

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MALVERN WAY INFANTS' AND NURSERY  
SCHOOL**

Malvern Way, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117133

Headteacher: Mrs J Noble

Reporting inspector: Shelagh Halley  
8203

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 June 2000

Inspection number: 193086

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary – Nursery & Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Malvern Way Croxley Green Rickmansworth Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD3 3QQ
Telephone number:	01923 773430
Fax number:	01923 711664
E-mail address:	head.malvernway@thegrid.org.uk
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Seabourne
Date of previous inspection:	13 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Shelagh Halley	Registered inspector	Science	What kind of school is it?
		Religious education	How high are standards?
			How well are pupils and students taught?
			Assessment
			Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
			What should the school do to improve further?
Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education
Clive Lewis	Team inspector	English	How well is the school led and managed?
		Geography	
		History	
Mary Harrison	Team inspector	Information technology	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Special educational needs	
		Under fives	
Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
		Music	
		Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates  
Demeter House,  
Station Road,  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7-10</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11-13</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14-16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16-17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>17-19</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21-24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25-37</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Malvern Way Infants' and Nursery School is situated in a pleasant suburb of Rickmansworth. There are 288 pupils on roll, 131 girls and 157 boys. It is larger than most schools of this type. This figure includes 70 children under five in the nursery. Pupils are aged from three to seven, organised into two nursery classes and nine infant classes. Two pupils come from homes where English is an additional language. Currently, there are 53 pupils identified as having special educational needs, broadly in line with the national average. Two of these have statements of special educational need, again broadly in line with the national average. Baseline assessment shows that pupils enter the reception classes with levels of ability which are broadly in line with the national average, although well below the county average, particularly in language, numeracy and social skills.

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

Taking into account the good standards attained and the good teaching and leadership, the overall effectiveness and value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

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

- Behaviour and the quality of relationships are very good.
- Pupils' social development is very good.
- Good assessment procedures and use of assessment in forward planning in core subjects.
- Good co-ordination and management of change.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Standards on speaking, listening and the uses of literacy across the curriculum.
- Smooth transition from nursery to National Curriculum programmes of study.
- Provision and support for pupils with special educational needs.

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

- Standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics.
- Staff expertise and confidence in the teaching of information technology.
- Challenge for more able pupils.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the school was last inspected in January 1997 the school has made satisfactory improvement. The school has drawn up a detailed long-term curriculum plan to ensure the full coverage of all programmes of study and this is now being revised to incorporate the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Schemes of work have been adopted from county and national guidance. Assessment has improved greatly and is well used to plan lessons which take account of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Procedures for ensuring a smooth transition from early learning in the nursery to the National Curriculum programmes of study have been improved satisfactorily. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning have been introduced and generally work well, but there is a lack of rigour in monitoring the learning of higher attaining pupils. The headteacher, senior staff and governing body are committed to improving standards further and have a satisfactory capacity for improvement. The governing body, although under strength, have done their best to establish the closer link between educational priorities and the school's spending plans with satisfactory procedures to evaluate spending decisions.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	A	C	D	well above average A
Writing	C	C	C	D	above average B
Mathematics	B	A	D	C	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The inspection team agreed to raise the comparative grade with other similar schools according to evidence presented by the headteacher that end of key stage assessment results in 1999 were similar to those of other schools with higher levels of attainment on entry. Last year's poorer results were largely due to a high percentage of low achieving pupils and indications from this year's end of key stage assessments are that the school is returning to the previous levels which are closer to the national average. This is a clearer reflection of the trend in pupils' achievements until 1999 being broadly in line with the national average. In the lessons seen during the inspection, overall attainment was close to the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested and want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils understand what is right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are good and pupils work and play in harmony.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are generally enthusiastic about lessons. Behaviour in and around the school and on the playground is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions upon others and show great respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They take initiative by carrying out small responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school through their discussions in family groups.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.*



The teaching of English and mathematics is generally good throughout the school and occasionally very good. Teachers plan their lessons very well and assess their effectiveness in terms of how well individual pupils have learned. Occasionally, there are lessons where work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of more able pupils and the pace is a little slow. The teaching of literacy and the use of these skills across the curriculum are good. The uses of numeracy in other subjects, for example design technology, science and information technology, are less well developed. The teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs is good and their individual learning targets are always taken into account in teachers' planning. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons seen, good in 55.2 per cent and very good in 10.34 per cent. Pupils generally concentrate well and persevere even when they find the work demanding. They make satisfactory progress across the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for learning in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their needs are carefully identified and they are given good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Family group settings and circle time help to provide very well for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Moral and social development are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils and provides a positive environment for teaching and learning.

Parents are very supportive of the school which provides good information for them. It could, however, be improved through additional information about how parents can help children with their learning at home. Despite constraints imposed by the national literacy and numeracy strategies, the school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum. The school's provision for the personal, social and emotional development of pupils is good and the care they are given is a strength of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership of the head and senior staff is good, ensuring clear direction, good teamwork and the good contribution of subject leaders.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its performance well and takes effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. The governing body continually seek more appropriate ways of applying the principles of best value.

There is an adequate number of qualified staff for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum, ably supported by a small number of experienced support staff who are well briefed and deployed.

Accommodation is good, although there is a need for some redecoration and refurbishment, for example the replace of windows. Learning resources are adequate, when supplemented by resource loans. The school has already identified the shortage of resources for information technology and the building of a computer suite is already in hand. The headteacher has built a strong team of co-ordinators who share the good management of all subjects. There are several vacancies on the governing body which are proving very difficult to fill, but the school makes the most of the talents of those willing to take on the responsibility. The governors understand and seek best value when making financial decisions.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good</li> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• The amount of work their children receive to do at home</li> <li>• Communications with the school</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and in line with that seen in any infants' school, as is the amount of work pupils are given to do at home. Communications from the school are satisfactory but the school could provide more detailed guidance on how parents can help their children to learn.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were in line with the national average in reading and writing and below in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in writing was close to the national average in writing, but below in reading and well below in mathematics. Standards in science were well below the national average as also was the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. In comparison with other similar schools, standards are below the county average which is, in any case, higher than the national average. The disappointing results were due in large part to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort. Indications are that, in the latest end of key stage assessments, standards are returning to the levels attained previous to 1999, being broadly in line with the national average. The trend in attainment before 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend. Standards attained during the inspection were in line with the national average in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in most foundation subjects. This is an indication that the strategies put in place following the analysis of the 1999 results and the adoption of the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy are beginning to have a positive effect. Standards in art and Religious Education are above the average for pupils aged seven. Children under five reach the expected levels in all the areas of learning and exceed them in physical development.
2. In the national tests for seven year olds in 1999, approximately three-quarters of pupils reached the level expected in reading, close to the national average though less than a quarter reached the higher level. The results in writing were very similar, except that very few reached the higher level. In mathematics, nine out of ten pupils reached the expected level, but very few exceeded it. In science, attainment both at the expected and at the higher levels was well below the national average. When results are compared with pupils from similar schools, they are below the average in reading and writing and well below in mathematics. The inspection team agreed to raise the comparative grad with other similar schools according to written evidence and records presented by the head teacher that end of key stage assessment results in 1999 were similar to those of other schools with higher levels of attainment on entry. This raises the grade for mathematics to results attained being below those of other similar schools. Levels of attainment in the current Year 2 show that the school is making satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress towards targets based on prior attainment.
3. Children under five enter school with a wide range of attainment levels, but overall they are average. A well-planned curriculum and satisfactory use of assessment to plan activities matched to the needs of all, mean that the vast majority of children make satisfactory progress. Where these children have special educational needs, they are identified quickly and good support given. These children make good progress, particularly when the class teacher has a support assistant to call upon, and by the time they are five nearly all have reached the standards expected in all six areas of learning.
4. Inspection evidence is that recent improvements are being maintained. Throughout the school, most pupils are working at the correct level and reaching the standards of which they are capable. Higher attaining pupils do not always make the maximum progress possible because work is set for them which is too easy or they are given tasks which do not take their learning forward.
5. Standards in literacy are satisfactory overall. All elements of the literacy hour are in place and the school provides extra time for reading and handwriting. These lessons are mostly effective, because of good planning and teaching. Pupils practise their skills in most other subjects of the curriculum.
6. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory overall, and a good proportion of pupils are quick and accurate in mental computation. The three-part lesson is well taught and pupils respond

positively and with enthusiasm. This is beneficial to their learning. Number skills are used well in other subjects, such as practical science and design technology.

