

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITINGS HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barnet

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101304

Headteacher: Mr Richard Maudsley

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 2 - 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 194199

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whittings Road
Barnet

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Richard Jefferies

Date of previous inspection: 10 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; design and technology; physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements; teaching; management
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; the school's care for its pupils; partnership with parents
1963	Sibani Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	English; geography; history; equal opportunities; English as an additional language	Curriculum
27635	Diana Cinamon	Team inspector	Science; art; music; religious education; under-fives; special educational needs	Assessment

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitings Hill Primary School is an average-sized school for boys and girls aged from three to eleven. 191 pupils attend full-time in the main school and 44 children attend the nursery, over half on a part-time basis. The number on roll has fallen from the last inspection as 30 pupils now enter each year. The community served by the school is culturally diverse and the intake includes 11 refugee children, mostly from Somalia. 26 pupils have English as an additional language and one of these is at an early stage of learning English. The main languages spoken are Somali, Urdu and Greek. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is above average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to reception is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standards are rising as a result of strong leadership and effective management that has concentrated on improving the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Most pupils achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress from a low base on entry, although attainment is still below average overall by the age of eleven. Staff strive successfully to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, but insufficient attention is paid to pupils learning English as an additional language. The focus on improving pupils' behaviour is resulting in the development of a harmonious atmosphere in which pupils can give of their best. The school has a high level of funding and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils progress well in writing in Years 1 and 2 so that standards are well above average by the age of seven.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide strong and effective leadership.
- The effective use of the very good computer resources is resulting in pupils rapidly learning new skills in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils respond well to the good support, guidance and provision for their personal and social development.
- Teachers rigorously monitor the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science and use the information obtained to guide their lesson planning.

What could be improved

- A significant proportion of the pupils do not achieve nationally expected standards for their age at Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Attendance has fluctuated but remains below the national average.
- The needs of pupils learning English as an additional language are not fully met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The current headteacher has built well on the good progress made under the previous head by improving teaching, raising standards and dealing with the key issues from the last inspection in 1997. Much of the improvement is as a result of the systematic monitoring of teaching and the thorough analysis of test data and pupil progress. All National Curriculum test results are much higher and have risen faster than nationally at Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning is supported by national guidance. Greater challenge is provided for the more able, although there is still room for further development in this area. Governors play a more significant role and, along with the good leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff, this places the school in a strong position to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	C
Mathematics	E*	D	C	A
Science	E*	D	C	A

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

National Curriculum test results have improved considerably since the last inspection and at a much faster rate than nationally for eleven-year-olds, although results have fallen slightly in 2001. Both mathematics and science results for eleven-year-olds were close to the national average and well above similar schools in 2000. Standards in English have not risen as rapidly, largely because writing has improved slowly, and results were well below average and close to similar schools. The school's targets were met for mathematics but not for English in 2000 and the higher targets in 2001 proved too challenging. The lower standard in writing of eleven-year-olds is in sharp contrast to the considerable improvements for seven-year-olds, where results in 2000 were above average and well above similar schools. Reading and mathematics results were below average but above similar schools. Writing and mathematics results have improved in 2001 while reading has remained unchanged. Teacher assessments for science were below average for the proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected for their age in 2000.

Staff illness has limited the progress made by children in reception this year, although the situation has now been remedied. As a consequence most children are unlikely to reach standards expected by the time they enter Year 1, their language skills being particularly weak. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Writing is a strength and virtually all pupils achieve standards expected by the age of seven, in contrast to reading and mathematics where standards are below expectations overall. Progress is inconsistent at Key Stage 2. Many pupils achieve well across Key Stage 2 but several are underachieving in Year 3 because staff changes this year. Attainment is well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. Pupils are making good progress in the development of ICT skills throughout the school. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are good. They are usually interested in activities and lessons, want to do well and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory, contributing to a calm and orderly environment; however, a significant minority of younger pupils are restless and inattentive, slowing their learning and that of others at times.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Many grow in confidence as they get older, gain self-esteem and understand the impact of their actions on others. Relationships are good and the pupils co-operate well with each other when working in small groups.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. Parents do not always give reasons for absence or reasons given are unacceptable. Punctuality has improved but several pupils arrive regularly late for school.

Staff strive successfully to promote positive learning habits and good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good, but have not yet succeeded in raising attendance to average levels.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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 has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory or better in over 96 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 16 per cent. The teaching of both English and mathematics is satisfactory. Writing is being taught particularly well in Years 1 and 2, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length in most subjects. There is much high quality teaching in Years 2 and 5 where the pupils are challenged and learn new skills and ideas rapidly. Pupils respond well in these classes by working hard and taking pride in their work. High expectations of work and behaviour are features of the best teaching. In these lessons most pupils try hard, concentrate and co-operate well with each other. Where lessons are planned and prepared thoroughly, teachers identify clearly what they expect the pupils to learn. Not all planning at Key Stage 2 is of the same high quality. Where there are shortcomings, activities are poorly chosen and more able pupils insufficiently challenged. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good overall, but the children's progress has been slower this year because of long-term staff illness. The variety of programmes to support the development of literacy either in normal classes or in small withdrawal groups, particularly for the less able and pupils with special educational needs, are well taught. Support staff make a particularly effective contribution to pupils' learning. Numeracy is taught satisfactorily although number skills are not consistently developed in subjects other than mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Staff place an appropriate emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy while providing a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school. Teachers' planning is now securely based on national guidance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good, particularly at Key Stage 1 where pupils' progress benefits from the early identification of their needs and well-targeted support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is no specialist provision for these pupils and no planned opportunities for them to develop their understanding in English, although they receive mostly effective support for literacy alongside pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education makes a very effective contribution to the pupils' good moral and social development. Spiritual and cultural development are promoted satisfactorily.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and protection of the pupils are satisfactory; however, staff have not received recent child protection training.

All National Curriculum requirements are met. The provision for information and communication technology is good. A considerable number of programmes are provided to support the development of literacy and the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The school promotes healthy and safe living effectively and provides good support and guidance for all pupils. Clear procedures to promote good behaviour are consistently implemented, understood by pupils and appreciated by parents. The school has developed a good partnership with parents by working hard to keep them informed and involved in school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, ably supported by senior staff, provides a clear direction based on raising standards that builds well on the improvements made under the previous headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths, recognise what needs to be done to secure improvements and fulfil their responsibilities rigorously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The careful and systematic monitoring of teachers' work and the analysis of test data have been instrumental in improving teaching and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Funding has been used very effectively to provide high levels of teaching and non-teaching staff and to meet the school's educational priorities.

