slow and children's attainment is below expected levels.

Creative development

88. Staff in the nursery give effective support to this area of learning. Activities are planned well and varied. Staff make learning fun, which motivates children to work hard and to maintain concentration, ensuring they make good progress. Children apply paint to paper confidently, enjoying mixing the colours to make simple prints. They maintain concentration because of the positive support from staff. Children explore sounds through simple instruments they made with support. One child proudly and confidently told the inspector 'how to play her guitar'. Other children 'popping bubble paper' were heard talking about the 'high' sounds they make. The programmes are enriched by a variety of games and role-play activities that develop children's imagination well.
89. In the reception class, the new teacher, aware of the deficiencies in this area of learning, effectively planned a variety of activities which children enjoyed. Because other classes were out of the room, the teacher was able to utilise a larger area. Activities were not only successful because of their practical nature and variety, but because there was an additional member of staff and three groups of children benefited from focused help in small groups. In this way children enjoyed designing and making simple hats for 'little red hen', played in the sand, and had a 'pretend picnic'. Although there is no role-play area, children used the small book corner to make a boat, with cushions from the chairs to recreate a story character's journey in a boat. Children thoroughly enjoyed these experiences and used imagination to good effect. However, activities such as these are not available on a daily basis. Because of this, children have very limited experiences and are attaining standards well below those expected.

ENGLISH

90. The results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests indicate that pupils aged seven achieve standards in reading and writing below those found in all schools nationally and in similar schools. Standards seen for these pupils in the course of the inspection are similar to these test results. For pupils aged eleven, test results in 2000 for pupils were in line with national averages and with those for similar schools. This inspection found that standards this year for eleven year olds are below those seen nationally because the year group contains a very high proportion of pupils (more than 60 per cent) with special educational needs. Between 1997 and 2000, results in English for both seven and eleven year-olds improved steadily, with the most rapid improvement occurring between 1999 and 2000.
91. The last inspection in 1997 found that standards in English by the ages of seven and eleven were broadly in line with those found nationally. Although those seen for these pupils in the course of the current inspection were below average levels, both year groups coincidentally contain a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards elsewhere in the school suggest that results will recover in future years.
92. Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are just below the national average and are similar to those suggested by last year's national tests. Early in the key stage, pupils make very good progress in their acquisition of reading skills as the result of lively and imaginative teaching. By the age of seven, a small proportion of pupils read fluently and confidently, but many still need constant practice in the learning of sounds and in deriving meaning and enjoyment from the printed page. Standards of writing are also below the national average. While a small number of pupils write confidently, accurately using full stops and capital letters, the use of basic punctuation for many pupils is not secure, although ideas are often correctly sequenced and events are often logically narrated.
93. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of reading and writing are both below national levels. While some pupils read fluently and with obvious enthusiasm, many do not make better than satisfactory progress because they have not acquired the habit of reading regularly for enjoyment and so derive little pleasure from improving their skills. In writing, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils write at length, correctly punctuating sentences and using paragraphs to separate groups of ideas. Many average attaining pupils, however, find difficulty in using accurate punctuation consistently and in varying the style of their writing according to the audience for whom the writing is intended. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in reading and writing and are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants.
94. Standards of speaking are average at Key Stage 1. Pupils make rapid progress when they enter the key stage because the teacher constantly engages them to think and to respond to searching questions. Pupils' understanding is constantly probed and each pupil is challenged directly to explain, reflect and offer an opinion, not only in English lessons, but in each area of the curriculum. In a lesson on food technology, for example, pupils were constantly challenged to make contributions to a list of different types of fruit that require peeling before eating and to offer reasons for their selection. By Year 2, many pupils speak confidently about their work. They are able to express opinions and relate events logically, and begin to describe the ideas or beliefs of others in religious education lessons. At Key Stage 2, progress in speaking is unsatisfactory and standards are below average by the age of eleven. This is because pupils are not given sufficiently frequent opportunities to speak at length and because teachers' questioning often anticipates the length of pupils' responses. In literacy lessons, for example, teachers use questioning well to determine pupils' levels of understanding but do not encourage them often enough to develop the reasoning behind an opinion or to justify an explanation at length.
95. By contrast, pupils' listening skills across the school are good. Pupils rapidly develop good listening skills when they enter Key Stage 1 and these are sustained as they move through the school. This is because teachers manage pupils well and develop good working relationships with them. Pupils are attentive in lessons and develop good powers of concentration because

teachers create a calm, purposeful working atmosphere, ensuring that pupils remain focused on the task in hand and work steadily towards the lesson objectives they have identified. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress in the development of listening skills. Those who might have difficulty in concentrating are well supported, both by teachers and classroom assistants.

