

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MOSS BURY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Stevenage, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117269

Headteacher: Mr J Langdon

Reporting inspector: Ms S Billington  
4343

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 193762

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Webb Rise  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: SG1 5PA

Telephone number: 01438 222300

Fax number: 01438 222301

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Nichols

Date of previous inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Registered inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11096	Ms M Davie	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?
23276	Ms M Mann	Team inspector	History Music The foundation stage	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
17456	Mrs A Smithers	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography Physical education Equality of opportunity	
29959	Ms K Fleming	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education	
22577	Ms M Hart	Team inspector	Hearing Impaired Unit and provision	

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education  
1 Albert Road  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT1 1SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a large primary school with 321 pupils on roll, including 26 who attend mornings only in the nursery. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes with an average of 26 children in each. There are more boys than girls on roll and in the Y3/4 classes there are almost twice as many boys as girls. The majority of pupils are white and of UK heritage. A range of other minority ethnic groups is represented including Indian, Black Caribbean and African. Eleven children speak English as an additional language; most of these are at an advanced stage of language acquisition but two receive specific support to help them with their English.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average but the number of pupils with statements of special need is high. Six of these are taught in a special unit for children with partial hearing for part of the time and integrated into mainstream classes for some lessons. There are also four children with statements of special need in the main school. The majority of pupils with special needs have learning difficulties; a small number has physical disabilities.

The school is currently part of a local business partnership initiative involving Years 5 and 6 pupils. This is aimed at raising pupils' awareness of business and the workplace.

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

This is an improving school. Standards are low but are showing signs of improvement, particularly in mathematics, writing and science. Teaching is good overall although there is some variation in the quality through the school. Leadership is sound. The headteacher and senior staff share a clear sense of direction and are working to achieve further improvement. Co-ordinators are working hard to fulfil their responsibilities, but many are new to their roles and are not yet in a position to monitor and evaluate work in their subjects. Almost all governors are also new to their roles; they are still being trained but are organised into appropriate committees to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. The school gives satisfactory value for money

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

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relationships are very good throughout the school
- Standards are rising in writing, mathematics and science
- Teaching in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Pupils in the hearing impaired unit (PHU) make good progress; they benefit from a very successful integration programme as do other children with whom they work and play
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good
- The school has good links with partner institutions that enhance opportunities for learning
- The learning environment is attractive and well-organised

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

- Pupils' skills in speaking and in reading
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), geography and music
- The use of teaching time to achieve a more balanced curriculum
- Opportunities for co-ordinators at middle management level to support and monitor work through the school
- Policies to meet statutory requirements and to guide the work of the staff

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then improvement has been slow but overall is satisfactory. Standards in mathematics have improved. Improvements in pupils' skills in reading have been slow until this academic year, but there are now indications of rising standards at the lower end of the school. Standards in science have improved, pupils are making satisfactory progress and many are achieving expected levels in this subject. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now good overall. Expectations of what pupils might achieve have been raised, though there is still a need to raise these further in Years 1 and 2 and to some extent in Years 3 and 4. The rigour and pace of lessons has improved overall, but is still a weakness at times.

Assessment has improved since the last inspection and consistent record-keeping systems are being put in place. Senior staff are monitoring standards but the majority of co-ordinators are new to their roles and lack a clear brief for their work; as a result some areas are not being monitored effectively. Teaching time is now in line with requirements although time is not always used effectively. Provision for the teaching of design and technology (DT) and ICT has improved and National Curriculum requirements are now met.

## STANDARDS

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

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

The inspection found that standards overall are better than recent results would indicate. Standards in English are improving in writing, but still lower than they should be in reading. Listening skills are broadly as expected, but limitations in pupils' speaking skills restrict their progress and as a result many eleven year olds are working at below or well below average standards. Standards in mathematics and science have risen and overall for eleven year olds are below, rather than well below, average.

The youngest children make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning and are in line to achieve the targets set for pupils at the start of Year 1. Progress is broadly satisfactory for five to seven year olds. The majority of seven year olds are achieving the standards expected in writing, aspects of mathematics and science, but higher attainers could achieve more. The majority of eight to eleven year olds achieve as they should, although again some higher attaining nine year olds could move on more rapidly in their learning.

Standards are in line with those expected for seven and eleven year olds in religious education (RE), art and design, design and technology (DT), history and physical education. Standards are below expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) and geography throughout the school and in music for eleven year olds.

The school has set realistic targets for attainment of eleven year olds in national tests in 2001; these were revised upwards during the year in the light of good assessment information that indicated the potential of pupils to achieve higher levels.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about school and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school; a small proportion is occasionally restless and inattentive in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities. Relationships are particularly strong throughout the school.
Attendance	In line with national averages but with a high level of unauthorised absences. Too many pupils arrive late at school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

Teaching is good overall but there is a variation in the quality of teaching through the school. Fifty four per cent of lessons were good and of these eleven per cent were very good. Three per cent – two lessons – were unsatisfactory. Teaching of the under fives is consistently good and in the nursery in particular often very good, ensuring that the youngest children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Teaching of the five to seven year olds is satisfactory overall, but in some lessons the pace is too slow and tasks are not always challenging enough to take the learning of higher attaining children forward. Teaching of the seven to eleven year olds is generally good and some teaching of the ten and eleven year olds is very good. This is having a significant impact on the progress of the oldest pupils, many of whom are quickly making up some lost ground in their earlier learning. Occasionally lessons with eight and nine year olds have the same weaknesses as those seen with the younger pupils.

Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory for five to seven year olds and good for seven to eleven year olds. Teachers are generally making good use of the guidance in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy as a basis for their planning. There is a lack of focus on the teaching of specific skills in reading and this is slowing the progress that pupils make.

Throughout the school lessons are well planned. Teachers generally make good use of resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. In the best lessons, pupils are well managed with teachers having high expectations of standards of work and behaviour to which the children respond well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and includes all the subjects that it should. There is a lack of balance because some subjects are not given enough teaching time.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is a good level of support and pupils with significant difficulties, particularly those in the PHU, make good progress.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional	Pupils receive a good level of extra support to help them to cope with the curriculum but sometimes are not sufficiently involved in
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language	classroom activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, particularly for spiritual and social development. A good range of visits, visitors and a high quality learning environment widen pupils' appreciation of the world around.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures to track pupils' personal and academic progress are good. Staff know individual children well.

Home-school links are satisfactory and the school has introduced some successful initiatives to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's learning. Children are well cared for, but the school is lacking some important policies to guide the work of staff and ensure that statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils' care and welfare are met.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head and senior staff share a clear sense of direction and are focused on the need to improve standards. Many co-ordinators need a clearer brief to enable them to be more effective in evaluating learning and supporting improvements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Almost all governors are new. Appropriate arrangements have been put in place to enable the governing body to fulfil its responsibilities but governors currently lack the expertise to enable them to do this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of information to analyse strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. Arrangements are in place to monitor teaching but these need to be extended to cover more subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally used effectively but better use could be made of time in some lessons.

The school has a good level of staffing, particularly teaching assistants. Accommodation is spacious and well used; some essential refurbishment is planned for the near future. Resources for learning are generally good and well used to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>The majority of parents (over 90%) feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are expected to work hard</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large proportion of parents feels that there is a lack of activities outside of lessons</li> <li>• A smaller proportion is concerned that children do not get enough homework</li> </ul>

The inspection findings broadly support parents' positive views. Extra-curricular activities are limited but there is a good range of visits including a residential visit for the oldest pupils. Homework is now set regularly, and for the older pupils in particular, is used well to support learning in aspects of English and mathematics.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

## HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. Overall standards are lower than they should be but there are clear indications of improvement. The school has recognised the need to raise standards and is beginning to put in place effective strategies to do this, but there is still a legacy of under-achievement to tackle. The last inspection found considerable variation in the standards attained in English, mathematics and science, with standards below average overall and particular weaknesses in the progress made by older pupils. This inspection also finds standards below average in English and mathematics, but with pupils now making generally satisfactory progress. In science, standards are improving so that the majority of seven year olds are working at expected levels and older pupils are making satisfactory progress, although standards overall at the age of eleven are below average.
2. Results of national tests taken by seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup> are beginning to rise, particularly in writing. In this area, while test results in 2000 were below average overall, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels was in line with the national average. Pupils' performance was below average in reading. In mathematics, performance was well below average. Compared with similar schools, performance in writing was below average and it was well below average in reading and mathematics. Over the past three years there has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The inspection found that standards in mathematics and reading have improved with the majority of pupils achieving expected levels but few working at higher levels. In writing, the majority of pupils are working at expected levels; only a minority reaches higher levels and a significant proportion of pupils are working at below average levels. Teachers' assessments of attainment in science in 2000 were broadly in line with the national average. The inspection found that in this subject also, the majority of pupils are achieving standards that are broadly average but few are working at higher levels.
3. Results of tests taken by eleven year olds at the end of Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup> have shown some improvement in the last three years, although there was a dip in 2000 because a high proportion of pupils who took the tests had special needs or were new to the school. Performance in the 2000 tests was below the national average in English and well below national averages in mathematics and science. Boys have generally attained better than girls compared to national averages, although girls' performance in English has improved to the point where in 2000 they performed better than girls nationally. Compared to schools with a similar intake, results were well below average in all subjects. As with Key Stage 1, the inspection found standards better than the results would indicate. In English, the majority of pupils are attaining broadly average standards and a small minority is attaining at higher levels. However, there is a significant minority – almost a third of the year group – that is working at below average levels. In mathematics standards are below average, rather than well below as recent results have indicated. In science, standards are below average but rapidly improving.
4. Children who enter the school have levels of skills and understanding that are broadly average for their age. They make steady, and often good, progress in all

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<sup>1</sup> Key Stage 1 refers to pupils in Years 1 and 2 aged from five to seven.