7. The school has put a great deal of effort into improving the identification of pupils with special educational needs and in successfully providing specifically for individuals. Pupils make good progress and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Targets are clear, measurable and well used in planning tasks and activities. Specific targets are set for personal development and for pupils with behavioural problems, in order to ensure that they achieve their best possible work. These pupils make particularly good progress when supported, either individually or in small groups, by the special needs co-ordinator, classroom assistants and their own teachers.
8. Pupils with high attainment levels generally make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. In reading, most make the progress of which they are capable. In other subjects, however, they are often given the same task as other pupils and consequently make less progress than they should.
9. Standards in science are satisfactory overall in the current Year 2. Standards in practical science, involving experimentation and investigation, have improved since the previous inspection. Standards in information technology are broadly average. Standards in religious education are above the recommended levels of the local Agreed Syllabus. In other subjects, standards are satisfactory and in art, and physical development among the under fives, are above the levels expected. There is no significant difference between standards achieved by boys and girls across the age range.
10. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children are making satisfactory progress in the school and none disagree.

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

11. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good. These are important school strengths which are helping pupils to learn effectively.
12. This positive picture has been maintained since the previous inspection. There were hardly any instances of classes having unsatisfactory attitudes or behaviour during the inspection; in most lessons, the quality of pupils' response was good. Pupils enjoy coming to school; this was evident during their conversations with inspectors and in the way in which pupils reacted in lessons. Those parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed this.
13. Enjoyment in a lesson was seen in a very good literacy hour organised as a 'Question Time' with a panel of 'experts' to discuss snails! Here, the teacher's imaginative use of the activity, her good use of humour in describing pupils as 'experts from the Institute of Snail Research,' the fast pace at which the activities progressed and the teacher's good subject knowledge of both grammar (and snails) ensured pupils learnt well and loved what they were doing.
14. On one occasion where pupils' attitudes and behaviour were judged as being excellent, this resulted from very good teaching of handwriting skills, with a clear emphasis on technique, the generation of a quiet environment with a very good level of concentration evident on pupils' faces. The teacher's high expectation of good behaviour, well established classroom routines, which did not preclude the sharing of jokes ('write sadly.....No, I didn't mean write sadly') and tasks which fully challenged the needs of all abilities ensured some very good learning took place and consequently, some very good examples of handwriting were produced, neatly presented.
15. Occasionally, pupils' response is more subdued and passive; this is directly related to the quality of the lesson, when the activities do not capture their interest, where it proceeds at a slow pace and the tasks do not fully stretch the abilities of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes towards school. They remain on task for most of the time and are helped by the teachers to maintain their concentration. They are very proud of

their progress, for example, when completing several pages of their 'Fuzz buzz' workbook in Year 1.

16. Behaviour is good, both in classrooms and in the playground. Pupils show they are developing a good sense of right and wrong. For instance, they explain how they are not allowed to go into the spinney in the middle of the playground, unless they have a teacher with them. They try hard to be considered for badges for kindness and thinking of others and are pleased and proud when they are successful at being nominated. Work on display in the corridor records what they have done and how hard they have tried. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and have good relationships with other pupils. A number of pupils have targets in the personal development area of the curriculum and these give effective help and guidance. No kind of bullying or aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and parents are happy that when incidents concerning behaviour are reported to the school, effective action is taken. There have been no exclusions in the last two years and this is the usual pattern.
17. Relationships in the school are very good. The school has a friendly atmosphere and there is usually harmony both in work and play. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities the school provides to enhance their personal development and maturity. They can be trusted to exchange their library books sensibly on their own, even though the library is some distance from classrooms. They carry out jobs around the school, such as giving out books and taking registers in a sensible way. Pupils in the nursery show a very good sense of independence as they register when they arrive by placing their nametags on their drinks and plan for themselves the activities they wish to take part in. Pupils are good at thinking of the needs of others; they helped raise money through a non-uniform day for Help the Aged and they helped to support a school damaged by fire by raising money for books.
18. Attendance at school is very good and is well above the average for primary schools nationally. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. The rate of unauthorised absence is below national averages as parents are conscientious in letting the school know reasons why pupils are away. Timekeeping throughout the day is good and lessons start and end as planned. There is no significant difference in attendance for pupils with special educational needs.

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

19. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching in one in ten lessons is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that teaching in the school is good.
20. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives and in the most effective lessons these are shared with pupils. Coupled with high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the pupils' own positive response especially to enthusiastic teaching, lessons move on at a good pace. Where teaching is particularly effective, teachers also use questioning well to push pupils' thinking forwards and help them understand new ideas. Classroom assistants and adult volunteers are fully briefed and their strengths recognised and well used. The recent initiative in providing extra support for higher attaining pupils is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
21. The teaching of numeracy is good and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. As with literacy, planning is good. This is largely due to the good use of the frameworks for each subject. The structure of the three-part lesson is seen in all classes. Games are used to sharpen pupils' mental recall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding, particularly in how to discuss various strategies for mental computation, are good and there is evidence of good quality training being put to good use.
22. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Activities are well planned and resourced. They are carefully matched to targets in individual education plans and pupils' abilities, whilst still being challenging. Teachers constantly assess pupils' understanding and

plan further appropriate work which is clearly modified and suitable for each pupil. Teachers are enthusiastic, have a pleasant manner and manage pupils effectively and firmly when necessary. This motivates them and makes them keen to learn. Effective use is made of computer programs to give pupils individual support. Classroom assistants are knowledgeable and skilled. They contribute much to the positive attitudes of pupils with whom they have good rapport. Through encouragement and persuasion they do much to encourage and enable pupils to complete activities successfully. The good standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. Individual educational plans have clear achievable targets, of ten related to literacy, numeracy and personal development, which are used across all subjects. Because of good teaching, pupils with special educational needs gain confidence and make good progress.

23. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good, except for information technology. Consequently, their explanations are clear and, when pupils experience difficulties, they are able to resolve them. The weakness in information technology is acknowledged by the school and they have made appropriate plans to improve teachers' expertise and confidence.
24. Teachers know their pupils well, and generally match work carefully in English, mathematics and science to pupils' capabilities. In some foundation subjects, for example, geography, history, music and physical education, the match is not as close. In all subjects, there are occasions when the learning needs of higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently taken into account when activities are planned. Average and below average attainers achieve well according to their prior attainment and prior higher attainers make satisfactory progress in core subjects.
25. Good use is made of resources for the literacy hour, and teachers' use is satisfactory in all other subjects to illustrate teaching points and enable pupils to experience firsthand learning. Although display celebrates pupils' achievements and is attractive, it is not always challenging enough to stimulate further curiosity and take learning forward.
26. Marking is often good and the oral feedback given to pupils by teachers is good. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they have done successfully, and where they should concentrate their efforts in their next piece of work. Although approximately eight parents in every ten who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children get the right amount of homework, a number feel that they themselves are given insufficient help or guidance in how they might best help their children learn out of school. Inspectors concur with this view.

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

27. The quality of learning opportunities offered by the school is satisfactory. All pupils are offered a range of experiences in National Curriculum subjects and religious education, relevant and appropriate to their ages. The school runs a music club for Year 2 pupils, and during the winter months there is a range of lunchtime activities including writing, science, library and football. This provision is satisfactory and makes a useful contribution to the intellectual, physical and social development of those who take part. French, gymnastic and short tennis clubs are also available for pupils whose parents are willing to pay a contribution.
28. There are good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The school follows closely the policies laid down in the national strategies. Both are planned to ensure consistency and continuity across the school, and are starting to be effective in raising standards.
29. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The timetabled provision for this area has had significant benefits in terms of pupils' behaviour, awareness of the needs and feelings of others and personal self-respect and esteem. Topics such as respect are covered well in class circle time. Further provision is made through the fortnightly family group meetings where groups formed across the school meet to discuss issues relating to feelings, personal safety, friendships and citizenship. These meetings also encourage older pupils to

have care and responsibility for younger children, and give younger children a growing confidence about school and their place in it. The school has a foundation programme for sex and health education which is built on at Key Stage 2.

30. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is an effective balance of teaching, both in the classroom and when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for more focused work. Pupils have lessons in all subjects and extra support is given as necessary. Pupils with specific needs or difficulties have appropriate programmes planned, for example, those with behavioural problems. The school positively supports integration and where deemed necessary, pupils attend several sessions at a special school. Other professionals help to plan pupils' specific programmes, for example, speech therapists. Pupils with statement have good provision, according to their specific needs. The school has recognised the need for extra help for the higher attaining pupils and have recently introduced specific learning sessions for them.
31. Links with the community are sound. Pupils take part in competitions and activities sponsored by local firms, often providing funds for the school. There are good links with a local rugby club whose members have helped in physical education lessons. Pupils use the local area in their studies; the school takes part in a local summer fair and each year plants trees to recreate a local orchard.
32. Links with other schools are good; there are joint staff meetings with the junior school to which most pupils will go; subject co-ordinators meet to look at progression in learning and to devise common methods for recording attainment and progress. They work together in setting and reviewing targets. Visits of staff and children between the schools help to ensure a smooth transfer to Key Stage 2.
33. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for social and moral education is very good and provision for spiritual and cultural education is good. These are strengths of the school. The positive qualities of this aspect, seen at the previous inspection, are still very much in evidence.
34. The provision for spiritual development is good. Whilst not being formally considered within the curriculum, there are many opportunities that arise within music, religious education and during the literacy hour that provide pupils with opportunities for reflective thought and consideration for different feelings. Family group times give good opportunities for pupils to feel special and to feel they belong within the school. The awarding of badges in Friday's assembly for kindness and positive attitude enhances these feelings. Work based upon the story 'Patchwork Quilt' where each piece of patchwork brings certain memories, is used well as a trigger for pupils' own thoughts. In a religious education lesson where the concept of death formed part of the conversation, pupils discussed how it feels to lose a favourite pet and what happens when plants die, which they shared with the class. A display of objects asking pupils to find things which were once living – such as wool from a sheep, tree bark, and feathers – helps to aid their understanding.
35. The quality of assemblies and acts of worship is generally satisfactory and meet requirements. These are mostly held as whole-school occasions, with year group assemblies every week. Music is incorporated into assemblies and sometimes used as a focus for reflection; during the inspection, pupils listened to the piano and to a tape of Holst's 'Planet Suite', which they were quick to recognise. Visitors are used well to introduce an outside perspective; the local vicar held an assembly during inspection week and told a story about giving thanks for favours received.
36. Moral development is very good and the school works hard to instil in pupils the difference between right and wrong. Allowing each class to decide upon their own class rules is helping them to take some responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils are taught to respect rules and given clear boundaries within which to operate. This is evident in the playground where there are certain 'no go' areas which they are trusted to respect. The headteacher believes firmly in the importance of citizenship, and this has been included well within the curriculum for some years. Circle times are productive in discussing different aspects of behaviour, such as the lesson where pupils were thinking about what being respectful actually means.

37. Social development is also very good. The awarding of badges for social development, with pupils often nominating each other, provides very good encouragement for pupils to try hard and develop acceptable social skills. Family group times are good social occasions where pupils of all age groups meet to discuss issues pupils feel are important, the current focus being playground friendships. Pupils are given a good deal of responsibility around the school. For example they escort younger pupils back to their classes and have class responsibilities. They are appropriately trusted to change their own books in the library area which is some way from the classrooms. People who are less fortunate than themselves are brought to pupils' attention and a sponsored non-uniform day was used to raise money for Help the Aged. When a nearby school suffered a fire, pupils were involved in raising money for basic supplies to tide the school over.
38. The provision for cultural development is good. Art makes a valuable contribution by raising pupils' awareness of a wide range of different artists such as the bright red poppies painted in the style of Georgia O'Keefe and a class painting after the work 'Woman with a Parasol' by Monet. A whole school trip to the Savoy Theatre helped to interest pupils in the performing arts as well as giving them a sight of well known London landmarks on the journey. The local history of the area around the school is remembered when pupils walk in their family groups to plant fruit trees in a nearby cherry orchard, on Apple Day.
39. Multicultural education is satisfactory and mainly covered through religious education and art, where pupils have drawn a mosque in freehand, paying good attention to the minarets and domes. In a Year 2 assembly during inspection week, pupils listened to a multicultural story of the fish god. Festivals such as Diwali and Eid are usually celebrated. When possible, visitors come in to share their experiences, such as the parent who came in to talk about Diwali, when diva pots were made and pupils drew Rangoli patterns. The good quality provision seen in all other aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not yet evident in the school's satisfactory provision for multicultural education.

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

40. The school continues to make good provision for pupils' care and well being in an atmosphere where teaching and learning are flourishing. It has successfully maintained the good standards seen at the time of the previous inspection and continues to fulfil its aim of providing 'a caring, happy and stimulating environment which encourages a joy in learning.'
41. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory and the person responsible is appropriately trained. Procedures to ensure health and safety in school are satisfactory. The headteacher attends relevant health and safety courses (recently on asbestos) and regular checks are made on the premises. This is especially necessary as there are doors and windows which are in a very poor state of repair and are rapidly deteriorating.
42. There are good procedures in place which are encouraging pupils to behave well; parents are pleased with the standards of behaviour in the school, which are good. The behaviour policy, formulated with pupils in family group times and incorporating parental comments, provides good guidance for staff in promoting positive behaviour, with a clear emphasis on consistency. Class rules, visible throughout the school, help to set the tone and encourage pupil's self-discipline. Monitoring of those few pupils who find good behaviour difficult is thorough, with individual teachers using pupil profiles to record relevant observations.
43. The positive ethos created in the school means that any kind of oppressive behaviour is not tolerated. Parents are pleased that if they contact the school with concerns about behaviour, matters are soon dealt with. During the inspection, playtimes were happy occasions and the good range of play equipment and interesting playground mean pupils are well-occupied and so less likely to resort to unsatisfactory behaviour.
44. The school's monitoring and promoting of attendance are satisfactory. All relevant legal procedures are followed and the headteacher is careful not to become complacent about the



school's very good attendance rates. For instance, a reminder was recently sent to parents about trying not to take holidays during term time and about ensuring punctuality.

45. Procedures for monitoring of pupils' personal development are very good. Staff know their pupils well and relationships are kind and supportive. Family group times and circle time, where pupils sit in a circle and talk about everyday situations that affect them give teachers good opportunities to get to know their pupils. Comments are recorded on pupils' end of year reports to parents. Parents are pleased with the quality of care in the school.
46. Procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils are good overall. Teachers use the information gained to check progress and plan future work, but there is no standardised assessment between that done on entry to the school and the end of key stage tests. In consequence, teachers do not have all the information they need about their pupils, especially the higher attainers.
47. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. There is good early identification and pupils on all stages of the register have individual education plans. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored, regular reviews take place and information from ongoing assessments is used well to inform future target and also to move pupils off, down or up the register, as and when appropriate. Professionals outside the school are consulted when necessary.

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

48. Parents support the school and are generally positive in their views on the quality of its work.
49. There was a good return to the parents' questionnaire with almost half of parents replying. The quality of parental support in terms of positive replies received has increased when compared to the previous inspection; this is a testimony to the way in which both relationships and the quality of information have improved.
50. Parents who replied to the questionnaire agreed wholeheartedly that their child enjoys school. They are pleased with the standard of behaviour in the school, which is good. They feel the school is helping their child become mature and responsible and they are pleased with the good teaching. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. A very small minority of parents does not feel their child receives the right amount of homework. However, the quality of homework is satisfactory and similar to that found in many infant schools. A similar proportion of parents do not feel the school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Again, the quality of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and similar to that found in many infant schools, where extra-curricular activities tend to be more limited due to the age of the children and the fact that they are often tired after a long day at school.
51. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting had more general concerns about the quality of information and contact with parents. These negative views were not echoed in the parental questionnaires. In particular, these parents did not feel well informed about how the school is teaching literacy and numeracy and felt that the lateness of communications and dates made life more difficult. In contrast, they appreciated the informal parents' meetings held in year groups, which the headteacher organises.
52. The quality of information for parents is good overall. In relation to parents' specific concern about not knowing dates, a calendar of events is given at the start of the year and at the start of a new term. Dates are given to parents as soon as they are known as the school appreciates parents need to plan. The school has held three information sessions about the teaching of literacy. The headteacher updated parents on how literacy was developing this academic year at informal year group meetings when issues including the draft behaviour policy, the home and school agreement and an introduction to the numeracy hour were also covered. Parents of pupils in the nursery and reception would not have benefited from the full cycle of information about literacy and numeracy over the past two years and this may account for their not feeling so well informed.

53. Partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. The procedures now followed ensure good and early identification of difficulties and parents are kept fully informed from the beginning.
54. The new governors' annual report, hot off the press during inspection week, gives parents a clear view of the financial difficulties the school has faced and the ways in which governors have tried to overcome this. Items of statutory information such as information about the success of the special needs policy, the professional development of staff, the admission of disabled pupils and steps taken to make sure they are not unfavourably treated, security information and progress on the school's action plan from the previous inspection have been omitted.
55. Inspectors feel that, overall, parents are well informed and that the school has a genuine desire to keep parents up to date. There is also a willingness to listen to parents' views and to amend procedures, if necessary. The well attended year group meetings mentioned above are a particularly good example of an effective way of keeping specific groups of parents well informed. The school provides a welcoming atmosphere for parents, for example, parents are invited into school to meet their child's new teacher and to visit the classroom before the start of the new term. The parent governor on the governing body provides a useful link between parents and school; one parent governor seat is now vacant and the school should explore all possible avenues and marketing strategies to ensure it is filled, in order that parents' views are fully represented.
56. Since the last inspection, helpful booklets about mathematics, reading, writing and handwriting have been produced. In response to parental concerns expressed during the last inspection, the school now provides parents with a comprehensive list of what will be studied each term. The school should now consider taking this a step further to include more ways in which parents can help their child at home. They should also consider developing the consultation and information gathering process with all parents, in order that the concerns of the small yet dissatisfied minority present at the parents' meeting can be identified and addressed.
57. Pupils' annual reports, completed and waiting to be sent to parents, are of a satisfactory quality. They give a good amount of information about the National Curriculum levels pupils are working at. Targets provided for parents to work on with their child, to help them improve, are generally clear and jargon-free. However, there are exceptions to this. Comments for information technology are very brief and tend to describe what a pupil has covered rather than the progress made.
58. Parents have a positive impact on school life. A good number of parents come into school each week to help in classes and they provide valuable help for those pupils who need that extra adult presence. The successful Fund Raising Group works hard to raise money to buy additional resources, with a good amount raised each year. The school has been especially reliant on their hard work in view of the financial difficulties. The group is currently saving to fund playground developments including major resurfacing work. Their hard work is having a very positive impact on the quality of education the school is providing.
59. Support for learning in the home is also good. Parents are very supportive of education and want their children to do well. They support school work by visiting places of interest connected to areas pupils are studying. They send in appropriate resources when teachers ask for items to enhance current topic work. Attendance at parents' evenings is very good with almost all parents present. Support for hearing their children read is regular and thorough.

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

60. The headteacher provides strong, positive leadership with clear educational direction for the work of the school. Following the previous inspection, the headteacher has overseen significant, steady improvements in the quality of the curriculum, the role of the co-ordinators, the quality of lesson planning and the quality of teaching. She has carefully nurtured the

development of a shared, whole-school team commitment to improvement, thus ensuring the effective commitment and contribution of staff with senior management responsibilities.

61. The leadership of special educational needs is good. Members of staff are supported well, for example, when writing individual education plans. The school has effectively focused on early identification of special educational needs in order to raise standards. The co-ordinator liaises appropriately with the governing body. There are good relationships and liaison with other schools.
62. With minor exceptions, the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities appropriately and effectively. The chair of governors and the current group of regular governing body members take a keen interest in the performance of the school and, in the case of new members, are actively seeking appropriate training for their role. There have been long-standing and continuing difficulties, however, in recruiting and retaining members from the local community and significant recent changes in the composition of the governing body. As a result, their role in developing a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, in accounting fully for the performance of the school or in acting as a 'critical friend' to the headteacher is currently in an early stage of development.
63. The school monitors and evaluates its performance closely. The headteacher and senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effective action has been taken to remedy weaknesses. For example, significant and effective changes have been made to the day-to-day English curriculum to improve attainment in writing. Currently, there are no newly qualified teachers on the teaching staff; however, there are appropriate and effective systems in place for the induction of new staff. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training and accepts post-graduate and undergraduate teaching students on a regular basis.
64. Educational priorities are supported appropriately through careful financial planning. The school development plan identifies relevant priorities for improvement and spending decisions clearly relate to these priorities. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure, is clear about costings and the pupils benefit from well-targeted spending decisions. The governing body is appropriately aware of the principles of 'best value' and applies these in its spending decision where practicable. The minor recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been dealt with promptly and appropriately. Systems for financial control are unobtrusive and efficient and keep the way clear for classroom teachers to concentrate on their work. Adequate, up to date information is available to members of the governing body prior to committee meetings. The school is beginning to make effective use of new technologies. The school's financial officer has received training in the new computer financial package adopted by the local education authority and appropriate use is being made of the school data analysis package to store and analyse pupil data. Specific grants received by the school are being used satisfactorily for the designated purpose.
65. The governing body and senior management team of the school are aware of the 'best value' principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition and apply these principles in their decision-making. The headteacher and governing body actively consider alternative providers for school services and have made changes, for example in suppliers for office consumables and cleaning supplies following careful comparisons. The school consults appropriately with local education authority financial and curriculum advisors and with parents, keeping them appropriately informed about significant changes to the school curriculum, inviting parents to meetings about the literacy and numeracy strategy, for example.
66. All teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach in the primary phase. Their in-service needs are identified through regular professional interviews and are closely linked with areas in the school development plan. Procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers are very good and the staff handbook gives useful and detailed guidance on the school's routines and procedures.
67. Accommodation is good, although suffering the effects of age, with plenty of space in the classrooms for practical activities. Some doors and windows are in need of replacement and the whole building needs a fresh coat of paint. The specific area for work with small groups of

pupils with special educational needs is adequate and well used. The interior of the school is unsuitable for pupils with physical disabilities. The extensive field outside and the large hard surface areas are well equipped for play and as a learning resource. The building of an extension to the staff room and alterations to cloakrooms to house a computer suite was due to begin the week following the inspection.

68. Resources are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum, except for information technology where the shortage will be remedied in the near future. Resources for teaching pupils with special educational needs are good.

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

69. In order to improve the school further the headteacher, governing body and staff should:
- (1) Raise standards in English by more systematically using assessments and records to plan the next stage of learning, especially for higher attaining pupils(*Paragraph 85*)
  - (2) Raise standards in mathematics by providing a broader range of activities, particularly for higher attaining pupils(*Paragraph 90*)
  - (3) Raise standards of attainment in information and communications technology by improving in-service training for staff so that they have the necessary confidence and expertise to teach the subject well\*(*Paragraphs 120, 122*)
  - (4) Improve assessment procedures in foundation subjects(*Paragraphs 102,108,122, 127, 131, 134*)

\*The school has already identified this weakness and has prioritised it in the development plan.

#### **Minor issues:**

Rectify omissions from the governors' annual report to parents (*Paragraph 54*)

Continue to recruit more representatives to fill the vacant seats on the governing body (*Paragraph 55*)

Provide more detailed guidance for parents on how they can help their children to learn at home (*Paragraph 56*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10.34	55.2	34.5	0	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-Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	35	218
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	39	44	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	33	35
	Girls	39	38	40
	Total	72	71	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87	86	90
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	36	34
	Girls	40	40	39
	Total	73	76	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88	92	88
	National	82	86	87

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	211
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

## **Teachers and classes**

### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	25.7

### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.7
--------------------------------	------

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1999
----------------	------

	£
Total income	448893
Total expenditure	451003
Expenditure per pupil	1641
Balance brought forward from previous year	5818
Balance carried forward to next year	3708

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	253
Number of questionnaires returned	110

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	53	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	43	7	5	15
The teaching is good.	58	39	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	51	9	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	38	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	0	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	36	52	9	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	45	45	6	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	50	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	48	10	2	18

### Other issues raised by parents

Communications with the school  
1 couple enquired about the expenditure for SEN

## 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

70. Children enter the nursery from three-and-a-half years of age. They attend on a part-time basis. Half of the children attend morning sessions and the other half attend in the afternoon. At the time of the inspection, there were six children under five in one reception class. The local authority is responsible for the selection of pupils for the nursery and for the number of admissions. The school uses early assessment procedures appropriately to identify children who may have special educational needs. These pupils have good provision and make good progress because the teachers are sensitive to their individual needs. By the age of five the large majority of children are attaining standards in line with those expected for children of this age. The curriculum is planned appropriately to the six recommended areas in the foundation stage. Children in reception have an appropriate curriculum and make a smooth transition to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum.
71. Children make sound progress overall in language and literacy. Good progress is made occasionally for example in speaking and listening, when making up an imaginative story about the 'Three Bears' in the morning sessions and when listening carefully to the teacher's instructions in an afternoon physical development session. Children are gaining knowledge and understanding about books and enjoy using them. They improve their language development through many activities including listening to stories, describing similar objects, for example, in a matching exercise and in role-play as when using the 'café' or playing with water. They have opportunities to use their senses and talk about their ideas, as when feeling and describing an orange in a 'feely bag.' They learn new vocabulary such as 'vehicle' when matching cars. Children have pre-writing experiences, and are taught to hold their pencils correctly. Just under half can independently write their names legibly and the other children can copy or write over dots, sometimes needing adult assistance. Most recognise their own names. There are opportunities planned for early mark-making skills, for example in the office area, which children use effectively. Children's listening skills are sound overall. However, when the noise level rises, they are distracted and do not listen well.
72. Children make sound progress in mathematics, with occasional good progress, for example, when working with numbers up to five, in the morning session. Opportunities are provided to consolidate their understanding of mathematics including making three-dimensional numbers using play dough, singing counting songs and rhymes, using their counting skills in a physical development lesson as they count the number of balls that they can throw into a hoop, learning about symmetry when painting butterflies and learning about capacity when working with sand. The higher attaining pupils can count up to 100, the average attaining pupils (the vast majority) can count up to 10 and the lower attaining pupils can recognise two or three numbers. Children use information communications technology to count and match.
73. Children make sound progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Occasionally, they make good progress as when they discuss how they have grown cress and sunflower seeds. They have learned about the life cycle of the butterfly. Discussions with pupils and teachers show that they talk about the days of the week and what they did at the weekend. They talk about their display of old and new things. Children use skills such as cutting, joining and folding when making their junk models of trains, choosing and finding out about different materials. Most children know that horses and pigs are farm animals. They show a basic understanding of computers and use them confidently and independently, for example when they work on mathematics. Children know that an orange is a fruit and they can name other fruits. Those who have seen oranges growing on trees when they have been on holiday, discuss this with other children. They know that healthy eating is important. There is a 'shiny table' with objects including mirrors to encourage discussion in this area. In role-play, they effectively build large structures including a rocket.
74. Children make sound progress overall in creative development, with some good progress being made in their ability to use colour and paintbrushes. They have carefully worked on shades of blue. Children have contributed to the large display about the story 'Watch Out – Big Brother's Coming'. They use paint freely to make bright symmetrical butterflies. They explore shape and form in both two and three dimensions, as when painting and making three-

dimensional models of trains and numbers. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and jingles at some point every day.