96. Progress in the acquisition of reading skills is good at Key Stage 1. The attainment of many pupils at five is well below that seen nationally but, by the end of the key stage, standards in reading have recovered to the point where they are just below national averages. Pupils in Year 1 make very good progress in reading because they receive lively, well-structured teaching. Pupils develop a satisfactory sight vocabulary and quickly understand that letters singly or in combination represent particular spoken sounds. There are high expectations for pupils to succeed. For example, six year olds in one very good lesson were expected to distinguish between words ending in '-ear', '-air' and '-are' in their reading and spelling and many were doing so successfully. Good progress is maintained in Year 2. Pupils begin to read with expression and begin, for example, to recognise rhythms when they read poetry aloud. However, many still have difficulty in reading phrases and in deriving meaning from whole sentences by the end of the key stage.
97. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading as they move through Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven, higher attaining pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately. Many of these pupils can locate accurately information in non-fiction texts and are beginning to express preferences for particular authors or writing styles. However, higher and average pupils are not given sufficient guidance in their reading, while those of average and lower attainment have not established consistent habits in reading independently by the age of eleven so that they practise these skills little outside school. As a result, teachers have to work hard to ensure that satisfactory progress in the subject is maintained. Those with special educational needs are well supported in their efforts to improve. For example, in some year groups, specially trained support staff use to great effect reading programmes specifically designed to improve particular reading skills.
98. Attainment in writing is below average at both key stages. Although standards are well below national averages when pupils enter the key stage at five, progress is generally good at Key Stage 1 because teachers have high expectations for their pupils to succeed. By the age of six, for example, higher attaining pupils complete several sentences of writing, coherently linking their ideas, and writing from a particular point of view, while pupils of average ability begin to recount experiences or stories in one or two simple sentences. In Year 2, pupils begin to write on a range of themes and for different purposes. For example, pupils attempt to write simple poems, and to recount at greater length both real and imagined events. Here, marking is used, often discriminatingly, to encourage pupils to make greater effort and to show the teachers' interest in the work pupils have completed. Progress in writing is satisfactory across Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 4 write summaries of book chapters or letters of persuasion to save particular animals, while older pupils describe the role played by characters in well-known stories or write imaginary diaries describing famous events. Some writing is logically developed, well rounded and of good quality, but too frequently pupils do not write in sufficient detail or with enough authority to convince the reader and work is too often accepted by the teachers that is not of the expected standard.
99. Standards of spelling are just below average at Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. While spelling is taught very systematically in some classes, for example where specific programmes are used to support the needs of particular pupils, the provision of spelling homework is not consistent. The school's initiatives to introduce work at home in this area have not been well supported, especially at Key Stage 2. Standards of handwriting and presentation are not consistent across the school because there is no common approach to teaching this aspect of English. While some pupils are already joining their writing efficiently at Key Stage 1, many older pupils at Key Stage 2 still print their writing. There is little evidence that pupils are constantly urged to improve the standard of presentation of their work.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The principal differences between the key stages relate mainly to expectations and to the pace

of lessons. At Key Stage 1, teachers display good knowledge of the subject. They use a wide range of strategies to ensure that learning is well directed and that lessons proceed at a good pace. Tasks set are well matched to pupils' different levels of understanding so that all are well motivated to learn. In one very good lesson, the teacher constantly probed pupils' understanding with relevant questions and set challenging tasks to which all pupils readily responded. At Key Stage 2, teaching is more varied. Sometimes, initial class discussions are too long, with the result that many pupils, especially those of higher attainment, are not challenged sufficiently to demonstrate what they know and understand and do not have sufficient time to practise the skills they need to acquire. In these lessons, learning loses pace, with the result that pupils are unable to complete their tasks in the allocated time. By contrast, teachers use questioning well when introducing their lessons. In one good lesson at Year 6, the teacher took care to include all pupils in her questioning and managed pupils very well, ensuring that all were constantly focused on the task set. The progress of each group was monitored effectively so that the teacher gained a good understanding of the progress each had made during the course of the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported in their work. Classroom assistants are well briefed and collaborate well with teaching staff when preparing and supporting lessons.

101. The English curriculum is sufficiently broad. A full range of skills is taught, and the National Literacy Strategy is generally used well to support learning. The curriculum co-ordinator monitors teaching and lesson plans, offering feedback and advice on improvement where appropriate. The school collects information on the level of English for each pupil, but, with the exception of those with special educational needs, does not yet analyse the specific strengths and weaknesses manifest in test results. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory, although a greater range of books for guided reading is required. Some elements of information and communication technology are used to support the English curriculum but this provision is not consistent or well-established. Drama and theatre visits are sometimes used to support the curriculum and the school is aware of the need to develop further this aspect of its work.

