

INSPECTION REPORT

PIXIES HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117256

Headteacher: Mrs J Stephens

Reporting inspector: Ms S Billington
4343

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 193605

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hazeldell Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Durrant
Date of previous inspection:	21 st April 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Registered inspector	Foundation stage English Art and design Design and technology Equality of opportunity English as an additional language	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9121	Dr H Danpure	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4341	Mr D Clegg	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
16971	Mr R Hardaker	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is broadly average in size with 197 pupils on roll; this will increase when more children are admitted to the reception class next term. Children are taught in seven classes, each with a single age group and with an average of 30 pupils in each. There are slightly more boys than girls on roll, but there is a significant imbalance in some year groups – for example Year 5 has more than twice as many boys as girls. Children are admitted to reception classes in September and January depending on their date of birth. Almost all have some pre-school experience before admission; their levels of skills and understanding on entry are above average overall.

There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and also very few who speak English as an additional language; none receives any additional support with English. The proportion of pupils that is eligible for free school meals is below average, at around five per cent.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average at 22 per cent. A small number – around seven per cent – has significant medical, emotional or social problems or learning difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, the school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds are above average. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is good in subjects such as science but there is scope to improve it further in aspects of English and mathematics. Leadership is sound and ensures that there is a shared sense of direction, but planning for improvement is not sufficiently based on a rigorous evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and form good relationships.
- Pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science at the age of eleven.
- Standards in art and design and technology are good throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by a good range of visits.

What could be improved

- Management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses at all levels.
- Standards in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Many English and mathematics lessons, though satisfactory, could be more inspiring and ambitious.

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 April 1997. Since then, the rate of improvement has been modest and some aspects of the school's work have not improved as much as might be expected. Standards have risen overall, but the improvement in pupils' performance in tests taken at the end of Year 6 has been slower than the rate of improvement nationally. The quality of teaching was judged a strength of the school in the last inspection; this inspection finds that teaching overall is satisfactory.

Elements of weaknesses found in the last inspection remain to be tackled. There is still a need to clarify the roles of the headteacher, staff and governing body in monitoring the effectiveness of the

school's work. Planning for school development has improved, but there is still a need to make better use of information, for example on pupils' performance in tests.

STANDARDS

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

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

Inspection findings on standards attained by eleven-year-olds largely bear out the test results. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average.

Results of tests taken by seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were generally above average between 1998 and 2000, but the most recent set of results are not as good as those of previous years. The inspection found that the vast majority of children achieve at least average standards in reading at this age; higher attaining pupils read with good expression and understanding. Standards in writing are below average and overall pupils are not achieving as well as they should in this area. Standards in mathematics and science are average. The majority of pupils achieve the levels that they should in these subjects.

Throughout the school, standards in art and design and design and technology (DT) are good and pupils achieve well in these subjects. The oldest pupils are also achieving well in religious education (RE) and history. In other subjects, standards are broadly in line with expectations.

Children in the reception class (in the foundation stage) make good progress in their personal and social development and have a good basis for their later learning. In all other areas of learning, they achieve levels broadly in line with expectations for children of this age.

Pupils with special educational needs who have short-term difficulties generally achieve as well as they should. Those with more significant problems do not have their learning needs met in lessons and, because of this, their progress is unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic learners and the vast majority works with good concentration and application.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and generally move around the school sensibly. They are sometimes boisterous at lunchtime and noise levels in the dining hall are high.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils form good relationships and respond well to opportunities to work collaboratively.
Attendance	Good overall, although a high proportion of pupils are taken on holiday in term time, which disrupts their education.

Pupils' very good attitudes and well-established work habits are particular strengths of the school. The oldest pupils are mature and sensible and well prepared for the move to secondary education.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, but it is variable. Teaching of children in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 is generally satisfactory and occasionally good. Teaching of older pupils is satisfactory overall and often good in Years 5 and 6 where there are high expectations and lessons are lively and challenging. Throughout the school, teaching in subjects such as science and physical education is good overall. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is broadly satisfactory, but not enough advantage is taken of guidance in the strategies to ensure that all lessons stretch and challenge pupils and fully meet their needs. Teaching of pupils with significant learning difficulties is unsatisfactory; the curriculum is not adequately adapted to meet their needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Effective links are made across subjects and a good programme of visits supports learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in record-keeping and in the management of support. Pupils with significant difficulties do not have their learning needs met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils who speak English as an additional language have their needs well catered for in classrooms. These pupils are competent in their use and understanding of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Subjects such as science, art and religious education make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to take on a range of responsibilities and to participate in community events.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are generally good.

The curriculum includes all the required elements and meets statutory requirements. The progress of most pupils is systematically monitored but there are weaknesses in assessment arrangements for pupils in the reception class and Year 1 and for pupils with special educational needs. Approaches to

marking are too varied and there is not enough feedback for pupils on what they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.

The school provides a range of information to encourage parents to support their children's learning and this support has a significant impact, for example on standards in reading. A significant number are unclear about expectations of some aspects of homework for older pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a sense of direction and co-ordinators offer a good level of support to their colleagues but there is not enough monitoring of teaching to highlight any weaknesses and focus planning for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are organised into committees with clear terms of reference and this helps them to broadly fulfil their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Not enough use is made from information to analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Broadly satisfactory. Additional funding is used for specified purposes but not always targeted to the areas of greatest need.

The school has a very good level of staffing but many classroom assistants are new to their roles and teachers need clearer guidance on the most effective ways to use their time. Accommodation is generally adequate, although the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is constrained by lack of space. Resources are good for some aspects of the curriculum, such as science and art, but those for the children in the reception class are inadequate and inhibit provision for teaching and learning in areas such as physical development.

Expenditure is carefully planned and monitored, but there is no systematic approach to evaluating the impact of spending on important areas such as the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>The vast majority of parents feel that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school and are expected to work hard. • Children are helped to mature. • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. 	<p>A minority of parents feel that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not work closely with parents. • They are not well informed about their children's progress. • Activities out of lessons are limited.

The inspection generally supports parents' positive views, although teaching and the rate of progress were generally found to be satisfactory rather than good. The inspection found that information for parents is generally good and written reports are very detailed but there is a need to work more closely with, and provide more information for, parents of pupils with special needs. Extra-curricular activities in the form of clubs are limited, but there is a good range of visits to support learning in subjects such as art and history and an annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, there has been a rise in standards achieved by eleven-year-olds since the last inspection although the rate of improvement was lower than that of schools nationally. Over the period 1998 to 2000, results of tests taken by pupils in Year 6 in English have been above or well above national averages; results in mathematics have been above average and, in science, they have been well above average. The performance of both boys and girls has exceeded the national average but girls have performed better overall, most noticeably in English. The most recent test results, compared to those in 2000, show an overall improvement in English. Performance in mathematics and science tests is at a similar level. Results of tests taken in 2000 compared to schools with a similar intake¹ were broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
2. From 1998 to 2000, results of tests taken by seven-year-olds at the end of Year 2 were above or well above average in reading and writing. Results in mathematics have been more erratic but generally have been above average. These results also indicate some improvement since the last inspection. While both boys and girls have attained results above the national average, girls overall have done better than boys. The results of tests in 2000 were broadly in line with those of similar schools. However, results of tests taken this year (2001) show a decline; this is particularly marked in writing which the school has targeted as an area for improvement.
3. Inspection findings largely confirm the test results for eleven-year-olds. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The oldest pupils have a good base of skills in literacy and numeracy. They are generally enthusiastic and knowledgeable readers. They write well in a variety of forms, including letters, accounts and poems and are able to write from a variety of perspectives. Work is usually well presented, with accurate spelling and punctuation. Pupils have a secure knowledge of number facts and the four operations and can use their skills effectively to tackle problems in a variety of forms. Their knowledge of all aspects of science is also good and they have good investigative skills.
4. The inspection found standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 to be broadly average and better than the most recent test results would indicate. However, standards in reading are higher than those attained in writing. Early reading skills are generally taught effectively and the vast majority of pupils

