

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEFRIARS FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Wealdstone, Harrow

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102184

Headteacher: Mrs L Pritchard

Reporting inspector: Mr T Richardson
16500

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 October 2001

Inspection number: 193850

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First and middle school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whitefriars Avenue
Wealdstone
Harrow
Middlesex

Postcode: HA3 5RQ

Telephone number: 0208 427 2080

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms H Chothia

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16500	Mr Richardson T	Registered inspector	Music; Foundation Stage	How high are standards; how well are pupils taught; how well is the school led and managed.
11575	Ms C Fish	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; how well does the school care for its pupils; How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
22092	Mr D Watts	Team inspector	Science, physical education	
20230	Ms J Clayphan	Team inspector	English; equality of opportunity; pupils with English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
8316	Ms J O'Hare	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology	
23434	Ms M Gibbon	Team inspector	Geography, history, religious education	
22768	Ms J Thomson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, art and design, pupils with special educational needs	
15023	Mr A Haouas	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitefriars is a very large mixed First and Middle school for pupils aged from three to twelve years. At the time of the inspection there were 412 pupils on roll and 51 part time children in the nursery. There are slightly more boys than girls and the school contains a wide range of minority ethnic groups, including refugees and Travellers. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment well below the expectation for their age. A very high proportion of the pupils (50 per cent) have English as an additional language (EAL) with the main home languages being Gujarati, Somali, Urdu and Arabic. Forty nine of these pupils are at early stages of acquiring English. Several of these pupils are not literate in their home language and some have deep traumas as the result of experiences they had before arriving in this country. Around 30 per cent of pupils claim free school meals and the school's catchment area covers the most socially disadvantaged parts of Harrow. A quarter of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs (SEN) and six pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Twenty five per cent of the pupils taking tests at the age of eleven have joined the school after Year 2. Since the last inspection the proportions of pupils with SEN and EAL have increased and the school has faced extreme difficulty with the recruitment and retention of teaching staff. This has slowed the rate of development and resulted in school leaders having to divert their energies into class teaching at the expense of focused and rigorous school improvement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitefriars is an improving school. First school provides a good quality of education and is successful in raising pupils' attainments to be close to the national average by the age of seven. Standards in Middle school are rising and pupils in Years 4 and 5 are now doing better than in previous years. The pupils currently in Years 6 and 7 have 'stood still' in the past, are underachieving, but are now starting to make progress again. Overall, the school is satisfactory, provides sound value for money and is likely to show sustainable improvement within the next two years, with Middle school becoming equally as effective as First school.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good leadership that is continuing to improve the school. As a result, higher standards are now seen from the nursery through to Year 5.
- Children have a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and the school adds very good value to their attainment on entry so that, by the age of seven, most pupils attain test results in English, mathematics and science that are close to the national average.
- The school has some very good teachers, particularly in the reception class, and is improving as teachers develop better teamwork and share best practice among themselves.
- The behaviour policy is resulting in improved behaviour management from

teachers, and pupils notice that behaviour is getting better.

- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal and social development so that they learn to respect one another and show good attitudes to their learning.
- Relationships in school are very good and there is racial harmony, respect and valuing of other cultures.
- The school provides an attractive environment that is welcoming to pupils and makes them want to learn.

What could be improved

- The pupils currently in Years 6 and 7 are underachieving and could be doing better in most subjects.
- The curriculum, and what teachers do in lessons, does not sufficiently address the language development needs of the pupils.
- There is still inconsistency in the quality of teaching between some classes.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to make sure that the learning needs of individual pupils are properly addressed in all lessons.
- There are too many unauthorised absences from school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Since then it has done as much as can be expected and has made satisfactory improvement against most of the key issues identified. In addition, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively; the quality of teaching has improved; behaviour in the school is improving; the quality of the buildings and décor is much better; there is now an appropriate senior management team; the work of the governors is now more professional and supportive; and the headteacher has continued to move the school forward, albeit slowly, despite the significant difficulties faced in the recruitment and retention of staff. There is still more to do to raise standards in Years 6 and 7 and to implement consistent assessment procedures in every subject throughout the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	D	C
mathematics	D	E*	E	D

Key

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

science	E	E*	E	D	lowest five per cent in the country
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Until this year, there has been insufficient improvement in the results of national tests for pupils aged eleven. By the year 2000, the attainments of Year 6 pupils in the school were in the lowest five per cent in the country in mathematics and science and well below the national average in English. At the same time, pupils' attainments at the age of seven were improving and keeping pace with national developments in reading, writing and mathematics. However, recent developments are now beginning to take effect and the school is meeting its targets for improvement. Also, there is a trend of rising standards that is moving 'upwards' through the school so that pupils from the nursery to Year 5 are now doing better than in the past. The pupils currently in Years 6 and 7 are underachieving and their attainments are too low. They have not made sufficient progress over the last four years and are out of the habit of concentrating and trying to do their best in class. Teachers are now working successfully to help these pupils and they are starting to make progress again. In two years time, as the pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 reach the age of eleven, the school is likely to have better results in national tests, that more accurately reflect the achievement of the pupils. Inspection findings show that children enter the nursery with attainment well below the level expected for their age. By the time they begin Year 1, the majority meet the expected early learning goals in most of the areas of learning. By the age of seven, most pupils' attainments are close to the national average in reading and mathematics and just above the national average in writing. This is a very good achievement since the children began the nursery, and a good achievement through their time in First school. Pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 are continuing to make progress as they should, and have moved forward in their knowledge by the expected amount. In English, pupils listen attentively but their speaking skills are lower than expected and a large majority of pupils have a limited vocabulary that slows down their progress and lowers their test results. In other subjects, in First school: standards are above the level expected for the age of the pupils in art and information and communication technology; standards are as expected in mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education; standards are below the level expected in geography, history and music. In Middle school: standards are above the levels expected for the age of the pupils in physical education (Year 7) and singing: standards are as expected in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and French (Year 7); standards are below the level expected in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen, interested in what is going on and happy to talk about their work.
Behaviour, in and out	Good. The 'Golden Rules' are having a positive effect.

of classrooms	Most pupils try hard to meet the expectation that they will behave well.
Personal development relationships and	Very good. Pupils are polite and courteous There is a reassuring absence of hurtful or racist comments and the cultural mix of friendship groups is to be greatly celebrated.
Attendance	Poor. There are too many unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery - reception	Years 1 - 3	Years 4 - 7
Lessons seen overall	Very good	good	satisfactory

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some areas of considerable strength as well as some areas still to be improved. Teaching is strongest in the Foundation Stage, First school and for the younger pupils in Middle school. There are also a number of individual teachers who provide a consistent high quality in their work and some who are inspirational at times. In the lessons seen, more than nine out of ten were judged as satisfactory or better. Good teaching was seen in two thirds of all lessons and almost one third of lessons were very good or better. One lesson in twenty had teaching of an outstanding quality. Just under one in ten lessons were less than satisfactory. Inspectors are confident that the continuation of what the school is already doing to improve teaching and learning will rectify this situation soon. Teaching assistants are of good quality and their work is helping the pupils with their learning. There is a clear commitment among teaching and non-teaching staff to do their best for the children and pupils. There is satisfactory teaching of English throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics is good and the strategies for literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. Improvements in teaching are now secure from the nursery through to Year 5 and are already beginning to make a difference, for the better, in Years 6 and 7. The school's plans to implement procedures for assessment are long overdue and there are some lessons where pupils are insufficiently challenged. The provision for homework is satisfactory. Good quality teaching is provided for pupils with EAL and SEN although there are times when more support is needed in class. In the lessons where teaching is good, the pupils are learning well. Where teachers make conscious efforts to promote the communication skills of pupils it helps them to learn more in subjects other than English. In the lessons where pupils are made aware of how much they are learning and the standards they are expected to reach, they learn more and are motivated to improve their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. They are suitably broad and balanced and meet national requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Good provision is made in First school and recent developments are likely to improve the provision in Middle school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory provision is made. These pupils are equally involved in the curriculum but more attention should be given to teaching new vocabulary in all lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' personal development. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pupils' social development is very good and this leads to very good relationships within the school between pupils and adults.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Staff work successfully to create an atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and valued and where they are listened to and their concerns taken seriously. This atmosphere improves pupils' attitudes to learning and helps them feel comfortable in school.

Parents have satisfactory views of the school. They receive good quality information about their children's progress and events in the school and generally willing to support the school. Teachers are working hard to encourage increased parental involvement in school activities. Current procedures for assessment are inconsistent and cumbersome so that teachers are not always aware of what pupils already know, and some pupils find their lessons could be more challenging.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership. There is a good and clear vision for how to improve and the benefit of this can already be seen in the higher standards of attainment for pupils now in Years 1 to 5.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Recent developments are improving the quality and work of the governors so they now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's	Satisfactory. The good practice of teachers evaluating and

evaluation of its performance	learning from each other in First school has yet to extend into Middle school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial planning and control is secure and the school looks to obtain best value in all transactions.

There is an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff, and the school has an appropriate range of learning resources. A rolling programme of improvement is enhancing the accommodation and the environment to a good level, and this is of benefit to the pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the teachers and non-teaching staff • the attitudes and values that the school promotes • parents feel comfortable to approach the school about any problems • class sizes are small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards – particularly the attainment of pupils in Year 6 • the provision for homework • communication with the school and the information parents receive about how well their children are doing • a lower turn-over of teaching staff • the behaviour of pupils • a wider range of activities outside lessons

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by parents. Standards in Year 6 are lower than they should be, but progress is now being made. Satisfactory provision is made for homework and the behaviour of pupils is improving. Good quality information is provided for parents and the school is doing all it can to recruit and retain teaching staff. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the last inspection, there has been insufficient improvement in the results of national tests for pupils aged eleven. By the year 2000, the attainments of eleven year olds in the school were in the lowest five per cent in the country in mathematics and science and well below the national average in English. At the same time, pupils' attainments at the age of seven were improving and keeping pace with national developments in reading, writing and mathematics. Before the inspection, the school, governors and parents expressed concern about this and asked inspectors to investigate the reasons for these anomalies in national test results. Detailed observation of pupils in lessons and analysis of their work over long periods of time show that:
 - There is a trend of rising standards that is moving 'upwards' through the school so that pupils from the nursery to Year 5 are now doing better than in the past;
 - The pupils currently in Years 6 and 7 have 'stood still' and not made sufficient progress over the last four years;
 - Some of these pupils have become disaffected and are out of the habit of concentrating and trying to do their best in class;
 - Teachers are now working hard with the pupils in Years 6 and 7 to interest them in learning and these pupils are starting to make progress again;
 - In two years time, as the pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 reach the age of eleven, the school is likely to have better results in national tests, that more accurately reflect the achievement of the pupils;
 - Pupils are doing better in mathematics than their test results indicate – this is because a large number of pupils have difficulty in understanding the test questions;
 - Not enough emphasis is given to practical investigations in science and this contributes to the underachievement of eleven year olds in this subject.

2. Inspection findings show that children enter the nursery with attainment well below the level expected for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress and enter the reception class where baseline assessment is carried out that shows the children's levels of development to be below average for their age. By the time the children leave the Foundation Stage and begin Year 1, the majority meet the expected early learning goals in mathematics; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and their creative development. In the two remaining areas: communication, language and literacy; and knowledge and understanding of the world, the children do well but are still below the expectation for their age. A good rate of progress is

maintained through Years 1 and 2 so that, by the age of seven, most pupils' attainments are close to the national average in reading and mathematics and just above the national average in writing. This is a very good achievement since the children began the nursery, and a good achievement through their time in First school. Pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 are continuing to make progress as they should, are building successfully on their attainments at the age of seven, and have moved forward in their knowledge by the expected amount.

3. Since the last inspection, a significant number of staffing changes have taken place, senior managers and governors have worked hard to improve teaching and learning and the school now has the capacity to provide an acceptable and improved quality of education for the pupils currently in Years 6 and 7. They have experienced a disrupted education and are currently underachieving significantly in most subjects. However, the 2001 national test results for eleven year olds show an upturn for the first time in four years and are an initial sign that the progress these pupils are now making is having an impact on their attainment. Other factors also affect test results. One quarter of the pupils taking the tests for eleven year olds have joined the school after the age of seven and missed out on the school's early years provision. A number of these pupils have very low literacy and numeracy skills and some have also had little or no formal education before joining the school. There has also been a rise in the number of pupils with special educational needs within the school.
4. The school's performance is compared with the test results of similar schools. These are schools with similar numbers of free school meals and pupils with special educational needs. Inspectors judge that the school has, until now been judged against the wrong group of schools and should be compared with schools that have between 35 and 50 per cent of the pupils claiming free school meals. On this basis, the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds show that the school is doing as well as other similar schools in English, and pupils' attainments are below average in mathematics and science. When compared against the national average for all schools, the 2001 results for eleven year olds show that the school is below the national average for English and well below the national average for mathematics and science. These results are no longer in the lowest five per cent of the country.
5. In English, pupils throughout the school listen attentively and with appropriate skill for their age. However, their speaking skills are lower than expected and a large majority of pupils have a limited vocabulary. While this is sufficient for most aspects of daily communication, these pupils are at a disadvantage when needing to understand the complex language of test questions and to learn new concepts in subjects such as history and geography. Standards in reading in First school are below the national average although all pupils enjoy books and higher attaining pupils are reading fluently. Higher standards in reading than in previous years are now evident in Years 4 and 5. The pupils in Years 6 and 7 have reading skills that are below average for their age with very few pupils reading at higher levels. This is holding the pupils

back in their knowledge and understanding of other subjects. In writing, in First school, standards are as expected for the age of the pupils and most of them form letters clearly and are starting to position them well. The pupils in Years 6 and 7 have handwriting that is usually fluent and joined, but sometimes untidy. Whilst the quality and quantity of what they write is below the standard expected for their age, the majority of pupils are, however, now making slow progress. Some pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and become fluent and completely at ease in the language. Others, particularly those who have had traumatic experiences, find concentration difficult in whole class situations and learn more slowly. Pupils are very well included in their classes by both staff and other pupils and their presence enriches school life.