MATHEMATICS

102. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. This is no longer the case, mainly because the ways in which average levels in a school are calculated and compared with schools nationally have changed. Pupils at the ages of seven and eleven attain below average standards. However, their achievements are satisfactory, and often good, in relation to their low attainment on entry to the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught well but do not quite reach the standard seen in most schools. The class in Year 2 contains over a third of pupils with special needs and several whose first language is not English. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall, and often good, but the current class in Year 6 has very high levels of special educational need, affecting over two thirds of the class. These pupils make good progress in their work but do not reach the standard seen in most schools. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls currently or between the progress made by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
103. In the National Curriculum tests for the oldest pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 since 1997, the school's performance had been well below the national average for several years. There was a substantial improvement in 2000 when pupils attained standards that were well above the national average and above the average for schools in similar areas. A large proportion of pupils attained the higher than expected Level 5. Girls did a little better than boys. Indications are that these improvements last year were the result of better teaching and planning in the subject. In Key Stage 1, the results achieved by seven year olds were also better last year but still below the national average and well below the average for schools in similar areas. In previous years, the pupils' results in this age group had been consistently well below average.
104. Inspection evidence shows that, by the age of seven, most pupils have attained Level 2. However, relatively few reach Level 3; this is the main reason why the school attains below

average results. Pupils add and subtract numbers up to 20 accurately and rapidly and can transfer their knowledge to simple problems with money. They begin to understand place value in three-digit numbers and recall the 2x, 5x and 10x tables. They name common two-dimensional shapes and describe their properties, such as the numbers of sides and corners. They weigh items in kilogrammes and measure the length of objects using centimetres. A small number of pupils handle larger numbers and more precise units of measurement confidently.

105. By the age of 11, pupils have made satisfactory progress. The main reason why standards are below average is that, while most reach Level 4, only a small proportion are confidently working within or at Level 5. Most pupils handle four-digit numbers satisfactorily but with varying levels of speed, accuracy and confidence. They use their multiplication tables to aid calculation but their recall of these is often slow. Pupils add and subtract decimals to one place and use negative numbers correctly. In work on shape, they calculate the area of rectangles and most can use this knowledge to work out the area of right-angled triangles. They present their work in a clear and organised way and are developing problem-solving strategies.
106. Standards of teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with many good features in Key Stage 2. Most of the lessons seen were good and one was excellent. Further evidence of teaching was gained from looking at pupils' previous work and from talking to pupils about what they have done. Teachers plan lessons well and make good use of the national guidance on numeracy. They cater for the needs of all pupils in the class in many respects. Pupils with special needs are frequently given work which is tailored to their level of attainment and which enables them to make steady progress. They are often helped by able support staff who make a significant contribution to many lessons. Pupils whose first language is not English are given clear explanations and vocabulary is explained well; this supports the development of their language skills and enables them to take a full part in lessons. Activities are often planned for the higher attainers in the class. However, these are too frequently only given after this group has completed other routine practice which is sometimes too easy for them. As a result, these pupils are not challenged sufficiently at times to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
107. Teachers' explanations are clear. This was typified in Year 5 when the teacher gave careful instructions about the correct use of a protractor that enabled the class to practise this skill successfully and efficiently. Teachers use question and answer sessions well to check pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. The 'mental starter' is often used well in numeracy hours to give pupils rigorous practice in basic skills. An excellent example of this was seen in Year 1 where the teacher's skilful use of questions and examples focused closely on pupils' individual needs. In this class, an inspiring teacher has succeeded in instilling a tangible excitement for mathematics in her pupils and achieves high standards of attainment for their age. Their response is animated. They are highly motivated, love exploring mathematics and constantly want to learn more. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and organise lessons that enable pupils to concentrate and generally to make good use of their time. Occasionally the teacher does not check sufficiently that, in the group work sessions, each group has understood what they should do and this can result in time being lost or pupils reinforcing something they have misunderstood. The final summary session in lessons is often rushed and not used as well as it could be to revise the main points of a lesson or to check pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements.
108. Until recently, the school has made little use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' mathematical learning. This situation has improved with the opening of the new computer suite but work is at a very early stage and the impact on pupils' learning has been limited. Good use is made of pupils' numeracy skills in science where they use charts and tables to record their findings but there is too little evidence of numeracy in other subjects such as geography or design and technology.
109. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and provides sound leadership, although the attention she is able to give the subject is limited by the other heavy demands on her time. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the school is establishing target-setting for individuals and

groups of pupils. There are sufficient practical resources to support learning, although pupils frequently have to share textbooks and some basic equipment such as the protractors is in poor condition.