The school is very well staffed, has spacious accommodation and a good level of books and equipment. Computer resources and the library are particularly valuable and well-used resources. Planning for the school's improvement is thorough, rigorous and supported by careful financial planning. The principles of best value are applied when purchasing goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • Teachers have high expectations. • Behaviour is good and their children develop a sense of responsibility. • Staff are approachable and work closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quarter of parents would like more information about their children's progress, although over half are very pleased with the information they receive. • Roughly a quarter of parents would also like to see more extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team supports the largely favourable parental views of the school. Inspectors also judge that the school provides good information about progress, particularly in English and mathematics. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for a school of this size and type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. It was a key issue for the school at the last inspection to improve pupils' attainment in all subjects but particularly in English, mathematics and science. Standards were generally below average and the most recent National Curriculum test results for seven and eleven-year-olds had been low. The strategies introduced under the previous headteacher and built upon this year under the new head have been successful and standards are improving. National Curriculum test results are much higher, particularly at Key Stage 2, where they have risen more rapidly than nationally, although there has been a slight decline in 2001.
2. National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds improved sharply in 2000 and were much higher than at the last inspection, particularly in reading and writing. Results in writing were above average and well above similar schools, while results in reading and mathematics were below average but above similar schools. The main reason for this difference was that more pupils achieved the standard expected for their age in writing. Writing and mathematics results have improved further in 2001, but reading results are unchanged. Girls have done better than boys in reading and writing since the last inspection, while there has been no pattern in mathematics to any variation by gender. The proportion of pupils assessed by their teachers to have achieved the expected Level 2 for science in 2000 was below the national average, but a similar proportion to nationally achieved the higher Level 3. There has been a slight fall in the Level 3 figure in 2001.
3. Test results for eleven-year-olds rose from the last inspection to 2000 at a faster rate than nationally, with the exception of a sharp fall in 1998; this improvement being more marked in mathematics and science than in English. Results in mathematics and science in 2000 were close to the national average and well above similar schools, while results in English were well below average and close to similar schools. The school achieved its target for mathematics but failed to reach it in English. The main reasons for the difference between the subjects was that fewer pupils achieved the standard expected for their age in English and more achieved above the standard expected in mathematics and science. The writing component of the English test produced lower results than reading in contrast to results for seven-year-olds. Standards in 2001 have not been maintained at the 2000 level, with many fewer pupils achieving above the expected level. The school's targets have not been met in either English or mathematics in 2001. There has been a difference in results by gender since the last inspection with boys doing better than girls, but no discernible variation by ethnicity.
4. Children start in the nursery with skills that are well below average, particularly in literacy. Progress is generally good in the nursery as a result of the good teaching, well-organised provision and carefully targeted support. Staff illness has limited the progress made by children in reception this year and as a result many children will not reach the standard expected for their age in many areas of their learning by the time they enter Year 1. Standards by the end of the reception year are below average in mathematics, in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal, social and emotional development, but standards are well below average in language and literacy. By contrast, most pupils have achieved the standards expected in their creative and physical development.
5. Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 1 and make good progress as a result of good teaching and carefully targeted classroom support. By contrast progress is inconsistent at Key Stage 2. Most pupils achieve well and respond to the high quality of the teaching in Year 5 by working hard and with much interest. The pupils in this class have made good progress this year, particularly in mathematics and reading. The school's policy is for the teacher of this class to take the pupils again in Year 6. If the progress that they have made this year is maintained, test results should rise in 2002. This is in sharp contrast to the slow progress made by pupils in Year 3, where the

high proportion of pupils with special educational needs for behaviour reasons and some changes in staff have had an unsettling effect. Several pupils have not achieved the standard of work of which they are capable this year and school assessment data shows that in some cases pupils are working at a lower level than when they were in Year 2. This class needs stability in the next three years if the pupils are to achieve satisfactory standards.

6. Attainment in English is close to expected levels at Key Stage 1 but below average at Key Stage 2. This difference is because attainment in writing is well above average at Key Stage 1 and well below average at Key Stage 2. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils often make good progress in reading but attainment is below average throughout the school. One factor influencing standards in writing at Key Stage 2 is that insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English. Attainment in mathematics is below average at both key stages. Number skills develop well at Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 2, and pupils learn to apply these skills to the solution of problems. Attainment in science is close to expected levels throughout the school. Pupils' factual knowledge is satisfactory and most can undertake simple investigations and experiments, although the subsequent writing up does not always allow them to express their findings in their own words.
7. Attainment in information technology suffered at the last inspection because insufficient time was being devoted to teaching skills, and resources were inadequate. Much work has been undertaken to remedy these weaknesses. Pupils now have regular access to the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a new computer suite, with most classes having two sessions each week. Staff training has improved teachers' expertise. The school has also been able to release the ICT co-ordinator from a class teaching responsibility for part of each week to teach each class, thus ensuring that all pupils receive expert tuition. Plans are in place to extend this arrangement next year. As a result, most pupils are now achieving well and making good progress in the development of ICT skills. Standards are close to those expected nationally throughout the school, with the skills of some older pupils becoming quite sophisticated. However, pupils do not have sufficient, consistently planned opportunities in their classrooms to use their ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.
8. Attainment is close to that expected for the pupils' age at Key Stage 1 in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and religious education. Singing is particularly good throughout the school. The work seen on display in art at Key Stage 2 is above that expected nationally. Attainment is close to expectations at Key Stage 2 in design and technology, history, music and religious education, but below expectations in geography. No overall judgements are possible for history at Key Stage 1 and for physical education throughout the school because only a limited range of evidence was available.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress elsewhere in the school. Support is effective and targeted well to meet the pupils' needs, and a good range of additional programmes help to support their progress. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is not secure. An initial assessment is made of their stage of language development, but teachers do not use this information effectively when planning lessons and the school does not closely monitor the progress made by the pupils in learning English. The practice in some classrooms of these pupils working with pupils with special educational needs does not always provide them with a good model of spoken English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. This is a similar judgement to the one made in the last inspection report. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school. From the school's own survey of pupils' views and from talking to some older pupils, it is clear that they like the teachers in the school and the range of activities offered. Significant numbers arrive early to take advantage of the breakfast club held before school, and many pupils are keen to stay on for the after-school activities such as the computer clubs. In lessons, pupils are usually interested in what is being taught, want to do well and take pride in their work. When the teaching is good or better, they are keen to answer questions and become fully absorbed in the tasks set. Some good

examples were seen during the inspection of pupils concentrating and persevering with their work, even when the weather became very hot or when, in some lessons, the teaching was uninspiring.