<sup>2</sup> Key Stage 2 refers to pupils in Years 3 to 6 aged seven to eleven

areas of their learning in the Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup>. This good start ensures that the vast majority is in line to attain the targets set as early learning goals at the start of Year 1 and is leading to improved standards at the age of seven. Children's levels of attainment are generally built upon in Key Stage 1 and the majority achieve as well as they should. However, there is a need to raise expectations of the potential of higher attainers and to ensure that work is appropriately matched to take their learning forward. At Key Stage 2, almost all pupils are now making satisfactory progress in their learning but many have not achieved as well as they should in the past and this is depressing their levels of attainment. Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the organisation of pupils into groups that are taught according to their levels of attainment are having a significant impact on learning at the upper end of the school. Many pupils are making up lost ground at this stage and the majority is achieving well.

5. In religious education (RE), physical education (PE), design and technology (DT), history and art, standards attained by seven and eleven year olds are broadly in line with expectations. There has been an improvement in standards attained in DT which were below average in the last inspection. In geography standards are below expectations for both seven and eleven year olds. In music, standards attained by seven year olds are broadly in line with expectations but gaps in older pupils' experiences in the subject mean that standards at the age of eleven are below expectations. In both of these subjects, standards are not as good as they were found to be in the last inspection.
6. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been limited until the last year and this has had an impact on standards. As was found in the last inspection, standards are below national expectations. Regular use of the ICT suite by all classes is resulting in rapid improvement although standards attained by seven year olds are still overall below national expectations. Older pupils have not had enough experience in working with ICT and as a result the attainment of eleven year olds is below expectations.
7. Pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit (PHU) achieve well. They make good and often very good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans and their targets for language development. Some individual pupils attain standards in line with national expectations in some aspects of their work, for example, in writing.
8. Pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of support and make satisfactory progress overall, although their progress is often difficult to assess because of gaps in record-keeping. Those with statements of special need make good progress and achieve well.
9. Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally make satisfactory progress in their learning so that they can access the curriculum and begin to make progress in key skills in literacy and numeracy. They often begin to achieve well once they are at the stage where they have a competent understanding of English.

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<sup>3</sup> Foundation Stage refers to children in the nursery and reception classes aged from three to five

## Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They are enthusiastic learners who are interested in their tasks and activities. They listen well because the school has worked hard at improving their skills in this area. They respond well to good lessons; in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson the teacher's energetic and animated delivery soon livened pupils up so that they paid close attention and therefore made good gains in their learning. In a Year 3 and 4 music lesson pupils were immediately focused because they related well to the country and western style of the piece they were asked to appraise and enjoyed clapping the beats. There are, however, a significant number of pupils who are passive in lessons, leaving it to others to answer teachers' questions, easily distracted and giving up on tasks far too quickly when they are finding them difficult. This is sometimes because teaching is not lively enough, or overly long introductions result in pupils becoming restless, losing concentration and therefore not learning enough.
11. Pupils in the PHU have very good attitudes to school. They come happily to school, work hard and are confident and comfortable in ordinary classrooms, in small groups and in individual sessions. They are encouraged to be as independent as possible and are self-sufficient in aspects of the day-to-day management of their hearing aids. Their confidence allows them to perform for parents and classmates, as they did, for example, in "The Wizard of Oz" at Christmas.
12. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. Pupils generally respond well to teachers' high expectations and this makes a significant contribution to how well they achieve. There are, however, a few, mostly boys, who find it difficult to remain focused and whose behaviour takes up too much of the teacher's time. As a result everyone's learning is disrupted. Pupils move around the school in a sensible manner, but are not always polite when speaking to adults, for example when responding to the calling of the register or asking for food at dinner time. Behaviour on the playground is also satisfactory, although parents have justifiable concerns that it sometimes deteriorates when children are confined to the hard playing surfaces in poor weather. Pupils are currently enjoying new play equipment such as skipping ropes and balls and having full use of the grounds to play football, run races or just sit in the grass enjoying the sunshine makes a big difference to how well they behave. One pupil was excluded for two short periods last year because of inappropriate and aggressive behaviour.
13. Relationships are generally very good. Parents confirm this view. They feel that the children appreciate the needs of others and show compassion for those less well off by raising money for charitable appeals. They wore something red on their heads this year to support *Red Nose Day* and are enthusiastic about the upcoming sponsored skip to raise money for the school. They work well together in pairs or small groups. In the ICT suite they share computers well, allowing each other a fair turn. The more accomplished are happy to share their knowledge to help others move forward. They do all have a go even if they are not exactly sure what to do next. In a Year 5 and 6 ICT lesson pupils showed their willingness to try to work things out and learn from their own mistakes while making pie charts to depict results of a class survey.
14. Personal development is good for most pupils. They take their jobs seriously, taking registers to the office and tidying up or distributing resources in classrooms. The oldest manage their additional duties particularly well. They help the youngest with

their coats, bags and lunch boxes when they are new to the school, play with them on the reception playground and work in the office at lunchtime. Many compliments have been received about how well these pupils answer the phone and take messages. The school council makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. All classes are represented and pupils feel that it gives them a real say in the running of the school. They raise money through sponsored activities and the council shop. Their first expenditure was to buy some construction equipment for the youngest children, showing their caring nature. They are currently saving for a drinking fountain. There are, however, not enough planned strategies to help some of the oldest develop initiative and perseverance and as a consequence some of them behave immaturely.

15. Attendance is satisfactory, but as at the time of the last inspection there is still too much unauthorised absence. This is accounted for by a number of children being taken on holidays for more than the allowable time during term and a few families who do not take regular attendance seriously enough. Despite ongoing efforts by the school, a significant number of children are not getting to school on time and are therefore making a poor start to their day.

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

16. Teaching is good overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In 54 per cent of lessons, teaching is good and 11 per cent of these is very good. Forty-three per cent of lessons are satisfactory and three per cent unsatisfactory. There is, however, a variation in the quality of teaching through the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and in the nursery it is generally very good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but has some weaknesses. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is generally good, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where at times it is very good. Teaching of children in the PHU is good. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teaching of pupils speaking English as an additional language is also satisfactory but for these children and for those with learning difficulties there is a need for more structured support in some lessons to enable them to fully understand and complete the tasks that they are given.
17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is well planned to cover all areas of learning. Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children and provide a good range of activities to engage children's interest and to support their learning. The best lessons are very well organised with tasks that take account of children's differing levels of knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, teachers' enthusiasm is transmitted to the children, learning moves on at a good pace and support staff are well deployed to support different groups. In a literacy session with nursery children, the teacher led a sound matching activity linked to the story of 'We're going on a bear hunt'. The use of a variety of objects engaged the children's interest and they made good progress in recognising different sounds as they matched the objects to the letters. The nursery nurse led a group reading an enlarged version of the story; the children used the pictures well, learning 'over', 'under', 'through' as they joined in actions to match the storyline. Clear explanations and questions encouraged the children to learn terms such as *title*, *author* and *front page*.
18. In Key Stages 1 and 2 lessons are well prepared and planned. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and use guidance material such as that from the national numeracy strategy well as a basis for their planning. In good lessons

teachers make effective use of learning objectives to guide their teaching and to explain to the pupils what they are going to learn. Teaching is usually supported by good use of resources to explain and demonstrate and ensure that pupils are interested and engaged in learning. This was evident in lessons across the curriculum so that in science, for example, pupils learn to observe closely and to describe accurately what they see. In geography lessons with Key Stage 1 classes, the use of digital photographs taken in different parts of the school grounds enhanced children's awareness of the environment. Occasionally resources are not suitably presented, so that in literacy lessons, for example, texts are sometimes too small for pupils to read or teachers do not use pointers as they are reading to make sure that the younger children are following the text.

19. The best lessons have a good pace and learning moves on at an appropriate rate. Pupils are well managed because teachers have good strategies to engage their attention and to keep them on task. This was a noticeable feature of a very good mathematics lesson with the lower attaining set of Years 5 and 6 pupils. The introduction was lively and animated, creating a purposeful atmosphere and immediately involving the pupils in mental calculations. Pupils with short concentration spans were given practical activities at an early stage in the lesson so that they were busy and had appropriate work to get on with. The lack of pace and effective pupil management leads to some weaknesses in teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1 and occasionally in Years 3 and 4. Introductions are sometimes over-long, pupils start to get restless and behaviour management is not always successful, leading to a loss of teaching time. On occasions, not enough ground is covered in the time available, as in an ICT lesson that was timetabled for seventy minutes but where the pupils spent only twenty minutes working on the computers.
20. All teachers are aware of the need to plan a range of tasks to take account of pupils' differing levels of attainment. In the most effective lessons, this ensures that learning proceeds at a good rate and that pupils build on what they already know and can do. This is often a key feature of the successful teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6. In other year groups, while a range of tasks is planned, some lack challenge and are not effective in taking learning forward. This was the case in a mathematics lesson with Years 1 and 2, for example, where higher attaining pupils spent too much time colouring in rather than identifying number patterns and recording the results. Where lessons have additional support, teachers ensure that staff and volunteers are clear about the activities that they are helping with and encourage them to make notes on pupils' responses and the effectiveness of the learning. Support staff make a good contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs in group activities, but need a clearer brief to enable them to play a more active role in whole class introductory sessions.
21. The school has maintained good standards in the teaching of hearing impaired pupils since the last inspection. Unit staff, both teacher and classroom assistants, work to a consistently high standard, whether teaching in the unit or supporting in the classroom. There is good and up to date specialist knowledge of hearing impairment, good teaching strategies, very good liaison and teamwork with class teachers and good joint planning. The educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and audiologist make significant and valuable contributions to planning, teaching and target setting. All these factors promote good progress and secure learning.
22. Throughout the school, teachers often make good use of evaluative marking to note pupils' achievements and to identify what they need to do to improve. Pupils'

individual targets are often referred to and progress towards these is noted. Homework is used to support learning in literacy and numeracy and is particularly helpful in supporting learning in Years 5 and 6. Pupils throughout the school take books home to read, but this is not consistently monitored and some pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2, do not read books at an appropriate level or take a lengthy time to get through the books that they choose.