SCIENCE

110. In the year 2000, the school's performance in the teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 was below the national average for the numbers of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 and above. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was close to the national average. Owing to the wide and varied range of abilities of pupils, with above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2 class, it is difficult to compare these results with the previous inspection findings. However, from a low attainment on entry pupils have made satisfactory progress, with current findings indicating that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 has risen from the previous year. However, there are no pupils currently attaining the higher Level 3, and standards overall, therefore, remain below average.
111. By the end of Key Stage 2, in 2000, results of the National Curriculum tests for science show that standards were well above average both when compared with national averages and when compared with similar schools. All pupils achieved at least the expected Level 4 with a higher than average proportion achieving Level 5. These results were a great improvement on the previous three years. The school does not consider that these results will be maintained this year. The inspection findings confirm this. Despite working hard to plan an interesting range of practical activities, with good quality support, the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 class has led to lower overall standards.
112. An analysis of pupils' work shows that, in Key Stage 1, they make at least satisfactory progress from a low level of understanding, as a result of the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of the teachers. Teachers' appropriate choice of tasks helps pupils to be enthusiastic and interested in the ideas and have numerous experiences of practical work needing investigation and observations. This was seen to good effect in Year 1. The teacher's lively approach, brisk pace, high expectations and reinforcement of appropriate vocabulary maintained pupils' interest when they looked at the differences between animals. They began to understand that living things can be grouped according to similarities and differences. Similarly, in Year 2, pupils (effectively supported through good questioning and demonstrations) began to understand the effect wind force has on the speed and direction of small boats. However, more able pupils who could clearly explain these effects, describing the direction moved in terms of the points of the compass, were disappointed that they were not given the opportunity to investigate their own ideas for boat designs. Pupils lack opportunity for and appropriate guidance in selecting and using equipment correctly or carrying out a fair test. Although a high proportion of pupils are secure in their understanding of all areas of science, more able pupils are not attaining the higher Level 3 because of the over emphasis on teacher-directed activities.
113. In Key Stage 2, the experiments chosen by teachers provide worthwhile practical experiences and encourage pupils to be interested in ideas. However, in general, the pupils are not given sufficient responsibility in asking their own questions or opportunities to design their own investigations, so that their initiative is limited. This again prevents more able pupils from being challenged to decide, for example, what evidence should be collected and to use their results to identify patterns or trends. Often the recording of work is the same in all books, indicating an overemphasis on teacher direction. An exception to this was seen in Year 5 when pupils were recording in their own words their predictions, methods and results of an investigation to raise the pitch on a 'Tea chest base drum'. Pupils are, however, given many opportunities to record measurements in a variety of ways but limited use is made of information and communication technology. Standards in all areas of science vary considerably between each year group. Generally, more able pupils, although attaining expected levels, are not sufficiently challenged and so do not attain the higher levels of which they are capable. Less able pupils, who usually work together despite being supported by classroom assistants, often struggle with copying out the texts of experiments and do not finish

their work. This prevents them from fully benefiting from the practical elements of the subject and impacts on their progress and understanding.

114. Although, as indicated, teaching over time is satisfactory, the teaching seen during the inspection week was good, as was found in the last inspection. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils use the equipment with a good degree of care and respect. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to question the pupils and reinforce learning. The main weakness in teaching is the over emphasis on teacher-directed activities, while teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve does not always cater for some more able pupils in the class. Less able pupils and pupils with English as an additional language, although thoroughly enjoying the practical tasks and supported well by classroom assistants, do not have many opportunities to work alongside and learn from more able classmates. A good example of effective practice in including less able pupils was seen in Year 3. Pupils collaborated in mixed ability groups, investigating the effects of ice cubes on the temperature of water. Making sensible suggestions, more able pupils supported less able classmates, who benefited from this approach and made similar progress in understanding.
115. The curriculum is planned using national and local guidelines. It covers the requirements of the National Curriculum appropriately and gives support to non-specialist teachers. The emphasis on practical work, as found in the last inspection, remains generally effective. The increase in resources has enabled pupils to follow their teachers' example and recreate simple investigations. This has allowed the work on investigative science to become more focused. There has been an improved link made to subjects such as mathematics but links to English need to be further developed especially in relation to pupils' planning and recording their work.
116. The use of assessment is being appropriately developed to track progress and to set targets. However, there is a need to ensure that teacher assessments are not over-estimated and that there is a consistency in matching pupils' work to National Curriculum levels. The co-ordinator is aware of these weaknesses and has had relevant advice from the local adviser. However, she has been unable to monitor teaching directly and her considerable workload leaves her with little time to support colleagues to develop their practice. This is needed if standards are to rise in future years and more able pupils given the opportunities to extend their learning.

ART AND DESIGN

117. Standards of attainment in art and design by the ages of seven and eleven are in line with national expectations. The inspection found that standards are broadly similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection, although there has been an improvement in the teaching of skills at both key stages.
118. Pupils make good progress in the subject as they move through Key Stage 1. They begin by making simple representations with paint and crayon of objects within their experience and, by the end of Year 1, are able to depict scenes from fairy stories in wax and chalk. In Year 2, pupils extend the range of subjects and materials they employ. They make carefully observed drawings of textured natural objects such as shells and bark; some attempt to recognise the presence of light and shade and display good powers of concentration in trying to represent accurately the object they are studying. Pupils paint bold, colourful portraits of famous people, linked to their work in history and religious education; these display evidence of experienced, focused teaching in the use of proportion and colour.
119. At Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. While they continue to make good progress in painting and drawing, there are fewer opportunities for the exploration of a variety of starting points for a single theme. Few examples of the study of the work of notable artists were seen during the course of the inspection and computer technology is not well used to support the subject. In Year 5, pupils apply different media to good effect and art is used well to enrich the geography curriculum. For example, pupils paint large, colourful portraits of people from St. Lucia and fruits from Caribbean islands. The work is carefully executed and makes a clear contribution to pupils' understanding of life in that country. In Year 6, pupils study Van Gogh's technique and try to imitate it using oil pastels. In so doing, they focus on

developing the skills necessary to achieve a specific objective and are therefore well motivated to succeed in the task set. Across the school, those with special educational needs progress at the same rate as other pupils and are generally well supported in their efforts by classroom assistants.