11. Behaviour in the school is satisfactory. As at the last inspection, there is a calm and orderly learning environment throughout the school day. Parents are pleased with the standards of their children's behaviour and the improvements in discipline that have taken place over a number of years. Pupils played and behaved well in the breaks and lunchtimes observed during the inspection and no incidents of fighting were seen as they were at the last inspection. Behaviour was good or better in two-thirds of lessons seen. However, a significant minority of pupils aged between four and nine display a pattern of restless and inattentive behaviour in lessons which requires teachers to work hard to keep them focused on the class activity. This sometimes slows down the pace of learning. Occasionally and particularly when the teacher is relatively new to the school and to the class, behaviour becomes unsatisfactory because a small group of pupils fails to sit still, concentrate and follow instructions. By the time pupils are ten and eleven, they have developed higher standards of self-discipline. In the current school year there has been one permanent exclusion, of a pupil whose special needs could not be met at Whittings Hill, and no fixed period exclusions. These are better figures than at the last inspection, and reflect the persistent and mainly successful efforts of staff over a period of time to manage and improve pupils' behaviour.
12. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. It starts from a low base when children enter the school, but pupils make good progress as they get older so that by the time they leave as eleven-year-olds they have achieved sound levels of confidence, self-esteem and understanding of others. The personal, social and emotional development of four and five-year-old children is below average. Their progress in this area of learning has been held back by the changes in staff over the past year, particularly in the reception class. In the infants and juniors, pupils benefit from the consistent opportunities provided by teachers throughout the school day to develop their personal qualities. For example, pupils are encouraged to think about what makes them special and who cares for them and to undertake a wide range of responsibilities in the class. Their views are valued and they feel involved in the life and development of the school.
13. Relationships in the school are good, and contribute to pupils' good progress in their personal development. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to work in pairs and small groups, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons or in role-play exercises in history and health education. They often help each other with particular problems such as how to spell a word or how to work out a more advanced mathematical question. Older pupils help younger ones with reading and with play at lunchtime. The school's survey of pupils' views earlier this year and discussions at the school council revealed that some pupils have had concerns about bullying behaviour at lunchtime. The older school council representatives are confident that this is no longer a problem because of the continuing efforts, in which they play a part, to improve arrangements in the playground. There was no evidence during the inspection of racial or any other form of harassment.
14. Attendance rates have fluctuated over the past few years; for example they were well below average last year but above average the previous year. In the current school year they have improved to reach the below average rate reported at the last inspection. Both authorised and unauthorised absences are above the national average. A scrutiny of the registers shows that many pupils are absent for short illnesses. Parents do not always give reasons for absence and sometimes the reasons are unacceptable such as taking the day off on the child's birthday. A few parents take their children away for term-time holidays that are longer than the maximum permitted. No class had full attendance during or in the week prior to the inspection. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection, when a rather casual start to the school day and to lessons was reported. Most pupils now arrive at school on time and most lessons start promptly. However, there is still a small but significant number of pupils who arrive late. Overall, pupils' unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality has a negative effect on the progress they make and the standards they achieve.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 16 per cent. There

is much high quality teaching in Years 2 and 5 where the pupils are challenged and learn new skills and ideas rapidly. The pupils respond well in these year groups, by working hard and taking pride in their work.

16. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are used effectively to support teachers' planning. Speaking skills are developed from the earliest age, particularly when teachers probe pupils' understanding through questioning and require them to respond in detail rather than in single-word answers. The features of the literacy hour are secure in all classes. Pupils understand the structure to lessons, such as when they are expected to work by themselves. Basic skills of understanding letter sounds are taught well. Pupils' reading skills are promoted and extended in group reading activities and by support from volunteers from the local community. Writing is taught well at Key Stage 1 and progress is good, but more could be done to extend pupils' writing at Key Stage 2 where progress is much slower. The features of the daily mathematics lesson have been successfully introduced in all classes. The development of mental arithmetic skills is fostered through a variety of interesting activities. Class teaching is clear, but subsequent activities are not always sufficiently challenging for the more able. Review sessions at the end of both literacy and numeracy lessons are used well to assess the progress made, extend pupils further and set the scene for future lessons.
17. Teaching of the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes is generally good, although staff illness this year has limited the progress made by reception children. A strength of the teaching is the teamwork of teachers, nursery officers and classroom assistants. Observations and assessment are an integral part of teaching and contribute to the progress children make. One shortcoming, however, is that tasks set for children in the reception class are not consistently pitched at a variety of levels to match the various levels of attainment.
18. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. The more effective planning clearly identifies what it is that pupils are expected to learn. Teaching and activities are pitched at a variety of levels based on an evaluation of the pupils' previous understanding. The best lessons then build systematically on what has been learnt before and conclude with a review of the pupils' success in meeting the learning intentions. The pupils' work is usually carefully marked, praise is given and comments are often effusive; however, these do not always provide advice on how work might be improved.
19. High expectations of work and behaviour coupled with challenge for all pupils are features of much of the best teaching. These characteristics were seen to good effect in a well taught Year 2 literacy lesson, where routines and procedures had been well established so that most pupils worked independently and responded well by concentrating and trying hard. The work on comparing books by different authors was provided at three different levels, extending the learning of all pupils effectively. The teacher's high expectations in a Year 5 religious education lesson engaged the pupils, and the interesting activities motivated the pupils well as they examined the moral implications of codes of conduct. Good co-operation in lively discussions when working in small groups supported and extended learning well. The same class were challenged and extended very effectively in a mathematics lesson involving percentages. Pupils were again involved in all aspects of the lesson ensuring that they gained confidence and learnt rapidly. Teachers are generally positive and encouraging of their pupils, working hard to improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Most pupils respond well and are keen to succeed. The difficult topic of the moral issues surrounding drugs and medicine was handled well by the teacher who controlled the Year 3 class well and elicited some very mature responses from the pupils.
20. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mostly good. Support staff use the individual programmes written for pupils with special educational needs well, so that they are clear about their needs, assess progress and provide feedback to teachers. Pupils learning English as an additional language are often supported in the same small groups. While this gives them valuable individual attention it does not always meet their specific language needs. The help given by classroom assistants, either in the normal class or when pupils are withdrawn for specialist programmes, is effective and plays an important part in the progress made by these pupils. Pupils get support for understanding as well as the development of skills. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson support staff helped pupils with special needs both to understand the

process involved in making an electrical circuit and to write their findings. In most classes behavioural problems are managed well by teachers using the school's code of behaviour and specific targets for individual pupils.