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

23. The curriculum is broad but lacks balance. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught but time for teaching some subjects is too limited. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been fully implemented and there is an effective personal, social and health education programme which includes sex education. There is no policy for drugs misuse although related issues are covered in the science curriculum. Daily acts of collective worship make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. However, in some assemblies, the worship element is not sufficiently emphasised, therefore not fulfilling statutory requirements.
24. The allocation of time to some subjects is inappropriate. For example, geography, history and design technology are taught for one term only during the academic year creating significant gaps in pupils' experiences. Too much time is allocated to the teaching of English at both key stages. A significant proportion is allowed for reading sessions and this time is not always used effectively. The time allocated to science has been increased to an appropriate level since the last inspection. Since then, schemes of work have been adopted for most subjects but there is still a lack of guidance for teaching physical education, geography and music.
25. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for children in the Foundation Stage are good. All six areas of learning are covered effectively and staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of this age group. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and in developing children's personal and social skills. Children are prepared well for the next stage of education and the start of work in National Curriculum subjects.
26. The curriculum meets the requirements of all pupils on the special needs' register. PHU pupils have good access to the whole curriculum because the school's approach is inclusive. They are well supported in ordinary classes, but also receive specialised teaching and therapy, to meet their specific needs in small groups and individual sessions. Time in the unit is thoughtfully planned so that pupils do not lose their entitlement to a broad and rich curriculum. The 'reverse integration' arrangements in which some pupils who are not hearing impaired join unit pupils for the literacy hour are particularly beneficial to all the children involved. All pupils with special needs are well integrated into classroom teaching and take a full part in the life of the school.
27. The few pupils who have English as an additional language are supported appropriately to promote their acquisition of language. However, they need better support in classrooms to enable them to be more involved in discussions and group activities. All pupils have access to every area of the curriculum.

28. Short term planning is good, but longer term planning across some subjects lacks cohesion, making the curriculum fragmented. The school has worked hard at implementing the national literacy strategy and, as a result, pupils' writing skills have improved but there has not yet been sufficient improvement in reading. Pupils' literacy skills are extended in subjects such as history but opportunities for the application of skills are missed in other subjects such as geography. Numeracy skills are developed through making graphs, models and maps in science, geography, music and history.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is limited. There is a football club and a choir is formed occasionally to sing on special occasions. The introduction of a permanent choir and recorder group is planned by the new music co-ordinator. However, many educational visits enhance the curriculum including visits to museums, places of historical interest, theatres and concerts. A range of visitors and special events in school also extends pupils' experiences. These have included a brass ensemble which regularly performs in assemblies, a string quartet, a science workshop and some coaching in various sports. A residential trip is arranged to the Isle of Wight for pupils in Years 5 and 6. These visits and visitors also support aspects of pupils' personal development.
30. The school has established good links with the local community. The local nurse, church leaders and sports coaches into school to talk to the children and pupils entertain senior citizens at Christmas time and contribute to charitable organisations. Liaison with the secondary sector is good. There are very good business links with local firms through the Enterprise Council. Year 5 and 6 pupils work with secondary school students, teachers and adults from the police and local businesses on a variety of activities. The pupils have been involved in exchange visits to other schools, made models, worked together to eradicate graffiti and created a mural in a local shopping centre. This gives pupils an insight into the wider world and supports their learning and personal development.
31. Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. The ethos of the school is positive and care is taken to create a learning environment that is attractive and stimulating.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The youngest children handle their hamster with love and care and show positive delight when chosen to look after 'Aristotle' the special teddy who goes home with each child in turn. Older pupils show excitement when looking at animals in science. In religious education pupils discuss sensibly their own 'special places' and empathise with descriptions such as 'behind the sofa with my dog', 'my bed, because it's soft'. Most assemblies contribute to pupils' spiritual development, through well-chosen music and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own feelings and those of others. However, on occasions opportunities for quiet reflection are missed.
33. Classroom rules and circle time help the pupils to share and to consider the effects of their actions on others and to appreciate individual differences. For example, one display board reads "We are all special – everyone is good at something". Adults provide good rôle models and use praise effectively. The school helps pupils to appreciate the needs of others and to integrate well. Achievement assemblies celebrate pupils' good work and behaviour; a special shield presented by lunch assistants for the best-behaved group is much sought after by the pupils. The provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory.



34. Provision for pupils' social development is good with many opportunities across the curriculum for the pupils to develop their social skills. Reception children collaborate very well in small group activities and older children work sensibly in pairs and threes when given the opportunity. Key Stage 2 pupils on the school council are given the responsibility to report back to the younger pupils in circle time, relating the relevant parts of the meetings and involving them in decision making. During lunch break, each class has a games/toy bag bought by money raised at the school stationery shop for which Key Stage 2 pupils take responsibility. These initiatives foster pupils' self-esteem and enhance their personal and social development. Visits to other schools and local organisations through the Business Links project also support pupils' social development.
35. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and is well supported by work in religious education, music, art, history and literacy. Pupils further extend their cultural awareness through learning about their locality and by visiting local places of interest such as the nearby Victorian village. Pupils explore diverse cultural traditions in some areas of the curriculum, for example, in music, where the recent purchase of a wide range of instruments provides opportunities to accompany songs of Caribbean, American or Asian origins. The study of Islam, Buddhism and other major religions is supported by a good supply of books and interesting displays around the school. These enrich pupils' learning which is also supported by experts coming into school to talk to the children; for example, a Hindu visitor to talk in assembly and a poet to organise workshops for the pupils.

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

36. There is a high degree of concern for the children's well being. Parents feel that the teachers are very approachable and always happy to discuss any concerns. All staff share an awareness of the need to provide a safe and well ordered environment, but there is almost no written guidance on issues related to the management of pupils' welfare. This is a significant weakness that leaves the school in a very vulnerable position. There is, for example, no policy for health and safety, drugs misuse, physical restraint of pupils or special educational needs. The school has no Child Protection policy but county guidelines are followed and staff are aware of their responsibilities in this matter.
37. Behaviour is generally managed well. Most teachers have good strategies for engaging pupils' interest in lessons and their expectations of behaviour are clear and consistent. Rules are sensibly kept to a minimum and prominently displayed around the school. Children are aware they should take pride in doing their best, look after each other and their environment, be polite and keep safe. Rewards make a positive contribution to their achievements and self esteem. Many have earned gold stars in their *Award Books*, working hard to fill the page so that they can show it to the head teacher. The shield for good behaviour during lunchtime is highly coveted as it allows pupils to choose an activity for a short time during the week. The current winners in a Year 1 and 2 class have decided they would like to have an extra go on the *leisure logs*. Lunchtime supervisors are vigilant in the large grounds and often play games with the children to help keep them occupied. Bullying is taken seriously, there is a clear statement in the school brochure and incidents are rare.
38. Attendance is regularly monitored to ensure that any problems are followed up quickly. The school contacts parents whose children are persistently absent or late and involves the education welfare service when necessary. Registers are, however,

not maintained in accordance with requirements as teachers often use tipex to make corrections. This invalidates their use as legal documents.

39. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Children are known very well and teachers are generally clear about what they need to do to improve their attainment. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 are particularly successful in using what they know about the pupils well to plan work that meets their needs. Teachers are beginning to use marking well to move pupils' learning on, particularly in English. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully through regular assessments, which are now being used to set realistic learning targets. Individual targets are set and assessed regularly and shared with parents so that they can support their children's learning at home. Use of target setting is however fairly recent and is not yet having a positive impact on standards across the school. There are some significant gaps in the records kept on pupils with special needs with the outcomes of reviews not always recorded and progress against targets in IEPs not noted. This has improved recently, however, and records have been regularly updated since January this year.
40. PHU staff offer a very good standard of care to their pupils. Staff have detailed knowledge of all their pupils and monitor very closely their academic progress and social and emotional well-being. Very good contacts with parents and very good liaison with other professionals ensure that all needs are identified and addressed. For example, staff have detailed and up to date knowledge of pupils' hearing aids and take every step to ensure that they are functioning well, including daily checks for each pupil. The assessment of pupils' language development is very good and very well used in planning lessons and interventions.

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

41. Parents and carers are satisfied with the school and positive about the steps taken to involve them. About one third of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire and their views are generally favourable. They feel overwhelmingly that their children like school and that the atmosphere is very open. Teachers are approachable, expect their children to work hard and are helping them to make progress. Inspection findings confirm this view. They are justified in thinking that behaviour is not always as good as it could be but are happy about the way the school picks up and deals with incidents quickly. Many are unhappy with the extra-curricular provision made for their children. Although there are many visits and visitors to enhance the work that pupils are doing, few opportunities are offered to broaden children's experiences through taking part in school clubs.
42. Parents receive regular information about social or organisational matters. They get very little information about their child's curriculum, however, and some rightly feel that they could do a bit more to help if they knew what was being taught. The prospectus is helpful for new parents as it gives them plenty of information about getting their child ready to start school. It is, however, missing some required information, for example parents' right to withdraw their children from religious education. The governors' annual report is informative about the life of the school but again missing a great deal of required information and therefore ineffective as a means of providing parents with the information they are entitled to receive. Parents rightly feel that annual reports give a good view on their children's strengths, weaknesses and progress. Reports are used well to share individual targets for

improvement, but do not give parents a clear idea of how well their children are doing in relation to what might be expected for their age.