120. Although only two art lessons were seen, there was sufficient evidence available through displays and discussions with pupils to form a judgement about the quality of teaching. This is generally good across the school and differences in standards between the key stages are attributable rather to the lack of breadth in the curriculum offered at Key Stage 2 than to differences in the quality of teaching. Teachers plan their lessons well, organising their materials and equipment sensibly and ensuring that those groups requiring help are well supported. Pupils are well briefed before starting work. In one lesson for older pupils, the teacher gave a clear explanation of what was expected, while those in Key Stage 1 working with a classroom assistant, displayed a clear understanding of the way in which they were expected to work. Pupils are well managed, and clearly enjoy their work. They share materials sensibly and are generally motivated to work slowly and carefully in order to achieve the desired effects.
121. The curriculum is sufficiently broad at Key Stage 1. There is some imbalance at Key Stage 2 because certain aspects of the subject, such as the study of a range of artistic styles, are not taught often enough. The art co-ordinator is well trained and has a good understanding of the developments required in the subject. Teachers' planning for art is reviewed and assessed to ensure that skills are taught progressively as pupils move through the school. There is currently no direct monitoring of teaching in the subject, although the co-ordinator has some idea of standards in each class because teachers make an assessment of pupils' attainment. Pupils have not benefited from artists' visits, nor have they visited galleries or libraries to view the work of professional artists. However, the Internet has been used effectively to examine art collections.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in design and technology by the ages of seven and eleven are broadly in line with those expected nationally.
123. Pupils have practised an appropriate range of skills by the age of seven. They learn to use glue economically, to cut various materials to size and begin to understand that there are conventional methods for assembling different components to make a model. Pupils learn to describe the sensory qualities of different materials, including food, and examine their shape, texture and response to cutting and joining. They learn fundamental safety procedures when using tools and the importance of hygiene when food is handled. The pupils experiment with different techniques, such as shaping and sewing, learning to prepare their ideas on drawing or tracing paper. They begin to understand the principles of designing, making and improving on a product. Most display a lively interest in their work and are well motivated to succeed.
124. As they move through the school, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of appropriate skills. Those in Year 3 plan the materials and tools they will need to design a vehicle and justify the selection of components they will need. Older pupils in the key stage design and make board games. Although they focus on the success of the game rather than on the technical or aesthetic achievement of their work, they make realistic evaluations of their products to indicate their shortcomings. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to cut and join a range of materials successfully, discussing rationally how to improve their work when they make a mistake and exercising due care in the use of tools. They have a sound understanding of the need to plan their work before making a product and to evaluate objectively their progress at each stage of its development.
125. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory overall, although some good lessons were seen in the course of the inspection. Teachers offer clear explanations of the tasks pupils are to accomplish and monitor their progress well, offering advice on the best way to proceed and ensuring that tools are used safely. Questioning is used well to encourage

pupils to plan how they are to overcome difficulties they have encountered with their designs. In one good lesson at Key Stage 2, the teacher referred constantly to previous learning and to the ultimate purpose of their work, enabling pupils to gain an accurate perspective of work planned to continue over a number of lessons. Pupils at both key stages learn effectively and are able to explain clearly their current task and what they hope to achieve. Those at Key Stage 1 share materials and tools sensibly, and good practice in the correct use of equipment is established across the school. All pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss ideas and problems. Sufficient opportunities are offered for pupils to practise planning, designing, making and evaluating their work, although sometimes not enough consideration is given to the final appearance of their product. The tasks teachers set are relevant and interesting for their pupils and this contributes to their enjoyment of the subject.

126. The curriculum for design and technology is sufficiently broad, although there is imbalance in the time allocated to the subject because it is taught for only one term a year. This means that pupils cannot build steadily on the skills they have acquired because there is insufficient continuity in their learning. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator is not well developed. There is no direct monitoring of teaching but, because he sees teachers' plans and discusses work with colleagues, the co-ordinator has a general overview of the work in each class. A policy for the subject and a new scheme of work are to be produced during 2001. Although there are not enough tools (for example, to enable more than one group to work with balsa wood) there are sufficient disposable materials for the curriculum to be taught effectively.