6. In mathematics, inspection evidence shows that by the time the pupils are seven, standards of attainment in mathematics are broadly average. Younger pupils make a secure start to their number work and, by Year 2, pupils can count reliably backwards and forwards, using a hundred-square for help. The higher attaining pupils collect data, draw graphs and start to interpret the findings. Younger pupils in Middle school are competent in number and they use their skills to solve problems. In Year 4, the pupils are competent in mental additions and subtractions using hundreds, tens and units. In Year 6, pupils are developing a clear understanding of shape, and this enables them to calculate the areas of rectangles and compound shapes made from rectangles. By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils' standards in mathematics are lower than expected nationally although their number skills are better than their test results. For example, the pupils presently in Year 7 can manipulate numbers, adding, subtracting, and multiplying into the thousands. Most use decimals to two and three places with a secure understanding of place value. Higher attaining pupils use perimeter formulae and construct a net for a given shape. Throughout the school, pupils apply their numeracy skills satisfactorily in other subjects.
7. In science, the findings of the inspection are that by Year 2, most pupils now are attaining the standards expected for their ages and are achieving well. Pupils handle a range of materials and make and record their accurate observations. In Years 6 and 7, pupils attain standards, that are well below those expected for their ages, and there is considerable underachievement in these two year groups. This due to some unsatisfactory teaching and the fact that pupils are given too few opportunities for practical and investigative work. In Years 4 and 5, however, improvements are taking place. Most pupils are now attaining the expected standards and are achieving satisfactorily.
8. In other subjects, in First school, standards are above the level expected for the age of the pupils in art and design and information and communication technology. In Middle school, standards are also above the levels expected for the age of the pupils (Year 7 only) in physical education and in singing. In First school, pupils attain the levels expected for their age in design and technology and religious education. They attain below the expectation for

their age in geography, history and music. In Middle school, pupils are doing as well as expected for their age in art and design, information and communication technology, French and design and technology. These pupils are attaining below the levels expected for their age in geography, history, religious education and aspects of music other than singing.

9. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN) have a wide range of needs and benefit from the specific help they receive, particularly in mathematics and English. By the end of Year 2, pupils with SEN have made good progress, successfully achieving many of their individual targets. Optional testing indicates that pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress throughout Middle school. Scrutiny of their test results and annual reports over time show that they have frequently become frustrated at not being able to keep up with peers. There has also been some delay in the identification of special educational needs due to some pupils having to wait a long time to be assessed by external specialists. However, the school and the Local Education Authority are now working successfully to secure better levels of support for these pupils.
10. In test results at all ages, girls do better than boys. The school is aware of this and is now analysing data to monitor the performance of other groups of pupils and beginning to use this information more effectively to rectify any differences found. Analysis of the lessons observed during the inspection shows that the school could do more to help pupils know what they are achieving and to have a clearer idea of the standards they are expected to attain. This would help the pupils know, for example, what they need to work on in order to gain a Level 4 in their reading.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes towards their work in school and their behaviour in class and around the school are both good; their personal development and relationship with each other and the adults in school are all very good. The school has created a caring and positive ethos and this helps pupils to take a pride in their own and others' abilities. The positive position in these aspects detailed in the previous inspection has been maintained.
12. Many parents say that their children like school and this is confirmed by pupils' positive attitudes to it. They are keen to come, they are interested in what is going on and are happy to talk about school and their work. In lessons, pupils' attitudes very much reflect the quality of the teaching; thus most is good with much that is very good or excellent. Where pupils' imagination and interest are well caught, they are eager to take part in lessons, keen to share ideas with each other and to listen to what others are saying; they discuss their work sensibly and enjoy showing their work to adults. They work with enthusiasm and clearly enjoy their successes. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to talk to each other about their experience of dipping their hands in a container of water and passing round an ice cube. Pupils were immediately interested and

discussed the differences in temperature purposefully with each other. Where pupils' attitudes occasionally become unsatisfactory, they may not listen well to each other or the class teacher, more able pupils may totally disengage from the lesson and pupils are sometimes bored because the pace of the lesson is wrong, the task is mundane and there is insufficient challenge for them to really get to grips with. For example, pupils in a mathematics lesson soon lost interest because they were not given sufficient time to think, or to assimilate the instructions given. Outside lessons, pupils are eager to take part in clubs organised in school, where they are offered. Pupils in First school told inspectors that they are eager to be able to access these clubs when they get to Middle school.

13. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) relate well to each other in their target groups and in whole class situations. The school's system of partnering SEN pupils with more able pupils is particularly successful. In all lessons observed where this took place there was added benefit to the learning of both pupils. In the computer suite, SEN pupils and their partners were patient with each other, carrying out the teacher's instructions together and successfully achieving their objectives in a positive way.
14. Although some parents feel that behaviour in school is not good, inspection findings are that behaviour in classes, around school and in the playground is good overall. 'Golden Rules' are discussed with pupils each year and each class draws up their own set of rules. This year, the new classroom procedures of 'isolating' pupils if they misbehave were explained to pupils; older pupils in particular say that this method is having a positive effect. In classes, pupils mostly respond quickly to correction of their behaviour and try hard to meet the expectation that they will behave well. Praise is often very well used to emphasise very good behaviour. However, there is a pattern of difficult behaviour in Years 6 and 7. Pupils have developed bad habits over recent years due to rapid changes of teachers that have led to the breakdown of a consistent approach to managing their behaviour. This problem has been recognised and is being tackled by the current staff in Years 6 and 7. Already, there are signs of improvement, especially when the school rules are consistently applied and lessons contain interesting and motivating teaching. Many pupils throughout the school told inspectors how well the new playground markings and equipment are helping to improve behaviour. Because pupils have something purposeful to do outside, they are less likely to get into trouble. Pupils of all ages were observed using, for example, the trail to hop, skip and jump round and the new large play equipment. No one was sent to detention from playtimes during the inspection; this is a great improvement. Although no bullying was observed during the inspection, pupils say that it does sometimes occur, but they also know that they must tell a teacher. Where it is reported to the school, it is dealt with effectively. The school nurse is sometimes instrumental, acting as a point of contact for pupils and parents, in helping to resolve this issue. There were a number of exclusions last year, mostly 'one-off' occurrences. They were all for valid reasons of unacceptable behaviour and were unrelated. No pattern was evident and all correct procedures were followed.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good and leads to the development of very positive relationships and independence. Pupils are polite and courteous; they are willing to help adults and one another without being asked; and unfailingly hold doors open for one another. Pupils can work co-operatively and can collaborate when required to. Their confidence is very well fostered by the school. For example, during a Middle school assembly, they happily stood up and spoke to everyone about work they had done and what made them proud of it. They accepted the praise given to them graciously. A very good initiative to promote pupils' responsibility is the Responsibility Award Scheme. Each year group has responsibility tasks that they can undertake. This results in certificates and badges being awarded. A good scheme currently aimed at Year 7, but which the school hopes to develop in other years, is a 'challenge' set for pupils. Last year, pupils were asked to research and prepare two lessons for another class on a subject to be chosen by that class's teacher. From the files seen, pupils learnt a lot about their own strengths and weaknesses. A recent innovation in the playground is the introduction of a buddy system where Year 7 pupils support younger pupils, for example in using the new playground markings and equipment. Pupils are generally respectful of the school environment and property and they move carefully around the building. They are trustworthy on the whole, although there have been occasions when pupils' property was stolen. A strength of the school is the very good relationships that develop and flourish across the whole community. There is a reassuring absence of any hurtful or racist comments and the cultural and racial mix of friendship groups is an example to everyone and to be greatly celebrated.
16. Unfortunately there is a poor rate of attendance at school. Whilst the level of authorised absences, including some for extended holidays, is just within acceptable limits, the level of unauthorised absence is far too high. This is partly due to procedural issues, such as pupils entering school late and not reporting to the office, as well as a few parents who are reluctant to inform the school of the reasons for absence. The school has already recognised the urgency of this problem and procedures are now in place to tackle it. In these, they are supported by the educational welfare service. The first figures for this year show that the signs are encouraging with unauthorised absences already reduced. Most pupils arrive punctually at school; those arriving late are noted, and if the problem persists, letters are sent home to remind parents.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning is, overall, satisfactory throughout the school. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and there are now some areas of considerable strength as well as some areas of weakness that are still to be eradicated. The strengths are most evident in the Foundation Stage, First school and for the younger pupils in Middle school. There are also a number of individual teachers who provide a consistent high quality in their work and some teachers who are

inspirational at times. Areas for improvement are mainly concentrated in Years 6 and 7. Here, some pupils have become disaffected in response to previous experiences and the teachers are working hard to improve behaviour and motivate the pupils back to learning.

18. In the lessons seen during the inspection, more than nine out of ten were judged to contain teaching and learning that was satisfactory or better. This leaves a fairly high proportion of lessons (just under one in ten) that were less than satisfactory. Inspectors were able to see a reason for this unsatisfactory teaching and are confident that the continuation of what the school is already doing to improve teaching and learning will rectify this situation soon. Since the last inspection there has been a significant rise in the proportion of lessons that contain teaching and learning that is good or better. Teaching at this level was seen in two thirds of all lessons and almost one third of lessons were also judged to be very good or better. As teachers and pupils relaxed during the inspection and became more confident in their work, the proportion of very good lessons increased with the outcome that one in twenty lessons were judged to be of an outstanding quality. Teaching assistants are of good quality and work effectively with teachers to provide a 'team' approach to work in the classroom. The quality of their work has a beneficial effect on lessons and is helping the children and pupils with their learning.
19. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from the very good teaching provided and make very good gains in their learning as a result. Teachers assess carefully what the children can do and then plan activities that will move each individual forward in their learning. There are very good routines provided so that children know what to do and the teachers' expectations are high, which helps the children to be clear about what they should learn and do. A strong emphasis is given to encouraging children to communicate, and songs and stories are presented with plenty of visual clues and actions that make the meanings of words more evident. This helps the children to feel confident about communicating in class and they quickly learn to use new words effectively. The teacher in the reception class provides teaching and learning experiences of a consistently high quality. She creates a very positive atmosphere and makes learning fun for all the children. This inspires the children to want to give of their best at all times and makes them feel good about the small steps they take forward in their learning.
20. Throughout First school, good quality teaching and learning generally takes place. The strongest teaching is in Year 2 and this is reflected in the learning of the pupils and their attainments each year in the national tests for seven year olds. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between the two classes in Year 3. These have been recognised by the school and appropriate support and guidance is already improving the overall quality of teaching in this year group. The quality of teaching and learning in Middle school is satisfactory overall with good teaching in Years 4 and 5. In Year 6, however, a third of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and a further third of lessons were good. This reflects the work teachers are currently doing to correct behaviour and motivate pupils as, at this stage in the school year, the

improvement in attitudes and concentration that is taking place is following an expected pattern of 'two steps forward and one step back'. In Year 7, whilst almost five out of ten lessons seen had good or very good teaching, unsatisfactory teaching was observed in one in five lessons.

21. The improving trend of teaching and learning matches the rising standards in the school and there is a clear commitment among teaching and non-teaching staff to develop the quality of their work and do their best for the children and pupils. These improvements are now secure from the nursery through to Year 5 and are already beginning to make a difference, for the better, in Years 6 and 7. This continuing change is due to:
- The work of the headteacher and governors in recruiting and retaining good quality staff;
 - The teamwork among teachers in First school that includes learning best practice from one another by observing colleagues at work in the classroom; and
 - The guidance and support provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher in improving teaching methods and helping teachers to address more closely the learning needs of the pupils.
22. During the inspection, teaching and learning was judged to be good throughout the school in mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology. Good teaching was also seen in religious education from Year 1 to Year 5, and in science in First school. Teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory throughout the school in English, geography, history, and in French for Year 7. Teaching was also satisfactory in science for Years 4 and 5. Too few lessons were seen in art and design, music and physical education for overall judgements to be made. The teaching of religious education and science in Years 6 and 7 was judged to be unsatisfactory.
23. Where lessons were judged to be of outstanding quality the following features were noted:
- The teacher manages the pupils very well so that they are engrossed in their work and concentrate for long periods of time. The pupils' work is valued and respected by the others with the teacher providing an atmosphere where delight is taken in the quality of vocabulary used in poems. This leads the pupils themselves to express rich poetical ideas such as, "Black is a night sky swallowing the clouds".
 - The teacher states clearly what pupils are expected to learn and shows them the work of other pupils so they can see the standard they should achieve. Pupils are praised for working at a higher level than in previous lessons and this motivates them to maintain an industrious working atmosphere and gain new skills with computers by the end of the session.
 - The teacher's positive approach creates a wonderful atmosphere where children are confident to try and try again and delight in what they have learnt.

- The teacher provides a high level of challenge that motivates large numbers of pupils to work very hard to sing in harmony with quality and control.

24. The lessons that were judged to be very good were characterised by the following points.

- The teacher has a lively and animated approach that motivates the class to listen attentively. Pupils are given clear explanations and the teacher checks their understanding with skilful use of questions. Constructive feedback is given to the pupils that gives them confidence and shows them what they have learnt. As a result, pupils use new vocabulary, such as the correct names for human bones, and extend their alphabetical knowledge at the same time.
- Pupils are grouped together well and the classroom and lesson are effectively structured and organised. The teacher uses a mixture of diagrams, discussion, questions and flash cards to interest the pupils and help them to understand the aims of the lesson. This leads the pupils to quickly gain new knowledge about shapes and be able to describe their properties with increased accuracy.
- The teacher sets different sets of questions for groups of pupils with differing ability so that all pupils are effectively challenged. Demonstration calculations are very well chosen so that a pattern emerges in the answers that spurs the pupils on to see if the pattern will continue and motivates them to double check their answers when the pattern is broken. In this way, pupils were led to practise their subtraction skills and doubled their efforts because of the fun in finding the answers.

25. The previous inspection noted that teachers were not making sufficient use of assessment to provide work that was more closely matched to the needs of all individuals. This is still the case and, although the school has appropriate plans to implement whole-school practice and procedures for assessment, this work is long overdue. The impact of delaying this work till now is seen in some lessons where some pupils are insufficiently challenged. This was also noted by some pupils who told inspectors that they would like their work in class to be harder. Before the inspection, parents expressed concerns in their questionnaire and in the meeting with the Registered Inspector about the amount and quality of the homework set in school. The evidence seen during the inspection leads inspectors to judge that the school's provision for homework is satisfactory and that the policy is appropriate and being followed effectively in most classes. Most pupils take reading and library books home, are expected to learn spellings each week and to work on learning their tables at home. Older pupils are given extension tasks in subjects such as English and mathematics and the Year 7 pupils are expected to complete the research and recording of specific projects at home.

26. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are managed ineffectively and lessons are presented without challenge, interest and motivation. As a result, the pupils become restless and some of them disrupt the learning experience

for others. In Years 6 and 7, despite the hard work of teachers to improve the attitudes of disaffected pupils the following contrasts were noted.