¹ There is no comparative data available yet for tests taken in 2001. The comparison with similar schools is based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

read regularly at home; as a result, they learn to read a range of books accurately and with some understanding. Skills in writing improve steadily in terms of spelling, basic punctuation and the length of accounts and stories but, for average attaining pupils, there is not enough improvement in the quality of the language used. More could be expected of pupils given their good vocabulary and skills in reading. Standards in mathematics are broadly average, with the majority of pupils working successfully with numbers to 100 and often beyond and beginning to solve problems and handle data. Standards in science were found to be broadly average, which confirms the results of teacher assessment at the end of Year 2². Pupils are acquiring a good base of knowledge in aspects of science such as life and living processes. The inspection found no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls.

5. Children come into school with above average levels of skills and understanding. They make steady progress overall in the foundation stage to reach the early learning goals³ by the start of Year 1. Many are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum in mathematics and English. Their progress in personal and social development is good as a result of the strong focus on this aspect of the curriculum; this ensures that they have a good basis for further learning.
6. As pupils move through the school, they continue to make steady progress overall; over time, the majority generally achieves the standards that they should. In some lessons in Years 1 to 4, higher attaining and sometimes average pupils do not always achieve as much as they should because the work that they are given lacks challenge. The rate of progress improves noticeably in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is good and expectations of what pupils might achieve are high.
7. Throughout the school, standards in art and design and design and technology (DT) are good and have improved since the last inspection. Standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 6 in religious education and history also show improvement and are now good; there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Years 1 and 2. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), geography and physical education (PE) are broadly average, as found in the last inspection. Not enough music was seen to make a judgement about pupils' attainment.
8. There is a very good level of staffing to support pupils with special educational needs. Many pupils with short-term difficulties benefit from the school's policy of early intervention and achieve average levels in national tests at the age of eleven. However, pupils with more significant difficulties do not achieve as well as they should. Work that they are given in withdrawal groups and in class

² There are no standardised tests in science at the end of Year 2.

³ The foundation stage refers, in this instance, to children in the reception class. The early learning goals are the expected levels of attainment of these children at the start of Year 1.

lessons is not sufficiently focused on the targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes are very good and this aspect continues to be a strength of the school. The vast majority of pupils are very keen to learn, willing to participate in class activities and show a real enjoyment of what they are doing. This was apparent, for example, in a Year 5 art lesson where pupils were very keen to give their opinions on a variety of still-life paintings by famous artists and justify their comments. Throughout the school, pupils persevere with tasks that they find difficult and many enjoy and respond well to a good level of challenge.
10. Behaviour is good. The school's aim is to encourage pupils to acquire a caring attitude and to understand that tolerance, consideration and good manners are important; the majority of pupils successfully achieve this. Pupils are polite and helpful and generally listen well. Even though they had only been in school for a few days, children in the reception class sat transfixed throughout an assembly taken by the headteacher. However, on occasions, pupils become restless in classes when they have to sit on the carpet and listen to the teacher for prolonged spells. The children enjoy getting outside into the playground and cope amicably when the weather necessitates them playing in the hard play area.
11. The relationships within the school continue to be good, both between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils willingly help each other and the staff. Staff are generally positive, encouraging and supportive and this results in pupils having the confidence to contribute and not feel uncomfortable if they make a mistake. Pupils display a happy, confident air and, as a result of the trust they have in their teachers and classroom assistants, are confident to try hard knowing that their efforts will be recognised and appreciated. Pupils work well in class on paired and group activities. They show very good respect and understanding towards children in the school who are from different races and have different faiths from their own. There is no tension between them and all pupils are fully accepted and treated as valued members of the school family.
12. Pupils willingly carry out the various jobs they are asked to do within their classrooms and around the school. Year 6 pupils take a leading role in taking on positions of responsibility such as helping in assemblies, in classes at wet playtimes and at lunchtime with younger pupils. Parents are very positive about the way the school is helping their children to mature. Pupils have some opportunity to use their initiative; the suggestion by Years 3 and 4 pupils that they might collect litter around the school is a good example of this. Overall, however, pupils have limited opportunities to contribute their ideas about how the school is run; it is proposed to establish a school council to enable this to happen.

13. The rate of attendance continues to be good, at a level above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence also continues to be below the national average. Frequent lateness by a few pupils was identified as a problem at the last inspection. Although this issue was raised again during this inspection by a few parents, lateness was not significant during the inspection week. Absence due to family holidays in term time continues to reduce the overall rate of attendance. Approximately one third of the pupils were taken out of school for a holiday during the year 2000/2001.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is satisfactory but there is too much variation in the quality across the subjects and in different year groups. Teaching in subjects such as science and art is good and at times very good. Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory but there is scope to improve it by taking more advantage of the approaches offered by the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Teaching in the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 is never less than satisfactory and at times it is good. There is a higher proportion of good teaching in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the majority of lessons are good, leading to pupils making good progress and achieving well at the upper end of the school.

15. Teaching in the foundation stage places a strong emphasis on personal and social development. This is very successful in ensuring that children quickly become used to school routines, are confident in participating in discussion and activities and learn to co-operate and collaborate with others. A good base for later learning and good work habits are formed at this early stage. Lessons in all areas of the curriculum are carefully planned and organised. The teacher and classroom assistant work well with small groups and use talk effectively to extend their understanding and to introduce key vocabulary. This was a good feature of a numeracy lesson in which children sorted objects using a range of criteria and were encouraged to explain how they had categorised the objects using correct mathematical terms. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory; early reading skills are well taught but there is scope to improve the provision for the teaching of writing and to extend children's skills further in this area.
16. In Key Stages 1 and 2, lessons are also well organised. Teachers have a clear view of what they intend to teach and, in the most effective lessons, they share an enthusiasm for the subject with the pupils. This was evident in an art lesson with Year 5 in which the teacher's comments and questions about the techniques used in the paintings that the class was studying engaged the pupils' interest and helped them to appreciate the skills of the artists. Resources are used effectively in introductory sessions in most subjects to give the pupils a clear view of what they might achieve. In an art lesson in Year 2, pupils were very attentive as the teacher showed sculpture in different forms and demonstrated a range of techniques for creating impressions of bark. This gave them a good basis for work with paper and clay as they used a variety of tools to create their own sculptures. In lessons in English and mathematics, the availability and use of resources is varied. In most lessons in English, for example, a range of texts is used to promote discussion in the first part of the lesson but the text is not always displayed to enable focused teaching about the use of language. In mental mathematics sessions in some numeracy lessons, there is an insufficient number of whiteboards or number 'fans' to enable all pupils to calculate and to display their responses. More resources have been ordered to address this need.
17. The most effective lessons are characterised by a brisk pace and high expectations of the pupils. This is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6 and is a key factor in the accelerated rate of learning at this stage. In a numeracy lesson with Year 6, for example, the teacher focused on exploring a range of methods for multiplying decimals, encouraging pupils to reflect on the most effective ways of tackling a range of calculations. Teaching was positive and determined, creating a good climate for learning as achievement was recognised and further challenges were set. In too many mathematics lessons, however, the pace is sluggish, there is a lack of challenge and, as a result, learning is limited. Similarly in English, too much time is spent on consolidation and practice tasks and not enough on exploring and using language in creative and exciting ways.

18. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The support that they are given in mainstream lessons is not always targeted to their needs and work in withdrawal groups does not always reflect and help them to achieve their learning targets.
19. Throughout the school, homework is set regularly to support work undertaken in class. This has a positive impact on learning, particularly in reading. Project work is set in Key Stage 2 in order to encourage pupils to read and research independently. However, the quality and effectiveness of this type of work is variable and there is a need for clearer guidelines about the methods to be used and the expected outcomes.
20. Approaches to marking are inconsistent and marking is not used effectively to recognise achievement and to support learning. There is some evaluative marking which indicates areas for improvement, but comments in pupils' work are often generalised and superficial. In some instances, marking is unfocused, with comments such as 'please try again', but no indication of what to do to improve.

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

21. As in the last inspection, the curriculum is generally broad and balanced. With the exception of ICT, the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The school is successfully using the national guidance to plan an appropriate range of activities covering all statutory subjects as well as religious education. The impact of the guidance on the teaching of subjects such as science, art and design and technology is particularly positive. A good range of visits, that supplement and enhance the work in classrooms, enriches the curriculum. Visits supplement work in a range of different subjects: walks around the locality help in geography, visits to galleries and museums give pupils insights into aspects of art and the residential visit for Year 6 pupils promotes their personal development as well as providing opportunities for field work. The curriculum for the youngest children provides an appropriate introduction to the National Curriculum in Year 1, but planning is not based on the recommended national guidance for the foundation stage.
22. The school has implemented the two national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and these are helping to ensure teachers plan activities that build on what pupils have learned previously. However, not enough use is made of the teaching suggestions contained within the strategies and so the implementation is not making as much impact on raising standards as it could.
23. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils; however, the curriculum for those pupils with long-term and significant learning problems is not always suitable and often fails to address the targets indicated in their IEPs. The work they undertake in mainstream lessons is not consistently adapted to enable them to achieve their targets and the small group work does not reflect their

learning targets. In some lessons during the inspection, pupils missed important parts of lessons due to being withdrawn for individual work. This is unhelpful as it means that they sometimes miss out on important teaching points, for example at the start of a numeracy lesson.

24. The school successfully ensures that pupils have good opportunities to develop personally. Although there is no specific policy for pupils' personal development, numerous aspects of the school's work ensure good provision for this area. For instance, in many lessons there are opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and groups. This occurs in subjects such as mathematics and physical education; there are some particularly good examples of collaborative work in art where Year 2 pupils produced some splendid clay tiles that collectively make up a draughts board. The pupils are encouraged to consider ideas that help them to reflect on, for instance, the beauty of nature. This is an important part of the 'school grounds day' when every pupil is given the chance to think about environmental issues.
25. Pupils successfully develop a sense of social responsibility through activities such as collecting litter on a rota basis, or the older pupils helping out with supervising the younger ones during wet playtimes. Assemblies are also occasions when pupils think about moral issues, for example through considering the plight of others. They also think about the impact of their own actions on those of others; during the inspection, Years 1 and 2 pupils were urged to 'share a smile'. Several classes successfully use the strategy of getting pupils to sit in a circle and discuss issues concerned with how they treat others and how they might try to resolve disagreements amicably.
26. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to enhance their cultural development. These include visiting art galleries, exploring the work of a range of different artists and listening to music from different parts of the world. In geography, pupils also learn about life and customs in other countries and the programme for religious education introduces pupils to the world's main faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school continues to provide good care for its pupils and parents are confident about the provision made for their children's welfare. Opportunities for pupils to talk about issues relating to their personal needs are provided as part of their personal, social and health education work, although time for this is not regularly provided for all classes. Pupils receive good care if they are sick or injured, but there is no proper medical room or suitable area for looking after children who are unwell.
28. There is a good, comprehensive health and safety policy with all the required safety procedures in place. The site is regularly checked by the headteacher and caretaker and health and safety issues are monitored by governors. All the necessary procedures are in place regarding child protection, supported by a good policy. The headteacher and deputy have received appropriate training and all staff know how to respond if an incident occurs.

29. The school expects pupils to behave well, both in the classroom and around the school. Pupils learn how they are expected to behave as soon as they join the school and this is reinforced by reminders from class teachers and the headteacher. This works satisfactorily and good behaviour is generally achieved. Some classes devise and display their own rules, thus involving pupils in considering how their actions may affect others. Issues about behaviour are raised during assemblies. There are appropriate rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for bad. Any incidents of bullying are quickly dealt with and any tensions between pupils are effectively diffused.
30. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The attendance policy gives clear guidelines to staff. Registrations are satisfactory and all registers are completed in full and regularly monitored by the headteacher. There are appropriate ways of rewarding good attendance with certificates. Parents are clearly informed in the brochure about their role in ensuring pupils attend school and in the procedures for reporting absence. The school strongly discourages parents from taking holidays in term time, but nevertheless a large number do so. The school involves the education welfare officer appropriately when attendance and punctuality problems arise.
31. There is an adequate range of procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school. These include notes on attainment in all aspects of English, mathematics and science, results of standardised tests taken at the end of Years 2 to 6 and subsequent targets and observational notes on individual pupils' personal development and academic achievements. Overall, the various systems in place provide adequate information to track pupils' progress and achievement, although there is a lack of objective assessment of the progress of the youngest children as they move from the foundation stage into Year 1. A greater weakness, however, is that insufficient use is made of the information to analyse the school's performance and evaluate curriculum strengths and weaknesses.
32. For pupils with special educational needs, assessment and record-keeping procedures are unsatisfactory. The quality of IEPs is very varied; some targets set are clear and measurable but too often the targets are imprecise and do not provide sufficient detail to enable progress to be monitored or assessed. Overall, IEPs do not give a sufficiently clear picture of the progress that pupils may or may not be making.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Overall, the school provides an adequate range of information on the school's activities and individual children's progress. Consultations in the autumn and spring terms enable parents to discuss their children's progress with their class teachers. Pupils' reports are issued in the summer term and can be discussed at an open evening. The quality of reports, generated using a bank of statements on computer that is updated each year, have improved since the

last inspection. Most reports contain good subject-specific information and targets for improvement in English and mathematics. The comments in other subjects are more generalised and tend to report what has been studied rather than what pupils can and cannot do.