GEOGRAPHY

127. No geography lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 owing to planning of the topic cycle. However, work seen in books and talking to pupils indicates that standards are broadly in line with expectations. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. In Key Stage 2 only one lesson was seen. Because of the very limited opportunities for pupils to study an appropriate range of topics in sufficient depth, standards overall are below expectations. This is a decline in standards seen since the last inspection.
128. In Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topics covered are satisfactory. Although no direct teaching was observed, teachers have used the local area to good effect with an interesting range of activities planned that stimulate pupils' growing sense of enquiry. This has ensured that pupils are interested and gain a satisfactory understanding of the features of their locality. Older pupils are able to compare their town to an island in Scotland, explaining in simple terms the main differences, such as methods of transport. Pupils were obviously interested in this topic, talking about it with enthusiasm. Simple maps develop geographical skills; pupils that are more able can draw a simple but accurate 'bird's eye view' of the features they see on their route to school.
129. There was insufficient evidence to judge teaching and learning in lessons. Indications are that these are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 2, teachers' planning indicates that one short geography topic a year is studied. This makes it difficult for pupils to consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The insufficient time spent does not ensure that topics are studied in sufficient depth to stimulate and develop pupils' interest or sense of enquiry. Although a variety of topics is taught, these do not fully comply with the current National Curriculum orders. For example, in Years 4 and 5, pupils have studied different economically deprived areas. This is unnecessary. When asked about this work, pupils could recall very little detail. This confirmed the negative effect that the current system of planning has on pupils' attainment and interest. Other topics (for example, 'land use') are not fully developed, and pupils in Year 6 have had no geography lessons for over a year. They have only just begun their study of rivers. Pupils' skills have shown some progress from Key Stage 1; for example, in Year 4 most pupils are able to use simple keys. These however, are not extended further to challenge pupils to extend their skills in areas such as grid references. This is an unsatisfactory situation.
130. Although teachers in Key Stage 1 follow a national scheme of work, this is not yet sufficiently seen in practice in Key Stage 2. Further consideration is required to ensure that, in all classes,

topics not only conform to the revised curriculum orders but also are taught in sufficient depth to ensure progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are developing but vary in accuracy and do not give sufficient indication of pupils' progress across each level. The co-ordinator is clearly aware of weaknesses in Key Stage 2 but has had insufficient time and lacks relevant and recent training to develop staff expertise.

HISTORY

131. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations, as found at the last inspection. This is due to the good quality teaching coupled with high expectations, which ensures that pupils make good progress from low levels of attainment on entry to Year 1. In Key Stage 2, standards are below expectations. This is due mainly to the very limited depth and range of topics covered that do not enable pupils to study the required range of the curriculum and so develop skills of research, analysis and interpretation of the facts known.
132. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to judge teaching and learning overall. In Key Stage 1, the good use of resources and variety of interesting tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities have stimulated pupils. These challenge younger pupils to think carefully about the information and ensure that they are motivated. For example, in one very good lesson all these elements were effectively combined. Pupils were clearly fascinated by the story of Florence Nightingale, talked enthusiastically about her work and could explain simply 'why hospitals were different in those days'. Older pupils in Year 2 could not only recall facts about the Great Fire of London that they had studied some time before but could explain the cause of the fire, how it spread so quickly and the consequences to the people of London. This clearly indicated how stimulating teaching can motivate pupils and ensure that they achieve well in relation to their abilities.
133. In Key Stage 2, only one lesson was seen. However, from an analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work, the required National Curriculum syllabus is not covered. For example, in every year group this academic year, pupils have studied Britain since 1930. In addition, topics are taught for only a few weeks each year and do not assist pupils to consolidate their understanding or enable them to progress in their knowledge or their skills. Visitors have contributed well to this topic and this has motivated pupils in Year 6. Pupils of all abilities felt some empathy with the plight of evacuee children in World War 2. However, in general, pupils have had limited opportunities for independent research and, in discussion with pupils in all year groups, they found it difficult to recall any facts in relation to the topic.
134. The co-ordinator has a heavy workload and has been unable to monitor planning or pupils' books. This would have highlighted the unsatisfactory range of areas planned. There is an urgent need to plan an appropriate range of topics that not only take into consideration the National Curriculum orders but also allow for them to be covered in sufficient depth to motivate and challenge all pupils. Consideration should also be given to using the rich sources of historical interest within the local area to support teaching and learning. Planning does not currently give an appropriate balance between teacher input and pupils' own research. It does not exploit more effective cross-curricular links that would maximise the use of available time. For example, there are limited opportunities for the subject to enrich and develop pupils' speaking, writing and independent research skills. In addition, assessments, which are in the early stages of development, need to be more refined to track pupils' progress more sharply.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135. Standards are below average by the end of both key stages. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not cover the full range of the National Curriculum and pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills lack depth. Over the past few years, the school has worked hard to find the resources necessary to improve standards. It has succeeded in establishing a small computer suite in a central area of the school, which has gone some way to improving provision and the rates of progress made by pupils, which are currently satisfactory. However, the suite can only cater for approximately half a class at one time and it

is sited in the school library; these factors cause problems of organisation and planning. It has only been set up by removing computers from several classrooms and this has limited the extent to which pupils can practise their skills to follow up the work they do in the suite. These developments are comparatively recent and pupils are starting work from a low baseline. As a result, the activities that are being covered are similar in each key stage, irrespective of the age group concerned. For example, during the inspection, most classes within Key Stage 2 were working on using text boxes and graphics to enhance their word processing. Pupils are not yet using information and communication technology sufficiently to support their work across the curriculum.