- Where the teacher has a lively and enthusiastic approach; gives clear instructions; keeps up a brisk pace; and promotes fun and enjoyment in learning the pupils respond well, concentrate hard and improve their skills.
- Where expectations are low; the topic is introduced without visual support; pupils are insufficiently challenged; and pupils are not encouraged to develop their practical and investigative skills then lessons are dull and the pupils are more likely to misbehave.

27. Throughout the school there is a clear link between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning. Some additional factors emerge from further analysis of the lesson observations. First, some teachers make conscious efforts to teach vocabulary and promote the communication skills of pupils in every lesson. This helps the pupils to learn more in subjects other than English. This, however, is inconsistent throughout the school and the effect is seen in the school's results in mathematics tests where the pupils do less well than they should because they do not sufficiently understand the language of the questions. Secondly, in the lessons where pupils are made aware of how much they are learning and the standards they are expected to reach they learn more and are motivated to improve their work. This approach is not provided in every class and this slows the rate of progress for some pupils.

28. The specialist teaching provided for pupils with English as an additional language is good, but the time given to each group is limited. These pupils have a wide range of home languages and are well supported in class when adults are available. The majority of these pupils are in a totally English environment right from the start. Each one has a classroom buddy to help them feel welcome and they also benefit from one specialist lesson a week. These proceed with great sensitivity. Pupils are taught in small groups in class, usually during the literacy hour while everyone else is also working in groups. The specialist teacher has copies of the class teachers' plans and carefully tailors her work to follow the main class theme of the lesson at a level suited to each individual. Most pupils concentrate well in these small groups and make clear progress. However, there are not enough teaching assistants to give the amount of individual and small group support that is needed to follow up this teaching. In other class lessons there is scope for teachers to include these pupils a little more in question and answer sessions, pitching more questions at levels that they can understand. Also, not all teachers pay enough attention to the regular presentation of new vocabulary at the start of each lesson in order to ensure that pupils understand clearly the content of those lessons and so achieve a wider command of English more rapidly.

29. In subjects across the curriculum, class teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils with SEN. Different tasks for mathematics and English are generally well prepared and taught in appropriate groups, often with the help of well-

trained and very effective support assistants. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) takes part in planning and prepares the Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) jointly with class teachers and support assistants. The majority of her support teaching takes place with groups and individuals in the classroom, but there is some withdrawal to a specially resourced room for pupils with statements who need more support. The IEPs and records of pupils with SEN are kept in class files and are useful in helping teachers to plan their lessons. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils with SEN are praised frequently; they show good levels of self-esteem and are confident while they work. Pupils participate well and maintain good levels of concentration, showing that tasks set are generally appropriate. This is evident even if work is carried out without adult support, showing that pupils are developing good levels of independence.

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

30. The school provides a sound range of learning opportunities. They are suitably broad and balanced and meet national requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship. The school is implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum well. All pupils have satisfactory access to the whole curriculum, but there is room for further relevance in the curriculum in meeting the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language.
31. The previous inspection found that the programme for teaching information and communications technology was not satisfactory. The school has worked hard to rectify this and provision is now good. Another area needing attention was judged to be the development of curriculum plans. The school has appropriately adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work for all subjects and is steadily adapting them to suit the school's specific needs. More time is spent teaching literacy, especially in Years 1 and 2, than in most schools. This is in line with the school's priorities and circumstances, and results show that the time is spent well. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with English as an additional language. They are given the same opportunities as other pupils to be involved in all areas of the curriculum, but attention should be given to ensuring that they, and others, learn subject specific vocabulary in a more systematic way as this is currently having an adverse affect on standards.
32. Teachers are appropriately putting the national literacy and numeracy strategies into practice throughout the school and standards are starting to improve particularly in literacy for seven year olds and eleven year olds. The opportunities for enrichment of the pupils' learning outside the classroom, are satisfactory. Parents expressed concerns that the school could do more to provide a more interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Recent difficulties in recruiting teachers have resulted in fewer clubs and activities than in the past, but the school's provision is in line with that in many other schools nationwide. There are a good number of outside visits organised for each class which provide valuable learning experiences and opportunities for

vivid memories. For example, while nursery children have the fun of going on a teddy bears' picnic, pupils in Year 3 visit St Albans in connection with their topic on the Romans. Pupils in Year 7 have the opportunity to take part in a week of excellent activities, which include a visit to the RAF museum at Hendon, a tour of the House of Commons and the opportunity to learn to ski. There is also a range of interesting visitors to the school, including last year a Buddhist monk. The pupils would like more after school clubs. There is a limited range of clubs for pupils in the Middle school and there is a Year 6 revision club in the Spring term which pupils find very valuable and helpful.

33. Pupils with SEN are often taught in specific groups within lessons for mathematics and English. They are usually set appropriate challenges and enjoy learning with their classmates. Withdrawal from lessons is kept to the minimum. Groups of pupils are targeted for specific help; additional literacy support is provided and there are booster sessions in Year 6. The school works closely with the Local Education Authority Support Services so that more appropriate learning opportunities are provided. Recent negotiations with the Local Education Authority have resulted in the school now having increased opportunities for external specialists to take part in the assessment of SEN and recommendations for what teachers can do to help individuals in class. These new arrangements are expected to improve the provision for pupils with SEN in Middle school. In addition, sessions of anger management for Year 7 pupils have been set up. There are weekly visits from an Educational Social Worker, Speech and Language Therapist and the Hearing Impaired Service. The Traveller Education Service is closely involved, to support the intake of Traveller children. The school has taken the very positive step of employing a Traveller to work with children in mainstream school. Teaching assistants are extremely effective in helping pupils with SEN to access the curriculum and provide discrete support to individuals and groups.
34. The school has developed satisfactory links with the local community. For example, the school has close links with the Harrow and Brent Business partnership. This led last year to Years 3, 4 and 5 trialing a mathematics game for a local firm. One particularly beneficial to both sides is between the school and the company opposite the school that produces art material. It provide the school with high quality art material and the school in return laminates examples of work produced by pupils for the company to use to show their clients; the school also gives them feedback on the products' performance. A local artist runs an art club for older pupils after school. Adults from 'Col Art' come into school on a weekly basis to hear younger pupils read. Pupils take part in events organised by the borough such as athletics meetings and the annual swimming gala. Students from local colleges work well in school bringing pupils fresh ideas and additional support and the school has a good network of links with other schools. This year the school won first prize in the 'Blooming Wealdstone' competition.
35. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Health education is included in the curriculum through personal,

social and health education, science and physical education. Pupils learn what they need to do to stay healthy. The school provides sex education, and education to raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug abuse, in a sensitive manner and at an appropriate level for the pupils' age.

36. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies provide ample opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own actions and put themselves 'in the shoes' of others. In science pupils expressed awe and wonder when boiling water disappeared through evaporation. A similar reaction was observed when Year 3 pupils were exploring the work of Picasso. Spiritual opportunities are planned into teachers' lessons. Moral development at Whitefriars is also good. The school's golden rules form the basis of the behaviour policy. Attractive posters around the school promote values of acceptance, fairness, honesty, and respect. Adults who work in the school are good role models for pupils. There is a wide range of reward systems to promote good behaviour and to foster and recognise positive qualities.
37. The provision for pupils' social development is very good and this leads to very good relationships within the school between pupils and adults. Older pupils are encouraged to support younger pupils particularly when they enter into the school. In most lessons, pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and groups. In PE, good sporting attitudes and teamwork are effectively promoted. The playground improvements such as picnic table, playground markings and climbing activities help to promote social development. The school also fosters social development through a range of clubs such as art, science, golf, and visits. Thirty five Year 5 pupils went on a residential trip to Swanage where they experienced cliff walks, limestone caves, fossil hunting, a visit to Corfe Castle and a journey on a steam train. The visit promoted both cultural and social development well.
38. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are effectively introduced to a range of cultural experiences. For example, in Year 3, pupils and staff reinacted the story of Rama and Sita. Colourful costume and masks were used for this. The middle school production of 'The Lorax' was a colourful and major production promoting drama, music and dance. In the entrance hall, posters welcome visitors in a variety of languages and this reflects the rich range of languages spoken in the school and the value which is attached to this rich diversity. The school has a good range of dual language books to assist learning for pupils whose first language is not English. Through history, pupils learn about life and times in ancient Egypt and Greece. Attractive displays stimulate interest in these areas. Pupils study the works of a wide range of artists from diverse and interesting cultures. Pupils are influenced by the styles of these in their own artwork. Musical appreciation and singing is very well promoted in assemblies. The major faiths of the world are given appropriate attention in RE lessons and assembly. Throughout the school, displays reflect a rich and diverse community. The pupils at Whitefriars are well prepared for life in a

multicultural society. As a consequence, pupils respect and value the rich cultural diversity within their school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Staff work hard to create an atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and valued and where they are listened to and their concerns taken seriously; they are successful in this. This atmosphere does much to foster pupils' attitudes to school and learning and to make them feel comfortable in school.
40. The school takes good care of its pupils. Its health and safety document is good. It covers all relevant areas and includes the need to be aware of the safety procedures in subjects such as science and physical education. Risk assessment is undertaken on the buildings and for trips. The school has good procedures for looking after pupils who become ill or have an accident in school; the correct recording procedures are adhered to. Routine medication is administered carefully and only with written permission from parents; this is accurately recorded by a welfare assistant. Staff are aware of which pupils may require urgent medical attention and the action required. Fire drills are carried out regularly and all appliances, alarms and equipment are meticulously tested and inspected by the caretaker and the appropriate authorities.
41. The school's procedures for child protection are good. The policy is relatively old, but still relevant and the local procedures are adhered to when action is required. Files relating to child protection are kept confidentially and separately. The headteacher, who is the designated responsible person, is very familiar with the routines of inter-disciplinary case conferences and does her utmost to protect and promote the welfare and protection of her pupils. Staff are vigilant in this area and recognise their important role.
42. The school provides good support and guidance for the personal development of all its pupils. It places strong emphasis on their social and personal development and this helps to promote their confidence and supports their efforts to become more independent. All staff provide good, caring support for the pupils. Teachers have good knowledge of how all their pupils are developing in this area and this is detailed in the annual report sent to parents about their children. Pupils in school are also very well supported by the school nurse. She not only keeps her eye on pupils' physical health, providing a good link between school and parents and the health service, but she is also concerned about their overall well-being. She is often approached by parents about concerns and is happy to offer advice and support. She acts as a very good counsellor to the pupils, listening carefully to what they say and taking action if that is necessary and appropriate. She helps to try to resolve issues, such as bullying, by talking with and listening to all parties and asking them to listen to each other. All this has a positive impact on pupils' development as considerate individuals with a sense of their own worth.

43. The arrangements to monitor academic progress and support pupils' progress are not so well developed. Since the previous inspection, when assessment was judged to be unsatisfactory, the school has yet not fully addressed this issue. While the present systems offer some information on pupils' progress in the core and foundation subjects, they are cumbersome and difficult to access. The school is aware of the need to make assessments more manageable and has plans to begin to rectify matters from November. This will allow time for the recently appointed co-ordinator to monitor the present arrangements and to propose guidelines for whole staff to consider, before forming consistent and whole-school assessment procedures.
44. The school analyses results from the national tests in English and in mathematics. Targets are subsequently set for improved performance but these have yet to be effectively used to accelerate progress. The assessment of pupils against these targets is presently patchy. Consequently, effective improvements in standards cannot be made. Nevertheless, there are pockets of good practice, where assessments are effectively used to plan the next steps in learning. A very good example of thorough, detailed and effective systems are in place in the Foundation Stage, where information is used to help plan future activities. As a result, programmes for learning are planned to address individual children's needs, thus enhancing their progress and subsequent attainment. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are dealt with sensitively. The specialist teacher keeps records of progress in accordance with local authority requirements and is working to develop detailed pupil profiles with clear short-term targets. The testing procedures, used for all pupils, are effective in the identification of pupils with SEN. The school's procedures for early identification of special needs children in the nursery are very good, allowing an appropriate programme of support to be established. However, analysis of Baseline testing in reception, SATs testing in years 2 and 6 and optional testing in years 3 and 4 could be improved to ensure that the progress of pupils with SEN is more closely monitored. This would help to improve the provision for pupils with SEN, particularly in Years 3 to 7. IEPs are appropriately reviewed each term and Statements of Special Educational Needs are reviewed annually.
45. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and discipline are good. Most staff set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use pupils' innate desire to behave well, with the schools' rewards and sanctions, to ensure that lessons run smoothly and playtimes are safe and social occasions. The new procedures for use in lessons are used well where needed by most teachers, but not all teachers are yet using them consistently. At lunchtimes, supervisors use a consistent approach to behaviour detailed in the school's lunchtime rules. Currently, the number of pupils being sent in from lunchtimes is reducing, due mostly to the new playground provision. Senior staff monitor behaviour in the First and Middle schools. Pupils appearing in detention are expected to complete a form and discuss what has happened with a teacher. The school has good procedures for monitoring and recording any bullying. Action is taken as swiftly as possible.

46. The school has already acknowledged the need to tackle the high level of unauthorised absences. The new procedures, set in place this September, are of good quality and include appropriate actions to be taken. They include measures to ensure that all pupils in school are correctly recorded as such in the register. These are already having some positive effects, with the figures available for this term showing a significant decrease in the numbers of unexplained absences. This level should fall further as the new procedures for establishing reasons for absences are pursued. The school has good systems for recording pupils arriving late. Procedures are in place to sensitively remind parents that their children need to arrive on time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school has plans to develop further its partnership with parents and is working hard to improve relationships with them. This work was evident during the last inspection and has been continuing since then. Overall, parents have satisfactory views of the school. They feel particularly that the teaching is good, with good quality teaching and non-teaching staff in place. They also like the small classes, and the approachability of the school. They do express concern about a number of areas; they feel standards, particularly at the end of Year 6 are not high enough. They are not so happy with the rapid turnover of teaching staff, the provision for homework, the behaviour of pupils and the communication between home and school, particularly about how their children are doing. They would also like more activities outside classrooms. Inspection findings confirm the positive views of parents. Inspectors agree with the concerns over the current standards at the end of Year 6, and that the high turn-over of staff has affected pupils' learning, but this issue has been well addressed and there are now sufficient teachers in place. Behaviour is found to be good overall and the provision of homework and activities outside the classroom are both found to be satisfactory. Detail can be found elsewhere in the report.