21. There are very few major weaknesses in teaching, although some lessons with many good features are less effective because of some shortcomings. There are occasions when the behaviour of some pupils is not controlled effectively and their learning and that of others in the class suffers as a result. Planning is not of a consistently high quality. In a small number of lessons learning intentions are unclear and activities poorly chosen. This is often coupled with insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils who as a consequence are not stretched and can become bored and restless. If pupils are to progress sufficiently from their low starting point on entry to reach nationally expected standards by the age of eleven these weaknesses need to be eliminated and good teaching become more consistently evident in all classes.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils are good and much improved since the previous inspection when there was insufficient coverage of subjects such as information technology, design and technology, geography and religious education. The arrangements for teaching ICT have improved significantly and are now good. Teachers are able to involve pupils more productively because of the use of the ICT suite. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. The school has successfully tackled the shortcomings in planning identified in the previous report by largely basing its schemes of work for the foundation subjects on national guidance and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. There is now much greater focus on what the pupils are expected to learn in individual subjects. The curriculum now builds more progressively through the school, although the time available for history, geography and design and technology remains below that in most schools.
23. The curriculum for the nursery and reception classes is planned following the national guidance for children of this age, and covers all areas of learning. There is considerable opportunity for pupils to learn through structured play and follow their own interests and choices. Some arrangements are in place for the curriculum of pupils who stay all day in the nursery but these are in need of further development. Early literacy is effectively integrated in nursery activities although numeracy is less evident. The learning objectives of activities are not always clear in the daily planning, which results in insufficient difference in objectives for different levels of attainment. As the children get older more formal learning is introduced and elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used in the reception class. However, the children are at an early stage in their overall development and approach and the impact of this has yet to be seen in the achievements and behaviour of the reception children. Good attention is given to the children's personal and social development.
24. Much activity is targeted at improving important skills and supporting the pupils' personal development. The school has successfully adopted the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy to support the teaching of English and mathematics. Standards in reading at both key stages and writing at Key Stage 1 have improved, although more opportunities need to be provided for pupils at Key Stage 2 to extend their writing in English and through other subjects. There are good opportunities for exploration and creativity in art in Key Stage 2.
25. Staff work successfully to ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum the school provides. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school, as considerable well-targeted support is available, but is most effective at Key Stage 1 where early intervention is having a beneficial impact on attainment. There are too many pupils at the top of the school whose needs have not been met sufficiently in the past for them to be no longer in need of additional help. Individual education plans identify specific targets, particularly in

literacy. The considerable number of programmes to support learning are carefully planned and classroom assistants are given responsibility for groups of pupils so they get to know them well. Pupils receive good support from classroom assistants within classes as well as in small groups, withdrawn from classes for additional literacy support or learning of social skills. This support is very valuable, although the pupils withdrawn sometimes miss lessons in some subjects. Currently, there is no specialist provision for pupils with English as an additional language and their needs are not identified as distinct from special educational needs. These pupils receive a range of support for literacy alongside pupils with special needs, although there are no planned opportunities for them to develop their understanding in English.

26. The good range of extra-curricular activities broadens the experience of those pupils who participate. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their musical skills in the choir, to develop computer skills or to improve their artistic skills. The school runs several sports clubs, which enable members to develop their social and physical skills. Visits by pupils and visitors to the school extend the pupils' experiences. The local community makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A residential trip is undertaken in Year 5 and 6 to support the development of pupils' social skills. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PHSE) which includes sex education and a drugs awareness programme. The lessons observed during the inspection made a very good contribution to the pupils' moral and social development. The emphasis on personal development, which includes encouraging pupils to work independently in groups and pairs and to take responsibility as monitors and school council members, prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Satisfactory links have been established with local high schools, which send pupils to the school for work experience. The ethos of the school encourages inclusion. The good experiences of music and art enjoyed by the pupils enhance their cultural development. However, the provision for multi-cultural development is limited. The school attempts to reflect diversity of cultures in art and displays, although there are some occasions when opportunities are lost to celebrate the richness and diversity amongst the pupils and of the wider society. Assemblies encourage pupils to think about moral and social issues. As a result, the provision for the pupils' personal development is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. As reported at the last inspection pupils feel safe and secure in the school. Teachers and senior staff know the backgrounds of individual pupils well, including those who are refugees, and work closely with parents and carers to support their best interests. Parents are pleased with the care that is provided for their children and with the improvements that have been made to the security of the school. The school promotes healthy and safe living very effectively through its involvement in the Barnet Healthy Schools Scheme and its use of the "Project Charlie" scheme of work, which covers drugs education. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils at lunchtime and for the collection of pupils at the end of the school day are good. There is a full complement of experienced mealtime supervisors who are responsible for individual classes and have regular meetings with the headteacher to share ideas and concerns. The school's health and safety policy has been reviewed recently and provides good guidance on procedures, which are carried out satisfactorily by staff including the site manager and first-aiders. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection and is highly experienced and qualified in this area. However, there has been no training for staff this school year on child protection issues, the guidance in the staff handbook is minimal and the policy is out of date. The headteacher has appropriate plans to update staff knowledge and understanding of procedures at the start of next term. Overall, the school's arrangements to ensure the health, safety, welfare and protection of pupils are satisfactory.
28. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are good; however, the school's measures have not yet succeeded in ensuring that pupils' attendance rates reach at least average levels. Teachers and office staff maintain registers to a consistently high standard, ensuring that reasons for absence or lateness are followed up and clearly marked. Attendance and punctuality have improved over the last year with the introduction of reward schemes. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service to highlight the importance of regular attendance and punctuality to

individual parents, but it could do more to remind parents of their responsibilities in the weekly newsletter. The school could also make clear to parents and pupils the link between unsatisfactory attendance and low standards.

29. The school's systems for monitoring and promoting behaviour are mostly good. Teachers consistently implement the clear and effective procedures, rules, rewards and sanctions. These are fully understood by pupils. Parents are particularly pleased with the way in which the use of praise, stickers and weekly awards motivates their children. Pupils confirm that these help them to behave well and to treat each other with respect. The school has successfully introduced several measures in response to concerns about behaviour at lunchtimes. The headteacher works very effectively with pupils, parents and mealtime supervisors to reduce the incidence of bullying. The promotion of racial harmony, whilst implicit in much of the school's work, has a relatively low profile. The school has a useful link with a local Pupil Referral Unit, which has provided support for a group of pupils with poor social skills. However, this work has not been consistently followed through into the classroom where the pupils concerned have not had the same class teacher throughout the year to maintain consistency.
30. Good procedures are in place to measure the progress made by pupils as they move through school. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Initial assessments of the children entering reception classes are carried out and reviewed at the end of the year to monitor their progress. Test results for English, mathematics and science are analysed and teachers are kept informed about the results of formal and optional tests. Teachers informally assess progress in other subjects. They use information well to identify where changes in planning may be needed, to make forecasts and set targets for pupils' learning. Teachers use a common format for assessing progress. Lesson plans provide opportunity for ongoing comment. Portfolios of work are assessed against National Curriculum levels to ensure consistency. The school's assessment data is being computerised to enable a more detailed analysis of progress to be undertaken.
31. The school provides good support and guidance for the pupils. Pupils and parents are involved in discussing, setting and reviewing targets, which are published in the pupils' annual reports. A generous number of senior staff, classroom assistants and parent and volunteer helpers provide effective help to pupils in lessons. Pupils who are falling behind in literacy or numeracy have access to a variety of schemes, and after-school revision classes are provided for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils before their National Curriculum tests. Pupils are confident that they can go to any adult in the school for help, from the headteacher to a mealtime supervisor. Their personal development is well supported by teachers' skilful use of circle time, when pupils are encouraged to share thoughts and feelings, and by very good PSHE lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported on a daily basis and their progress is effectively monitored. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped to achieve clearly defined targets, indicated in their individual education plans. Additional tests are sometimes given to assess specific needs. There are regular reviews to ensure that pupils receive effective support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Parents express a good level of satisfaction with the school. A higher percentage of parents than at the last inspection completed the questionnaire and over 90 per cent of replies were positive about most aspects of the school. These favourable views were reflected in the pre-inspection meeting with parents and in the school's own survey carried out earlier in the year. One of the main concerns raised by parents in both surveys is the range of activities offered outside lessons, with a significant number of parents wishing to see more competitive sports and games. The inspection team found that the range of extra-curricular activities is good for a school of this size and type.
33. The school's links with parents are good, as was reported at the last inspection. Parents at the meeting with inspectors commented that the current headteacher is developing the partnership further by implementing a very effective 'open door' policy. The approachability of senior staff and class teachers is one of the features parents like most about the school. Parents and carers have