136. The school is gradually building up the resources necessary to offer its pupils the full range of the National Curriculum programmes of study but they are not yet being taught. In most lessons, half of the pupils work at computers while the rest work on similar projects manually. While these activities are often planned well and are relevant to pupils' needs, the time available for pupils to have 'hands on' practice with computers is limited. Resource levels are still below those seen in most schools and, in spite of the school's best efforts, some of the computers are outdated or unreliable and not always available for pupils to use. The school is not yet well placed to make sufficient rapid progress to keep pace with current developments.
137. By the age of seven, pupils enter text into the computer and use routines such as the space bar and delete key unaided but their typing and editing are very slow for their age. Most cannot independently change the size and font of the text, underline or make print bold. They have used 'painting' programs but not had experience of control technology or the Internet. They are aware of how technology is used in the home. By 11, pupils have extended their word processing skills satisfactorily and can combine text with graphics, as seen in their designs for advertisements for fizzy drinks, which are laid out well with good use of colour and clip art. They have some limited understanding of databases and have used adventure simulations. They use computers for research; for example, they used the Internet for information on Van Gogh linked to their art topic, and for revision for their recent National Curriculum tests. They have not yet used e-mail in school or had appropriate activities in control technology.
138. The teaching and learning in the lessons seen were satisfactory and appropriate to pupils' current levels of attainment. Several of the teachers lack confidence in the subject and are only just starting a planned programme of further training. They try to give individual attention to the wide range of pupils' needs on the computer but this is difficult because they have to supervise the rest of the class who do not have access to the hardware. They manage pupils' behaviour well. Most pupils are very keen to work and sometimes over-eager to take their turn on machines. The teachers are to be commended on how they plan activities that cater for both the 'manual' and 'hands on' groups. An example was seen where half the class produced manual copy for a newspaper and the rest typed this and adjusted the layout on the computers.
139. The co-ordinator gives sound leadership but is not yet released from teaching to monitor the subject at first hand. She is energetic and has realistic ambitions for its development. The school receives sporadic technical support but this is not always available when it is needed. Teachers have assessed pupils' broad levels of attainment satisfactorily but do not have systems to enable them to judge the development of skills in detail.

MUSIC

140. Evidence of pupils' attainment was very limited during the inspection and no class lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 or at the upper end of Key Stage 2. In the only large-group singing session seen with the pupils in Key Stage 1, attainment was satisfactory. Attainment in the lessons seen in Year 3 and 4 varied from above average in one lesson to below average in the other. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that their attainment is satisfactory. Based on this limited evidence, the school is judged to have maintained the standards identified at the time of the last inspection. By Year 6, pupils have established an appropriate repertoire of songs. They recognise and use a satisfactory range of percussion. They listen to and appraise music in a range of styles and from various traditions, evidenced by recent work on

Caribbean music. However, their knowledge of famous composers and performers is limited and consists mainly of popular modern musicians. A minority of pupils have learned to play the recorder over several years or are members of the school choir.

141. The teaching in the lessons and large-group singing session seen was satisfactory, with good features. The co-ordinator has secure subject knowledge that is used to good effect with his class and when he leads sessions for the whole school. The use of the overhead projector for these sessions is appropriate but the screen is inadequate and pupils struggle to read the transparencies. Teachers use a commercial scheme well to support their planning and their lessons. This gives interesting and varied activities that motivate pupils and cater for the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers explain tasks clearly so that pupils understand what to do. They promote good relationships and use humour well to establish a pleasant atmosphere for learning. As a result, pupils feel relaxed and enjoy their lessons.
142. The co-ordinator has taken over the management of the subject fairly recently. He has an appropriate action plan for its development. Teachers have made a good start on assessing pupils' attainment in music in line with the revised National Curriculum. The commercial scheme is a good resource and the school has a large hall which can be used for activities. However, stocks of musical instruments are inadequate and many are in a poor state of repair. There are currently no facilities for pupils to receive tuition in instruments other than the recorder but musical groups visit the school occasionally to introduce pupils to other instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. It was possible to see only three lessons during the inspection, one each in gymnastics, games and athletics. On this limited evidence, pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons that enables them to make progress in line with their classmates. Swimming lessons, as at the time of the last inspection, are offered as a choice to pupils in Years 3 and 4. The take-up rate of these is low and currently almost half of the pupils choose not to swim, often for financial, religious or cultural reasons. As a result, many pupils do not reach the expected standard in swimming by the time they leave the school. There are plans for the school to offer additional financial support for swimming in the next school year with the aim of encouraging a greater level of participation.
144. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 1, pupils could run, jump and balance with appropriate control for their age. They sustained energetic exercise and commented on the effects this had on their bodies. In a Year 2 games lesson, pupils practised their skills with balls and quoits at a satisfactory level. The only lesson seen in Key Stage 2 was in athletics with Year 6. These pupils showed sound achievements when they were introduced to basic hurdling techniques. There was an improvement in their skill by the end of the lesson but this improvement was limited by the length of the session. In the lessons seen in both Year 2 and Year 6, the time allocated was not long enough for pupils to learn, practise and extend new skills effectively.
145. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers broadly plan lessons that cater for the range of activities required by the National Curriculum, although dance is not as well developed as other aspects. Teachers' explanations are clear and they generally maintain good control of pupils' behaviour. The support given to pupils with special needs is good and effective use is made of volunteer helpers to this end. Lessons were conducted safely overall; for example ear studs are covered by tape and footwear is suitable. However, in a lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils were allowed to work without tying back long hair. In both key stages, there is too little insistence on pupils having a suitable basic clothing kit for lessons and several wore either long trousers or beachwear that were not appropriate to the activities taking place.
146. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and they give useful advice on technique. In the best cases, they use demonstration by pupils well to show good practice to the rest of the class.