75. Children make very good progress in physical development. They can throw balls into a hoop with increasing accuracy, improving their hand/eye co-ordination and using their mathematical skills to count at the same time. They move confidently, using their imagination, on different pieces of apparatus. They crawl through, over and under pieces of apparatus well, with regard to safety. They balance with increasing independence and body awareness on a narrow bar. Children are aware of different parts of their bodies and walk on the inside and outside edges of their feet. They react to instructions quickly. In outside play they practise throwing balls through a basketball net increasing their hand-eye co-ordination. They use pedal bikes, cars and scooters, exercising and increasing their stamina. Children enjoy handling appropriate tools such as paintbrushes and pencils with increasing dexterity, developing their fine motor skills. They use construction kits well.
76. Children make sound progress in personal, social and emotional development. There are instances of good and very good progress, for example, in a physical development session where relationships are very good. In a morning activity session, when many activities were going on, the large number of pupils related very well to each other. Children help to plan their own activities. They behave well in the library and are learning to take turns, for example, when allowing each other to speak in the library session and when role-playing in an 'ice-cream shop.' They generally socialise well and are gaining in confidence. However, at times, the large number of children in the classes has an adverse effect on development. They show their feelings and have a sense of wonder when their teacher empties a bag of objects on the floor in a matching exercise. They show independence and move quietly from one activity to another. When taking part in physical development sessions, the vast majority of pupils change their clothes independently.
77. The quality of teaching is at least sound overall in all areas of learning. There are instances of some good and very good teaching. Where teaching is very good, the teacher manages the children very well and they react quickly to instructions. Support staff are well directed, children have a very good range of experience, tasks are challenging and the teacher uses children to demonstrate their skills. As a result, children's attitudes are very positive. They are all very keen to carry out their work and relationships within the class are very good. Where teaching is sound, little time is spent during the activity sessions in having conversations with the children to extend their learning and a higher level of noise is tolerated which adversely affects children's learning. Teachers assess children's achievement well and use their assessments to plan future lessons. There is good identification of children with special educational needs and these children make good progress.
78. Leadership is good and there has been a sound improvement since the previous inspection in some areas, although a large increase in the numbers of children in the classes has affected this. Information to parents has improved, and the school acknowledges that the nursery information pamphlet needs updating. One or two parents had some concerns about the lack of communication but there are a number of channels of communication available and it is planned to update these. There is now more team planning and a greater team spirit. Children have more freedom to develop skills of independence, new carpet has been laid in the nursery and there is more involvement with the main school, including that through family groups and year group assemblies. The nursery's own baseline assessment is updated at least once a term and children's achievement is closely monitored in order to improve standards.

## ENGLISH

79. By the end of the key stage, the attainment of the majority of pupils in reading, writing and spelling overall is in line with the national average. Although a significant minority of pupils achieve above expectations for their age, the attainment of a minority of pupils is below expectations for their age. Overall attainment in speaking and listening and in handwriting and presentation of work is good. Although national figures are not yet available, provisional results of the recently undertaken Key Stage 1 assessment tests indicate overall attainment of the current Year 2 cohort is in line with expected levels after a drop in standards in 1999 which is explained by the nature of the previous year's cohort. With the exception of the 1999 results, levels of attainment in English have been maintained in line with national improvements in attainment since the previous inspection. Analysis of pupils' attainment on entry to the school indicates that pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in English and a minority, including pupils with special educational needs, have made good progress.
80. By the end of the key stage, standards in speaking and listening are good. Opportunities for speaking and listening are planned into the curriculum and pupils are systematically encouraged to talk and put forward their ideas during lessons, with discussion being used as a valuable learning tool. As a result, pupils listen well to others and this ability to listen carefully to their teachers and peers, observed in many lessons during the inspection, has a significant, positive effect on pupils' progress. Most pupils can recall and describe in simple detail their experiences and explain what they are doing. Pupils speak confidently and most understand the importance of taking turns to make spoken contributions.
81. In reading, although a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils are achieving well and demonstrate reading skills at a level above those expected for their age, overall attainment by the end of the key stage is satisfactory. Pupils read a variety of texts appropriate for their age and ability and show a developing enthusiasm for books. Love of books is encouraged successfully by the daily literacy hour whole-class reading activities and by the weekly lessons in the very attractively organised and decorated library where pupils return and take out books. Big books used for shared and class reading in literacy lessons include a good range of fiction with stories from a range of cultures, traditional stories and poetry and factual books used effectively as a basis for lessons. As they progress through the school, the majority of pupils acquire a love of books and a range of strategies and skills to enable them to tackle new words and understand text. A significant minority of higher attaining pupils read well and are beginning to read accurately and with expression. They talk about the characters in the stories they have read, predict outcomes and discuss their favourite stories and authors. The majority of pupils take reading books home each night and return them regularly. Reading diaries record pupils' progress effectively and serve as a useful home-school link.
82. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in writing is satisfactory overall. Most pupils make a good start in writing in the reception classes, learning the letter shapes and sounds, and how to form their letters, initially guided by their teachers' handwriting and gradually beginning to make their own independent efforts. By the end of the key stage, many pupils write a sequence of simple sentences. The writing of the majority of pupils in Year 2 shows a developing understanding of the use of capital letters and full stops and a satisfactory understanding of sentence structure. Their writing displays a satisfactory to good range of vocabulary and an ability to spell short words correctly. During the previous school year, all English teaching and planning was devoted to the newly introduced literacy hour. In common with a number of primary schools, after following the scheme of work closely for one year, the school decided that the writing aspect of the English curriculum had been neglected and changes have been made during the current year to the timetable and curriculum to overcome this problem, with an additional weekly writing lesson added to the curriculum. The effect of these recent changes is clearly evident in the improved results in the recent end of key stage assessment tests which demonstrated a significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining above national expectations for their age in writing. Although the specific writing lessons were not observed during the inspection, examples of extended writing, frequently of a good standard, and of pupils writing for a variety of purposes and to support other areas of the curriculum were on display in classrooms and around the school. Several examples of extended writing in other subject areas were observed in the work scrutiny, for example, in

history and religious education workbooks. The uses of literacy across the curriculum are a strength of English teaching in the school.

83. Standards of handwriting are good overall and pupils' presentation of their work is generally above that expected for pupils of a similar age. Most pupils are able to form their letters correctly and write in a satisfactory cursive handwriting style and the majority of pupils have begun to develop a neat, cursive style of writing by the end of the key stage. Although standards of spelling vary considerably, spelling in the written work seen is satisfactory for pupils' age. Pupils memorise spellings from word lists and vocabulary taken from books studied in literacy lessons. Setting pupils by ability for spelling lessons has a positive impact on standards of attainment and progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English due to well-focused support and well-targeted group activities in literacy lessons.
84. Pupils' response in English lessons ranges from excellent to satisfactory and is very good overall. They enjoy their work and most are eager to learn. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers, contribute constructively to lessons and answer questions willingly and appropriately. A notable feature of pupils' positive response is the way pupils walk confidently, quietly and responsibly around the school, up and down the long corridors and stairs, returning and exchanging their reading scheme books and returning to their classrooms without the need for constant adult supervision.
85. Teaching in lessons observed is good overall. There are some instances of very good teaching. The teachers' good subject knowledge, joint planning and understanding of the national literacy strategy enable them to teach the subject effectively. They have adopted the national literacy strategy wholeheartedly and enthusiastically and literacy lessons are well planned and organised, in detail, with resources readily available for pupils to use. Skilful questioning techniques are used to consolidate and direct pupils' learning effectively. In most cases, teachers plan appropriate work for pupils of differing levels of ability. However, in the one lesson where teaching was merely satisfactory, although the lesson was well planned and classroom management was good, the challenge for higher attaining pupils was insufficient. It is because of this that the overall progress made across the key stage is satisfactory. Marking of pupils' work is up to date and, in the best instances, offers pupils positive encouragement to improve their work. The quality of learning in lessons observed ranges from very good to satisfactory and is good overall. Homework is used satisfactorily to support and extend learning in the classroom.
86. The curriculum, based on the national framework, ensures that teachers plan lessons which take note of what has gone before and what is to follow and that all pupils have equal access through the adaptation of tasks to their abilities. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development through the frequent opportunities to discuss texts being read.
87. The subject co-ordinators work well together and manage the subject effectively. They have undertaken appropriate in-service training for the literacy strategy and have developed a good overview of English in the school as a result of their monitoring and evaluation of provision and classroom practice. Resources for classroom teaching are good. The school library is a valuable, attractive, well-utilised resource, books are organised using a simplified Dewey system of cataloguing and shelves are clearly labelled by category. It is well used by pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. Pupils' attainments in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were overall below the national average. Whereas ninety per cent reached the expected Level 2, which was in line with national expectations, only eleven per cent achieved the higher Level 3 which was well below. Taking the four years 1996-1999 together, the performance in mathematics was above the national average. The lower performance in 1999 can in part be attributed to the cohort having a greater number of pupils with special educational needs than normal, and a significant number of higher attaining pupils having left the school during the key stage. Indications from national testing in 2000 are that overall standards have risen and are