very good opportunities, especially in the classes for three to seven-year-olds, to see teachers and talk about their children's progress at the start and end of every school day. There is very good attendance at the termly consultation evenings. Parents are invited to the Friday assembly when their child is given the 'Pupil of the Week' award, and the school has held meetings, with crèche facilities, on literacy, numeracy, drugs education, the end of key stage tests and secondary transfer. Parents also receive termly letters outlining the topics their children will be studying and the homework they are expected to do. Weekly newsletters provide useful information about school life, and the prospectus and governors' annual report are very informative about all the required aspects.

34. Over half of parents responding to the questionnaire were very pleased with the information they receive about the child's progress but nearly a quarter were not. Inspectors found that the annual reports provide very good information about pupils' achievements and targets in literacy and numeracy, good information about pupils' personal development and behaviour, and sound information in other subjects. Because of staff reports were not issued in the spring term for children who started reception in the autumn term, as in the older classes. They were due to be issued shortly after the inspection, based on the same good format as in the rest of the school. The school is planning to issue additional short reports on pupils' progress in the summer and autumn terms.
35. Parents have a good involvement with the work of the school. This has a beneficial impact on the provision of resources and support for school activities, but is not so effective in contributing to pupils' learning at home. There is a very active Friends of Whiting Hill Association which raises considerable sums of money that fund large projects such as curtains for the halls and equipment for the playgrounds. Parent helpers make a valuable contribution to work in classrooms and to activities such as swimming, cookery, Christmas events and repainting the library area. The school makes good efforts at consultation evenings to involve parents in discussing and reviewing their child's targets in literacy and numeracy. Parents also have the opportunity to submit in writing their own views about their child's strengths and weaknesses and their comments on homework. Parental support for their children's learning at home, such as reading, is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. At the time of the last inspection standards were low and much needed to be done to improve the school. The improvements made since then are a testament to the leadership and management of senior staff and governors. The foundations for sustained improvement were laid by the previous headteacher and have been built upon by the current head. The deputy headteacher fulfils an important role well and has provided valuable continuity during the change of headteacher. The commitment to raise standards is shared by all associated with the school and is articulated in the actions taken to achieve the school's aims. Resources have been directed effectively towards maintaining high levels of both teaching and non-teaching staff, to support the high proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs.
37. A major factor in helping the school to move forward is the emphasis placed on monitoring and evaluation, which is now good, and the rigour with which it is carried out. Staff with management responsibilities are appropriately involved and external expertise and guidance used effectively. The procedures for monitoring teaching in the core subjects are thorough and the result is a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. The amount and variety of data collected to track pupils' progress has increased, and is fed back well into curriculum planning and used to establish targets.
38. The expectations placed upon staff with management responsibilities are clear and these roles are fulfilled well. For example, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by staff working effectively as a team. Regular meetings are held to exchange information and review pupils' progress; classroom assistants are given suitable direction and their opinions are valued.
39. The role of the governing body has developed considerably in the last 18 months under the astute

leadership of a new chairman and with the support of committed governors, several of whom are new in post. The expertise available within the governing body has improved, enabling governors to undertake their responsibilities effectively. Governors are suitably involved in helping to establish the future direction of the school and in monitoring and evaluating progress made. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and recognise what needs to be done to raise standards further.

40. Planning for the school's improvement is rigorous, and involves staff and governors in a careful review of past achievements. This process is translated into a comprehensive development plan, covering all areas of the school's work. The cost of developments and the implications for staff training are identified, but it is not always clear where the school's major priorities lie. Financial planning is thorough and the principles of best value are applied when purchasing goods and services. Specific grants, such as those provided for staff training and for pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately. An appropriate financial balance is carried forward to cover emergencies unlike at the last inspection where this figure was judged to be inadequate.
41. The school benefits from a high level of funding, which has been used very effectively to meet its main priorities. The school is very well staffed for its size, although it has experienced a high turnover of staff in recent years and some extended staff illness, which has had a particularly detrimental effect in reception. Class sizes are average. In addition the school is able to have the deputy head and special needs co-ordinator without responsibility for a specific class, teaching in a support role where necessary. Staff expertise is used well. The ICT co-ordinator is released for part of the week to teach each class for one hour in the computer room. There are plans to extend this arrangement next year. Music is taught by a part-time specialist teacher and swimming by an instructor. Arrangements are good for the professional development of staff and for the induction of those new to the school or to the profession. Pupils also benefit from the good support provided by the high number of well-trained classroom assistants.
42. The reduction in pupil numbers and the school's redesignation as one form entry (because pupil numbers have fallen in the area) have resulted in very spacious accommodation and a good quantity of learning resources. Spare rooms have been used creatively as they have become available to provide a computer suite, an attractive library and specialist rooms for special needs pupils. The computer suite is having a significant impact on raising the pupils' skill levels, but insufficient use is being made of other computers available in each classroom. The library is a valuable and well used resource, which is stocked with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. A wide selection of fiction books is also readily accessible in classrooms. The covered swimming pool is used throughout the year to provide pupils with specialist tuition from a swimming instructor. High quality displays in classrooms and corridors provide a stimulating learning environment and are used well to celebrate the pupils' achievements.
43. The school has largely overcome the weaknesses that were previously impeding the pupils' progress, but standards still need to rise further. The improvements to the way in which the school is managed and the focus provided by the headteacher, senior staff and governors place the school in a strong position to sustain recent improvements and to deal with the challenges that still remain.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. To build on the good progress made since the last inspection and to raise standards further, the school should:
- 1) Raise attainment in English (as identified by the school in its development plan) and mathematics by: *(paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 6, 58, 59, 61, 62, 66 and 67)*
 - providing further opportunities for extended writing and in particular developing writing across all subjects;
 - making demands and structures of writing clear to pupils and providing examples as clarification;
 - developing a range of strategies that support pupils' writing skills before they become independent writers and ensuring a consistent approach to monitoring and target setting for writing;
 - providing a consistent challenge for the more able pupils in English, mathematics and science;
 - ensuring that the learning intentions for each section of numeracy lessons are clear and specific.
 - 2) Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality by: *(paragraphs 14 and 28)*
 - reminding parents frequently about their responsibilities for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time;
 - establishing and making clear to pupils and parents the link between unsatisfactory attendance and low standards of attainment.
 - 3) Establish programmes to support the particular language needs of bilingual pupils. *(paragraphs 9, 20, 25 and 64)*