43. Parents have been invited to a number of curriculum information evenings in order to increase their confidence in supporting their children's work at home. Topics have included numeracy, literacy, reading and handwriting. Despite poor attendance, the school makes efforts to keep these lines of communication open. Reading records and home school books are used well to provide an effective link, particularly with parents of younger children. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to reviews and many contribute their views to the process. Parents of these children are sometimes given helpful guidance on how they can support their children's learning at home but this practice is inconsistent across the school. Most parents are generally satisfied with the amount of homework their children are given, but a few feel that it does not consistently get harder as the year goes on or that Years 5 and 6 are given sufficient to prepare them for secondary school. Inspection findings do show however that the amount set is generally appropriate. All children are asked to read at home every night and as they get older they are also given lists of spellings to learn. Year 5 and 6 children are set homework regularly, usually over the weekend and it is marked in class on Monday morning. Support for homework is variable. Teachers of the oldest pupils make every effort to ensure that those who need it get an opportunity to complete it at school.
44. PHU staff maintain very good links with parents. As many pupils live at a distance from the school communication is frequently in writing or by telephone. Parents are invited to discuss individual education plan targets and nearly all attend annual reviews of the pupil's special provision. In addition, staff provide at least one social occasion in the school year – for example, parents were invited at Christmas to a performance by Unit pupils of "The Wizard of Oz" and shared a meal with staff.
45. Newly established initiatives, such as the shared reading sessions in the nursery, reception and Key Stage 1 classes, are having a very positive effect in getting parents involved in their children's learning. Strong support from the Friends Association also helps to maintain good links. The association organises many social activities such as the school barbecue and makes a substantial contribution to resources. Funds raised have been used to provide all of the outside seating and more recently the toys and games bags which are being used at lunchtime. Parents' views were recently sought about the new sex education programme; governors hold regular surgeries at all events attended by parents, providing a good forum for the exchange of ideas.

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

46. The head and senior staff share a clear sense of direction and a determination to improve standards of attainment. They are supported by an enthusiastic group of co-ordinators, but many of these are new to their roles, including some in temporary posts, and they lack a clear view of their responsibilities in relation to curriculum development and monitoring. The school development plan covers all subject areas with aspects identified for improvement but there is a lack of a clear strategy to address the low standards in some important areas, for example in reading.
47. The senior management structure has been re-organised to ensure that a group of senior staff have a clear overview of the work of the school. Systems for monitoring of teaching have been implemented and all teachers are observed regularly by the

headteacher and other members of the senior management team. Teachers are given feedback and targets are set. This is ensuring that strengths and weaknesses in teaching are systematically evaluated in subjects such as mathematics and science. This evaluation has also been helpful in identifying that expectations of what pupils might achieve have been too low. Performance management arrangements are in place and there are good arrangements for professional development based on teachers' individual needs and priorities for school development.

48. Almost all governors are newly appointed and the governing body is not yet up to its full complement. Governors are undertaking training where possible and are appropriately organised into committees to fulfil their responsibilities. They are still at the stage of gathering information about the school and are active in, for example, seeking to improve the buildings. However, governors are not yet in a position to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to contribute to strategic planning for its further development.
49. The school lacks several policies that are essential to meet statutory requirements and to guide the work of the staff. These include policies for health and safety, pupil restraint, equal opportunities and drugs awareness. Some documentation, such as the prospectus and governors' annual report, do not include all the required information.
50. The PHU is well managed by the teacher in charge. Support staff are well trained, well briefed and well deployed, maximising the benefit to pupils. Careful checks are maintained on stocks of equipment such as hearing aid spare parts, and the budget well spent on materials which enhance pupils' experience and progress. Careful time tabling for all pupils ensures maximum benefit from the main school curriculum and the additional teaching and therapy sessions. Very good liaison with class teachers and health professionals ensures good use of all resources. The school is well resourced for its hearing impaired pupils and the *Sound Field* amplification system in the hall and some classrooms is of benefit to all pupils.
51. There are weaknesses in the systems for managing provision for special educational needs in mainstream classes. There are gaps in the documentation for tracking pupils' progress and recording the outcomes of reviews; some pupils are still on the register of special needs when they have clearly made good progress and should have moved off. Pupils with English as an additional language appear on the register but it is clear that their difficulties relate to their limited skills in English and that they do not have special educational needs. A new co-ordinator has just taken over responsibility for special needs and she is working hard to improve the system. Since she came into post, the quality of pupils' individual education plans has improved. Targets are much more specific and pupils' progress is being reviewed against the targets set. There is no policy for special educational needs and teachers lack guidance in identifying and supporting pupils with difficulties; this leads to some inconsistencies in the management of the system and at times means that support staff lack information to enable them to fully contribute to pupils' records of progress.
52. The budget is well managed and specific grants are used for their designated purposes. The school has accumulated a large underspend in the last two years but this is earmarked for essential capital works to improve the buildings.

53. Accommodation is spacious and well used, enabling good facilities for teaching all aspects of the curriculum. The school has made creative use of some formally unused areas to create, for example, an ICT suite and to extend the size of the nursery. This has greatly enhanced learning opportunities but some areas are quite cramped and the library and ICT suite are too small to successfully enable a whole class to work together. Resources are good and generally used well to support teaching and learning in all subjects. Staffing levels are good overall, with a large number of support staff. Teaching assistants provide a good level of support to many individual and groups of pupils throughout the school but are not always involved effectively in introductory sessions in lessons. Teaching time is not always used effectively; some literacy and numeracy lessons are too long and the large proportion of time allowed for independent reading is not used well.

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

- Improve pupils' skills in speaking and in reading by:
  - putting in place a clear structure to guide the teaching of skills in these areas;
  - focusing on the teaching of key vocabulary to extend pupils' expressive language and understanding;
  - carefully tracking the acquisition of pupils' skills in reading to inform the programme for teaching these skills.  
(Paragraphs: 22, 28, 63, 64, 65, 68, 70, 71)
  
- Raise standards in ICT, music and geography by:
  - ensuring that there is enough time for teaching these subjects and that the time available is used effectively;
  - providing clear guidance to ensure the continuous development of skills in these subjects as pupils move through the school.  
(Paragraphs: 95, 105, 109, 112)
  
- Make more effective use of teaching time by:
  - ensuring that literacy and numeracy lessons do not take up more time than is recommended;
  - reviewing the amount and use of time allocated for reading to ensure that it is used efficiently;
  - monitoring the use of time allowed for teaching each subject to ensure that it is appropriate to cover the curriculum;
  - tightening up on time lost during the day.  
(Paragraphs: 19, 24, 53, 99, 103)
  
- Ensure that co-ordinators at middle management level are enabled to effectively fulfil their roles by:
  - providing training on their roles in the management of the school;
  - giving them a clear brief on their roles in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning and the opportunity to carry out these responsibilities.  
(Paragraphs: 46, 88, 104, 108, 113, 120)
  
- Ensure that the school puts in place all the policies that are legally required and necessary to guide staff, particularly in relation to pupils' welfare.  
(Paragraphs: 36, 49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	43	43	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	295
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	65

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	31	14	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	29
	Girls	11	13	12
	Total	36	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (82)	89 (89)	91 (89)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	26
	Girls	13	12	12
	Total	40	40	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (82)	89 (89)	84 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	16
	Girls	11	7	12
	Total	23	18	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (66)	55 (59)	85 (66)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	11	14
	Girls	9	7	11
	Total	14	18	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (59)	55 (56)	76 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	4
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	249
Any other minority ethnic group	7

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	29.5

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	318

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	692,897
Total expenditure	653,851
Expenditure per pupil	2,076
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,099
Balance carried forward to next year	87,145



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	321
Number of questionnaires returned	86

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	41	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	41	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	60	12	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	51	16	2	6
The teaching is good.	48	44	2	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	45	15	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	41	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	45	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	56	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	35	3	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	43	5	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	10	30	31	13	15

## **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**

54. Provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage. Thirty children in the reception class receive full time education and twenty-six in the nursery are taught on a part-time basis. Children enter the nursery at the beginning of the autumn or spring terms before their fourth birthdays and transfer to the reception class as they become five. A good induction process effectively welcomes parents and children to the nursery. This includes visits to school beforehand and helpful written information. Parents contribute to a profile of their child's progress that is begun on entry and are encouraged to help in the classroom whenever possible. Initial assessments, conducted shortly after admission to school, indicate that speaking and listening skills, awareness of written language, mathematics, personal independence and the social development of most children are average for their age. Careful analytical records are kept of each child's progress which are passed on to the next class. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage so that by the end of the reception year most children will attain the expected standards in all areas of learning and some will exceed these in most aspects. Good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning. All staff work closely together for the mutual benefit of the children and have very good knowledge and understanding of the educational needs of this age group. One hearing impaired child in reception is given good support by a classroom assistant and another child with minimal hearing loss is also supported. These children, together with another with special educational needs in the reception class and three with English as an additional language in the nursery, are fully integrated into all classroom activities. All these children make good progress because they are ably supported and care is taken to ensure that everyone is included in all activities.