48. Information for parents is deemed to be good overall. Good quality newsletters are sent regularly by the school and occasionally by governors. They do much to keep parents informed of news, events and activities covering the whole school. Further letters are more focused on individual years or classes and are relevant and helpful. Curriculum information letters are sent out for each year group. They give enough basic information for all year groups from Reception upwards, but the school is looking to improve the overall quality. The quality of information provided by the nursery on what children are doing, is very high. Reports to parents about their children's progress are generally good and sufficiently detailed to provide information on all subjects. These include areas for pupils to improve their learning. In addition, parents are informed about the progress their children make with regards to personal and social development. However, while parents are informed of the levels that their children achieve in the national tests at age seven and eleven, the reports do not include the levels achieved in comparison with national expectations in all subjects and at other times.

Consequently, parents are not sufficiently aware whether their children attain the appropriate standards for their age.

49. There are good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's learning with teachers. However, whilst meetings between individual parents and teachers are attended by more than half of the parents, more general meetings, including those covering what pupils will be learning, are poorly attended. Parents do come and talk to teachers at other times, such as before or after school. The school also makes good efforts to contact parents if there are concerns about how pupils are doing. The school makes great efforts to ensure that there is satisfactory partnership with the parents of pupils with English as an additional language, and arranges for information to be provided in a range of home languages. Pupils who have been in school for some time help to translate and make new parents feel welcome.
50. Part of the school's plans to involve parents more is to try to get them to come into school. A good idea to be introduced in the nursery and reception classes is to invite groups of parents to stay for a hour with their children when they bring them to school. They will be able to work alongside their children and to really see what they are doing. Teachers plan to have someone in attendance who speaks those parents' first language. Through these events they hope to encourage parents to get more involved in their children's education at home and at school and for this to extend further into First and Middle schools. Parents willingly come to some events in school. One particularly successful occasion is the Family Friendship Evening that is very well attended with many parents taking part in, for example, demonstrations and displays, and by sharing food from the wide and varied cultures from which they come. The school is sensibly looking at this event to see why it is so successful and to use any pointers to improve parental involvement further in other areas. There is generally a good attendance by parents at events involving their children. Parents attend the governors' annual meeting where a special theme is also discussed. For example, this year it is 'Learning Through Play'.
51. The school has a system of homework books, which can also be used as a means of communication between home and school. Unfortunately, although the books are sometimes signed, very few parents make any comments in them. Where they do there is a response from the teachers, who really appreciate parents' interest. Parents are willing to come in to school to help for specific reasons if they are asked. Parents of younger children generally support their children in the early stages of learning to read. The school has a 'Friends' association. The summer fair this year raised a lot of money, which has been very well used to improve greatly the playground facilities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher provides leadership of good quality and is supported effectively by a good deputy headteacher and senior management team. The governors have improved over the last year and are well led so that the

quality of their work is more professional and they now have a good knowledge of what the school does well and what it is working on to improve. However, since 1998, the school has faced extreme difficulty in the recruitment and retention of staff and, despite the best efforts of the headteacher, this has slowed down the school's rate of development. For example, there have been more than thirty changes of teaching staff during the last three years. Included in this figure are changes that the headteacher and governors needed to make to improve the quality of teaching, as well as teachers leaving the school for promoted posts elsewhere. One outcome of this was that the headteacher and deputy headteacher have had to devote much of their time to taking classes and this has prevented them from monitoring, supporting and developing a more consistent quality of teaching throughout the school. Throughout this difficult period, the headteacher has provided the school with a good and clear vision for how to improve and the benefit of this can already be seen in the higher standards of attainment for pupils now in Years 1 to 5. At the time of the inspection, there was a full quota of teaching staff and the headteacher and senior managers were, once again, taking full command of improving the school.

53. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has led initiatives on meeting children's learning needs with a variety of teaching styles and methods and encouraged staff to learn best practice from one another. This has resulted in the teachers in First school working more closely together, observing one another at work, and producing written information for themselves and new colleagues on the teaching methods that work best. This work is of high quality and is already raising standards throughout First school. Extension of this approach is planned for Middle school. The headteacher and governors have also made some good quality appointments of new teachers and their enthusiasm and high expectations are already having a positive effect on raising standards. Teachers are deployed carefully so that they can work effectively together and learn from each other and there is now a good shared commitment among staff for improving the school and raising standards. In addition, the school's behaviour policy has been revised and the changes are steadily improving the quality of behaviour in and out of classrooms. This work has taken place at a satisfactory but slower rate than the school would have liked. However, the outcome is seen in a 'rising tide' of improvement and higher standards that has now reached Year 5, but has yet to show in the school's published test results for pupils aged eleven.
54. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are well respected by staff and, when they are able, carry out routine monitoring of teaching, giving useful guidance to staff on how to improve their work. However, difficulties with recruitment have meant that they have been unable to provide rigorous support and follow up to their classroom visits and, as a result, there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching between some classes. Current procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching are, therefore, satisfactory and have the potential to improve now that all staff are in place. The school has an effective system of subject leadership and the teachers responsible are working hard to make sure the curriculum provided

is appropriate and continuous in their subject throughout the school. They also offer support and advice to colleagues that helps them to plan their lessons more effectively. Many of the subject leaders, however, are newly appointed staff and are not yet sufficiently experienced to work with their colleagues in lessons to make sure that their subject is taught to a high standard in every class. They also lack the non-contact time with their own class to be able to do this. Inspectors recommend that senior managers and governors work to develop the expertise of subject leaders and then provide them with sufficient 'release' time to carry out this important aspect of their work.

55. The school has appropriate procedures for planning its improvement and is steadily addressing the well-chosen priorities identified in the current school development plan. The action plan from the previous inspection has been satisfactorily implemented and most of the recommendations made are now in place in the school. The exception to this is the recommendation to improve academic assessment and ensure consistent practice and procedures throughout the school. This is still to be done, is long overdue, and is likely to further raise standards once implemented. The school is aware of this outstanding issue and has appropriate plans to rectify this soon.
56. The school's finances are appropriately used, the recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been satisfactorily acted upon and the governors now keep a careful and questioning watch on all expenditure. The governing body is satisfactorily accounting for the school's performance and their priorities are effectively linked with improving the quality of education in the school. Financial control, accounting and the administration of specific grants are satisfactory and the governors make sure that the principles of best value are appropriately applied to school transactions. The school is aided in this work, and in its links with parents and the community, by office and administration staff of good quality. They work effectively to ensure the smooth running of school administration and make appropriate use of new technology to help reduce unnecessary paper-work. The Headteacher and the coordinator for SEN (SENCO) work closely together to improve identification of pupils with SEN and provision for support. There is a detailed action plan for improvement, closely monitored by the Headteacher, SENCO and Governor with responsibility for SEN. Some of the targets have already been met and improvements are likely to be seen soon in the provision for pupils in Years 3 to 7. The part time SENCO provides effective leadership for the provision and gives valued support guidance to teachers and assistants. Governors are kept informed of the school's progress in SEN procedures. They monitor the provision through the Headteacher's monthly report. The SEN Governor is also a member of the finance group and is fully involved in the allocation and monitoring of funding for SEN provision.
57. There is now an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers to meet the demands of the school curriculum. The school has an appropriate range of teaching assistants who are well trained and deployed. Liaison between the teachers and teaching assistants is effective and this contributes

considerably to pupils' learning particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. However, whilst a lot of good work is done, inspectors judge that there could be more assistants to support pupils with English as an additional language.

58. The school has satisfactory procedures in place for the induction of new staff. There is a clear staff handbook and existing staff are supportive as they help to ensure that new teachers settle into the school. Procedures for staff training and performance management are satisfactory. However, given the high teacher turnover in recent years, the school would benefit from more formal and structured induction procedures to make sure that all new staff know what to do and are clear about how well they are expected to teach. The school has appropriate plans to address this matter.
59. The school's accommodation for learning is good. A rolling programme for decoration has helped to ensure that classrooms and corridors are colourful and in good decorative order. Displays of pupils' work, photographs, plants and artefacts help to create a pleasant environment in which pupils feel motivated to learn. The school has an impressive 12-station computer suite. The field, playground and gymnasium are good facilities for physical education. The school also has specialist science and cookery rooms. However, during the inspection, these specialist facilities were underused. The school has been particularly effective in creating a stimulating outside learning environment. The asphalt playground has recently been resurfaced and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection when this surface was judged to be in poor condition. With help from the Friends Association, picnic benches, climbing frames and playground markings have been introduced. There are attractive borders with a range of shrubs and flowering plants. This has been so successful that the school won a category of 'Wealdstone in Bloom'. Teachers and pupils have set up tubs of colourful summer bedding and trailing plants. These all help to enhance the learning environment and there is evidence that these improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' playground behaviour. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained by an extremely committed, hard working and conscientious caretaker. He takes pride in his work and takes effective measures to ensure that the school is an attractive and safe environment.
60. The school's resources for learning are satisfactory overall with no subjects being less than satisfactory. Strengths in the learning resources include the play area for the Foundation Stage and information and communication technology provision throughout the school. In art and design, the school makes effective use of a visiting artist and has a productive partnership with a local company. Resources and artefacts for religious education are good. An effective use of the loan service in history enhances resourcing for this subject.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61.To continue and accelerate the improvements already begun, senior managers, governors and staff should now:

- Raise the achievement of the current pupils in Y6 and Y7 in all subjects by (paragraphs 1-7, 10, 14, 20, 26, 91):
 - Providing interesting, challenging and practical lessons that motivate the pupils towards learning
 - Continuing to work on improving the behaviour and attention span for these pupils
 - Involving pupils in their learning so that they know what they need to work on next
- Make sure the curriculum is sufficiently relevant for the language development needs of all the pupils by (paragraphs 27, 28, 31, 89, 92):
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills in lessons through questioning, discussion and debate
 - Ensuring that, in every lesson, pupils know the key vocabulary they are expected to learn and use
 - Rewarding pupils for their correct use of more interesting and abstract words
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching between classes by (paragraphs 21, 24, 52-54):
 - Making sure that teachers in first school continue their very good procedures for learning from one another and sharing best practice*
 - Extending this provision into middle school so all teachers routinely see one another at work and share techniques and skills*
 - Making sure that senior managers monitor classroom teaching rigorously, setting clear targets where necessary for teachers to improve on what they do*
 - Helping subject leaders to have the time and expertise to monitor how well their subject is taught and bring about any improvements needed*
- Improve the procedures and practice for assessment so that the needs of individual pupils are properly addressed in all lessons* by (paragraphs 25, 43, 44):
 - Agreeing whole-school procedures for how best to assess the attainment and progress of pupils in every subject*
 - Agreeing within each subject a common understanding of the National Curriculum Level descriptors*
 - Making sure that teachers mark pupils' work consistently and help pupils to know what they should do to improve*
 - Assessing regularly how well each pupil is doing and use this information in lessons to help pupils to move on to the next steps in their learning*
 - Involving all pupils in knowing how well they have done, what they should learn next and what they are expected to learn by age seven and eleven

- Improve the rate of attendance* by (paragraphs 16, 46):
 - Continuing to implement the new procedures for improving attendance introduced in September 2001.

62. In addition, the school should also address the following points in their action plan:

- Improve the induction procedures for new teachers (paragraph 58)
- Make more use of specialist teaching rooms (paragraph 59)
- Make more use of teacher assistants to support pupils with English as an additional language (paragraphs 28, 57)

*already included in the school's plans for development

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	19	29	19	6	1	0
Percentage	5	24	37	24	8	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	412
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	104

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	207

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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 Year 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	21	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	28	29
	Girls	15	17	14
	Total	41	45	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (77)	90 (83)	85 (85)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	28	27
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	41	43	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (83)	85 (79)	83 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Year 6

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	32	19	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	14	21
	Girls	14	10	14
	Total	30	24	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (53)	49 (42)	71 (53)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	25	26	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (52)	50 (40)	60 (55)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	44
Black – African heritage	30
Black – other	27
Indian	81
Pakistani	29
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	167
Any other minority ethnic group	33

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	159

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

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

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,062,526
Total expenditure	1,046,455
Expenditure per pupil	2,409
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,071
Balance carried forward to next year	53,101

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	412
Number of questionnaires returned	136

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	37	7	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	44	9	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	47	13	4	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	23	34	16	7
The teaching is good.	34	55	7	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	38	20	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	40	4	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	43	10	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	32	41	17	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	33	46	7	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	49	8	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	27	21	16	8

Ninety per cent of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. A significant proportion of parents (more than 20 per cent) have concerns about homework; the information about how their child is getting on;

the partnership with parents; and the activities provided outside of lessons. In addition, 17 per cent of parents have concerns over behaviour in the school. These views were supported by the written additional comments received on 20 questionnaires and by the parents who attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector before the inspection.