34. The school provides some good documents for parents such as a comprehensive prospectus and regular newsletters. The provision of detailed information each half term about the work to be studied and home tasks given to each class is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, parents lack specific information about homework and how literacy and numeracy are taught.
35. A significant minority of parents feel that communication with the school could be improved. Although parents have plenty of opportunities to see class teachers and the headteacher, they do not feel that they are provided with sufficient information. There is some justification for this, for example parents are not given their child's results in standardised tests taken in Years 3 to 5, to which they are entitled. There is a particular weakness in communication with parents of pupils who have special educational needs. Parents are not sufficiently involved in the formulation and review of their children's IEPs. The practice of sending home new IEPs to be signed is not satisfactory.
36. Parents and carers continue to show good support for the school. A number of parents help in school, a parent runs the school rugby club and a parents' committee organises social events and raises money for the school. A large number of parents also supervise groups of pupils doing various projects on the annual grounds day. Attendance at parents' evenings is very high. Many parents and carers make a good contribution to their children's learning by providing good support at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. Leadership in the school is satisfactory overall. Aply supported by her deputy and staff colleagues, and with good support from the governing body, the headteacher provides sound leadership which gives the school a clear direction.
38. In the last report, some aspects of leadership and management were judged to be at least good and some very good. However, developments in leadership and management have not kept pace with those found in other primary schools. A number of weaknesses, particularly in systems for monitoring and evaluation, are preventing the school from moving forward at the rate it should. As a result, the rate of improvement since the last inspection has been slow.
39. The subject co-ordinators support their colleagues well through giving advice on planning and curriculum issues. Most monitor aspects of pupils' learning by scrutinising work. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching throughout all areas of the school. However, other staff are not delegated to do this and,

as a result, co-ordinators lack a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the areas for which they are responsible. The key stage co-ordinators lack clearly defined management roles and responsibilities and they are not effectively monitoring standards. Co-ordinators lack information required to plan adequately for improvement. As a result, their contribution to the management of the school and planning for its further development is weak. The school has recognised the need for training to enable co-ordinators to make a more effective contribution to monitoring and evaluation.

40. Management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is poor. There is a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teachers. Although the school tries to pick up children with any difficulties early on, there is a lack of clear criteria for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and for their movement through various stages of the register. The quality of the provision for special needs is not effectively monitored and, as a result, pupils with significant difficulties do not have their needs met.
41. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in both long- and short-term planning. The school development plan gives a sense of direction to the school. Some areas of weakness, for instance the need to raise standards in writing, have been identified. Other weaknesses, for example in the management of provision for special educational needs and some weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, have not been identified because of a lack of systematic monitoring. As in the last inspection, there is still need for more structured action planning which is based on a rigorous analysis of areas of weakness, the achievements of set targets and the intended impact on standards.
42. The governing body is well led and well organised. Governors are very supportive of the school, have been active in undertaking training and are becoming increasingly effective. The headteacher gives the governors information on results from national tests and they have a developing understanding about ways in which data can be usefully interpreted. Governors are strongly supportive of the school. However, governors, particularly those with curriculum responsibilities, lack adequate information to inform them about the strengths and weaknesses of the areas for which they are responsible. For example, governors do not receive written or verbal reports from subject co-ordinators on standards or developments within individual subjects.
43. Governors are appropriately involved in financial decision making. The chair of the finance committee is particularly well informed and makes a valuable contribution to the sound financial management of the school. Over the past year, the school has amassed a significant surplus of funding but plans are in place for it to be appropriately used. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but there are some gaps. Some curriculum areas, for example art, science and religious education are well resourced. There is a

lack of resources for teaching some aspects of ICT and inadequate provision for some areas of learning in the foundation stage.

44. There is a good level of staffing as a result of the recent significant increase in the number of additional classroom assistants. These assistants are developing good working relationships with teachers and pupils but further thought needs to be given to ways in which they are deployed and to the duties they undertake in classrooms. Many work with pupils with special educational needs and they need a clearer brief about the most effective ways to support the learning of these children. The secretary provides efficient support to the headteacher, governors and staff and a friendly welcome to visitors to the school.
45. Accommodation is well maintained and the school uses the available space well. There is, however, no medical room or ICT suite and this has an impact on aspects of the school's provision. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to make classrooms exciting and attractive learning environments by displaying pupils' work well and setting up a range of interesting displays.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of teaching and learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:
 - (1) Ensure that the provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively managed by:
 - clarifying roles and responsibilities for management of this area;
 - ensuring that IEPs contain clear and measurable targets that are used to focus teaching and assess pupils' progress;
 - involving parents in the formulation of IEPs and regular reviews;
 - clarifying the criteria for the identification of pupils with special needs and for their movement through stages on the register.

(Paragraphs: 8, 18, 23, 32, 40)
 - (2) Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses by:
 - ensuring that co-ordinators have adequate information to enable them to analyse the quality of provision and standards in the areas for which they are responsible;
 - analysing performance data and using the information to identify areas for improvement;
 - ensuring that governors are fully informed about the school's performance and in a position to contribute to and monitor planned improvements.

(Paragraphs: 39, 41, 42)

- (3) Raise standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 by:
- implementing specific strategies for teaching skills in writing;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of forms.
- (Paragraphs: 4, 50, 59, 60)*
- (4) Further improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics by:
- taking full advantage of the guidance on teaching provided in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
 - ensuring that all lessons have an appropriate level of pace and challenge;
 - critically appraising the use of commercial material in literacy lessons to ensure that it is used in the most appropriate way to move pupils' learning forward.
- (Paragraphs: 16, 17, 60, 63)*

Minor area for improvement

The consistency of the quality of marking. *(Paragraph: 19)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	13	19	0	0	0
Percentage	0	6	38	56	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	13	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	10
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	27	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	90 (90)	90 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	11
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	90 (97)	93 (97)
	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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	14	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	12
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (90)	90 (73)	93 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	23	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (80)	72 (77)	83 (83)
	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	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	206
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	107

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	0	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	2000/01
	£
Total income	444,489
Total expenditure	424,419
Expenditure per pupil	2,001
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,121
Balance carried forward to next year	34,191

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	279
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	50	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	48	2	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	44	14	4	6
The teaching is good.	50	40	2	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	40	12	8	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	34	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	34	14	10	4
The school is well led and managed.	68	18	8	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	50	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	34	24	10	14

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

47. Children are admitted to the reception class on a full-time basis at the beginning of the autumn or spring terms before their fifth birthdays. Their attainment on entry is above average overall and their base of skills in numeracy is usually at a higher level than that in literacy. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good for personal and social development. Teaching is effective in ensuring that children are on course to meet the early learning goals at the start of Year 1. Observation of children currently in Year 1 shows that many exceed these and are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum in aspects of English and mathematics.
48. Children's skills on entry to school are assessed but there is no subsequent objective assessment of their progress in any area of learning. Informal notes are kept of their personal development and some elements of achievement but there is no structured approach to monitoring their rate of progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum on offer.

Personal, social and emotional development

49. Good attention is paid to this area ensuring that children develop positive attitudes to learning and begin to co-operate with others and have a growing appreciation of their needs. Although children had only been in school for a short period at the time of the inspection, they were showing confidence in speaking in a group, trying out new activities and understanding the need to take turns and think about the consequences of their actions on others. In a physical education lesson, they made good attempts at dressing and undressing themselves and followed the directions of adults as they put the equipment away at the end. Practical activities in small groups encourage the children to listen and respond to others' ideas, as they showed when they were building 'houses' using construction equipment and discussing how to create a roof.

Communication, language and literacy

50. Even at this early stage of the school year, children listen carefully and show good understanding in discussion. They follow instructions, ask and answer questions of adults and each other and use talk well to clarify and organise their ideas. Children enjoy listening to and discussing stories, as they showed when the teacher shared the big book 'This is the Bear'. Several commented on the pictures, a few anticipated the rhyming words at the ends of lines and the majority showed understanding of the sequence of events and appreciation of the humour. Early reading skills are taught well so that children learn to recognise commonly used words and to use pictures to make reasoned guesses at the storyline. At the start of Year 1, almost all children have made a good start in reading simple books independently. Skills in writing progress at a steady rate so that, for example, children move from copying under the teacher's writing to writing individual letters and recognisable words. By the

end of the foundation stage, almost all are writing captions and short sentences. Higher attaining children write a few sentences independently but the quality of written work does not improve as much as it might, given their good skills in speaking and listening and in

reading. Opportunities to write independently are too limited and insufficient attention is given to introducing children to different forms and purposes of writing to extend their skills and promote understanding of the writing process.