#### **Personal and social development**

55. Teaching is good and children make very good progress in this area of learning. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and consistently praise children's efforts, promoting self-esteem. In both the nursery and reception classes, children display an understanding and empathy towards the needs of others. This is evident when they follow instructions carefully in a physical education lesson or when taking turns and sharing resources in a mathematics activity. Adults provide good rôle models, treating each other and the children with care and respect. Children develop self-reliance in taking responsibility for their own actions; for example, when dressing and undressing themselves, caring for their pet hamster, registering their names on arrival in school or in rôle play. Teachers make an effort to make lessons challenging and exciting and thus engage the children's interest and attention. In music, when the children were learning a 'rap' about the three bears, the teacher dramatised the actions effectively and delighted the children. On another occasion, children found making the bears' bowls out of clay both challenging and fun. The children enjoy school and are enthusiastic about learning. Concentration in group tasks is encouraged from the outset and reception children's ability to concentrate is good. Children become quietly absorbed in their activities and remain on task for a considerable time, gaining positive attitudes to learning.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

56. Communication skills are promoted well throughout the Foundation Stage, particularly in the nursery where speaking and listening skills are progressing well.

This is evident in many classroom activities, as for example, when children listened attentively to the stories of 'Hairy Bear' and 'We're going on a bear hunt' and tried to join in. They respond well to teachers targeted questions and to the contributions of others. Adults interact effectively in activities, maintaining a constant dialogue with the children, for example when looking at the hamster and trying to ascertain whether she is awake or asleep! Children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and reception children have a good grasp of rhyming words. Teaching about letter names and sounds is good. Nursery children are becoming proficient at finding the initial sounds of simple words and sorting objects beginning with the same letter.

57. Reception children have made an enthusiastic start with reading and enjoy sharing early reading scheme books with an adult. As a result of the effective teaching of letter names and sounds and the adoption of elements of the literacy framework, children develop early reading and writing skills appropriately and confidently. Children are taught to hold their pencils properly and to form letters correctly. Teaching in this area of learning is always good. Strategies for teaching letter formation are particularly good. Children know where the letters begin and end and are given good support and reminders to form the letters correctly. Higher attainers in the reception class write joining their letters and are beginning to write their own sentences. For example, "They igoul lokt dawn and sed soriy". Children are encouraged to make their own attempts at writing and average attainers write over and under the teachers' script and are making good attempts at writing words. Lower attainers receive appropriate support so that they make good progress. On-going assessment is well-structured. Careful records of every child's progress in all strands of this area of learning are used in future planning. Individual targets are set and these are in the children's books. Rôle play, the home corner, the various activities and attractive displays stimulate the growth of new vocabulary whilst notices around the room and captions on paintings and displays further encourage the children to discover and use new words.

### **Mathematical development**

58. The teaching of mathematics is good and children make good progress to reach the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. Throughout the day, teachers use many opportunities to reinforce number skills during registration, through stories and rhymes, in music lessons and when tidying and collecting things. Nursery children count confidently to ten and can match colours and sizes of teddy bears on a number line. They reproduce patterns and use vocabulary such as "big", "small", "tiny", "bigger than", accurately. Through a range of activities in the sand, water and the three bears' house, they acquire and practise basic number skills as they fill containers of different sizes with water or sand and count bowls and spoons or chairs. Almost all reception children recognise and write numbers to ten. Higher attainers match numbers and groups of objects to 20. Average attainers match up to 15 and are able to write these numbers correctly. Lower attainers need support in writing numbers, but have secure knowledge of numbers to five. Children recognise and name basic shapes and know which ones have straight or curved lines. They count on and back and understand the terms "less than" and "more than". They have experience in handling money and solving simple problems, adding and subtracting small numbers. They are confident at matching, sorting and making complicated patterns. Children are taught to form their numbers correctly and take a pride in their work.

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

59. Teaching is good and by the time children leave the reception class they will have attained the expected standards in this area of learning. A wide range of resources and tools give the children appropriate experience in model making, sewing, sticking and joining. They learn to handle the tools with care and respect. Nursery children are taken on journeys round the school and to the park to explore the differences between the indoor and outdoor environments. Children in the reception class move around the school confidently and make careful observations of living and non-living things. Nursery children can put the teddy bear's clothes in the correct sequence and dress him. They also do this on the computer, using the mouse confidently. Reception children have access to the new computer suite where they log on and off and complete sentences on the computer screen by inserting the correct word. They are confident in using the keyboard and reproducing words. Good support from the teacher and nursery nurse enables all the children to make progress in their computer work, although sometimes they have to wait for assistance. The children support each other well.
60. Children learn about themselves and their families and are beginning to have an understanding of how people lived in the past. For example, reception children study Victorian toys and display the toys alongside their own observational drawings. A table of artefacts from Victorian times enables the children to observe, handle and talk about life in the past and to learn how objects such as a telephone, a gramophone and bicycle have changed over time. Children grow beans and note their progress and their need for water and light. They show joy and excitement when caring for the hamster, which they do very sensitively.

### **Physical development**

61. Teaching is good in this area of learning. A spacious gym, hall and delightful outdoor environment ensure that children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Nursery children enjoy using a good range of mobile toys in their secure play area in addition to playing with small apparatus and the 'playground' games which are drawn on the ground. They work confidently and receive much encouragement from staff. Reception children have their own special play area with access to large climbing apparatus in the bigger playground. Children make very good attempts at dressing and undressing themselves and follow instructions very well. Staff encourage them to be independent. Nursery children respect each other's space when moving around. This was evident in a lesson where children were learning to control their movements and hold a fixed position. Nursery children try hard to go over, under and through objects in different ways. A variety of colourful, soft apparatus gives them good opportunities to improve their skills and become more confident in moving. As one child said as he approached a new piece of apparatus, "I'll see how I'll do!" Reception children show good control in their movements and work imaginatively. For example, in a dance lesson when creating a story about the awakening of toys, children confidently explored their surroundings and demonstrated their movements, choosing which toy they would be.

### **Creative development**

62. Teaching is good and staff provide a wide range of interesting activities to develop children's creativity. Children enjoy working with different media and express themselves well through drawing, painting, playdough, clay, model making materials and collage. They produce careful work which is displayed attractively, for example the nursery children's flowers in the hall and the reception class's drawings of Victorian artefacts. The home corner provides the children with many opportunities for creative play and language development. For instance, children mix the porridge for the three bears, lay the table and make the beds. They articulate what they are

doing well. For example, "We are playing the three bears and I'm making the breakfast, the bears are starving!" Music plays an important part in pupils' creative development. In addition to the instruments kept in the music corner with which the children can experiment, more formal music lessons are taught. Nursery children sing joyfully and listen to the sounds of instruments with great delight. They can name the instruments, hold them correctly and repeat simple rhythms, tapping and clapping their hands and knees. Reception children listened in rapt attention to the 'Carnival of the Animals'; they sing sweetly and, in the main, tunefully. Music is taught in the classrooms, which is confining and inhibits movement to extend children's learning in some lessons. Incidental singing of number rhymes, nursery rhymes and reciting poems and story rhymes further enhance children's creative development.

## ENGLISH

63. Results of national tests are well below average overall, but there are indications of improvements in standards in both reading and writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when there were particular weaknesses in these two areas. Standards are beginning to rise but this is more apparent at the lower end of the school and is the result of the good start that children are getting in the Foundation Stage. Many of the older pupils are still making up lost ground and only a minority are achieving as well as they should. Throughout the school there are weaknesses in pupils' skills in speaking and many has a limited vocabulary. This has an impact on pupils' achievement in literacy, slowing their rate of progress. This particularly affects the achievement of older pupils. Throughout the school pupils, including those with special needs, are generally making satisfactory progress overall and achieving as they should. However the rate of progress is not consistently maintained and at times higher attaining pupils in Years 2 and 4 do not move on as much as they should. Year 5 and 6 pupils benefit from good teaching targeted at groups organised by prior attainment.
64. Throughout the school the majority of pupils listen well in class discussions and show understanding in their responses to instructions and simple questions. However, many are passive and make limited contributions to class discussions. By the age of seven the majority of pupils convey meaning clearly in simple sentences and talk audibly. However, most of the older pupils show little development from this stage. Few pupils speak in extended sentences and, as they express their ideas, their vocabulary is often limited. A small minority of higher attainers develop their ideas with good detail, adapt their speech to suit formal situations and use standard English appropriately. The small group of pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from targeted support to enable them to quickly acquire the competence to cope in the class situation.
65. Standards in reading are showing signs of improvement with many of the youngest children making good progress in this area. The majority of six and seven year olds read at expected levels, but too few are reading at higher levels. By the age of seven, pupils use a variety of strategies, including picture clues and their knowledge of sounds, to help them to work out the storyline and to tackle unknown words. A minority reads with good expression and understanding. The majority shows an interest in reading; pupils take books home to share with their parents and enjoy choosing books and sharing them with friends in independent reading sessions. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils read accurately but often lack expression and their intonation is often inaccurate. Limitations in vocabulary means that they

often struggle to understand significant ideas or themes in what they read. Pupils understand how to find information but are often unclear about the most efficient way to do this, confusing, for example, the functions of contents and index. A minority reads with good expression and shows good understanding, referring to the text to justify their views. However, around a third of the year group is reading at below average levels. These pupils read slowly and in a stilted manner; they are often hesitant and lack confidence in talking about what they have read.