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

63. Children enter the nursery in the September or January before their fourth birthday. They attend part time, either every morning or every afternoon, and transfer into the reception class in the following January or September. In reception, children have a two-week induction period after which they attend full time. They move into Year 1 in the September following their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, the morning and afternoon nursery children were very new to the school and there was only one reception class, as the other was not due to begin until January 2002. Also, there were 26 full time equivalent children in nursery, with 25 full time children in the reception class. Before the inspection, parents said how pleased they are with the provision in the Foundation Stage. Inspectors support these views and find that all the children benefit very well from the very good teaching and learning that takes place.
64. Most of the children that begin the nursery have attainment well below the expectation for their age in all the areas of learning. They make good progress so that, by the time they enter the reception class, baseline assessment shows that most of the children have caught up a little but still have attainment levels below the expectation for their age. The children continue to make good progress in the reception class and, by the time they enter Year 1, most meet the Early Learning Goals in their mathematical, physical and creative development as well as in their personal, social and emotional development. The children's skills in communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and understanding of the world are not quite as good as in the other areas of learning, but are just below the level expected when the children enter Year 1. This is very good achievement over time and is a direct result of the consistent high quality of education provided by the teachers and nursery nurses.
65. The children follow a well constructed curriculum and teachers provide the children with a wide range of activities, routines and experiences that are carefully chosen to match their learning needs. In particular, inspectors were impressed with the consistent very high quality work of the teacher of the reception class and the teamwork evident between other teachers and nursery nurses. All the teachers are skilled at promoting the children's communication skills. A strong feature in the reception class is the way that every moment is a learning opportunity where children work in such a positive atmosphere that they are inspired to learn. In the nursery, the teachers are skilled at encouraging all children to improve their language development. The nursery nurses are of very good quality and work with their teachers as an effective classroom team. Since the last inspection, good improvement has taken place. The curriculum has been broadened to be in line with government recommendations and assessment procedures have been refined so that all

adults know how well each child is doing and can plan to extend their development through the activities provided. Teachers and nursery nurses have worked hard to improve the partnership they have with parents and have good plans for extending this even more. There is a strong emphasis on valuing each child, their home language and culture and this helps the children to feel included and have a really positive start to their education.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children do very well in their personal, social and emotional development. This area of learning is very well taught and most children meet the early learning goals, as expected, by the time they enter Year 1.
67. In the nursery, the children already understand what is expected of them and are trying hard to play and cooperate with one another. For example, one boy asked another to help him make a 'train' with chairs and then willingly did as he was asked and moved to a space where they would not get in the way of the others. Children quickly learn what is fair by the teacher providing clear routines and procedures for turn taking which make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to play. For example, children are eager to use the attractive range of outdoor toys provided. They place their name card against the toy of their choice and are happy to see whether they will be first, or have to wait until later, to have a turn. Teachers tell interesting stories and sing a good range of songs and these encourage the children to want to sit, listen and join in. The adults in the nursery build good relationships with the children and this encourages them to want to talk more and be confident to take part in activities, as well as to ask questions about anything they are unsure of. Activities and resources are chosen well and the home corner and writing corner include good resources that value the differing cultural backgrounds of the children. This leads the children to develop awareness and respect for their own cultures and beliefs, as well as those of other people.
68. In the reception class, the teacher is always positive and praises the children often for what they do well. This makes every child feel valued and boosts their self-esteem so that they want to be involved and learn more and more. For example, rather than tell children off, she reminds them how good they are at keeping musical instruments quiet until needed and the children then try hard to concentrate and stay as quiet as they can. Another example was seen when the nursery nurse brought a group of children to show their teacher what they had learnt today. Their names and efforts were written in the teacher's 'happy book', with verbal praise such as, "You counted so well today". This made the children feel very proud and inspired them to do more.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Children make good improvement in their communication, language and literacy skills over their time in the Foundation Stage. A significant proportion of the children enter the nursery with very limited communication skills, either because of delay in their language development or because they are learning

English as an additional language. The good teaching they receive helps the children to develop their skills so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most children are just below the average attainment expected for their age in this area of learning.

70. In the nursery, some children do not yet talk to each other or to their teachers. A minority of children is communicating effectively and are confident to approach others to say, "Hello, I'm xxxxx. What is your name?" Teachers provide good opportunities for children to play together where they are also encouraged to communicate. For example, children are encouraged to play in pairs when dressing up or building with construction kits. Teachers and nursery nurses then ask questions and make suggestions that encourage the children to say more and explain their ideas in greater detail. When telling a story, the nursery teacher leaves gaps so that children provide the missing word. She also asks questions that enable other children to guess what will happen next. In this way she encourages reluctant children to join in as well as helping more confident children to say more. During these regular story and song sessions, teachers draw attention to the words being used and expect the children to recognise, for example, the words that make the title of the book. In addition, the children place their name cards against the toys and activities they would like to do and these measures are effective in helping the children to recognise words and begin to understand the process of reading. Writing is encouraged through daily use of the writing corner. Here, children see writing displayed in a range of languages and can use the materials provided to improve their fine coordination skills as well as see the purposes of writing. For example, the children making a 'train' went to the writing corner to 'write' the £2 tickets for the journey.
71. In the reception class, these activities are extended further. For example, one girl had 'written' a full page as an invitation for her teacher to come for tea. She then, confidently, read her invitation to the teacher and class and was pleased at how well they listened to her. The teacher's routines are helpful and children listen hard at play-time for the sound that begins their name before they go outside. Also, the children learn a good range of songs and, through these, practise new words and come to understand their meanings. Very good use is made of stories to motivate the children to read the books for themselves. Words and sentences are reproduced on flash cards and used in other games and songs so that the children come to recognise the same word in different contexts. Also, stories and songs are illustrated so that the meaning is made clear and this helps the children to improve their vocabulary and knowledge. For example, while telling the story of 'The Very Busy Spider' a model spider was used to 'spin' a large web for everyone to see and this helped the story to be meaningful, even for children who are new to learning English.

Mathematical development

72. Children achieve very well in their mathematical development and begin Year 1 with understanding and skills at the level appropriate for their age. This area

of learning is taught well in the nursery and very well taught in the reception class.

73. In the nursery, children make sequences of colours as they thread cotton reels and count with confidence to three. During story and singing time the children reinforce their counting skills and use musical instruments for the clock (in Hickory Dickory Dock) to chime one, two or three. Where possible, adults encourage children to count to higher numbers and provide opportunities for children to learn concepts such as 'short and tall'. Good use is made of resources. For example, the teacher uses a large clock and toy mouse to illustrate the nursery rhyme. This focuses the children's attention on the clock face and the numeral being pointed to by the short hand and is helping them to recognise these correctly.
74. In the reception class, children count the pebbles they have won for good behaviour into the jar. The teacher expected them to manage large numbers and they counted successfully to 31. This routine was repeated later in the day and when the teacher asked how many pebbles there may be now, the children were able to reply 'more than 31'. Number games and songs help the children to count reliably to ten, both forwards and backwards, and to recognise the numerals correctly. Reading about and making spiders becomes an opportunity for learning about the number eight and most children can make this number on their fingers. Adults make a point of teaching the meaning of words such as 'more and less' and encourage children to use an appropriate mathematical vocabulary throughout the day. Good praise is given for mathematical accuracy and for using the right words and this leads the children to try harder.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Many of the children begin nursery with a limited knowledge and understanding of the world. This area of learning is taught well and, by the time children enter Year 1, the majority have made good progress and show levels of attainment just below those expected for their age.
76. In the nursery, children are learning to use their computer and already move the mouse accurately to select items on the screen and new parts of the program. During conversation, some children show they are aware that places such as North America are outside of London and also that tigers have stripes, whereas leopards have spots. However, many of the children find it hard to extend their ideas as they lack general knowledge about the items they play with. Teachers recognise this and make a point of joining in the children's games and explaining, demonstrating and discussing how, for example, by adding soap to the water, bubbles can be made.
77. In the reception class, children continue to build on their knowledge and their teacher and nursery nurses make a point of explaining the meanings of new words and always using the correct terms. In this way, the children come to learn about spiders for example, and learn how they make webs and trap flies

for food. They also continue their learning about computers and are able, for example, to use the mouse and software to create colourful drawings of spiders. Some children use their new knowledge to influence their games outside and pretend, for example, to be fish swimming together to protect themselves from sharks.

Physical development

78. Children develop their physical skills well and make very good progress over their time in the Foundation Stage so that they begin Year 1 with their development at the level expected for their age. This area of learning is taught very well and teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that help the children to improve larger skills such as climbing and jumping as well as improving fine skills such as using scissors and pencils.
79. In the nursery, the children enjoy playing outside with the cycles, cars and climbing equipment provided. They quickly learn to pedal and control their steering and enjoy the challenges provided by their teacher, such as having to balance along a plank before climbing up to the slide. Children use the space well and control their running to avoid bumping into one another. Indoor activities are carefully chosen and the children learn from one another as they try to use scissors for themselves, or use chopsticks to pick noodles from a bowl.
80. In the reception class, children make use of the larger school playground and really enjoy the attractive equipment provided. They climb and jump as well as running boisterously around and expend a lot of energy. These experiences are added to with more formal sessions and all contribute to helping the children further develop their skills. In the classroom, the children are encouraged to draw and control their pencils with increasing accuracy as they begin to learn to write and many of them are already able to write their name clearly.

Creative development

81. Children do well in their creative development. This area of learning is very well taught and children enter Year 1 with the skills expected for their age.
82. In the nursery, children draw and paint and use their skills to produce, for example, attractive illustrations of stories such as 'The Enormous Turnip'. They cut and stick different textures and colours to make patterns of their choice and concentrate hard to finish their picture before moving on to a new activity. With musical instruments, children learn to play the 'tick-tock' of the clock while singing Hickory Dickory Dock and enjoy the performance that results.
83. In the reception class, children choose at a wet play-time the kind of music that would best suit their mood. One child, for example, chose 'calming music' to help everyone behave better. During story times, the children use musical

instruments to create sound effects to accompany the tale. They continue to improve their painting and drawing skills and are helped to extend their imagination in the games they play indoors and outdoors. The teacher presents lessons and ideas with her own creativity that encourages the children to extend their listening, looking and imagination skills. This creates an atmosphere where children are confident to try out new ideas and leads them successfully to develop new skills.

ENGLISH

84. Since the last inspection, the results of eleven year old pupils in national tests in English have been disappointing. These results have not kept pace with improvements in the rest of the country and, when compared with pupils' test results at age seven, show poor added value and low standards in Middle school. However, there are signs of improvement and pupils' standards in Years 4 and 5 are now significantly better than they have been in previous years. The results of the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds also show an improvement over 2000 and the work being done by the school to raise standards in English is now likely to show a sustained improvement in test results within the next two years.
85. The 2001 national tests for seven year olds show that pupils' attainment in reading is close to the national average and their writing skills are slightly better than in other schools nationally. The national tests for eleven year olds show that, in 2001, pupils' attainment in English was well below the national average. However, when the school is compared against similar schools, these results match the average to be expected and this is a big improvement over the results of the last four years. Also, a significant proportion of the pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 are attaining at the nationally expected levels for their age in reading and writing and this shows that they are now achieving well and building successfully on their prior attainment at age seven.
86. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language; about a quarter of the pupils taking tests at age eleven have joined the school after Year 2 and there are also a considerable number of pupils with special educational needs in each class.
87. Children begin the nursery with levels of communication, language and literacy development that are well below the expectation for their age. Many pupils enter school with delay in their language development and a high proportion of pupils also speak English as an additional language. The baseline assessment that takes place when children start the reception class shows that they have made good progress in the nursery, but still have communication, language and literacy skills below the expectation for their age. Pupils enter First school with low attainment, but, by the age of seven are attaining results in national tests that show their reading and writing skills are broadly in line with the national average. This shows that, since beginning the

nursery, pupils have made very good progress and are achieving very well in their basic literacy skills.

88. Inspection shows that pupils' standards of attainment in Year 1 are still below average. While the majority listen attentively, many do not speak clearly. The most able are starting to read from simple texts. Some more able pupils start to write simple sentences, they form their letters with increasing care, but many are just beginning to use their growing knowledge of sounds to write the initial and end sounds of words independently.
89. The standards of attainment in the current Year 2 are as expected for this early stage in the school year, and a few pupils are already showing skills within Level 2. Pupils' listening skills are well developed. They listen attentively to their teachers and courteously to each other. Speaking skills, however, are not so well developed. While some pupils speak fluently and often confidently, their vocabularies are restricted. Others do not speak clearly or coherently when answering questions or describing things. Pupils' standards in reading are below average overall. Not all pupils have books at home. The most able pupils read fluently and with enjoyment but lower attaining pupils do not easily use strategies such as phonics to sound out unknown words. They are starting to recognise a few words and they use pictures to guess what the sentences are about. The less able pupils enjoy looking at books and discussing them. Pupils begin to spell some simple words accurately. They use word banks to help them, start to savour words such as "slimy, poisonous", and become aware of similes. One pupil wrote "a fly as big as a giant" while another wrote "a spider black as night". Pupils show great delight in their achievements. Standards in handwriting are as expected for their age and most pupils form letters clearly and are starting to position them well. The pupils in Year 3 continue to build on their basic skills and make satisfactory progress in developing their reading and writing. However, while they continue to listen attentively, their speaking skills still show that a limited vocabulary is being used. This has an effect on their learning in other subjects and makes it more difficult for pupils to understand, remember and discuss the new concepts they learn, for example in history and geography.
90. The pupils who now transfer into Middle school at the end of Year 3 are doing better than in previous years. Also, the picture is far more positive for pupils in the younger middle school classes. Attainment is still a little below national expectations overall, but a significant and growing number of pupils in Years 4 and 5 is attaining at the expected level. Pupils' listening skills are good and their speaking, although below the national average starts to reflect a growing awareness of interesting words. For example pupils in one Year 5 class found fifteen synonyms for "angry" and were able to arrange them in order of degree of anger. In the other Year 5 class pupils wrote poetry to illustrate colour and demonstrated deep sensitivity and understanding of the effect of words. For example, one pupil wrote "Red is the scars of a wounded tiger in a deserted jungle", while another wrote "Black is a night sky swallowing the clouds."

91. However, the impact of recent difficulties with staffing is seen in the current Years 6 and 7. The school identifies the present pupils in Year 6 as a group who attained poor results in the national tests as seven year olds and who have had a considerable number of changes of class teachers during their time in Middle school. This has made many pupils disaffected, and in addition there are a few pupils with English as an additional language who have joined the year group recently and who display signs of trauma. The standards of attainment in English across the year group are well below the expectation for their age. Very few pupils are working at the expected level and many are underachieving. They are not accustomed to concentrating. Their listening skills are not well developed and their speaking often shows a lack of thought and a restricted vocabulary. Reading skills are generally below the levels expected for pupils of this age. While the most able pupils reach the reading standards that are expected, no-one reads at a higher level. Although there is a system to indicate the degree of challenge of different books, there is no effective policy to encourage pupils to read challenging material for pleasure in school. A good initiative started last year to heighten pupils' awareness of books by writing regular book reviews has been continued in one class but not the other. Writing skills are poor. For some lessons, pupils are grouped by their ability in English. Pupils' attitudes to work are satisfactory in the top group but when pupils are in their classes, attitudes are sometimes unsatisfactory despite the best efforts of staff to interest and stimulate them. Handwriting is usually fluent and joined, but sometimes untidy. The majority of pupils are, however, now making satisfactory progress, and showing signs of catching up with some of the skills they missed earlier.
92. The standards of attainment of pupils at present in Year 7 are below average overall, although a few pupils are reaching the expected level. There is a wide range of speaking skills, but generally, once again, vocabulary is restricted. Reading and writing skills are often below average. This represents a lower level of literacy than is expected for the ability of the pupils and is holding them back in other subjects. A clear example of this is seen in mathematics where these pupils have lower results in their 2001 national tests than their ability in class indicates. This is due to them not being able to read the test questions sufficiently well to answer them accurately.
93. The literacy hour is used well in some classes to widen pupils' knowledge about other subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 learned about glossaries and definitions by using the scientific names for parts of the skeleton. Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills are planned in some lessons, but arise by chance in others. Good attention is paid to the use of specific vocabulary in mathematics and science lessons, but at present there is not a school-wide policy of systematic encouragement of a rich everyday vocabulary.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and often it is good. In Year 2 it is very good and on occasion it is excellent in Year 5. Teachers plan closely together across year groups. In each lesson, teachers emphasise key points which build on what pupils already know, and they ask

questions well to assess how much pupils have understood. Teachers start lessons well by sharing the learning objectives clearly with their pupils, but time is lost in many classes while pupils write them down as titles for their work. This does, however, help pupils to pay attention. Many pupils are confident to answer because they know that teachers encourage pupils to try even if they sometimes get things wrong. Teaching assistants play a valuable part in giving discreet help to pupils who learn more slowly, but in some classes there are too few of them to support adequately all those who need help. Teachers have a good grasp of the subject. The first part of the lesson is used well and, when appropriate, gives valuable impetus for the main part. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the reading of a myth round the group heightened the pupils' awareness of the story and led smoothly to discussing the roots of words, especially those with Greek origins. The topic was continued effectively as a task for individuals to find strings of words with a common root.