Mathematical development

51. Many children show good awareness of mathematical ideas and are able, for example, to categorise objects and sort in a variety of ways such as by colour and size. Mathematical vocabulary is good and many children use terms such as 'more' or 'heavy' accurately as they play in the sand and water trays. Most children learn to recognise and order numbers to 10 and, by the end of the foundation stage, many are working to 20. They begin to add or subtract groups of objects and many record simple sums pictorially.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. Limited teaching was seen in this area but planning shows that children have a range of experiences to enable them to extend their awareness of the world around. They explore the use of their senses and features of living things in the environment. They learn about the jobs that people do and have opportunities to take on roles, for example as they play in the home corner and act out being shoppers and shopkeepers. Books are used well to raise awareness of features of the environment; 'Rosie's Walk' was the basis of simple map-making to show the hen's route around the farm. Children become familiar with the uses of the computer, using the mouse to manipulate images on the screen and responding to instructions and giving commands in games. They use a range of equipment to build and construct, adapting work to solve problems where necessary. However, the range of construction equipment is limited and some is outdated; this limits opportunities for children to improve their models and extend their ideas.

Physical development

53. Even at this early stage of the year, children show good control in moving in a variety of ways in physical education lessons. They have a growing awareness of others and of the appropriate use of space. However, provision for this area is limited because there is no large equipment to use in the outside play area and, as a result, incidental activity to improve children's physical skills is constrained. The school has recognised the need to improve provision and plans are in hand to enable this to happen. Children's skills in using tools, scissors and pencils steadily improve and many have good control by the time they start in Year 1.

Creative development

54. Children learn to use pencils, crayons and paint to represent their ideas in a variety of ways. Paintings by children who have just started school show bold use of colour. Very few paint with recognisable form but, by the end of the foundation stage, their work often shows careful observation and good

attention to detail. Lively illustrations often enhance written work, as in the stories of 'Mr Gumpy's Outing'. Children learn to mix colours and are introduced to sketchbooks to enable them to experiment with line and tone. The good range of experiences in art at this early stage is a contributory factor to the good standards achieved as pupils move through the school.

55. Children learn to respond and use their imagination in role-play but resources for this area are inadequate and this limits the quality of play. Many are receptive to new ideas, happily taking on the roles suggested by others and jointly creating an imaginative scenario, as, for example, they get the baby ready for a walk.

ENGLISH

56. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Standards in reading are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and pupils generally achieve the levels that they should. However, standards in writing are below average at this stage and many average attaining pupils are not achieving the standards that they should. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are very good. Standards in writing are good in Years 5 and 6. Since the last inspection, standards attained by Year 6 in English have improved, although standards in reading are higher than those in writing. Standards attained in Year 2 are at a similar level and the weakness in writing that was highlighted at that time is still an area of concern.
57. Good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills in a variety of contexts. From an early stage, pupils participate in weekly 'sharing assemblies' in which they explain and demonstrate aspects of their recent work. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and to listen carefully to others. Discussions at the start of lessons are often used well to extend pupils' vocabulary, as teachers focus, for example, on the key terms that may be used to accurately describe their observations in science. This was evident in a lesson with Year 2, where the teacher asked a series of open questions that encouraged pupils to organise their thinking and to classify materials according to a range of given criteria. As they move through the school, pupils develop a good awareness of the need to adapt their speech to suit a range of purposes. The majority of children have a good command of standard English and start to employ it appropriately. By the time they are in Year 6, many pupils use a good variety of expression and vocabulary to engage the listeners' interest. This was clearly apparent as pupils read extracts from their written work based on the story of 'The Wooden Horse'. They showed a very good feel for period language as they used terms such as 'by jove!' and 'spiffing idea'.
58. Reading skills generally develop well as pupils move through the school. There is a good emphasis on teaching early skills such as learning to recognise key words and sounds and using pictures to interpret events. Almost all pupils read regularly at home to parents or carers and this makes a strong

contribution to their progress and achievement. The majority of pupils currently in Year 2 read accurately and show understanding of what they read. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to read with good expression and can give a clear synopsis of books that they have previously read. In Key Stage 2, a good range of texts is introduced in literacy lessons and pupils start to develop clear preferences for particular authors or types of books. Year 6 pupils are generally enthusiastic readers, showing understanding of the key points of the texts that they read and the ability to express their views on the main themes and characters in a variety of stories. Research skills are developed well and pupils learn to retrieve and organise information from a range of sources, including the Internet and CD-Roms.

59. Pupils' written work steadily improves in Years 1 and 2 as they write factual accounts, stories and descriptions of their work in subjects such as science and design and technology. Ideas are developed logically and pupils learn to write structured accounts at greater length. Higher attaining children begin to make good use of vocabulary for effect, writing, for example 'but let's get on with the story,' and to use capitals for emphasis. For too many pupils, however, while written work improves in terms of length, general accuracy of spelling, punctuation and presentation, there is limited improvement in the content. There is insufficient emphasis on improving the language used to engage the interest of the reader. This improves as pupils move through Key Stage 2. The range of written work broadens to include, for example, interviews, reports, letters and some imaginative stories in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, standards noticeably improve. Many pupils are skilled at writing in a variety of forms and from a range of perspectives. Written work, for example narratives based on 'The Listeners' and an emotive account of a 'Titanic survivor', show a good feel for evocative language. Pupils use their skills well in subjects across the curriculum, for example in describing features of Malaysia in Year 4 and in written work linked to the Victorians in Year 5.
60. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. In most lessons, teachers make use of texts to engage pupils' interest and to promote discussion. However, the need to display these, for instance on an overhead projector, is sometimes overlooked and teaching lacks focus as a result. This was a weakness in lessons where teachers were encouraging pupils to identify the use of connectives or how dialogue is written, but were not able to clearly highlight pupils' accurate responses or to correct their errors. Tasks that follow introductory sessions are clearly explained and pupils organise activities well and settle to work quickly. In many lessons, all pupils follow the same programme of tasks and there is insufficient attention to matching their stage of learning to the work that is given. This is a particular weakness where there is indiscriminate use of commercial material that is sometimes insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils and too difficult for lower attainers and those with special needs. In one lesson, for example, several pupils who were competent writers marked time composing simple sentences while a small number with significant literacy difficulties struggled to understand the task, even with the help of a classroom assistant. In most lessons, teachers use questions well to promote pupils' appreciation of the language used by an author and their own expressive reading of texts sets a good model. These factors are important elements in promoting pupils' progress in speaking and listening. However, there is not enough direct teaching of reading and writing and many teachers are not yet taking full advantage of the opportunities created by the literacy framework to engage in focused teaching of groups to demonstrate and promote pupils' skills. Some effective use is made of ICT for wordprocessing of written work to create a good finished product, often for display, but use of computers for drafting and editing of work is limited.
61. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Whilst these pupils receive a good level of additional support, this is not targeted to best effect. Those with short-term learning difficulties make steady progress and are usually working at average levels by the time they reach the top end of the school, but children with more significant difficulties do not receive the support that they should. Targets set in their IEPs do not sufficiently inform the teaching that they receive in class lessons or withdrawal groups. For example,

a need is often identified for pupils to increase their recognition and use of key words but these words are not available or displayed as they undertake a written task.