66. Since the last inspection standards in writing have improved throughout the school. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils write structured accounts, re-tell stories with reasonable detail and write short letters, descriptions and instructions. Most begin to join letters reasonably consistently. Attempts at spelling are generally recognisable, but many pupils make persistent errors in spelling commonly used words. Higher attaining pupils start to make good use of descriptive vocabulary, introduce dialogue and vary sentence structure to create interest for the reader. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special needs, make progress in introducing detail in written work and write stories and accounts with some structure, but spellings are often invented; they rarely use full stops and work is sometimes difficult to read.
67. By the age of eleven pupils' written work represents a good range, including descriptions, poems, diary extracts and newspaper articles. Many introduce some lively dialogue and begin to use vocabulary for effect, writing, for example, 'late on a dark and gloomy night'. A small group of higher attainers writes from a range of perspectives, make good use of dialogue and introduce a variety of punctuation to enliven their work. As with reading, around a third of pupils are working at below average levels. Written work is often disorganised and presentation poor. In subjects such as science and history, pupils extend their literacy skills as, for example, they write structured accounts of experiments and newspaper features on the Spanish Armada. However, opportunities to use literacy skills are not consistent across the curriculum; in subjects such as geography, over-use of worksheets restricts pupils' development and application of skills. By contrast, in history, pupils have good opportunities to record accounts of events in a variety of interesting forms including diary extracts and letters.
68. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory; it is good in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of guidance from the national literacy strategy to plan their lessons. However, the lack of structured guidance for the development of pupils' skills in speaking results in a variation in the approaches to teaching key vocabulary. In some lessons, there is a very clear focus on this with teachers using, explaining and encouraging pupils to use words accurately in their responses. In other instances, too many questions from teachers and an acceptance of one or two word answers limit the opportunities for language development. Good use is made of resources to support teaching, particularly when teachers are introducing texts or extracts from books to the class. However, occasionally this material is not sufficiently enlarged to enable all pupils to see clearly; teachers of younger pupils do not always use pointers when reading to ensure that the children are following the text. In the most effective lessons, teachers take every opportunity to demonstrate clearly what pupils need to learn, for example by writing with them or making notes to provide a structure for their written work. All teachers plan a variety of tasks to take account of the range of attainment in each class. At times, however, these are not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 and Year 4, who sometimes practise something in which they are already competent before getting to

an extension task. There is a lack of support materials such as word banks and personalised word lists for quick reference when pupils are writing and this often slows the pace of their work.

69. The best lessons are conducted at a good pace, with teachers using a good variety of strategies to involve pupils in activities at all stages. In a lesson with Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher used an extract from a text that had just been discussed to introduce the use of dashes and hyphens. Pupils were attentive and enjoyed 'spotting the dash'. The teacher moved to talking about sentences already on display that needed dashes and set the pupils working in pairs to discuss and use whiteboards to punctuate some of them. This ensured a high level of involvement by the pupils and good co-operative working and also enabled the teacher to assess pupils' levels of understanding by checking the sentences written on the whiteboards.
70. Throughout the school, teachers mark written work regularly with good evaluative comments that indicate achievement and what pupils need to do to improve. In many instances, references are made to individual targets and indicate how well these are being achieved. Progress in reading is tracked in terms of the books that pupils read and the levels at which they are reading, but their acquisition of skills and areas for improvement are not evaluated with the same rigour as in their written work. Good use is made of homework in Years 5 and 6 to support learning in school.
71. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the role and is not yet in a position to systematically monitor and evaluate standards throughout the school. She has worked hard to improve the range of books and to re-organise reading material to provide a better structure to support pupils' progress in this area; this is in the early stages of implementation and it is too early to evaluate the impact of the new system. Throughout the school a very high proportion of time is allocated to reading; this is not always used in the most effective manner and many of these sessions lack a clear structure to ensure that pupils are heard to read regularly and make enough progress in their reading. Despite the time allocated, many of the older pupils who are competent readers get through too few books, indicating that they do not read enough to improve their skills and extend their understanding.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. There has been an improvement in standards recently, largely due to the gradual impact of the national numeracy strategy. National test results in 2000 showed pupils' attainment well below average when compared with national averages and with similar schools. The inspection found that the standards attained by the current group of seven and eleven year olds are below, rather than well below, average. More eleven year olds are predicted to attain the higher levels in national tests this year; this is due to good teaching in Years 5 and 6, the setting of pupils in groups according to their levels of attainment and the provision of individual targets to improve pupils' performance. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and its impact on learning has impacted positively on pupils' achievements throughout the school.
73. The majority of seven year olds are confident when working with numbers to 50 and undertaking simple calculations. They are beginning to understand the inverse operations of addition and subtraction. A significant minority can manipulate numbers to 100. They investigate patterns within numbers and, for example, higher

attainers successfully grasp the idea that if you add two odd numbers together then they will always make an even number. All pupils recognise familiar two dimensional shapes and a significant minority knows the vocabulary and correlation with the equivalent three dimensional shapes. Pupils are beginning to understand simple money problems and are learning to present data in the form of graphs. Too few pupils are working at higher levels than those indicated above.

74. Eleven year olds achieve well in relation to their abilities. The majority undertakes two-digit multiplication and has knowledge of fractions and decimals and their equivalence. Higher attaining pupils are confident working orally with number calculations. A significant minority of Year 6 pupils are working at lower levels but are becoming more confident with numbers to 100 and most are trying hard to remember the mathematical processes involved in calculating using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The majority of pupils plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants and lower attainers are beginning to plot shapes using co-ordinates. Higher attainers measure angles accurately and are able to recognise where a shape will be after reflection around an axis and also its position after a series of movements.
75. Teaching in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory overall. There are a variety of good strategies evident, for example in one class Year 1 and 2 pupils try to find as many facts as they can about the 'number of the week'. This enables lower attaining pupils to consolidate their learning and challenges higher attainers to find more complicated calculations to offer as examples. In some lessons, plenary sessions are used effectively. For example in a lesson with Year 3 and 4 pupils, following an investigation of number patterns pupils discussed how they had learned to use a quick method to identify multiples of three. Where teaching is not effective, tasks are insufficiently challenging and do not enable pupils to securely achieve the learning objective. The work set for groups of pupils with differing levels of attainment does not reflect the wide range of abilities of the pupils. There is a need to improve the overall pace in many sessions because not enough ground is covered in the time available.
76. The quality of teaching is good and at times very good in Years 5 and 6 where pupils learn effectively through the provision of well targeted and challenging tasks. Teachers are confident in their knowledge and provide clear explanations of mathematical ideas. High expectations of work and behaviour ensure that the majority of pupils respond and apply themselves diligently to the tasks. A high level of interaction between adults and pupils is effective in helping the majority of pupils to question and increase their understanding
77. The school makes good use of the national guidance and strategies for teaching numeracy are sound. Numeracy is used to support learning across the curriculum, for example, in measuring and collecting information about the weather and comparing different types of graphs during ICT. The co-ordinator is very effective in her role and has had an impact on improving standards. The school is making good use of assessment and tracking procedures and is keen to improve these further by introducing more testing and targeting of pupils in the lower parts of the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**



78. Results of standardised tests indicate that standards overall are well below the national average. However, the inspection found that there has been good improvement in this subject and the majority of pupils, including those with special needs, are making satisfactory progress and achieving expected standards. The vast majority of seven year olds are working at expected levels, though few reach higher levels. By the age of eleven, most pupils attain average standards and a small proportion is working at higher levels. However, a significant number is working at below average levels. Overall, there is an indication that standards are rising as a result of a range of strategies, most notably the implementation of a scheme of work which ensures that the curriculum is taught at a greater depth. This is an improvement since the last inspection. More time is now allowed for teaching and this is also a factor in the rising standards. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are benefiting from good teaching in groups based on prior attainment and individual targets set to improve performance.
79. By the age of seven, pupils investigate the strength of different fabrics in their work on materials. They also investigate the conditions required to grow seeds and make good gains in understanding the need for light and the correct soil. Higher attaining pupils made good gains in enquiry skills in investigating the types of materials attracted to magnets. These pupils are able to accurately record their findings in well-structured sentences. The majority of pupils label different parts of a plant correctly and have worked on identifying sounds in different environments. Pupils' work shows that they are making satisfactory progress over time in their acquisition of knowledge of the different areas of the subject. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs are supported well by classroom assistants and this enables them to make appropriate progress in their understanding.
80. The work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 shows reasonable use of scientific language and opportunities to design fair tests. Pupils have worked on the classification of animals and are able to label correctly the parts of a butterfly. The pupils had worked on food chains using the computer to construct bar charts to demonstrate their findings. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have investigated the sun and its position at various times of the days, recording the position and length of the shadow accurately.
81. By the age of eleven, pupils have had good opportunities to study all aspects of science. During a lesson on electricity, higher attaining pupils were able to construct circuits quickly and to move on to successfully draw a range of circuit diagrams. In a similar lesson with lower attaining pupils, good support from the teacher and classroom assistant enabled them to successfully construct a circuit. Pupils have studied the body and how it works and drawings of the heart are labelled using appropriate terminology.
82. The quality of teaching and learning for Years 1 and 2 is mostly satisfactory, as was found in the last inspection. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that inform teaching and learning. The pupils are attentive and respond well to the teachers' questions, making good gains in learning new scientific vocabulary. In exploring the habitats of animals in the school grounds, pupils remained on task as they worked in groups with an adult and, as a result, their skills in observation and categorisation improved. In an unsatisfactory lesson on animal habitats, the learning objectives did not build on pupils' earlier experiences and teaching lacked the necessary pace to ensure that their learning was extended.
83. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching and learning is always satisfactory and often good; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers are now

secure in their subject knowledge and good use is made of the scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression in the subject. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils were investigating magnetism and displayed competency in organising their chart to record findings. They worked co-operatively and used resources with care. The class was managed well, with pupils with special needs targeted for support by the class teacher who ensured that they made good progress. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils are taught in groups set by prior attainment; this is proving a useful strategy to enable the higher attaining pupils to make appropriate progress and the lower attainers to have the support they need to achieve their individual targets. Teaching in these year groups is good; lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which provide the pupils with challenge. Good behaviour management enables pupils to make good gains in learning and this has also improved since the previous inspection. Lessons are well paced; this was demonstrated as pupils listened attentively to the explanations of parallel and series circuits, which they then successfully created. The pupils present their work neatly and obviously take pride in this.

84. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She has benefited from local authority training on the leadership of subjects, which has enabled her to monitor teaching in a constructive way. Resources are organised carefully to ensure they are sufficient to support teaching and learning in the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

85. Pupils throughout the school attain expected standards, as was found in the previous inspection. Throughout the school pupils have access to a range of techniques and a variety of media. Displays around the school show work with pastels as in pictures of sunflowers using the work of Van Gogh as a stimulus, close observational drawings of rocks and fossils using watercolours and delightful collages created with seeds. Good work takes place on the development of skills using line, tone and shading which, for example, is creatively linked to the work of artists such as Karl Blossfeldt. Year 1 and 2 pupils used printing techniques effectively to explore line. Still life pictures of fruit by Years 5 and 6 demonstrated good skills in colour blending.
86. By the age of seven, pupils closely observe pictures and objects as a basis for their own work. They design representative pictures using a variety of objects such as seeds. In a Year 1 and 2 class pupils dropped pebbles into water, observed the resulting patterns and then represented these using paint. By the age of eleven, pupils show advanced skills in close observational drawing, for example in studies of shoes and shells. They use paint confidently and are able to use a range of techniques and media to represent their ideas. Skills in using perspective have been developed in Years 5 and 6 and are demonstrated well in pupils' drawings of street scenes.
87. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, but work in pupils' folders, displays around the school and teachers' planning shows that teaching is at least satisfactory and some aspects are good. In a lesson with Years 1 and 2, pupils were developing techniques of using paper in three-dimensional form. The teacher gave clear guidance, which supported the pupils in creating successful paper sculptures; the pupils displayed good basic skills and were competent in cutting and sticking. The pupils worked co-operatively in groups, which enabled them to share ideas and to explore them in greater depth. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson pupils examined the work of artists using *pointillism* and then created their own picture in a similar manner. The

teacher's good subject knowledge enabled pupils to work creatively in this style. The class was well managed, and the teacher had high expectations of behaviour. Work in art effectively complements that in other subjects, such as in history when pupils worked on close observational drawings of Tudor Houses and painted portraits of famous people of that time. In a personal, social and health education lesson, pupils had produced pastel portraits of their friends and then written about the quality of their friendships.

88. The co-ordinator is new to this role; she has audited resources to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum and co-ordinates the display in the public areas of the school which are consistently attractive and well presented. She has identified the need to provide training for her colleagues to extend their knowledge of the range of techniques that need to be taught. The use of the local authority scheme of work enables teachers to plan coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator is currently a part-time teacher, which limits opportunities to evaluate the standards achieved and to assess the outcomes of planning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. Standards achieved by seven and eleven year olds have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly in line with expectations. The issues raised then of the need to improve the quality of teaching and to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum have been largely addressed, although the organisation of the timetable places some restrictions on time for teaching and learning.
90. It was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection so judgements are based on the teachers' planning and pupils' work. The design and technology curriculum is planned in termly blocks so only Years 5 and 6 were studying this curriculum area. This arrangement ensures that the amount of teaching time allocated is in line with recommendations, but results in a lack of continuity in pupils' experiences and limits the progressive development of their skills.
91. By the age of seven, pupils select materials for making objects and, for example, assemble them to make shakers and rattles. They are given some opportunities to design products and to make decisions about how to construct them using a range of techniques. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Year 1 and 2 pupils have been taught the skills of directional cutting and using a ruler correctly. They have designed bookmarks and badges and made instruments from their own designs. Good links were made with other areas of the curriculum when pupils had made pop-up Christmas cards.
92. In Years 3 and 4 pupils studied structures as their focus for the term and have furthered their skills in making simple structures, measuring and cutting them accurately. Work in Years 5 and 6 linked well with history when pupils designed and built Tudor houses and boats. Their constructions had been designed well, with pupils making their own decisions on which materials to use. They evaluated their constructions successfully and made good gains in understanding what needed to be done to improve their finished product. They had investigated the design of shell structures by examining everyday products using technological language confidently.
93. In the one lesson seen with Year 5 and 6 pupils, good planning showed clear learning objectives. The lesson contained a good balance between discussion, practical activity and written evaluation. The pupils' knowledge of why it is necessary

to evaluate was extended through testing the quality of a product – tomato soup – and then designing their own product analysis questionnaire. Throughout the lesson the good behaviour of the pupils supported their learning, especially during class discussion when challenging questions from the teacher required pupils to think about the different ways of evaluating everyday products. Good use was made of the classroom assistant to prepare the soup for testing and then to support pupils with special educational needs who then made good progress.

94. At present there is no co-ordinator for design and technology and the subject lacks leadership to ensure that the improvements made since the previous inspection are maintained.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

95. Standards attained by both seven and eleven year olds are below national expectations. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge base for their ages, but they are less secure in their understanding of geographical concepts and the development of their skills is limited. This is due to the lack of a scheme of work, too long a time gap between opportunities to study the subject and, for pupils at Key Stage 2, insufficient opportunities to undertake research and record their work in a range of formats.
96. Key Stage 1 pupils learn about their locality. At the age of seven, pupils know their address and, with support, can use a simple map. They are beginning to be able to draw outline plans of their classroom. They can make sensible suggestions as to the location of features of the school recorded on photographs. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 know the names of cloud formations, for example *cirrus* and *cumulus* and their relative position in the sky and they record weather patterns over time. They follow a map to find their way from a specific point to the school. Year 5 and 6 pupils understand and use an appropriate range of vocabulary about rivers and that the source is the beginning, and a delta is 'a group of islands at the mouth of the river'. They know that the Nile, Amazon and Mississippi are all rivers with deltas. They know that a meander is a 'bend' in the river, but do not know how it is formed.
97. The previous inspection report found that the overall quality of learning was negatively affected by an over-use of work sheets; this is still limiting older pupils' achievement. The range of planning to extend pupils' knowledge base and increase their vocabulary is sound but there are too few opportunities, particularly for Years 5 and 6 pupils, to undertake research and write for a range of audiences. Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged in the written work undertaken.
98. Only three lessons were seen in which the teaching was broadly satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 teachers questioned pupils effectively at the start of a new project to determine previous knowledge. For example they asked pupils to describe Stevenage in relation to; the world, the European continent, and its position in the British Isles. They provided resources to enable pupils to read a local map. Where research projects are initiated, such as producing a handbook about Stevenage, pupils try hard and are interested; however, they have difficulty in starting the work because they have not had the opportunity to develop research skills systematically over time. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked well together trying to recall in which part of the school grounds the objects in a series of photographs were positioned. The task was challenging in that the photographs were close up and features had to be carefully considered, but there were missed opportunities to maximise learning by extending pupils' vocabulary through discussing variations in distances and angles.

99. The co-ordinator is on a temporary contract and is fulfilling the school's requirement to maintain the resources. There is a lack of time and expertise to develop the subject and this is having a direct impact on standards. Currently, staff are making some use of the national guidance for planning; where this is happening, teaching and learning are improving, but there is no whole school approach to planning curriculum provision. The arrangement whereby the subject is taught for one term each year does not enable pupils to build on previous skills effectively, nor to progressively develop their understanding of how and why things happen in the world around them. The gap between each topic is too long.

## **HISTORY**

100. No history teaching was observed, as the study of geography is the focus for this term. Teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, together with discussions with staff and pupils, indicate that standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven years. This is similar to the finding of the previous inspection but there are sometimes lengthy gaps in pupils' experiences that limits the range of study.
101. By the age of seven, pupils have learned about the past and changes over time. For example, they are able to talk knowledgeably about the Second World War and relate it to when their grandparents were small and, in some cases, evacuees. They use vocabulary such as "before", "then", "after the war" and "a very long time ago" meaningfully. They recount events relating to the war, explaining that "some of the country children bullied evacuees and wouldn't share their toys". They know the procedures for when a siren sounded and the types of shelter, explaining how people "needed blackouts on the windows so the enemy wouldn't see lights shining". They study 'Famous People' and re-tell the story of Grace Darling graphically, sequencing the events of the rescue. They remember accurately the first words spoken on the telephone invented by Alexander Graham Bell and can discuss why the telephone is useful. They also empathise with Mary Seacole who "helped people in the Crimean War" and talk about Florence Nightingale. They know these people lived a long time before the Second World War, showing a growing understanding of chronology. Pupils record their work appropriately in a variety of ways including worksheets, letters, pictures and their own accounts.
102. This year, Years 3 and 4 have studied the Egyptians and Years 5 and 6 the Tudors. Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of life in Egyptian times and have studied some artefacts. They know about the pyramids and pharaohs. As one pupil wrote, "the body was wrapped in bandages, after that it was put in lots of coffins". Pupils understand that the Egyptian year can be divided into three seasons and empathise with the different conditions people experience. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to deduce and sift information from facts given. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 present lively accounts of life in Tudor times and show a comprehensive knowledge of the monarchs, food, explorers, rich and poor families and the rôle of children. They are looking forward to visiting the 'Mary Rose' to see the Tudor ship themselves and to confirm and update the information they have gleaned from their studies.
103. No teaching was observed, but the standard of work in pupils' books is always satisfactory and good at the end of Key Stage 2, indicating at least satisfactory teaching and learning. Work is appropriately marked. There is no policy or structured scheme of work but a two-year programme of topics is followed with one topic taught

each year in Key Stage 2 and two in Key Stage 1. This results in some lengthy gaps in pupils' experiences in the subject.

104. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to further the subject, but has had no training for her role and does not monitor planning, pupils' work or classroom practice. There are sufficient resources which are supplemented through the local authority service which supplies artefacts.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. Standards achieved by seven and eleven year olds are below national expectations. This was the finding of the previous inspection report and the school has made insufficient progress in raising standards. Often pupils are confident when using computers as many have them at home, but they are not given sufficient opportunity to learn specific skills during lessons. Resources have been improved but the ICT suite is fairly new and currently pupils have had insufficient opportunity to develop the full range of knowledge and skills required over time. This is improving with timetabled lessons for all classes and a scheme of work to guide teaching.
106. Most seven year olds enter, save and retrieve their work. The majority of pupils are beginning to become familiar and confident in using keys for specific functions, for example the shift key to produce a capital letter and a question mark. They select a suitable size and style of fonts for different purposes. They give simple commands to a floor robot although a significant minority requires adult support in order to achieve this successfully. The majority of pupils are not secure in a broad range of the required skills due to insufficient practice. By the age of eleven, pupils enter data use it to create bar charts, pie charts and line graphs. They combine text and graphics and use these effectively to present work in other areas of the curriculum, for example while making a cover for their geography file and presenting a project on the Chinese New Year. However, these pupils have not been taught higher level skills, for example the use of spreadsheets and retrieving information from the Internet, and the majority is not confident in these areas.
107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Staff training through national initiatives has begun, but is progressing slowly and has not yet had sufficient impact on teaching. Strategies to maximise pupils' learning opportunities while using the ICT suite have not been discussed by staff and this resource is not always used effectively. As a result, learning is limited when teachers spend too long explaining aspects of a task and pupils spend too little time practising a skill. In one lesson, however, effective questioning assessed how much pupils remembered about how to give simple commands to a floor robot and enabled learning to be targeted appropriately. Good use was made of ICT to support learning in science in Years 5 and 6 when pupils entered data about electrical equipment; in this session the pace was brisk and pupils participated fully and completed a good amount of work.
108. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable but new to the role. She has correctly identified the need to have in place a structured long-term plan and has adopted national guidance as a framework but has lacked opportunities to monitor or influence the quality of teaching. Staff have assessed the needs of the older pupils and correctly chosen to teach some basic skills progressively, but as a result pupils are working at lower levels than would be expected for their age. There is no structured approach to assessment to enable work to be set to match the broad range of pupils' attainment and this is having a direct impact on standards. Central grants have been used to

acquire new equipment and to connect the school to the *National Grid for Learning*. Resources are currently adequate in quantity and will be improved when further new computers are in place and the planned extension of the ICT suite is completed. There is also a need to improve the Internet facility, which currently does not work at all times.

## MUSIC

109. Standards attained by pupils at the age of seven are in line with national expectations but standards are below expectations at the age of eleven. The last inspection report found standards to be broadly average throughout the school; this position has not been maintained.
110. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have good opportunities to listen to music and their listening skills are developing well. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils listened attentively to a variety of animal sounds and tried hard to recreate them, later choosing instruments to fit the sounds. By the age of seven, pupils clap a simple rhythm, keep a beat and learn new songs quickly. However, their singing lacks accuracy in pitch and rhythm because songs are not always taught in short sections or phrase by phrase to eliminate errors. The children usually sing unaccompanied and thus are dependent on the teacher pitching songs correctly and recognising how tuneful the singing is. Pupils compose simple rhythms using instruments, but few are familiar with notation.
111. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, where there is some specialist teaching, are learning to appraise music and identify individual instruments, such as violins and percussion. They describe the feelings the music evokes, for example, when listening to music by an Aaron Copeland, pupils volunteered, "riding a horse" and "travelling". They are learning to depict the shape of a musical phrase using their hands and recognise if the music is high or low. They are beginning to play tuned percussion instruments such as chime bars and are learning to make elementary chords to accompany a song effectively. Most pupils reproduce rhythms clapped by the teacher and are just beginning to read rhythms containing crotchets and minims. They are making good progress within their limited experience, but have not yet reached the standard of performing and composing expected for their ages.
112. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to understand note values such as semibreve, minim, crotchet and quaver and clap simple rhythms following a chart. Most pupils deduce that two minims, two crotchets and two sets of quavers equal eight beats and enjoy working out rhythm exercises. Their compositions, to date, have been reproducing patterns of the music and they have little experience of composing on a staff with bar lines and correct notation. Singing is weak at Key Stage 2 and lacks good pitch and dynamics.
113. Music is taught by all class teachers of whom one, a recent appointment, is a music specialist. Teaching skills are broadly satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Most tasks set are appropriate to pupils' level of understanding and background in music. Pupils' learning and understanding is satisfactory and sometimes good in lessons, but at a lower level than expected for their ages. This is because there has been no structured written guidance or training for the teachers in music. A new co-ordinator has been appointed this year and is already having an impact on standards. A scheme is being appraised which will give full guidance and support to non-specialist teachers, a range of instruments has been purchased, a choir and recorder group is to be formed and the co-ordinator is advising and supporting teachers. However, the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor teaching to gain an overview of the weaknesses in standards, support pupils' learning or raise standards in the subject.
114. Pupils have the opportunity to sing within the community on occasions and to learn the keyboard or guitar. Approximately fifteen pupils take advantage of this facility.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Seven and elevenyear olds achieve standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. The picture was much the same in the last inspection and since then the co-ordinator has encouraged staff to make some use of published material to guide their planning; creative dance is now part of the curriculum. However, there is still insufficient guidance to enable teachers to develop pupils' skills systematically as they progress through the school. There is no difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs participate fully and are integrated well in all sessions.
116. During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 1 were engaged in dance activities and Key Stage 2 pupils were practising athletics skills. Long term planning indicates that the school provides opportunities for pupils to undertake an appropriate breadth of study, at both key stages. During the current academic year pupils have been unable to undertake swimming activities as the local facilities have been closed for refurbishment. However, all pupils have an opportunity to attend swimming sessions at some time during Key Stage 2.
117. By the age of seven, pupils use movement imaginatively and respond well to stimulating music. They are able to clap, nod and stamp with the beat and appreciate the links between movement and music. They perform the basic skills of making shapes, twisting and stretching their bodies with appropriate control and co-ordination. They delight in pretending to be scared and surprised and their body actions express these feelings well.
118. Key Stage 2 pupils take part in and design challenges within field athletics. At the age of eleven they demonstrate good techniques while running and jumping. They learn to pace themselves so that they accomplish the circuit of the running course from a steady start. Good links with mathematics are made with mathematics when they measure out the course; they also time and measure their own performance, recording the results with the intention of practising a skill and making an improvement.
119. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good; it is good overall, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In the best lessons pupils know the learning objectives and they understand the purpose of the activities. For example, they realise they are expected to extend physical effort and develop a consistency of actions over a number of events, to begin to evaluate their own performance and to suggest improvements while completing a circuit of athletic activities, running, hopping, throwing and jumping. Where teaching is very good pupils are prepared well for the session and are given good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning; teachers use good organisational strategies that ensure that pupils know where they are to go and what they are to do quickly and efficiently. Skills are taught well, for example how to start a sprint from a low position and gradually push upwards and forwards. Pupils learn the importance of preparing their bodies for exercise, gradually warming up their muscles and extending their cardiovascular activity. In dance, published taped materials are used effectively, providing pupils with stimulating ideas while they move to the music as giants and dragons. Praise encourages pupils to try hard and improve.

120. The co-ordinator is conscientious but is not given sufficient opportunity to fully develop the subject. The school lacks an effective scheme of work that can be carefully monitored. There is also a lack of information from ongoing assessment to use as a basis for planning work to enable all pupils to gradually build up their skills in a systematic way. The co-ordinator promotes physical activity during breaks in the school day and pupils have a very good range of resources and space at these times, for example, *leisure logs* for climbing and bags of balls and ropes to use. Accommodation and resources are very good and enhance standards. There is a very well maintained and clean hall and gym, a large field as well as hard surfaced areas and a learner swimming pool. Girls and boys have the opportunity to play soccer after school and a range of matches is organised, but the range of extra curricular sports activities is limited.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Standards remain as found in the previous inspection with attainment of seven and eleven year olds in line with the national expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This sets out the topics to be studied from the six major faiths: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. The syllabus is supported by a scheme of work produced by the local authority, which is used successfully by all teachers to plan the curriculum for religious education on a weekly basis.
122. By the age of seven, pupils are developing an understanding of special times in different faiths. They have studied stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and are developing an awareness that each faith has its own special books and stories, as was seen when pupils sensitively examined a replica of the Torah. Religious festivals such as Diwali. The stories of Christmas and Easter are studied and are revisited and extended with the older pupils.
123. By the age of eleven pupils have a sound knowledge of the different faiths and are developing a clear sense of moral issues through studying the Ten Commandments. They show a mature understanding of differences amongst people as seen when a pupil answered the question "Does everyone have the right to be different?" with "Yes, if you are not talking about behaviour". The pupils have studied special occasions in different faiths, for example the Seder Meal and the important roles of the leaders of different faiths, such as the Rabbi and the Christian vicar.
124. Teaching is almost always good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in their lessons, which are well planned with clear learning objectives. Pupils are successfully encouraged to share their experiences; in one lesson pupils shared their special places with each other. They worked co-operatively in pairs sharing ideas and listening attentively and good questioning by the teacher ensured that the pupils extended their knowledge of the significance of special places and develop their listening skills. Pupils' behaviour throughout this lesson was good; the teacher's high expectations and constructive use of praise enhanced this. Teachers use resources well to stimulate pupils' interest. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, good questioning enabled pupils to gain understanding of what ultimate and non-ultimate questions are. Some disruptive behaviour in this lesson was well managed by the teacher, ensuring that the learning of others was not affected.
125. There is currently no co-ordinator for religious education; the headteacher is overseeing the subject and monitors teachers' termly plans. The subject lacks the benefit of detailed monitoring, particularly of the work produced by the pupils. At present the quality and use of recording in religious education is inconsistent, and as

a result pupils' attainment and levels of understanding cannot be assessed adequately.