95. During the main part of the lesson, teachers and assistants work carefully with small groups of pupils and ask questions to extend and clarify their thinking. In the best lessons, teachers have very good relations with their pupils and good classroom control. This creates an atmosphere conducive to work, pupils settle quickly and put good effort into their reading and writing. Teachers plan with their teaching assistants so that the assistants are able to give good support to small groups who need it and this enables them to achieve appropriately and have pride and confidence in what they do. However, analysis of pupils' work and classroom observations indicate that some teachers do not consistently plan to challenge their highest attaining pupils appropriately. The same task is carried out by all but the lowest ability pupils. Not all teachers use the plenary part of a lesson to best advantage. Where it is used well, it is partly a time for teachers to check how much their pupils have learned through careful questions, and also an opportunity to stretch them further in their thinking and understanding.
96. The subject is well managed. Staff have been well trained and briefed. There is a clear and detailed policy which contains useful guidance for teachers new to the school. The school regularly monitors planning, and when staffing levels are stable, it also monitors teaching. National test results are analysed for areas which need development and plans are in hand to extend this to predict pupils' probable future results throughout the school. The system of assessing pupils' attainment in each class is cumbersome and is being refined so that teachers will find it easy to keep brief records which are more readily accessible. Teachers have agreed basic targets for their pupils as a class. One or two teachers have already identified individual targets for pupils to work towards. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. There is a central library that contains a good selection of fiction books and a satisfactory range of reference books. Each class has a weekly session when books are changed and pupils are either given a specific task such as doing research or perhaps the teacher will choose to read a story in this quiet atmosphere. The librarian ensures that books are kept in good repair and that the room is tidy and welcoming.

MATHEMATICS

97. By the time pupils are seven, their standards in mathematics are broadly average and continuing to rise, as the results of national tests indicate for year 2001. Standards attained by the time pupils are eleven, are very low in comparison with the nationally expected levels. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, their levels of attainment remain low. When compared with similar schools, pupils aged eleven reach levels that are below average. However, improvement is now taking place, standards are rising and the school's test results for eleven year olds are likely to show sustained improvement within the next two years.
98. The previous inspection judged standards to be well below national expectations, by the age of seven, and in line with those expected nationally by eleven. However, since that time, the school has had to accommodate large numbers of pupils joining the school, particularly after the end of Year 2. Many of these pupils have limited language development and there are also some who have considerable learning difficulties. The school works very hard to cater for the specific needs of these pupils.
99. Current inspection evidence indicates that pupils' standards are below the national expectation but higher than the test results show at the end of Year 6. This discrepancy is mainly attributed to the low levels of language that many of the pupils have when they sit the national tests. In addition, there are many transient and de-motivated pupils who have been admitted into the Middle school. Many arrive with a lack of self-esteem, which the school has worked hard to raise. The problems have also been exacerbated by the high turnover of teachers. While standards are lower than expected in Years 6 and 7, there are strong indications that in two years' time, pupils are likely to attain the expected levels nationally. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are making good progress and achieve well in comparison with their earlier attainment and experiences. In addition, the school has yet to implement appropriate and consistent assessments that are likely to better inform teachers' planning and ensure continuity of learning as pupils move through each year group. Plans to address these issues are now in place and are likely to further assist in tracking pupils' progress and to sustain improvements.
100. Inspection evidence shows that by the time the pupils are seven, standards of attainment in mathematics are broadly average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who learn through English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 2. Younger pupils make a secure start to building skills in number work and count to 10, and some, to 20. By Year 2, pupils have developed their number skills well and they can count reliably backwards and forwards, using a hundred-square for help. Previous work indicates that these pupils are competent in multiplication of numbers by 2 and 5. The higher attaining pupils use their well developing number skills to collect data on favourite television

programmes, draw graphs and start to interpret the findings. Pupils begin to recognise shapes such as squares and triangles. They use their skills to weigh objects in grams. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were observed measuring in centimetres, with considerable accuracy. In Year 3, pupils understand how a single digit can be used to aid larger subtractions.

101. Younger pupils in the Middle school are competent in number and they are beginning to use their well developing skills to solve problems in mathematics. In Year 4, the pupils are competent in mental additions and subtractions using hundreds, tens and units. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the pupils were observed handling data, which they grouped at regular intervals. They confidently and accurately recorded their information on bar-line graphs. These pupils were also observed interpreting information correctly. In Year 6, pupils are developing a clear understanding of shape, and this enables them to calculate the areas of rectangles and compound shapes made from rectangles.
102. By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils' standards in mathematics are lower than those expected nationally. Nevertheless, number skills of the majority are better than test results would indicate. For example, analysis of work completed last year by the pupils presently in Year 7, indicates that they can manipulate numbers, adding, subtracting, multiplying numbers to thousands. Most are beginning to use decimals to two and three places with a secure understanding of place value. They can calculate the answers to division calculations involving smaller numbers. Their work indicates that pupils can work out the equivalent percentages and decimal fractions. The higher attaining pupils use perimeter formulae and construct a net for a given shape. Pupils recognise parallel faces and identify properties of 3D shapes. They know and understand ratio and proportion and use their skills to solve mathematical problems. Their levels of attainment are in line with national expectation. There is, however, a significant proportion of pupils who have very limited understanding of number and for whom, even the most basic and simple calculations pose problems. For example, during the inspection, a minority of Year 7 pupils were observed struggling to work out simple subtraction.
103. Numeracy skills are applied satisfactorily in other subjects. In history, pupils gain a concept of chronology by referring to time lines. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were observed in design and technology using their well developing skills of measurements to ensure appropriate lengths of dowels for their axles. In science, pupils in Year 4 record their findings, by collecting data and using graphs.
104. The overall quality of teaching is good. Out of 14 lessons seen, 10 were good or better, 3 were satisfactory and 1 unsatisfactory. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge, which enables them to teach mathematics well. Planning is particularly good in the First school and is structured to enable the pupils to build upon previous learning. In the Middle school, planning is not always based securely on a reliable assessment of what pupils know,

understand and what they are able to do, as assessment procedures are not yet in place. Lesson plans do not always include specific speaking and listening sessions, where the pupils can learn new vocabulary and use it when discussing their mathematics. In very good lessons in Year 2, the teacher planned enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening, such as collaborative activities that required talk to complete the task. In the best lessons seen, those teachers seized opportunities for pupils to report back to others how they have completed the task, or the problems they encountered and how they managed to overcome them. In Year 4, one teacher asked a pupil with special educational needs to outline how he constructed his number pyramid. These opportunities effectively help the pupils to articulate their thinking and to improve their speaking and listening skills, and develop further their mathematical expertise.

105. Teachers share the learning objectives clearly with their pupils so that the pupils understand what they are to learn. They use the final sessions well to summarise key learning points and in some instances, to extend pupils' thinking further. Teachers who maintain a brisk pace both in the mental sessions and during the pupils' main tasks, inspire their pupils, who consequently concentrate well throughout the other parts of the lessons. The best lessons were observed in both Year 2 and 4 classes and in some Year 3 and 5 classes. These lessons were characterised by enthusiastic teaching and learning.
106. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, occasionally, this is not undertaken regularly enough to let pupils know how well they are achieving in their work. In addition, those teachers are unable to assess whether concepts are understood or whether pupils need to move onto the next step. In respect of marking, there are some inconsistencies, particularly when marking only informs the pupils whether the answer is correct or not. When this happens, pupils do not know what they should do next to improve their work. In the best marking seen, teachers acknowledge pupils' efforts, but also pose challenging question to further pupils' thinking. In some classes, this practice was observed, with the pupils responding with an answer. These teachers successfully involve their pupils in learning.
107. Teachers work hard in managing their pupils and the resulting behaviour in most classes is good. A small number of pupils show challenging behaviour, but this is skilfully managed in a calm and patient manner, with minimal disruption to teaching and learning. However, occasionally, the high proportion of time spent in trying to control pupils who need attention, considerably slows the progress of the whole class. Nevertheless, in most lessons, the harmonious and calm atmosphere, achieved through the very good relationships that exist, helps the pupils to learn and to make progress.
108. The co-ordinator is new to this responsibility. As her role is underdeveloped, she has been unable to monitor all aspects of the subject effectively. The main concern is to raise standards in the Middle school and improve the test results for eleven year olds. Despite restrictions, the co-ordinator has made a

good start by analysing the national test results at the end of each key stage and other tests undertaken regularly. This analysis is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. Information is used to strengthen the curriculum and teaching in those areas. More recently, the co-ordinator has started to monitor progress throughout the school, by sampling work of different ability groups. She is also involved in taking booster classes after school, to prepare the pupils to sit tests. As yet, there are no effective systems in place for tracking the progress of individual pupils, so that the school can be sure that all pupils are doing their best. Resources for the subject are adequate, but in need of improvements, both in quality and in quantity, particularly in the Middle school.

SCIENCE

109. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11 years, the school's results in science were well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, results were below average. Few pupils attained the higher standards of Level 5 or above in the tests. Results in the tests for eleven year olds have been consistently well below average since 1996 with them falling to a very low level in 2000. Results were better in 2001 but still well below average. In the 2000 statutory teacher assessments for 7 year olds, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard of Level 2 or above was below the national average. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above average.
110. The findings of the inspection are that by Year 2, most pupils now are attaining the standards expected for their ages and are achieving well. This is because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils handle a range of materials and make accurate observations. For example, they know that water in a boiling saucepan disappears. They identify the differences between ice and water using terms such as cold, solid, see through and slippery. Observations are clearly recorded. Pupils describe their observations using appropriate scientific vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils explain how steam from cooking changes back to water when it hits a cold window or wall. In Years 6 and 7, pupils attainments are well below the levels expected for their ages, and there is considerable underachievement in these two year groups. This due to a large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and the fact that pupils are given too few opportunities for practical and investigative work. In particular, pupils are not given opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations. This is a significant weakness and it is having a detrimental effect on the development of pupils' scientific knowledge, understanding and skills.
111. In Year 6, pupils need help to carry out fair tests to see which materials dissolve in water. They make simple predictions, make observations and record their results in charts produced by their teacher. However, the work provided is over directed so pupils do not have the opportunities to select equipment and design ways of recording results by themselves. Little attempt is made by pupils to give a scientific explanation for their results. In one Year

7 lesson on the water cycle, pupils knew that water could exist as solid, liquid or gas. A few higher attaining pupils could explain the physical processes of evaporation and condensation in the water cycle. In another Year 7 lesson, the teacher and pupils were discussing how to perform and write up a scientific experiment. This was an overlong theoretical activity. Unfortunately, the pupils had little recent practical experience to bring to the debate. Consequently they demonstrated a low knowledge of experimental and investigative work and became less interested in the lesson. In Years 4 and 5, however, improvements are taking place. Most pupils are now attaining expected standards and are achieving satisfactorily. In these year groups, teaching is more consistent and more appropriate experimental and investigative tasks are provided. Year 4 pupils generate scientific questions which can be tested and make suitable predictions. In Year 5, pupils carried out an investigation to find out the conditions needed for seeds to grow well. Most made accurate observations and recorded their results clearly. Higher attaining pupils drew conclusions from their results and offered appropriate scientific explanations.

112. The quality of teaching in First school is good and sometimes very good. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and learning. Pupils make good gains in scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers plan the lessons well and share the learning objectives with the class. Pupils are clear about what they are to learn. Effective questioning is used to promote pupils' learning and to check their understanding. Pupils respond enthusiastically. Teachers promote scientific vocabulary well and pupils use this correctly in their answers and explanations. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are given effective support by the teachers and assistants. This enables the pupils to participate fully in all the activities and they make good progress. Behaviour management is good and the teachers have created a positive climate for learning. Pupils are motivated, interested and behave well. They remain on task and work collaboratively when required.
113. The quality of teaching in Middle school is satisfactory overall. However some lessons in Years 6 and 7 were unsatisfactory, in addition to some other lessons where good teaching took place. The unsatisfactory teaching is having an adverse effect on standards, attitudes, learning and behaviour. In the good lessons, the teachers effectively checked pupils' previous learning before moving on. The teachers were enthusiastic and this motivated and inspired the pupils. Effective explanations and demonstrations promoted learning well. Skilful questioning challenged the pupils and encouraged them to think. The pupils responded well to this. Good relationships were established between the teacher and class and the pupils were well managed. This resulted in positive attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils were provided with appropriate practical activities which enabled them to develop scientific skills. With good teaching, pupils make good gains in their learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Their questions and the tasks set lack challenge. The lesson lacks pace and learning time is not maximised. As a result, pupils are not

motivated or productive and they make insufficient gains in their learning. Pupils are given too few opportunities for practical activity. Where practical activities are provided, they are over directed by the teacher. As a consequence, pupils are not given the responsibility to planning their work and selecting their equipment. Pupil management is unsatisfactory and this leads to unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour.