62. Management of the subject is weak. The co-ordinator does not have a whole school view of provision for or standards achieved in the subject. Insufficient use is made of information from data to track pupils' progress or to analyse strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. This is a particular weakness at the lower end of the school, where there is no systematic approach to assessing children's progress and a lack of information to inform improvement. The need to improve standards in writing at Key Stage 1 has been recognised by the school. Key Stage 1 teachers have carried out some analysis of where the weaknesses lie and the school has put together an action plan to bring about improvements. Teaching is not monitored regularly and remains at a satisfactory level because there is insufficient focus on promoting the most effective strategies to raise the quality.

MATHEMATICS

63. There has been some improvement in the standards attained in mathematics since the last inspection, particularly for the pupils in Year 6. When pupils leave the school, they have a good base of numeracy skills that they successfully use to solve problems. Pupils' work at the end of Year 2 indicates that they achieve broadly average standards. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy but, in too many lessons, the suggested teaching strategies are not making as much impact as they could. The pace of learning and the demands made on pupils are, too often, not high enough.
64. The youngest children arrive in school with a good base in numeracy skills and these are built on and extended as they become more familiar with counting and simple number patterns. By the time pupils start work on the National Curriculum, they have a reasonable base of understanding. The pupils in Year 1 refine their counting skills and begin to learn how to add numbers together and use number lines to 'picture' what they are doing. Teaching successfully helps them grasp the idea of 'counting on' and enables them to begin to become increasingly familiar with simple addition. More could be achieved through the provision of better quality number lines and some clearer explanations about how to use them to solve more complex problems. Year 2 pupils move on and continue to extend their understanding. They develop good awareness of the properties of shapes and lines of symmetry and begin to measure accurately using standard units. They become more confident about using higher numbers and learn about how numbers work, for example by counting in 5s and 10s. The clever use of a square showing numbers 1-100 made pupils think carefully about number patterns and helped them to get to grips with the idea of place value. Occasionally, the pace of the teaching is too slow and more could be achieved through a brisker approach where pupils are challenged further, for instance to recognise more complex number patterns. The classroom assistants enable groups of pupils to have more focused help

when they are working, but they are not consistently used in the most efficient way.

65. Older pupils continue to gain a better grasp of how numbers work. They extend work on higher numbers, often working comfortably with four digit numbers and increasing their understanding of the four operations. Effective teaching explores the relationship between the different operations. For example, Year 4 pupils were successfully introduced to the idea of making addition and subtraction sums using the same numbers. This gave them a good insight into how one operation is the inverse of the other. Some pupils, even at this early stage of the year, could move on at a more rapid rate if more account was taken of what they had achieved in previous year groups. In some lessons, not enough use is made of information about what pupils can already do to plan work for their differing levels of attainment. The range of mathematical work is extended so that pupils become familiar with the features of common shapes, they explore the ideas concerned with symmetry and the older pupils apply their numeracy skills to solving problems about scale, area and perimeter.
66. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is satisfactory; in Years 5 and 6, pupils benefit from consistently good, enthusiastic teaching that makes demands on their thinking. Pupils respond very well to these high expectations and gain real enjoyment from meeting the challenges set. This was very evident in a Year 6 lesson where all the pupils were fully engaged in solving mathematical problems to two decimal places. The emphasis throughout was on understanding the range of strategies that could be used and there was a buzz to the lesson as pupils worked with real commitment. They helped each other and shared explanations. Older pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of education. They have a secure grasp of how numbers work, are familiar for instance with the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and work comfortably with high numbers. They apply what they know well and are keen and enthusiastic about the subject.
67. The management of the subject is not sufficiently rigorous to lead to sustained improvement. Some performance data is analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses but the co-ordinator lacks a view of standards across the school. Teaching is not evaluated and there is no way of sharing the most effective practice and identifying areas for development across the school. Although resources are adequate, some lessons would benefit from the provision of more individual whiteboards and digit cards to be used by pupils at the start of lessons and thus ensure that all are fully involved. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is limited.

SCIENCE

68. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are in broadly in line with expectations; their knowledge of life and living processes is good and they are developing a good base of investigative skills. The current group of eleven-year-old pupils are working at levels above national expectations. By the end

of Year 6, pupils' knowledge and skills is good in all areas of study, with investigative work being a particular strength. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and achieve the standards that they should. The rate of progress is good overall in Years 3 to 6, ensuring that the oldest pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are generally given good support by class teachers, classroom assistants and by other pupils. This, together with the appropriate tasks they are set, contribute to the satisfactory progress they make.

69. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of physical processes such as the transmission of sound and the uses of electricity. They know that some materials are good conductors of electricity and some are good insulators. They know how to create a simple circuit to light up a torch bulb using a battery, wires and a bulb. These pupils are able to carry out simple investigations using a range of magnets to determine which ones have strong 'pulling power' and which have less power. In a good lesson, Year 2 pupils were investigating a range of materials and grouping them according to some of their properties. Higher attaining pupils suggested a range of criteria which could be used for classifying them. They also suggested some good tests for determining some of their properties. In their descriptions, they used a good range of appropriate vocabulary.
70. Year 6 pupils have good investigative skills and use apparatus well in their investigations. For example, in their study of forces, they measure in Newtons using spring force measurers. They take accurate measurements and record their observations. From their investigations, they are developing an understanding of forces of gravity and friction. Higher and average attaining pupils make predictions before carrying out investigations, have a good understanding of the need for fair testing in investigative work and observe and discuss results offering explanations for their findings. In one lesson, these pupils were investigating what happens to the force needed to pull a load up a slope as the slope gets steeper. Having taken a series of readings of the force required to pull the load up a range of inclines, the higher attaining pupils were able to input these into the computer and to generate a simple graph showing how the force required related to the incline. Lower attaining pupils make relevant observations during investigations and, with help, record their observations and provide explanations for patterns in recorded measurements.
71. Pupils make good progress with learning throughout Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils study light and light sources and the learning of pupils of all levels of attainment is good. Higher attainers have a good understanding of the way the earth orbits the sun while average attainers know that the distance a light source is from a given object will determine the length of the shadow formed. Year 4 pupils extend good learning in the subject through an extensive study of 'My body'. They cover considerable work on how to look after themselves, for example on healthy eating and taking care of their teeth; this work makes a good contribution to their personal, social and health education. Pupils in Year 5 develop a good awareness of photosynthesis by investigating the growth of

plants and by experimenting with the various conditions in which plants can be nurtured. This extends the good work done in Year 4 on life processes when pupils search the immediate outside environment of the school looking for minibeasts and surveying their various habitats in such places as walls and hedges.

72. In the three lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was at least good and a lesson with Year 6 was very good. Teachers plan well. Most lessons include a range of appropriate activities that meet the learning needs of most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Some activities consolidate previously learnt skills, extending and building on them and helping pupils to develop new skills and understanding. A number of strengths account for the good progress that pupils made in the three lessons seen. Teachers encouraged pupils to explain their scientific thinking and they asked probing questions which challenged this thinking. They placed an appropriate stress on the development of investigative skills. Pupils' learning was supported as they co-operated well when working in groups, particularly when carrying out investigations. For example, in the Year 6 lesson, pupils were working in mixed groups, sharing the tasks of observing, measuring and recording. Good application to the task contributed to the pace of learning and the development of good investigative skills, as did the good quality support given by higher and average attaining pupils to the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs. Ends of sessions were used well to consolidate and assess pupils' learning.
73. The subject has continued to develop well since the last inspection. Resources overall are good, although use of ICT is limited. Programs are used to generate a range of graphs from given data but there is a lack of equipment such as sensors to monitor and measure external events. The good use of resources by teachers is contributing to the good progress pupils make in developing their investigative skills. Management is good. The co-ordinator has a good awareness of the strengths and weakness of the subject, gained through the monitoring of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' work.