now in line with national averages, and this is borne out by inspection evidence. This improvement in overall standards during the last year has been brought about by the effective introduction and implementation of the national numeracy strategy, and the regular weekly support now provided for higher attaining pupils. Standards in mathematics now broadly match those reported at the last inspection.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed sound number concepts. Pupils' written work shows that there is much consolidation of basic number work; they understand how to identify hundred, tens and units in three digit numbers, and can order these numbers correctly. They readily identify odd and even numbers and can name two and three-dimensional shapes, pointing out their properties. Strategies used to work out answers are evident in their work, for example in Year 2 where pupils were given a list of objects on sale and had to spend as close to a given sum of money as possible. Standard units of length have been introduced and pupils clearly understand how to estimate and measure the length of classroom objects.
90. Teaching is mainly good and as a result pupils learn well. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and manage behaviour well, creating a good atmosphere for learning. Lessons are planned very carefully across each year group. The teaching programmes set out in the national numeracy project are carefully followed, and ensure that pupils cover all of the required elements of the National Curriculum. Well-paced mental sessions at the start of each lesson help pupils to develop their knowledge of addition and subtraction facts, for example accurately recalling number bonds up to ten and twenty. Year 1 pupils quickly add nine to a number by adding ten and subtracting one. Teachers' questioning of pupils is very effective, with questions often being targeted at differing ability levels. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were adding nine to a given number, some were expected to add to a single digit number and others to two and three digit numbers. In most lessons pupils are asked to explain their answers and strategies for solving problems, so demonstrating their level of understanding, as in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were creating two and three digit numbers using large dice, identifying the hundreds, tens and units digits. Incorrect answers are not dismissed but are used well as teaching points. Tasks are well prepared for differing ability groups; lower ability groups, including pupils with special educational needs, are well supported by the tasks provided, which enable them to make satisfactory progress towards achieving the learning objectives for the lesson. Where learning support assistants are in lessons, they provide appropriate support. However, teachers' expectations of high attaining pupils are inconsistent, similar tasks to other groups often being set with, for example, larger numbers, but little further challenge by way of investigative work or problem solving. In better lessons, where further challenge is given, pupils respond well, for example in Year 1 where they were solving equations with missing numbers, checking their answers using inverse operations. Extra support is given to higher attaining pupils for one session per week in each class. This is used well, and pupils enjoy the harder tasks set and having to explain their working out.
91. Pupils are enthusiastic about their mathematics lessons, behave well and show a strong interest in the work they are doing. They work well in their groups, enabling teachers to work with particular groups or individuals. Their good attitudes are making a positive contribution to their attainment and progress in mathematics. Parents are encouraged to be involved in pupils' learning; a 'Maths Help' booklet clearly sets out how parents can support their children's learning in number as they pass through the school.
92. In both the introduction to lessons and the plenary sessions, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills; the subject vocabulary to be introduced is shown in planning and is well used by pupils in lessons. Mathematics is occasionally used in other subjects, for example in design technology when measuring wood for a marble run. Opportunities are taken during registration to practice counting and number calculations. There is little evidence of information technology being used in mathematics.
93. Mathematics is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. She heads a team of three, who have monitored lessons, following the successful introduction of the national numeracy strategy. All aspects of numeracy lessons have been observed and findings discussed at staff meetings, with a view to making improvements. The policy for mathematics is due to be reviewed and updated, to take account of the numeracy hour. Teachers evaluate their weekly

lesson plans, recording pupils who have fallen short or have exceeded learning objectives, and half-termly assessment tasks are set, also linked to learning objectives, and pupils' competencies recorded. These assessments are used satisfactorily to inform future planning. Results of national testing are carefully analysed so that any weaknesses can be given attention. Mathematics is adequately resourced.

## SCIENCE

94. At the end of the key stage, standards in science are in line with the national average and this standard has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress throughout the school. Those with special educational needs make good progress.
95. Pupils of all abilities are secure in the knowledge and understanding that plants need sunshine and water to live and grow and some higher attaining pupils can relate this to human life. They look closely at plants they are observing and at illustrations of the life cycle of a plant, correctly identifying seeds, roots, stalks, leaves, buds and flowers. Some predict that without water a seed will die, but about one-third of a reception class were unsure that dead plants could not come to life again. Pupils are beginning to classify animals into categories such as mammal, bird or reptile by comparing the similarities and differences and using their knowledge of these animals to answer relevant questions. Many understand and are intrigued by the many forms of camouflage used by animals. They know that birds have feathers, rabbits have fur and reptiles have scaly skin. Those with prior higher attainment use their numeracy skills well to measure distance when experimenting with forces and their literacy skills for writing brief conclusions following an experiment to find the best material for making curtains. Most have a clear understanding of the names of parts of the human body and many can distinguish between living and non-living things. Younger pupils study forces as pushes and pulls, linked to the making of a simple puppet and to the Big Book on 'The Enormous Turnip.' Most understand that many appliances in their own homes take energy from electricity and correctly identify whether the source is from a battery or a mains supply. In their work on materials, pupils make 'feely' pictures which link to the needs of the visually impaired. Their posters on personal hygiene and a healthy life-style show satisfactory understanding of the needs of people. Pupils of all ages carry out experiments such as testing materials for their opacity and transparency, and they plan seeds to observe the growth cycle at first hand. They are making a satisfactory beginning in recording their observations in drawings, simple tables and the higher attainers write brief sentences. Pupils are encouraged to research their projects on computers and to word-process their work to improve presentation which is already good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the key stage.
96. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. Occasionally, teaching and learning are very good. In the best lessons, teachers plan work which is carefully matched to the needs of individual pupils after having evaluated the child's particular strengths and weaknesses in knowledge, understanding and skills. They question effectively to check and extend pupils' learning and to help them express what they want to say. Lessons are well-prepared and organised and pupils are managed well so that they know exactly what they are supposed to do and learn in a calm learning atmosphere. Tasks set challenges for all pupils, though they are not beyond the abilities of those with special educational needs. Teachers give clear explanations and relate new learning to pupils' existing experience, for example linking the growth diary of a plant to the study of diaries in the literacy hour. They give time targets to sustain pupils' interest and effort. However, in some lessons, not all pupils are actively involved in discussion and so they become inattentive and a little restless during introductions and plenary sessions which limits the progress they can make. When management is not entirely secure, pupils are noisy and fussy moving to activities and chat about things other than the task they are supposed to be tackling. Occasionally, teachers talk too much themselves instead of drawing pupils into the discussion so that they can share what they know and understand. Not all lessons are sufficiently lively or exciting and, although display is an attractive celebration of pupils' achievements, it is insufficiently stimulating as a learning resource.

97. The school bases its science work on the local education authority's scheme of work, supplemented by national guidance and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. This is used effectively, although the school acknowledges that work on scientific investigation and enquiry needs to be further developed in some classes. The scheme is to be revised to incorporate the requirements of the new curriculum in September. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and good use is made of the information obtained to help teachers plan suitable lessons. Resources are adequate and the school is gradually building up a good stock of equipment, although storage is posing a problem. The staff use the extensive school grounds well, for collecting grasses, pond dipping and the observation of wild animals in the spinney. As an annual exercise in contributing to the life of the local community, pupils plant and tend fruit trees in Stones Orchard. The science curriculum is enhanced by visits to a butterfly farm and an aquatic centre, and the school welcomes visiting theatre groups or science advisory groups who give presentations on forces or electricity. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role which is effectively exercised in terms of management, although suffering from a lack of time for monitoring and evaluating teaching and provision because of constraints imposed by the demands of the national literacy and numeracy projects.