114. Lesson observations and study of pupils' work indicate that the classes are rarely given different tasks in order to meet the different ranges of ability. This means that not all pupils are appropriately challenged. While pupils with special educational needs receive support, work rarely stretches the higher attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work is not yet consistent in helping pupils to learn. Marking does not always state why a piece of work is good and rarely does it indicate how it could be improved. Currently, there is little evidence of ICT being used to support teaching and learning in science.
115. The school has been without a co-ordinator for over two terms and a current member of staff has taken over the role temporarily for the Autumn Term. The school has adopted the national guidelines for its scheme of work but insufficient attention is paid to scientific enquiry in Years 6 and 7. The local education authority has produced a high quality framework for developing scientific skills but this has not yet been adopted. This could help to improve the planning and provision for scientific enquiry. Assessment and target setting procedures are at an early stage of development. They are not sufficiently well established to guide future planning, teaching and learning. As a consequence, work provided is not always well matched to the different abilities within a class, particularly in Middle school. The school has a specialist science room but this was only used for one lesson during the inspection. This accommodation is currently under used, although the co-ordinator has appropriate plans to improve this facility by reorganising learning resources and producing attractive displays. The intention is to raise the profile of science within the school. The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped at present. She does not monitor teachers' planning but this is planned to happen in the future. The monitoring and development of teaching has occurred in First school, but the co-ordinator has not had the opportunities to observe and support teaching throughout the school. Whilst the co-ordinator has appropriate ideas for developing the subject, the school has yet to produce an action plan for science containing priorities for improvement with clear costing. Overall, the school has made insufficient improvements in science since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

116. By the age of seven, pupils' attainments in art and design exceed the national expectation. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 7, their attainment is in line with the expectation for pupils of a similar age. Observation of lessons, interviews with pupils, scrutiny of work, photographic evidence and displays around the school all show that pupils make good progress and achieve well up to Year 2 and show satisfactory progress and achievement in Years 3 to 7.

The success of pupils with special educational needs is particularly notable. These pupils have good self-esteem and work very hard during lessons, and are delighted with their achievements.

117. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop good control over a wide range of media and techniques in art and design. They are able to mix and blend colours and record from experience and imagination with appropriate regard to detail. The pastel portraits produced by Year 1 pupils, after study of a friend, show choice of appropriate colours for skin tones with recognizable features. The Year 2 paintings of sunflowers are of high quality. Pupils have the opportunities to work in 3D, use clay and natural materials, to consider and appreciate the work of different artists and to use some of the artists' techniques in their own work. In Years 3 and 4, pupils produce detailed pencil and crayon drawings to illustrate their written work and contribute to collaborative class collages. The Year 5 self portraits were creatively developed into clay faces. The Year 6 pastel pictures in the style of Picasso and the Year 7 pencil drawings in the style of Escher are good example of pupils' ability to incorporate depth and perspective into their work. However, pupils in Middle school are given insufficient opportunities to explore a wide range of media and develop skills in 3D and textiles. Insufficient use is made of the specialist art room with its variety of resources and pupils experience too few challenging practical lessons, particularly in Years 6 and 7. Sketchbooks have been introduced from Year 3, but they need to be used more consistently to provide a good record of pupils' developing skills.
118. Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. The one lesson seen in Year 2 was, however, very good. The teachers' excellent subject knowledge and very good planning, showing progression of learning, meant that pupils' confidence in their own ability to succeed was raised. The lesson observed in Year 5 was satisfactory, but a Year 7 lesson was unsatisfactory. Classroom management was weak, the pace was slow and pupils were not kept on task. As a result the learning objective was not achieved. Pupils generally show a positive attitude to art. When they are well motivated they work hard and quietly to achieve a good finished result. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 receive a high proportion of theoretical lessons and a lack of enthusiasm for the subject is evident. When engaged in practical tasks, pupils demonstrate enjoyment and work responsibly. A Year 4 class worked carefully, mixing sand with paint to create hieroglyphic pictures in the style of Paul Klee. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs and groups.
119. Since the last inspection, standards in the subject have been maintained. Pupils use their artistic skills and expertise well to support their work in other subjects, such as when illustrating written work in English, history, geography and religious education. The scheme of work shows links to other subjects and includes the use of computers. Art is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. She has been in post since 1999, and is committed to raising standards of attainment in First and Middle schools, to above national expectations. She has organized an art club, with the help of a local artist, for

pupils in Years 4 to 7. Also, she has developed good links with the community, establishing a productive relationship with Windsor and Newton whereby art materials are donated and samples of pupils' work sent back to show other customers the effectiveness of particular products. The school has also been successful in various competitions, a Year 7 pupil winning the Kodak Young Photographer of the Year. The co-ordinator has insufficient opportunity to monitor lessons and consequently is limited in her ability to help and support colleagues or to influence teaching and learning to any great degree. However, she monitors coverage of the scheme of work, is building a portfolio of examples of pupils' work and has clear direction for improvement in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Standards in design and technology throughout the school, are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained its standards. While it was possible to see only a few lessons, nevertheless, samples of work from each year group and photographic evidence indicate that pupils achieve well in the subject from their below average starting point in the reception class. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are all included and are learning well to achieve the appropriate levels.
121. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils were observed making structures more stable, by creating frames. Year 2 pupils know and understand that, in order to keep their vehicles moving freely, they have to overcome problems in their designs. They employ a variety of methods of attaching their axles successfully to the chassis. In the Middle school, Year 6 design and draw helmets for a Greek soldier. They evaluate the purpose, comfort and appeal of their designs. The pupils consider improvements they need to make to protect the most vulnerable parts of the head.
122. The overall quality of teaching is good. Planning is generally effective, particularly, when teachers focus on helping the pupils to build on their existing skills. The subject interests the pupils and they understand what they have to do, because the teachers have explained carefully. Pupils are reminded of the need to evaluate work in progress and to consider ways to improve. Good use is made of well-focused questions to give pupils ideas and to help them develop understanding. This was seen in Year 2, where the teacher asked relevant questions, related to both mathematics and to design and technology, in order to help the pupils improve their skills of attaching a wheel on an axle. Relationships are very good and high expectations of independence and behaviour, observed in Year 2, mean that pupil work well together and share ideas. They enjoy practical tasks and are happy to talk about their work and to explain what they are doing.
123. Through the good management of the subject, it is clear that all aspects, including food technology, are taught progressively throughout the school.

The co-ordinator is very imaginative in proposing subject areas that can be usefully linked to developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, Year 7 undertake French cooking, to link with work on France. In Year 6, the pupils use their scientific knowledge to activate their volcano models or, using A4 paper, they construct structures, which can support the weight of a school dictionary. In food technology, Year 3 pupils learn about the importance of hygiene and packaging when making sandwiches.

124. There are good schemes of work and a policy in place to guide teaching and learning in the subject. Additionally, the co-ordinator has developed easily manageable assessments to track pupils' progress in skills and understanding and to inform planning. Time restrictions do not allow her to monitor teaching and curriculum development. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator keeps an overview of developments, by maintaining a portfolio of pupils' work, including photographic evidence. The co-ordinator encourages teachers to use other subjects, for economy of time and for linking areas of learning effectively. For example, Year 2 make moving models of Florence Nightingale, for book covers. Pupils used their literacy and numeracy skills effectively to make these attractive covers. The co-ordinator encourages interest in design and technology, by regularly organising challenges, which have to be undertaken at home and at school by a year group. Most recent examples include designing and making a carrier bag or a kite that flies. These strategies help the school to make good links with the parents and to encourage them to take an interest in their children's learning.

GEOGRAPHY

125. During the inspection, due to timetabling arrangements and the structure of the curriculum, geography lessons were observed in Year 4 and Year 7 only. Judgements are based on the two lessons seen, discussions with teachers and with pupils in Years 6 and 7, analysis of pupils' work and of teachers' planning. The evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2, 6, and 7, standards are below those expected of pupils at these ages, although most pupils are achieving satisfactorily when compared with their attainment on entry to school. In the school's previous inspection, standards were found to be in line with national expectations throughout the school. The apparent fall in standards reflects the change in the school's population and the increased proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language who need additional support. All pupils, including those who have English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs, make generally satisfactory progress from their differing starting points.
126. In First school, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory. Analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning show that pupils in Year 2 have studied aspects of people's lives on Bhola Island, near Bangladesh. They are able to identify its location on a simple outline map and know that the weather is hotter than in Harrow. They identify and use simple symbols on a plan. Teachers' planning indicates that appropriate use is made of the area around the school to enable younger pupils to follow simple routes and to

make observations on the kind of traffic in the area. In useful links with history, pupils identify features of a seaside environment, including some simple features of a coastline. Some pupils achieve levels appropriate to their age but the limited development of many pupils' literacy and speaking skills restrict the rate at which they learn.

127. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning by the age of 11 is satisfactory. Good teaching was seen during the inspection in Year 4. The lesson opened crisply and positively with a revision of the previous lesson where pupils had been formulating lists of questions on Egypt. This was part of the preparation for conducting an interview. Pupils were well motivated and interested as they were going to take part in an interview of the headteacher who had visited Egypt several times. This 'real' situation was well enhanced by the effective preparation of both the class and headteacher. As a result the session proceeded purposefully and pupils maintained good concentration. At the end of the lesson pupils had enhanced their interest in Egypt, developed their awareness of the country and its people and consolidated their observational and questioning skills. However indications are that the quality of teaching overall is more variable. Pupils' skills in Year 6 have not been so consistently developed. Pupils in Year 5 have a good opportunity each year to experience a residential visit to Swanage from which they benefit in a number of important aspects of their development. However there have been some missed opportunities to use these occasions to enhance pupils' geographical awareness and to further develop their skills of investigation and enquiry. Some pupils' more limited literacy skills result in a too limited range of geographical vocabulary. In some classes this is because it has not been specifically and systematically taught. Their understanding and use of maps and plans at a variety of scales, are also limited. Pupils are however interested in the subject and eager to share and develop their understanding.
128. A similar picture is evident in Year 7. Some higher attaining pupils are attaining a level which is appropriate for their age. However many pupils have more limited literacy skills and their geographical skills have not been consistently developed earlier in the school. Although they are comfortable using two figure coordinates to find specific locations they are not able to transfer readily their knowledge of four figure coordinates in mathematics, to their work in geography. At all levels in the school, teachers mark pupils' work supportively but the quality of comments to help pupils' improve their work is variable.
129. The leadership of geography is satisfactory, as the school's emphasis has been on literacy and numeracy since the last inspection. The coordination role has been undertaken, relatively recently, by two part-time members of staff who have a good understanding of the needs of the subject, as identified in the action plan for the subject. They work closely and effectively together but have had only limited opportunities for monitoring the quality of teaching in the subject. The curriculum follows the guidance in units of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority but this has not yet been sufficiently adapted to meet the specific needs of the school. As was the case in the

previous inspection, assessment in the subject is not sufficiently developed. There are some useful links with other subjects such as science and design technology, in the school project to develop the school environment. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' understanding of the world in which they live and to their awareness of the differences in communities in other parts of the world. Resources are satisfactory to support the needs of the curriculum but the range of atlases is currently too limited to enable all classes to use them conveniently.

HISTORY

130. During the week of the inspection lessons were seen in Years 2, 3, 4, 5. Judgements are made on the lessons seen, an analysis of pupils' work in all years, discussions with pupils and teachers in Years 6 and 7 about their work and an examination of teachers' planning. Standards in Years 2, 6 and 7 are below those expected for pupils' ages. Although some pupils in each year reach the expected standards the high proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language, special educational needs and the high level of pupil movement means that the majority of pupils do not achieve as well as expected. Overall all pupils make satisfactory progress but pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress when lesson activities are well adapted to their needs and they receive good support. Standards of work in the last inspection were in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2, 6, and 7. The differences in inspection findings reflect the changes in the school's population since the last inspection.
131. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. However some good and very good teaching was seen during the week of the inspection in lessons for both younger and older pupils. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were considering how seaside holidays had changed over the years. The teacher created a calm, quiet atmosphere in which pupils could confidently respond and think carefully about what they knew and had remembered about their earlier lessons. Using an interesting, relevant range of photographs and pictures the teacher used questions well to draw pupils' attention to differences and to help them make comparisons with their own experiences and knowledge. 'What would you wear to the seaside? What are these people wearing?' All pupils were encouraged to respond and this gave them good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, particularly for those pupils who had English as an additional language and for pupils who had special educational needs. Pupils were given good opportunities to record what they had learned and by the end of the lesson they had made good gains in their understanding of some of the ways their lives are different from those of people in the past.
132. Very good lessons were seen in Years 4 and 5. In these lessons teachers had used interesting ideas to effectively involve pupils in their learning and as a result, pupils paid very good attention and were enthusiastic in their responses and their discussions together. In the Year 4 lesson the teacher

used a pupil to demonstrate how he had turned his 'action man' into an Egyptian mummy and another pupil to act as a model. Throughout the discussion and explanation the teacher expected pupils to be able to give reasons for each stage of the process. This helped pupils to develop their thinking and their understanding, logically and coherently. In the Year 5 lesson on The Victorians the teacher's lively style captured pupils' attention and encouraged them to be active participants in the lesson. This teacher used pupils' earlier learning effectively to raise issues for further research and with a very good level of praise and encouragement the lesson 'buzzed' with enthusiasm for new knowledge.

133. Analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning in Years 6 and 7 indicate that teachers plan generally appropriately. In Year 6 some good planning was seen for the wide variation of ability in classes. However pupils' knowledge and understanding and their ability to record their work at an appropriate level is limited. These pupils' prior experiences have not provided them with a sufficiently secure skills foundation on which to build. As a result many older pupils' research skills and their knowledge base do not give them sufficient support to develop their ideas and their thinking to the expected level.
134. Where teaching has weaknesses, there are sometimes issues around the management of pupils' behaviour. Ineffective strategies mean that too much time is spent on ensuring that pupils are listening appropriately and as a result, their learning is affected. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where the teacher had prepared an interesting range of artefacts to help pupils to understand how to make historical observations and to ask relevant questions. However, frequent interventions to remind pupils about listening attentively interrupted the flow of the lesson and pupils' concentration. From the analysis of pupils' work there are indications that expectations for the amount and quality of pupils' recorded work are not consistent either across the years or across classes within years. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is generally supportive and encouraging but there are variations in the use of constructive comments in helping pupils to improve.
135. Pupils have useful opportunities to develop their learning about life in Roman Britain when they visit St Albans and Year 5 pupils learn about the historical importance of limestone quarries in Victorian times when they visit Swanage on their residential visits. In their visits to Harrow on the Hill pupils are given opportunities to identify buildings and evidence related to their period of history. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' awareness of cultures in the past and to changes in British culture over time. The subject currently does not have a coordinator but the deputy headteacher is maintaining an overview of the subject. The school uses the Quality and Curriculum Authority units of work as a scheme of work. It is however aware of the need to further adapt these units to meet the needs of all pupils in the school and to ensure that pupils' experiences and skills are developed coherently. The school's previous inspection found that assessment in the subject is underdeveloped. This situation remains. There are good links with other subjects such as art, when pupils make collage portraits of Tudor

monarchs and in information and communication technology and literacy when Year 4 pupils used a text on the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Resources in the subject are satisfactory and the school makes good use of its link with the Museum of London to enhance its own range of artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136. The pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is above the national expectation for seven year olds by the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations in Year 6 and by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' attainment and progress was below national expectations in all year groups. Teaching was unsatisfactory across the school, resources were inadequate and insufficient use was made of ICT in other curriculum areas. Provision for ICT has improved considerably, and the good progress made by pupils up to Year 2 should now follow through the school so that even higher standards of progress and attainment can be achieved by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 7. The success of pupils with special educational need is particularly good. These pupils work confidently and are supported effectively so that they achieve well for their age and levels of difficulty.
137. Pupils are good at working independently and in pairs on computers. They understand the relevance of what they are doing in relation to the building of skills needed for other subjects. Year 1 pupils confidently log onto the Paint program to create a self- portrait and pupils in Year 2 develop those skills to produce a carefully constructed line picture, within a frame, in the style of Bridget Riley. Pupils in Year 4 can explain how the editing skills they are learning in word processing lessons are helping them to understand the use of punctuation in literacy work and gain experience of writing for different audiences. Year 5 pupils, using a data program to present their research on favourite things, are able to show how it develops their understanding of different kinds of mathematical graphs. By the time they leave the school, pupils can write a variety of word-processed text in different styles and layouts, for example, poems, stories, posters, rules and newspaper articles. They can explore data on CD-ROMS, extract text from different sources and incorporate pictures in their document. However, there could be more opportunities for the use of computer devices such as digital cameras, sensing or control devices.
138. The teaching of ICT is mostly good and an excellent Year 2 lesson was observed. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and the school has ensured that they have been appropriately trained to use the ICT suite. The lessons are appropriately planned and structured, with clear objectives so that pupils know what they will learn. In the best lessons, work is well matched to the pupils' ability, teachers build effectively on learning that has taken place previously and pupils make good progress in the development of their skills and understanding. Lessons are less successful when

assessment opportunities are missed and teachers are insufficiently aware of what pupils can already do.

139. Pupils enjoy using the computers and work well in pairs, taking turns or collaborating on a task. They are very supportive of each other, working patiently with a less able partner and enhancing their own skills through the help offered. They co-operate well with their teachers and support assistants listening to instructions and working enthusiastically.
140. Development of the computer suite, acquisition of sufficient hardware, including a good Internet connection and appropriate software, plus the development of a scheme of work, have all contributed to the good improvement in standards since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are so well motivated that they would like increased access to computers and the opportunity to use computers more in their classroom as well as in the ICT suite.
141. The subject is well managed and led by the co-ordinator. There is a detailed plan of action for further improvements. These include linking ICT more appropriately to the whole curriculum, including music, by incorporating ICT opportunities into the schemes of work. The co-ordinator has started to collect samples of work and is developing the system so that it gives a clear picture of pupils' progress and attainment. There needs to be a more structured approach to assessment to: help teachers to plan their lessons for the subject; help the coordinator to plan the curriculum more accurately; and to help pupils to build on their existing skills.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

142. French is taught to Year 7 pupils for one period of one hour per week. Attainment by the end of Year 7 is as expected for the age of the pupils. They make satisfactory progress and are in-line to achieve the expected levels by the end of the year. The situation now is very different from the last inspection when the language was taught throughout the school and standards, therefore, are not comparable.
143. In Year 7, pupils understand short questions and statements. They recall basic phrases, numbers and answer questions about their age and where they live. Their pronunciation is approximate but sufficiently clear to be understood. In writing, they copy accurately from the board and select words appropriately to complete a text with gaps, using worksheet references. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They practise and rehearse the language within familiar contexts and reinforce their learning through the use of role play and games. The majority of pupils show interest and are attentive during lessons. They are willing to take part in oral work and relate well to the teacher and to each other. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory and appropriately focused on developing pupils' oracy skills as the foundation for further work. Effective methods like

role play and games are used to develop speaking skills to enable pupils to learn key vocabulary and develop their pronunciation. Lessons start quickly and are conducted at a good pace. Some aspects of teaching are less effective, namely the over use of English or translation to explore vocabulary and the lack of access to textbooks to use as a reference in lessons or for extending pupils' autonomy in learning through homework. There is no coordinator for the subject and teaching is currently provided by a supply teacher. The school has no current written policy for modern foreign languages and no evidence of assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' academic development and the quality of provision for the subject. Despite this, the pupils in Year 7 are doing as well as they should for this early stage in the school year.

MUSIC

144. Since the last inspection, less emphasis has been given to music while the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented. There has also been a recent change in the teacher responsible for coordinating the subject. The school, however, continues to promote musical performance through interesting and colourful annual shows, such as 'The Lorax' performed at Christmas 2000, and enables pupils to have individual and small group tuition in a good variety of musical instruments. These pupils do well and enjoy increasing their musical skills. The school also values the musical expertise of pupils, for example, by enabling a pupil who has private piano tuition to play her instrument during assembly. A notable feature of the provision is that every pupil in Year 5 has the opportunity to play steel pans in an ensemble. In addition, good provision is made for pupils to develop their singing skills and the standards they attain by Year 7 are above those usually expected for their age. However, in other aspects of the curriculum, such as composing, listening and appraising, pupils do less well than expected for their age as a result of the variations in the quality of music teaching between classes. Each class teacher takes their own music lessons and, whilst some teachers are confident in the subject, others are less skilled and so the pupils have a patchy experience of musical development as they move through the school. As a result, the pupils' attainments in music by the ages of seven and eleven are below the expectation for their age.
145. During the inspection, it was possible to observe a small number of lessons which ranged in quality from excellent to unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 1 clap a steady beat and are able to respond to the challenge provided by the teacher to recognise favourite nursery rhymes from the clapped rhythm of their syllables. They make reasonable attempts to play two counter rhythms at the same time and listen carefully to the music played by others. In Year 3, pupils remembered that Saint Saens composed Carnival of the Animals and listened carefully to 'The Elephant'. Their teacher helped them to appreciate how the tempo and pitch reflect the nature of the animal and the pupils used this knowledge to identify another section correctly as 'The Kangaroo'. However, the teacher's intention of allowing the pupils to move in time to the music was taken as an opportunity to play around and without effective behaviour

management, further learning opportunities were missed. However, in a singing assembly for pupils in Years 4 to 7, exceptional teaching took place. This session was led by the coordinator for the subject and was very successful indeed in teaching all the pupils how to sing a round in three parts over a clapped pulse; how to recognise changes of texture, harmony, tempo and dynamics in a performance of 'Let it Be'; and improved the tone and pitch of the massed voices so that a performance of high quality was achieved. The teacher generated enthusiasm and set high expectations which the pupils responded to by giving of their best. The coordinator has good ideas for how best to develop the subject in school and how to develop the curriculum further to make full use of computers and electronic instruments. However, he is, as yet, unable to spend time helping other teachers to improve the work they do with their classes and this is likely to keep the overall standards in music at a lower level than they could be.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. During the inspection lessons were seen in Years 4, 6 and 7 only. No physical education (PE) was seen in First school. However, teachers' planning indicates that a full range of National Curriculum activities is provided for these pupils.
147. In a Year 7 games lesson, pupils' demonstrated standards above those expected for their ages and they are achieving well. They demonstrated precision, control and fluency in movement. Striking, passing and receiving skills in hockey were good and these were effectively applied to small team games. Pupils were co-operative, responsible and worked safely. In a Year 6 lesson seen, standards were below those expected for their ages and the pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Pupils demonstrated passing and receiving skills, which were insufficiently developed. Co-operation and teamwork were also at a low level. This was because of ineffective teaching resulting in poor pupil attitudes and behaviour. In a Year 4 dance lesson, pupils attained expected standards. They showed co-ordination and control as they performed a pattern of movements. They responded creatively to stimuli from percussion instruments. Pupils evaluated their work and this led to them modifying and improving their sequence of movements.
148. The quality of teaching seen in Year 7 was very good and this has a positive impact on standards and learning. The teacher's approach was lively and enthusiastic and this motivated the pupils. Instructions were clear and the pupils responded very well to these. The teacher had established very good relationships with the class and managed the pupils extremely well. As a result, the pupils were very well behaved and there was a clear sense of achievement and enjoyment throughout the lesson. Good teamwork and sporting attitudes were observed. The teacher used pupils effectively to demonstrate skills to the class. Praise and constructive feedback by the teacher helped pupils to improve their performance. The lesson was well structured and maintained a good pace. Pupils were productive and learning time was maximised. As a result of this very good teaching, the class made

very good gains in the development and application of hockey skills. By contrast, in Year 6, the quality of teaching was poor and this resulted in poor pupils' attitudes, learning and behaviour. The purpose of the lesson was not clear so pupils did not know what they were to learn. The teacher's expectations of pupils' work and behaviour were too low and pupils applied insufficient concentration and physical effort to their work. This resulted in poor attitudes and behaviour where there was disobedience and some unsafe behaviour. The teaching of dance in Year 4 was good. The teacher's clear instructions and demonstrations promoted learning well. Opportunities were given for pupils to evaluate their own and others performance. This led to adaptations and improvements in the pupils' sequence of movements. The organisation, management and pace of the lesson were good. The pupils were productive, their interest maintained and they behaved well.

149. The school is using national guidelines in reviewing its schemes of work. A clear system to assess pupils' attainment in PE has still not been established and this was an issue identified during the last inspection. This is long overdue and restricts teachers' effectiveness in planning activities which are well matched to pupils' differing abilities. The co-ordinator views teachers' plans to ensure curriculum coverage. She has had the opportunities to observe some teaching of PE but these are informal procedures and she lacks time to help her colleagues provide a consistent quality of teaching throughout the school. The PE programme is supported by extra curricular activities such as golf, football and cricket. The school's facilities for PE are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education by Year 2 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By Year 6 and Year 7 standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the school's previous inspection, standards were in line with expectations by Year 2, Year 6 and above expectations by Year 7. This change in standards is reflected in the changes in the nature of the school's population and the changes of staff. Judgements in this inspection are based on classroom observations, analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils in Years 6 and 7. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of religious experience and together they represent most of the major faiths of the world. Pupils in First school make good progress and achieve well as a result of effective teaching. Pupils in Middle school receive a more variable quality of teaching and many pupils underachieve and do not sufficiently develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make progress at a similar rate as other pupils in their classes. However, the school has a caring supportive ethos, which encourages pupils to respect the ideas and opinions of others. Collective worship also makes an important contribution to pupils' religious, spiritual and personal development.
151. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory. Analysis of pupils' written work indicates that teachers provide an appropriate range of experiences for pupils. Pupils know about features of a Christian church and some important festivals in the Jewish faith. They discuss what is important and special to them and learn that other people have celebrations that are special to them. Teachers try hard to create interesting and memorable experiences for pupils whose literacy and speaking skills are often limited. In a good Year 1 lesson, the whole year was involved in the re-enactment of a Christian baptism in which two pupils were the parents and the teacher took the role of the vicar. The words of the service had been carefully simplified to ensure that pupils understood each step of the service and the 'parents' were able to make appropriate responses. The other pupils took their part as invited friends and family. All pupils were completely involved in the ceremony and absorbed in the atmosphere teachers had effectively created. At both the beginning and the end of the lesson, teachers ensured through careful questioning and explanation that pupils had understood that a baptism was a joyful ceremony in which parents promised God that they would care for their child. By the end of the lesson pupils had made good gains in their understanding of the atmosphere and the meaning of Christian baptism. In a good Year 2 lesson the teacher used an interesting range of wedding photographs to help pupils understand some of the traditions and customs surrounding a Christian wedding. Pupils talked about weddings they had attended and there was a good contribution made by pupils who had attended wedding ceremonies of different faiths. This sharing of experiences and valuing the variety of belief and tradition within the school is a strength.

152. Evidence from lessons and teachers' planning indicate that while teaching and learning in the early years of Middle school are often good, the experiences of older pupils, including Year 7, is more variable and in some classes insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of the subject. As a result older pupils do not sufficiently develop their awareness and their understanding of the areas of learning outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. Therefore teaching and learning overall in Middle school is unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, lessons are carefully planned to provide pupils with experiences which encourage them to develop their spiritual responses. In the planning for a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used music and poetry to encourage pupils to think about how they communicate with God. As a result of this stimulus pupils wrote their own prayers and questions for God, with thought and sensitivity. They thanked God for the beauty of the natural world but reflected their concern about recent events with questions such as, 'Why do people fight with other people?'
153. Older pupils often have a good understanding of their own faiths, which they bring from their own experiences, but this understanding is not consistently developed through their experiences at school. Some teachers do not feel confident in teaching the subject and this lack of confidence is sometimes combined with weaker pupil management. As a result, some lessons for older pupils frequently lack challenge and opportunities for them to develop their understanding of the religious significance and meaning of some key features of the faiths they are studying. Pupils often have a too limited understanding of basic features of Christianity and other faiths. This was seen in an unsatisfactory Year 5 lesson on harvest celebrations in the Jewish faith. The lack of visual stimulation and the teacher's didactic approach resulted in pupils' losing interest and concentration. Too much time was spent in restoring appropriate attention and, as a result, pupils learnt too little during the lesson. Discussions with older pupils showed that they shared their experiences of different faiths openly and with respect for beliefs that were different of their own. This 'openness' to each other is a strong feature of the school and develops appreciation for each other and their own traditions.
154. The subject is led by a committed and enthusiastic member of staff. She has a good understanding of the subject and is prepared to support staff who need to develop their confidence. She has been able to monitor pupils' work in a range of classes across the school and has provided useful guidance for developing the teaching of the subject. However this has not yet been implemented in practice. The school uses the units of work of the locally agreed syllabus as a useful scheme of work and enables the planned curriculum to meet its requirements. The school's resources for the subject are good and are effectively further supplemented by teachers' own resources. Assessment in the subject is under developed and insufficient use is made of the well organised assessment guidance in the locally agreed syllabus. This was also the case in the school's previous inspection. There are appropriate links with local churches which pupils visit as part of their studies of the local area. Local Christian clergy take part in school assemblies on some occasions but there are few visits to places of worship of other faiths or visits to the

school from clergy of other faiths to enrich the curriculum. Overall, the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experience. In the earlier years of the school the contribution of the subject is good.