ART AND DESIGN

74. Standards are good throughout the school and work in some aspects of the subject is of excellent quality. Only two lessons were seen, so a secure judgement on the quality of teaching is not possible, but these lessons and pupils' work throughout the school indicate that teaching is good.
75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good opportunities to work with a variety of media and to learn to use a range of techniques to represent their ideas and observations. As they draw, print, paint and make collages, they learn about colour, pattern and texture. Observational drawings, for example of trees and leaves and studies of flowers show good attention to line and form. Pupils have good opportunities to work collaboratively, as they did in producing a beautiful seed collage in Year 2. They learn about careful brushwork and colour mixing

techniques; their early understanding is built upon effectively as they move through the school so that many of the older pupils show good skills, for example in painting landscapes.

76. Work in Years 3 and 4 shows good detail, as, for example, pupils produce portraits of their friends or in the style of the Tudors. Observational drawings are often of very high quality and pupils' skills are used well, for example in their studies of plants on school grounds day. Art is used well to enhance and support work across the curriculum; Year 5 pupils have produced some excellent still-life studies of fruit in the style of Victorian artists and Year 6 made close observational drawings of bicycles as part of their work on forces in science. The oldest pupils show confidence in using a range of methods and materials and modifying and improving their work. Sketchbooks are often used to enable the initial recording of images and exploration of ideas; in some year groups, their regular use and evaluative comments by teachers results in noticeable improvements in pupils' skills.

77. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to learn about the work of artists and to try out their techniques. Year 4 showed very good brushwork in studies based on Klimt and Year 6 demonstrated a good understanding of cubism in striking and colourful work based on the techniques of Picasso. These opportunities support pupils' spiritual and cultural development; collaborative work in the subject, for example in creating a street scene in the style of Lowry, enhances their social development. The curriculum is enhanced by visits, for example to the National Gallery. ICT is beginning to be used to support work in art, through the use of 'Colour Maze' for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and to enable research into the work of artists through the use of CD-Rom.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. As with art, this subject has high status and standards are good throughout the school. No lessons were seen and no judgement is made on teaching, but teachers' planning and pupils' work indicate that there are good opportunities for pupils to learn about all aspects of the subject and to experience all elements of the design and make process.
79. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to make simple plans to represent their intentions and to use a range of materials and techniques in making a variety of products. Clay and textile work is often of high quality, showing careful attention to detail to enhance the finished product. Pupils have a good range of experiences as, for example, they make instruments, 'face' biscuits and Christmas cards. Year 2 pupils produced detailed designs for puppets, labelling constituent parts and considering the materials that they could use. They made considered evaluations of the products, identifying problems and potential improvements, often showing understanding at a level usually expected of pupils well into Key Stage 2.
80. The skills developed by the younger pupils are built upon well as they move through the school. Designs become more detailed and pupils start to explain the reasons for selecting certain materials and to show measurements for their products. Work in Year 5 on making zoetropes involved pupils in research as well as design and evaluation and enabled them to make good use of their skills in literacy and numeracy. Year 6 pupils also engaged in research on Greek sandals before designing and making sandals that fitted their own feet; this was a challenging task that resulted in a good range of products in a variety of styles.
81. In much of the work, pupils have good opportunities to use the techniques that they learn in art to enhance their products. Clay flowers in Year 3, for example, show careful use of shaping techniques and good attention to colour to create an attractive final product. Design and technology is also used effectively to support work in subjects such as history and science. As part of their topic on Greece, pupils studied and reproduced the designs on Greek vases in paint before sculpting their own. Knowledge of the properties of materials and forces is brought to bear as pupils make vehicles and products with moving parts. Photographs using the digital camera are often used effectively to record products made and to form part of a portfolio of work that is built up as pupils move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

82. No teaching of history or geography was seen during the inspection. The work in pupils' books shows that, where a judgement could be made, standards are broadly in line with expectations. The work of the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often better than the average, especially in history.

83. There was not enough evidence to make a firm judgement about standards in history attained by pupils at the end of Year 2. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are taught a good range of history that successfully introduces them to how people lived in the past and to some important events of particular periods. The younger pupils learn about life in the Roman Empire and contrast this to some aspect of the Celtic period. They learn about why the Romans wanted to invade England as well as about the struggle to repel them led by Boudicea. Timelines are successfully used to give the pupils a sense of chronology. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills to record events in their own words. Work on the Tudor period is better as it gives pupils a good chance to write in some different ways. For instance, pupils imagined they were Catherine of Aragon and wrote about her feelings which make interesting reading, especially about her marriage to Henry V¹¹¹! Pupils also contrast the lives of the rich and the poor in Tudor times and are given some insight into how 'ordinary people' spent their time.
84. Older pupils study the Ancient Greeks and the Victorians and produce some work of a high standard. At this stage, pupils apply their literacy skills well to produce good pieces of writing that include theatre posters, a sequence of 'a day in the life' using text and pictures or personal diaries of a Victorian servant who writes about getting up early and the drudgery of laundry work. Much of this work is broad based and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, touching on art, architecture, everyday life and historical events and trends. For instance, Year 6 pupils have studied the spread of steam power during the Victorian era and the impact that this had on patterns of settlement and how people spent their lives.
85. In geography, Years 1 and 2 pupils begin to learn about the immediate environment of the school and the local parks. Representing their observations in drawings, they learn about the facilities available and games people can play. Seven-year-olds begin to record the weather patterns and make good use of the information to create simple graphs to represent the pattern.
86. In Years 3 to 6, pupils extend their understanding of places through, for example, work on the Yorkshire Dales. Through their studies, they begin to acquire some key geographical skills, for instance mapping skills through the plotting of land use along a High Street. As in the history, however, too much of the work is based on worksheets and pupils do not have enough chance to record in their own words and so use and refine their literacy skills. Pupils in Year 5 do, however, get some good chances to use their numeracy skills. As they study the growth and development of Hemel Hempstead, they record the main occupations of the population and record this data on graphs. They also explore some of the important geographical questions about why places are where they are. There is good application of mapping skills as they record siting the town at the confluence of two rivers. This local study very successfully combines history and geography to tell an interesting and well-recorded story.

87. Both history and geography make an effective contribution to ensuring the breadth and richness of the curriculum. The school is sensibly adapting the most recent national guidance to support planning and these subjects are managed in a sensible and effective manner. There is limited use of ICT to support learning, but lack of resources restricts the potential for this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