## **ART**

98. A limited number of lessons was observed during the inspection. Judgement takes account of documentation, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with teachers and pupils.
99. Pupils' standards in art are above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils work on their own designs after studying the work of Van Gogh. In their own work they use short straight lines as he did to create their pictures. They use pencil crayon well, often overlaying two colours to achieve shading and the right mix of colour. Pupils relate short lines to short grass and longer brushstrokes to the branches of trees. Their pencil control is good and they are beginning to understand how to use the shape of their paper effectively, for example, whether to use a portrait or landscape presentation. They are developing a sense of proportion and perspective and they know that a house in the distance needs to be drawn smaller than if it were in the foreground of their picture. When looking at their own work they are critical and can see ways in which they can improve their skills. Higher attaining pupils draw trees and people particularly well and create well-balanced compositions.
100. The quality of teaching observed in art is good. Teachers give good clear introductions to their lessons, their planning is detailed and they create a positive working environment. They have high expectations of pupils and give challenging tasks. They build up a good relationship with their pupils and have good management skills. All these factors have a very positive effect on the pupils' learning, which is good, and they improve their art skills. They increase their skills in observation and they are learning to look at their own and other artists' work critically. Good teaching also has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and their progress. They are able to maintain concentration and are very keen to work. They enjoy the subject and they compliment each other on their results. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress. They use a variety of techniques and materials. They sew carefully, using a running stitch, make detailed observational drawings of sliced fruit and plants and make bright collage sunflowers using paper and seeds. Pupils also use clay and paint effectively to make three-dimensional door number plaques. Other pupils in Year 1 have made very sensitive drawings of flowers including daffodils and wild lilies. Pupils in reception make good progress when designing stamps for their post office and painting dandelions in the style of John Bauer. Pupils in one reception class used colour boldly and produced beautiful vibrant paintings of poppies in the style of Georgia O'Keefe. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
101. Art makes a contribution to numeracy, for example, when pupils work on perspective, shape and form. They use their literacy skills when discussing their own work and that of other artists. They also listen well to the teachers' instructions. Information technology is used effectively in art; for example, in reception they use word-processing when designing a

Mother's Day card. In Year 1, they use a painting program to create landscapes, some of which incorporate trees, flowers and a sun.

102. Leadership in the subject is good although there have been few opportunities for the monitoring and evaluation of provision and classroom practice. The programme used ensures that pupils build on their art skills year by year, even in the reduced curriculum. There is no specific assessment procedure but an annotated school portfolio is kept to help teachers to plan future lessons built upon pupils' prior attainment.
103. Since the previous inspection, there has been sound improvement. The teachers have increased their knowledge in art and their confidence in teaching the subject. There is now an appropriate programme in place, through which skills can be built up progressively. The local scrap bank has helped improve resources, which are now satisfactory, as has access to the local education authority teaching centre's resource bank.
104. Display around the school is good. It supports learning and enhances the school environment. Two particularly good displays are the 'Peacock' and 'Camouflage.'

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. A limited number of lessons was observed during the inspection. Judgements are therefore based on documentation, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with teachers and pupils.
106. Pupils' standards in design and technology are in line with those expected nationally for pupils of this age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils carry out market research in food technology, to find out what kind of cakes pupils prefer to eat. They use information technology to record the results of their survey. They have also designed and made vehicles with axles and wheels, increasing their construction skills and their understanding about how things work. Pupils' work shows that they can evaluate their designs and constructions and suggest how improvements could be made. They have also worked with paper, folding it and bending it to make paper sculptures and paper weavings, extending their knowledge of the properties of this material.
107. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed during inspection was good. Teachers manage their classes well and make specific teaching points when necessary, for example, about safety when using a saw and a vice. They give appropriate advice to parent helpers and good support to pupils. Teachers constantly assess the needs of each pupil and give appropriate help and direction. Their subject knowledge is good and they pitch their tasks at levels which challenge the pupils. Planning is clear and detailed. This good teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning, progress and attitudes to work. They learn how to work safely and use tools effectively. They make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage, increasing their construction skills, knowledge of mechanisms and their understanding of how to join things together using a variety of techniques. For example in reception, they have made cones using staples and glue. Year 1 pupils make good progress. They have designed marble runs and are in the process of constructing them using wood, glue and hardboard. They use their measuring skills to construct the runs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers are sensitive to the needs of each individual and give them appropriate support. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, they are very motivated and almost all work hard to complete their tasks.
108. Leadership in the subject is good. Programmes are appropriate within a reduced curriculum and the pupils' skills are gradually built up. It is planned to look at the nationally recommended programme and make best use of it for this school. There is effective planning. There is no formal assessment procedure. However, detailed notes are kept about the pupils' individual skills and annotated examples are kept for the school portfolio for teachers to use in future planning. Design and technology makes a good contribution to literacy, for example when pupils write on their planning sheets and when they discuss and write the evaluation of their product. There is a sound contribution to numeracy including measuring and the use of three-dimensional shapes such as cones. Information technology is used well and resources are satisfactory.



109. Improvements since the previous inspection are satisfactory. The teaching of the design process has improved and this now includes a section on evaluation. There is more emphasis on learning about how things work. Pupils now have much more responsibility for planning their work and in the independent use of tools. Links with other subject areas in the curriculum have improved. Members of staff have improved their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject. There is a better emphasis on the quality of the final product.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Two geography lessons were observed during the inspection, one in the reception class and one in Year 2. Additional evidence provided by a scrutiny of samples of pupils' work on display and in folders shows that standards are broadly in line with what is expected nationally by the age of seven. Pupils have undertaken an appropriate range of work in geography during the current school year and they make appropriate progress as they move through the school.
111. In the reception lesson observed, pupils were undertaking a 'treasure hunt' around the school grounds. They were following a route on a simple map, using such terms as around, across, behind, through, under and over to describe it. They were developing their knowledge and skills through small-scale enquiries and examining the features of their immediate environment. In the Year 2 lesson, pupils were recording their observations of the environment on a 'field trip' to the spinney in the school grounds. They were observing carefully, drawing selected plants and mini-beasts and recording the situation in which they were discovered, for example 'I saw a woodlouse under a log' and 'It has yellow and black stripes.' In the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good. Pupils, particularly in the reception class, responded very enthusiastically to the opportunity to work outside the classroom.
112. Teaching in the lessons seen ranged from very good to good, although lesson observations provided insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching in the subject overall. In the lesson where teaching was very good, the teacher managed the lesson, both within the classroom and once outside in the school grounds, very well. The teacher had a very good rapport with the pupils, demonstrated good subject knowledge, maintained a good pace through the lesson, motivated pupils well and provided good individual support. The quality of teaching and the provision of well planned, interesting activities resulted in good quality of learning in the lessons seen.
113. The geography curriculum has been based on the local authority scheme of work but, with the imminent arrival of revised National Curriculum orders at the beginning of the new school year, the school is reviewing the curriculum and adopting aspects of the government-recommended scheme of work for the subject. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and provide useful information for teachers to use in planning future lessons. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory understanding of the role and, although she has little time for going into classroom, she satisfactorily monitors teaching and learning through her examination of teachers' planning and pupils' completed work. There is a generally satisfactory range of classroom resources for the subject although the school has a very good, well-utilised physical resource for geography in the school grounds.

## **HISTORY**

114. Only two history lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Year 1, planned jointly and covering the same topic. Work sampling provided additional evidence of pupils' work in history, however. A scrutiny of pupils' work in folders and on display around the school and photographic evidence provided by the school indicates that pupils' standards of attainment are broadly average for the age of seven. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make appropriate progress in history as they move through the school. A portfolio of history work collected by the co-ordinator demonstrates that pupils undertake an appropriate and interesting range of historical topics supplemented effectively by a range of visits and visitors designed to extend their historical understanding. For example, the pupils

have celebrated the school's fiftieth anniversary, visited an exhibition on Christianity through the ages at a local church, visited the House on the Hill Toy Museum, Knebworth House and a local castle.