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

45. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan.
- Develop and implement a policy and programmes for gifted and talented pupils.
 - Ensure that a regular programme for child protection training is introduced.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	14	48	32	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	31	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	83

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	26

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.3	School data	1.1
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	11	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	18	17
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	25	28	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (68)	88 (82)	84 (71)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	25	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (76)	84 (68)	84 (74)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	20	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	12
	Girls	12	16	17
	Total	22	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (63)	85 (66)	85 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	13	15	15
	Total	23	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (49)	74 (61)	79 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	130
Any other minority ethnic group	17

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.3
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	201

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31.0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	771992
Total expenditure	765250
Expenditure per pupil	2990
Balance brought forward from previous year	30201
Balance carried forward to next year	36943

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	222
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	41	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	59	9	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	48	11	5	7
The teaching is good.	55	34	7	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	25	23	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	41	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	43	23	0	7

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

46. Many children enter the nursery with weak skills particularly in literacy and numeracy, although there are a few high attainers. Staff absence has hindered progress this year, although by the time of the inspection this problem had been resolved and most children were making good progress. This was largely as a result of good teaching in all areas of learning and well-focused support from all adults. The progress of reception children has been particularly affected, and as a consequence standards have suffered. These children are soon to start in Year 1, with the majority not having reached many of the early learning goals for children of their age. Most children have achieved expected standards in both their physical and creative development. Standards are below expectations in the pupils' mathematical development, their personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, while standards are well below expected levels in language and literacy.

Personal, social and emotional development

47. Children are frequently encouraged by all adults to interact and play together with other children and to develop their own independence. For example, nursery children play well together in the water tray, sharing equipment and enjoying the bubbles they create. They have made good progress in playing and relating to other children and in making choices about activities. They know the routines of the nursery and tidy up efficiently, knowing where everything goes. They confidently go to other rooms to collect the milk explaining to adults what they are doing. Children show a good level of independence as they move sensibly from one activity to another. Some children do not settle in large groups and are restless listening to a story.
48. Reception children have made progress in working and playing together. For example, they cooperate to follow each other in a game they make up in the outside area. In the classroom they learn to take turns in putting forward their ideas. Good teaching and models of the best way to respond in different circumstances have an impact on their behaviour. However, much behaviour is still immature. Staff have to use a variety of strategies to gain the children's attention and to line up. Many children quickly become fidgety and in spite of reminders by teachers several do not follow class conventions such as putting their hand up to speak. Some are unable to work together at a computer and need attention from the teacher to remain on task.

Communication, language and literacy

49. Many children start in the nursery with poor speaking and listening skills. Adults listen attentively to the children, showing them that they value their efforts at communicating. A good example of this is milk and fruit time, when adults ask children for their news and this becomes a conversation. Speaking and listening skills are generally below average, with children giving explanations in only very simple terms. The teaching of literacy is good in the nursery. Most children listen well to stories, although a few are not yet clear whether or not to interrupt. They learn to recognise rhyming words and predict what will happen next in a story. A few have a good understanding of the moral of a story. Staff encourage the children to think of themselves as readers and writers. A travel agency play area is equipped with brochures, notepaper and other office items, which the children use to role-play and increase their language skills. Some show good knowledge of library skills, checking books out with a card and against a computer for returning. More formal writing skills are encouraged well and most children try to write their names. Good teaching helps children to learn and apply initial sounds on the computer.
50. Reception children listen more carefully and are keen to answer questions. They are beginning to

express themselves more clearly and are at an early stage of learning to read and write. Elements of the literacy framework are used well to teach reading and writing. Children gain an understanding of sounds and many use these to write about the foods they have drawn but need help to complete words. A few make use of word lists to help them. Almost half the class form letters correctly, but others use capitals or do not attempt to write. Pupils begin to understand the importance of order by reading and discussing the contents page of a big book. The children are starting to read simple words and higher-attaining children read stories quite well. Lower-attaining children are starting to use their knowledge of sounds to help them to read as well as using the pictures.

Mathematical development

51. Children are encouraged by their teachers to see mathematics all around them and as part of their daily lives. For example, they sing songs in the nursery about the days of the week. The teacher introduces children to the idea of clockwise and anti-clockwise at milk time, but opportunities for counting and number are less evident in the daily routines. There is wide variation in attainment. Some children do not know how old they are, while others know that three red dots have the same value as three orange ones and one child counted accurately on a peg-board up to twenty-four.
52. Reception children make satisfactory progress as a result of the recent consistency in teaching. They learn to count, order numbers, make number patterns and use the symbols plus and minus. Good teaching in one session using a variety of resources and change of activities kept the children motivated and interested. Children count in tens from a number square, then find ten more than a given number. They increase their understanding of money, for example recognising coins as a result of a dice rolling game.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. Adults in the nursery are sensitive to the children's needs and how to get them interested in activities. Children expand their knowledge in response to the many activities offered and the good teaching of the adults. For example, a sticking exercise encouraged children to talk about the stripes on a tiger and to see why this animal is different from a lion. Children playing with bubbles had their attention drawn to the colours in the bubble frame and to the shape and bounce of the bubbles.
54. Children have good access to computers in the nursery. One child was observed using her knowledge of initial sounds of words to help her find a dinosaur. This good experience is continued in the reception class where children are taught in the computer suite. They learn to load software, and most can use a mouse to manipulate shapes on the screen. Some children explore the software confidently, discovering how to use some of the buttons to draw circles, ellipses and jigsaw patterns. They also add text to their work.
55. Children's knowledge and understanding of the activities they do are variable. For example, a group making rubbings with crayons in the outside space were very proficient at the task but showed little understanding of the fact that the knobbly pattern was caused by the surface underneath. By contrast, a girl painting the shed with water was sure that the darker colour when the wood was wet would not remain once it had dried.

Physical development

56. Nursery children have good access to the outdoor play areas which contributes to their development of physical skills. This outside space is managed well by adults to provide exercise, develop skills and encourage social co-operation. Children have access to a good range of activities and resources, including the use of wheeled vehicles, a sand-pit, a play tent, racquets and balls and musical instruments. Low-level climbing equipment is arranged so that children can climb, balance and jump down, but there is no large climbing equipment to enable children to increase these skills. Pupils do forward rolls, ride bikes skilfully, throw and hit a ball using a

racquet. They use space well. Reception children use the same space and resources for extended playtime outside but do not have direct access from their classroom. Children use tools such as paint brushes and crayons with good control.