Pupils respond well to the practical nature of activities. Most are keen to participate and behave well. Teachers structure the short lessons as well as they can in the limited time available and ensure that pupils warm up and cool down for each session.

147. The co-ordinator has audited and organised the equipment recently and has begun to monitor her colleagues' planning. She has, however, had no training in a fuller monitoring role with the aim of raising standards and has not yet had opportunities to see her colleagues teach. The provision in the school has suffered this year from a long period when the hall was out of use because the floor was being replaced. Extra-curricular clubs are offered in football, netball and rounders for the older pupils and volunteer helpers give valued help with these.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. Standards in religious education for pupils of seven years of age are in line with those expected by the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make good progress in understanding their uniqueness as individuals and in their appreciation of the importance of God for Christians and other faith communities. However, standards by the age of eleven are below those expected by the Agreed Syllabus and progress through Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory because pupils do not make the necessary gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The reason for this is that insufficient time is allocated for the subject to be taught at the expected depth.
149. By the age of seven, pupils understand that certain people are regarded by society as important. They begin to appreciate the significance of God and understand that a deity is worshipped in different ways by the various faith communities. They know that Christians believe that Jesus is God's son, while some explain that Muslims regard Jesus as a prophet, although they are unsure what this means. Pupils display a thorough knowledge of the Easter story, describing the betrayal of Jesus, his resurrection and subsequent appearance to the apostles. They know that further stories about Jesus may be found in the Bible, and can recount some Old Testament stories such as that of Noah's Ark. Pupils begin to understand fundamental aspects of different faiths, such as Judaism and Sikhism, and describe some of the customs and artefacts associated with each.
150. Pupils do not make the progress expected in their learning between the ages of seven and eleven, and, across the key stage, progress is uneven. Those in Year 4, for example, display quite detailed knowledge of one or two events in Jesus's life and have acquired some understanding of key Christian beliefs. By Year 6, pupils have made little further progress and their levels of knowledge and understanding are not dissimilar to those of younger pupils in the key stage. They display close knowledge of some aspects of the Agreed Syllabus but have not covered others at the expected depth. There is little written work in religious education across the key stage, so pupils have no permanent record of their ideas or thoughts to which they can refer.
151. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 2 because the subject here is not taught at sufficient depth to ensure that pupils make the necessary progress. Only two lessons were seen in religious education during the course of the inspection, one at each key stage. Both of these were of satisfactory standard. Teachers use questioning well in their lessons, generally giving clear explanations and including all pupils well in discussion. Religious artefacts are sometimes used very effectively to support teaching because their beauty elicits a certain wonder from the pupils and enables them to develop a sense of respect and value for them. The lessons seen proceeded at a satisfactory pace and were well planned and prepared. Teachers display satisfactory knowledge of the subject, although the range of work seen and discussed with pupils indicates that teachers at Key Stage 2 are less confident in teaching some elements of the curriculum. Pupils across the school display positive attitudes towards their learning; they have many questions, and are eager to learn more about the subject. Some pupils at Key Stage 2 think deeply about the mysteries of life and are interested in comparing religious beliefs and customs.

152. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced at Key Stage 1 but insufficient time is allowed at Key Stage 2 to ensure that each element of the Agreed Syllabus is covered in sufficient depth. The syllabus anticipates, for example, that about one hour each week will be devoted to the subject at Key Stage 2. The subject co-ordinator, in post for six months, currently has a limited role in developing the curriculum. Teachers' planning is monitored each term but the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching or pupils' work and so cannot be sure that pupils build up the skills and knowledge expected as they move through the school. Pupils' progress in the subject is not systematically assessed.
153. Resources for the subject are growing and some artefacts are of good quality. However, there are currently not enough books to support the curriculum. Visits to places of worship are sometimes used to enrich the curriculum; for example, pupils have visited a mosque and St. Albans Abbey. The pastor of a free church takes assembly each half term. However, such visits and visitors are not used systematically to enhance pupils' understanding.