115. In the lesson observed, Year 1 pupils were distinguishing between television programmes today and in the past after having watched a video of 'Andy Pandy' and 'The Flowerpot Men.' They were asking and answering questions and developing a sense of chronology by sequencing events and objects, using common terms to describe the passage of time. They demonstrate an appropriate awareness of differences between ways of life at differing times and are discovering aspects of the past through a variety of historical sources.
116. Teaching in the lessons seen ranged was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. In the best lesson, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and effectively used her own childhood experiences to interest and motivate the pupils who responded well to the lesson. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their history lessons and ask and answer questions enthusiastically.
117. History is organised so that units of work alternate with geography topics. The school is currently considering adopting a government-recommended scheme of work for history in preparation for changes to the National Curriculum at the beginning of the next school year. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory understanding of the role and performs well her management function of monitoring and evaluating provision and teaching. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the results used well to help teachers with planning future lessons. There is a satisfactory range of resources for the subject supplemented by teachers' own resources.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards in information and communications technology are in line with those expected nationally for pupils of this age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils collect information from a market research project in food technology. The higher and average attaining pupils access an appropriate program to record their findings and confidently show others how to do this. Lower attaining pupils need verbal assistance to complete this process. All pupils have had specific detailed instruction on how to carry out these procedures. Pupils type in information to display it pictorially as a graph and they discuss their results. They have also produced surveys on mini-beasts and on television programmes watched by pupils in the class. Year 2 pupils take part in shared reading with reception children. They work in pairs and the Year 2 pupils confidently help the reception children with their mouse skills, reminding them to double click and to drag appropriately. They also help them with word-processing skills to write a short story about Goldilocks. Pupils use their word-processing skills to review books like 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', to put adjectives into sentences and to write stories. They use art programs to produce pictures about sharing their feelings. Pupils' work shows that they can make a floor robot go where they wish to, by entering a set of instructions. Pupils have used a simulation program and most have used computer games. All pupils in the school have access to the Internet every week and use it with assistance from adults.
119. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. Teachers use good visual aids which help pupils to learn how to access different programs. They ask specific questions of pupils and constantly assess their knowledge and understanding, as when working on the food technology project in Year 2. They have good management skills and have high expectations about the way pupils relate to each other. All of these factors have a positive effect on pupils' learning, attitudes and progress. In the shared reading sessions reception pupils make progress in basic computer skills and Year 2 pupils instruct others and are patient when they make errors. Year 2 pupils also make progress in handling data. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress when they learn to save and retrieve their work. They show pleasure and amazement when their work appears back on the screen. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in information communications technology. This is because they are given assistance when needed. Pupils listen well and stay on task for most of the time.

They are able to concentrate and have very good relationships with each other when working in pairs and large groups.

120. Examination of pupils' past work shows that teachers use information and communications technology in the different subject areas of the curriculum, for example in history, art, literacy, religious education, mathematics and geography. However, the whole area of using information and communications technology across all subjects is not developed fully throughout the school as teachers acknowledge. Teachers also use a variety of equipment including tape recorders and television.
121. Information and communications technology makes a good contribution to literacy, especially in word-processing, which is a strength in this subject. A sound contribution is made to numeracy including work on patterns.
122. Leadership of the subject is good and monitoring and evaluation of provision and classroom practice are satisfactory. The school has already evaluated the subject and identified areas for development. There are appropriate plans to address these areas in order to improve standards. Improvements to the accommodation are imminent. A computer suite is planned and money has been put aside to purchase or lease up to date hardware and software. It is acknowledged that the weaker areas of the curriculum are control and modelling. The programmes that are now being followed ensure improvements in these areas. Members of staff acknowledge their need for more training in this area and this is already appropriately planned. There are no specific assessment procedures. However, there is a school portfolio and teachers keep detailed records of what pupils can do.
123. Improvements since the previous inspection are sound and include an increase in the teachers' knowledge, understanding and confidence to deliver more focused work; pupils are now given more support and guidance; standards have improved and pupils can now read well enough to access the programs; several more up to date computers have been purchased for the classrooms and there are now more printers.

## **MUSIC**

124. Only two music lessons were observed so that no judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. Indications are that standards meet expectations at the end of Key Stage 1.
125. Within Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to express, through their singing, the mood within songs. They can identify long and short sounds in music and show this through their body movements and in their use of percussion instruments. Many are also able to follow the rhythm of a song using percussion instruments as in Year 2 where they add an accompaniment to 'This Old Man', first by clapping and then using instruments. Pupils' singing in assemblies is enthusiastic and tuneful. They know the names of the instruments they are playing and are introduced to musical vocabulary, understanding terms such as pitch, duration, tempo, piano and ostenato. All pupils in Year 2 are taught to play the recorder, and there is a music club where pupils play a range of tuned percussion instruments.
126. Music lessons are satisfactorily planned by each year group and based on national guidance, often incorporating the contribution of a visiting music teacher. Lessons build on previous learning and enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. They have a fairly brisk pace which helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. On the whole pupils respond well, listening carefully to any instructions given.
127. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory understanding of the role, but at the present time the management function is underdeveloped in terms of monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning and classroom practice. There are no procedures for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. There are adequate resources for music which are checked and replaced when necessary.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. During the inspection it was not possible to view all aspects of physical education. Three lessons were observed in which most pupils reached average standards that have been maintained since the previous inspection.
129. In dance, most pupils use space well to provide contrast in their movements, although a significant minority has to be reminded to avoid collision. Pupils show a good use of imagination in interpreting music in movement, and are beginning to evaluate their performances. They develop sound skills to enable them to start playing simple games of football and hockey. For example, in one lesson, pupils practised dribbling footballs and in another controlling a puck with a hockey stick.
130. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons contain warm up sessions and tasks are well explained, often with pupils demonstrating activities, as in a Year 2 lesson where pupils showed contrasting movements of birds and insects through the air. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well organised and managed and this enables them to make sound progress. For example, in a good reception class lesson the hall was divided into four sections with cones and pupils spent time at each of the activities set out in these sections, practising different skills. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and behave sensibly. They mostly listen well to instructions and organise themselves to put out apparatus and equipment. Teachers are fully aware of safety, carefully checking apparatus and observing pupils throughout lessons.
131. Physical education is soundly led by two co-ordinators, covering the nursery and the main school. The local authority's planning and scheme of work are followed ensuring coverage of games, gymnastics and dance. Dance has been identified as a weaker area and in-service training has been organised to develop teachers' confidence in this aspect. Pupils prepare for school productions involving movement and dance; simple football games are organised at lunchtimes during the winter months and an inter-class tournament is a feature of sports day. Gymnastics and short tennis are promoted through out of school clubs held at the school but run by outside agencies. The school has links with the Saracens Rugby Club, some of whose players have helped in physical education lessons in school. Parents help with physical education lessons in the nursery. Some satisfactory assessment of developing skills and aptitudes takes place which is recorded in pupils' individual profiles and the information obtained is helpful in guiding teachers when planning the following lesson. Accommodation, both indoors and outside, is good and the school makes good use of the extensive field around the main building. Resources are adequate for teaching the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in religious education is above the levels recommended in the locally agreed syllabus and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the elements of Christian worship, in particular an Anglican communion service, and have good knowledge of Christian and Muslim places of worship. Higher attaining pupils explain how a hymn is a kind of prayer and that sacred songs have meaning for believers. Most, including some with special educational needs, know that the special clothes worn by a vicar are called vestments and that the colour of them changes according to the seasons of the church year. Many know that the Bible is a holy book – the Old Testament in Judaism and the New Testament in Christianity. Pupils' discussion with and about 'people who help us' contributes to their understanding of citizenship and consideration of others. They are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of ritual and festival in faith communities, for example Diwali. They are even beginning to explore the ultimate question of bereavement and loss. Pupils' written work on their own personal rules for use at home shows they appreciate the need for order, tolerance and respect. They know that Jesus and Mohammed were religious leaders and that their teachings have a significant impact on the lives of believers and unbelievers alike.
133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and successfully improves and deepens the knowledge and understanding of religions which pupils bring from home. There are instances

of good teaching and learning throughout the key stage. Teachers listen well to pupils, valuing all contributions and setting a good example for pupils to follow. They read stories well and expressively, pausing frequently to allow pupils to look at the illustrations and comment, thus adding to their understanding. Teachers are sensitive and sympathetic when tackling the problem of suffering. They plan lessons well and try hard to involve all pupils in discussion through the direction of effective questioning to all abilities and encouraging personal, spontaneous contributions. This leads to thoughtful questions from pupils like, 'How do we know about Jesus since there is no-one left alive who knew him?' which led to a clear explanation of the oral and written traditions. Sometimes teachers wait too long for pupils to pay attention, instead of seizing the initiative with a lively presentation. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress but sometimes tasks are undemanding and lack interest, providing too little challenge, apart from the demands of reading and writing. There is very little of pupils' work celebrated in display and teachers' exhibits, although attractive, are lacking in challenge to take learning forward.

134. The scheme of work closely follows the new Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus and is to be extended and incorporated fully into the new curriculum this September. Lessons are carefully planned to take account of what has gone before and what is to follow. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of visiting speakers, for instance, the local Anglican vicar and parents from other faiths. There are no formal procedures for assessment. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the role, but currently the management function is under-developed in terms of monitoring and evaluating classroom practice and provision. Resources are adequate, when supplemented by artefacts from the local resource centre.