Creative development

57. Good provision is made for creative play. A travel agent corner in the nursery enables children to re-enact office life. Children make rubbings in the classroom where the teacher describes the texture of each object and its effect on the rubbing. They are then encouraged to go and find their own and to explain where they found it. Outside play resources encouraged one group of reception children to play at being musicians, which included singing practice and creating a game of following a leader.
58. Reception children enjoy the singing sessions, which they share with Key Stage 1 pupils. On these occasions they join in and repeat lines and actions. Many know a good number of songs by heart. In a music lesson they learned to sing high and low notes and to use percussion instruments, although not all were able to handle these carefully.

ENGLISH

59. Standards in English have improved steadily since the previous inspection. More pupils now achieve nationally expected standards by the ages of seven and eleven. Results in the 2000 national tests in writing for seven-year-olds were above average and well above the average of similar schools, whereas results in reading were below the national average but above the average for pupils in similar schools. The difference was largely because higher-attaining pupils did better in writing than in reading. There has been little change in the 2001 results for reading but further improvement in writing. Observation of pupils in lessons, looking at their work, and hearing them read shows that they achieve below the nationally expected levels in reading but well above in writing.
60. Test results for eleven-year-olds in English in 2000 were well below the national average but close to results in similar schools. There has been a fall in the 2001 results. Two-thirds of pupils have achieved the standard expected for their age but none above this. By contrast to results at seven, writing was the weaker aspect of these results and has been for some time. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development. Inspection evidence at Key Stage 2, based on a wider range of literacy tasks than the tests, indicates that attainment in reading is below national expectations but in writing, it is still well below.
61. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils can listen with sustained concentration. They listen well to their teachers and to each other, respond to questions and retell stories in shared reading and writing sessions. They listen attentively to their teachers and each other. Most pupils make contributions to lessons and answer their teachers' questions readily and with enthusiasm.
62. Attainment in reading is below average by the end of Key Stage 1. The majority of the pupils read simple texts using their knowledge of letter sounds but only a few read with fluency and expression. Higher attainers' understanding of what they read is good but for the rest it is weak. The majority can identify main characters and settings in stories, although most pupils cannot express their opinions about the main events or ideas in stories. Only higher-attaining pupils have developed library skills that are appropriate for their age by the end of Year 2. Pupils improve their reading at Key Stage 2 through a range of intensive support. This has made a particular impact in Year 6 where over two-thirds of pupils achieve standards expected for their age. All pupils contribute with enjoyment to the whole class reading. They enjoy reading stories, poetry and information books. Higher attainers read accurately, independently and fluently, and can express opinions about the books they read. However, most pupils, including the higher attainers in Year 6, have not developed skills of prediction, inference or deduction. They have satisfactory library skills and can find information from non-fiction books.
63. Given the limitations of the pupils' skills on entry to the school they make very good progress in

writing at Key Stage 1 where standards are well above average. The most able seven-year-olds can plan and write at length with sustained ideas. Pupils can write for different purposes ranging from stories and diaries to letters. Basic skills of writing are well established for almost all in the current Year 2. The pupils use a sequence of sentences, which are grammatically correct. They have developed a clear sense of punctuation. Standards in spelling and handwriting are good. The pupils take pride in their work, which is presented well. In contrast, standards in writing in the current Year 6 are low. The school has identified writing as an area for development but opportunities for extended writing are limited. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn to write book reviews, letters, diaries, stories, persuasive writing and news reports. However, few Year 6 pupils write at length sustaining their ideas. They produce mainly short pieces of writing, which are often structured comprehension tasks. Standards of handwriting are unsatisfactory with few having developed a joined-up style, although work is presented neatly.

64. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is consistently good or better in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. The literacy hour is well established. Teachers in Key Stage 1 in particular have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They effectively build on pupils' previous learning and help them to consolidate what they know. For example, in a lesson in Year 2, the teacher revised the pupils' knowledge and understanding of synonyms through a matching game encouraging pupils to use what they already knew. Teachers generally use questions well to extend pupils' thinking and enthuse them. Pupils respond with interest and are eager to contribute to lessons. This was observed to good effect in a Year 5 lesson on persuasive writing, where pupils came up with a range of emotive words such as 'terrified', 'fear', 'horrified', 'running out' in response to skilful questioning. Another feature of good lessons is the way teachers move pupils from one task to the next with a brisk pace. Consequently pupils settle quickly, concentrate and work well together in pairs and small groups. The relative weaknesses of the satisfactory lessons include teachers' lack of skills in getting responses from many pupils, which leads to low level of pupils' participation.
65. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans with clear targets, which are followed carefully, and this results in good support which is well focused. The classroom assistants give pupils in Year 3 and 4 opportunities to succeed in reading through a systematic approach of additional literacy support. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 also receive additional support to improve their language skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. In many classes the pupils learning English as an additional language are supported alongside pupils with special educational needs, who do not provide them good models of English.
66. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection. The systematic monitoring of teachers' planning and their lessons and the use of test data to evaluate progress have helped to improve teaching and standards. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. This is having a beneficial impact on pupils' standards in both key stages, but more so in Key Stage 1. Teachers use other subjects to extend the pupils' vocabulary and reading skills but insufficient opportunities are provided to develop writing elsewhere. Writing remains a major weakness at Key Stage 2 and remains, quite rightly, a major focus for the work of the school.

MATHEMATICS

67. Standards in mathematics have improved considerably since the last inspection. National Curriculum test results in particular are much higher. Test results for seven-year-olds improved considerably in 2000 and although below average they were above results of similar schools. There has been a further slight improvement in 2001, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving above the expected Level 2. Results for eleven-year-olds also improved considerably in 2000 and met the school's target. Results were close to the national average but well above results in similar schools. There has been a fall in 2001, with fewer pupils reaching the expected Level 4, and the school's target has not been met.
68. Pupils achieve as expected in Years 1 and 2 from a low base on entry. Most make satisfactory progress in the development of mathematical skills and in their application to the solution of

problems. Several pupils have not reached the expected level by the age of seven, although a significant proportion are working above this level. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but standards are slightly below average overall. Most pupils achieve as expected at Key Stage 2 and teaching is satisfactory, although the picture here is inconsistent. For example, pupils in Year 5 make very good progress as a result of much high quality teaching. By contrast many pupils are underachieving in Year 3 and have made slow progress this year. Standards in the current Year 6 are well below average, a fall from last year, largely because fewer pupils in this class are working at the expected level and very few above it. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets in mathematics throughout the school, although the support that they receive has a greater impact in Years 1 and 2 than at Key Stage 2.