88. Most seven-year-olds meet the standards expected. By the age of eleven, pupils are confident when using computers and overall achieve expected standards when communicating and handling information. They have a developing understanding of the power of information technology. However, the school is not yet adequately equipped to teach all the required aspects of the subject and there are gaps in pupils' experiences and opportunities to achieve the expected standards in some areas. Further resources are required to enable pupils to develop skills in control technology and in using sensors to monitor and record changes in the environment such as alterations in temperature and light. Older pupils have little experience of using spreadsheets, which means that their knowledge of this aspect of modelling is limited.
89. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use wordprocessing programs to draft ideas and edit text. They have a basic familiarity with the hardware and the programs in use. Pupils have reasonable control of the mouse and know basic keyboard functions. Year 1 pupils learn to use the keyboard to write words such as their names on the screen. The higher attaining pupils activate the printer in order to print out their efforts. With support, pupils use the computer to gather and collate data and produce simple block graphs depicting such things as the distribution of heights of pupils in the class or of their various shoe sizes. Through work on these activities with the teacher, pupils begin to build up some understanding of the power of the computer. They also learn to use the mouse to click and drag various shapes across the screen. Year 2 pupils learn to create pictures and draw them on screen. They use the computer to complete lists of words with common endings. They generate pie charts using gathered data, for example on pupils' favourite drinks. Pupils with special educational needs have equal opportunity to use computers and other equipment. All pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve the standards that they should at this stage.
90. In the aspects of the subject that can be taught, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve as they should in Years 3 to 6. Year 3 pupils continue to develop their wordprocessing skills. They edit text by changing font and they combine images with text. They use various programs to draw pictures on the screen and incorporate these with text, for example to make Christmas cards. In one lesson, Year 3 pupils displayed good knowledge and skills in wordprocessing as they made attractive labels to enhance their own books of stories. Older pupils learn to program a robotic toy, thus becoming more aware of the power of ICT. They also learn to search for and retrieve information

using CD-Roms and the Internet. All pupils are introduced to the digital camera and older pupils learn to incorporate photographs into text; they use LOGO to construct complex patterns on the computer screen. Teachers display a secure understanding of the subject and, where possible, they help pupils to develop their ICT skills appropriately.

91. ICT is largely taught through its use across curriculum subjects. There is little discrete teaching of the subject. Some good examples of the use of ICT are to be found in science, for example in constructing graphs from collected data. Some use is made of ICT in history, geography and religious education for pupils to research a range of topics using the Internet and CD-Roms. However, concern was expressed in the last inspection report that insufficient opportunities for the use of ICT were being identified in long- and medium-term planning; overall, this is still a weakness.
92. Management of the subject is satisfactory. An effective training programme has contributed to raising teachers' levels of confidence. The co-ordinator monitors learning by scrutinising pupils' work. She does not monitor teaching through direct observation and, consequently, does not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and areas for development throughout the school. Resources are unsatisfactory and the school realises that there is a need to improve these in order to develop the subject further. Satisfactory progress has been made in the subject since the last inspection, although further improvements are still needed.

MUSIC

93. During the inspection only two lessons were observed, both in Key Stage 2 and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards or the quality of teaching. The overall quality of singing is satisfactory. Pupils display adequate control of pitch and rhythm and are able to sustain a constant beat.
94. In one lesson, Year 4 pupils were encouraged to listen to music and respond. The pupils listened well and articulated the feelings and images created in their minds by the music. They had the opportunity to listen to the works of a range of composers including that of John Williams, Benjamin Britten and Mussorgsky. Higher attaining pupils expressed preferences for the music of one or others of the composers and clearly stated reasons for their choice. Year 5 pupils developed their understanding of different periods by listening to Renaissance and Baroque music. In both lessons, pupils sang well in unison. They are beginning to develop an understanding of conventional notation. Higher attaining pupils distinguish and correctly identify music played in a major or minor key.

95. Teaching in both lessons seen was good. Clear planning and a range of resources were used to effectively support teaching. Lessons were managed well and much was expected from pupils. Teachers encouraged good listening skills and, through astute questioning, they successfully encouraged average and lower attainers to respond verbally to music by attempting to express their emotions and reactions to it. A strong feature of both lessons was the high level of pupil participation and their obvious enthusiasm. Pupils with special educational needs participated fully and displayed the same enthusiasm as their peers.
96. Planning ensures that National Curriculum requirements are largely met, although further provision needs to be made for composition. The school is aware of this. Pupils have a range of opportunities to participate in musical activities. They can join the school choir, which joins in the annual celebration of music at The National Festival of Voices at Wembley. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, clarinet and flute; parents and carers pay for this tuition.
97. The co-ordinator supports teachers well, giving good guidance on planning. Teaching is not monitored and, therefore, the co-ordinator lacks information to effectively focus on improving teaching and learning throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

98. Only a limited number of lessons were seen during the inspection and too few to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. The teaching seen with the older pupils was good. The school follows the national guidance for the subject so pupils are taught the full range of activities including games, gymnastics and dance. All pupils are given a good opportunity to learn to swim at the local pool and the great majority of eleven-year-olds can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
99. During one lesson, Year 1 pupils enjoyed the opportunity to balance on different parts of their bodies. The teacher gave careful emphasis to key vocabulary and encouraged pupils to follow what became increasingly complex instructions. The use of pupils to demonstrate good balance successfully resulted in others improving their performance. The pupils jumped lightly and landed safely, bending their knees and maintaining control.
100. Year 6 pupils were concentrating on fitness programmes; working very successfully in pairs, they timed each other on various exercises, noting the results with a view to improving in the coming weeks. The lesson had a good emphasis on physical activity and the teaching was demanding. The pupils were encouraged to complete the exercises with some thought to accuracy and control. Teaching with the Year 5 pupils was also very effective in encouraging them to improve their performances. The teacher placed good emphasis on the need to evaluate their own and others' performances; this led to much better

execution as pupils picked up on the comments made and took serious notice of the demonstrations by individual pupils.

101. Dance lessons offer pupils a good opportunity to combine work in physical education with music. A lesson with Year 4 pupils made good use of a range of music to explore the interpretation of rhythm and feel of the music in movement. The quality of pupils' movements was good; they were light on their feet and used body positions effectively to express the mood of the recordings. Good teaching encouraged pupils to listen carefully to the music, used good performances to guide improvements and give clear help as to how to further improve. Pupils responded very positively; they worked hard, showed a good determination to succeed and collaborated to good effect.
102. Subject provision is broad and balanced. There are some opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive games, for example in rugby, football and rounders. Year 5 and 6 pupils have been very successful in local rounders and rugby competitions in the last three years.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. At the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time pupils are aged 11, their attainment slightly exceeds these expectations. This reflects the higher profile of the subject since the last inspection and the good improvements that have been made.
104. Although it was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection, scrutiny of work across the school and observation in these lessons show pupils, including those with special educational needs, making sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress to achieve well from Years 3 to 6. Concern was expressed in the last inspection report that some lessons lacked a clear focus on religious education. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that the school has fully addressed this issue.
105. As a result of good teaching, pupils gain a good knowledge of a range of world religions. Using this knowledge, Year 6 pupils are able to compare and contrast a range of aspects of these religions, picking out key facts for this purpose. In their studies, pupils effectively use a range of reference material to research key beliefs, festivals and symbols associated with several faiths. Some particularly interesting work enables pupils to explore a given theme, object or topic and relate it to the part it

plays in several religions. For example, pupils have studied how flowers and plants play a part in a number of religions and what some flowers have come to symbolise to these faiths.

106. Older pupils build on a sound understanding developed in Years 1 and 2. Year 1 pupils learn about festivals. As part of their study of Christianity, they learn how Christmas is celebrated and how worshippers give thanks at Harvest Festivals. Year 2 pupils learn about religious symbols and meanings found in a range of faiths including Christianity, Sikhism and Judaism. Throughout their time in school, pupils learn about stories in the bible from both the Old and New Testaments. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about the Parable of the Sower and pupils in Year 4 learn about Joseph and his experiences in Egypt.
107. Management is good. The co-ordinator monitors the subject well by direct observation of teaching and learning in classrooms and the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. This gives her a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and helps her support her colleagues well. A good resource bank of books and artefacts are used well in classrooms to help pupils understand more about religious education. Older Key Stage 2 pupils make good use of reference books when researching about world religions, and some use is made of CD-Roms and the Internet as research tools.