69. The structure of the daily mathematics lesson is in place in all classes, but is used more effectively in some classes than others. Mental arithmetic sessions at the start of each lesson are particularly effective and often lead into the main teaching activity. Teachers use a good variety of activities to sharpen the pupils' recall and to make these sessions lively, interesting and challenging. As a result, pupils develop secure number skills and confidence when calculating. Pupils in Year 1 were required to use their knowledge of place value to add on one or ten to a number, while Year 2 pupils developed a sharper recall of addition facts to 20. Year 4 pupils chanted adding on in halves and then tenths as preparation to work on decimals and pupils in Year 5 calculated percentages of whole numbers mentally.
70. The teaching of the main part of each lesson usually has clear objectives for what the pupils are to learn, although this aspect is the weakest feature of some teaching. Assessment procedures are thorough. The information is used well by most teachers to adapt their teaching and to provide tasks that extend all pupils; however, higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently extended and learning can be slow for these pupils when tasks are not selected to challenge and extend their thinking. Most teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to consolidate their learning and to apply their skills through solving problems and undertaking short investigations. As a result pupils learn how to interpret questions and select the appropriate mathematics needed when faced with a problem to be solved. The main focus is on the development of number skills, although pupils also learn about the properties of shapes such as their symmetries and by Year 6 most can calculate areas and perimeters of simple shapes and the size of missing angles. Pupils draw and interpret graphs, plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants, solve simple equations and can identify the probabilities of single events.
71. Where sessions at the end of each lesson are carefully planned, good consolidation of learning takes place and teachers can evaluate the pupils' success in meeting the lesson's aims. Teachers often use these sessions to extend learning and to challenge the pupils' understanding. For example, a complex problem was employed in a Year 2 lesson to emphasise the need to select the operations to be used when solving problems. The pupils were thoroughly absorbed by this task and many applied their number skills well and were able to describe effective strategies for the problem's solution. Similarly in a Year 4 lesson the teacher required the pupils to think about how to order numbers where two decimal places were used so that most pupils clarified their understanding of the significance of each digit.
72. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards are much higher. The monitoring of teaching and the evaluation of test data have had a beneficial effect on pupils' progress and their subsequent attainment. There remain areas to be tackled if standards are to continue to improve and teaching is to become of a consistently high quality. Monitoring should now focus on ensuring that all teachers identify clearly the learning objectives for each section of their lessons, and that higher-attaining pupils are more consistently challenged by tasks and activities and teaching is adapted to meet their needs.

SCIENCE

73. Test results in science have improved since the last inspection. In the assessments for seven-year-olds in 2000 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was below the national average, whereas the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was close to the national average. Assessments for 2001 show a slight drop in the percentage achieving Level 3. National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were close to the national average and well above results in similar schools. There has been a fall in results in 2001 largely because fewer pupils have achieved standards above the nationally expected Level 4.
74. While inspection findings broadly confirm the assessments at Key Stage 1, the standard reached by most pupils in some areas of learning, such as their work on electricity, is at least as expected for their age. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1, although pupils' learning is held back at times by weaknesses in literacy. Key Stage 1 pupils achieve appropriately and make steady progress. For example, in Year 1 they find out about the growth of different animals by sequencing and comparing the development of frogs, hens and children. They decide which materials are suitable for hot and cold countries and classify objects into magnetic and non-magnetic sets. Investigations begin into the source of light. Considerable progress has been made in the pupils' ability to record their findings, so that most are able to write with more confidence as they record, for example, what they have found out about sounds. This early understanding and approach is soundly built upon so by the end of the key stage pupils are able to investigate the process of electricity in some depth. They look at the uses of electricity and the associated dangers and one pupil could explain why there are no electric sockets in bathrooms. Most pupils can put their understanding of the flow of electricity to good use when building an electrical circuit to light a bulb. Teachers' questions at the end of the lesson check understanding and reinforce learning. For example, Year 2 pupils worked in groups to find out for themselves that a break in the circuit meant that the bulb would not light and for higher-attainers to see that the metal link between the batteries in the holder is part of the circuit. Probing questions helped the pupils to understand and explain the process, and they gradually adopted scientific vocabulary such as 'power' and 'circuit'.
75. Inspection evidence supports the test results for pupils at Key Stage 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils achieve appropriately but progress throughout the key stage is variable. There is evidence from the work produced during the year that investigative work is at the heart of the approach in most classes. Pupils' work shows that they have regular opportunities to engage in practical work and to carry out investigations and experiments. For example, Year 4 pupils make predictions, construct graphs of results and draw diagrams of methods used in their practical work. Pupils have a secure factual knowledge of the areas that they have studied by Year 6. They can define and describe processes and write out methods for experiments. However, their learning is limited because the worksheets they use require simple answers, with no evaluations of their investigations or opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to be challenged. In general, lessons are well planned, although occasionally this planning is not followed through so learning is not consolidated. For example, Year 6 pupils took part in an interesting investigation into the melting rates of different chocolates, they observed carefully, remembered how long it took the chocolates to reach various degrees of melt but were not given the opportunity to compare their results, discuss different conditions and make conclusions.
76. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and as a result their learning develops well. Classroom assistants are well briefed to support pupils. For example, in one lesson the support teacher took a group to the library to find better resources so that pupils could research the habitats of the cockroach they were studying.
77. The monitoring of planning and teaching has enabled a clear picture of strengths to be established. An appropriate action plan has been prepared for the subject's development. Higher-attaining pupils now need to be more consistently challenged at Key Stage 2 and although teachers usually mark work in science books and folders they do not consistently indicate how pupils might improve or develop their work.

ART AND DESIGN

78. Pupils' attainment by the age of both seven and eleven is in line with national expectations. Pupils' skills develop well and as a result some aspects of the art and design work of the older pupils are good.
79. Pupils have the opportunity to use a variety of techniques and media. For instance, Year 2 pupils have made murals from decorated tiles to represent the school's swimming pool. Year 4 pupils have tried the tie-dye technique, and Year 5 produced marbled backgrounds for displaying poems. Pupils have good opportunities to work with colour, such as the painted cityscapes that have a very good feel for night in the colours used. Others have experimented successfully with light and dark tones and perspective as they made patterns to hide a shape. Pupils also show how to depict the foreground and background in coloured drawings and paintings of the environment, evidence that they have looked at how artists may solve these problems.
80. Pupils have studied the work of several artists and are able to apply what they know about the styles of particular artists and the techniques used to their own compositions. For example, Year 1 pupils selected natural materials such as twigs and leaves when making sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. A few of Year 4 pupils' pastel portraits, inspired by the work of Modigliani, have picked up on the elongated shape so typical of his style. Art from non-western cultures is used as a resource, illustrated by the decorated hands, which are derived from Aboriginal handprints. Good observational drawings provide the basis for much of the pupils' work and there is opportunity for pupils to experiment with and mix media and techniques. For instance, Year 6 pupils produced beautiful, ethereal representations of planets using a combination of paint, sponges and pastel.
81. Pupils apply their art skills in other subjects and topics throughout the school. Year 1 pupils have carefully drawn the roots and shoots of plants as part of their science studies and Year 2 pupils made detailed drawings of batteries in their lessons about electricity. Older pupils used shading effectively to bring depth to their illustrations of the story of the Iron Man.
82. No overall judgement of teaching is possible as only one lesson was taught during the inspection. However, this lesson and an examination of the displays show that teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of media and techniques. They ensure that the pupils take care with their work and reach a high standard of presentation. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson responded positively by showing interest and enthusiasm for the subject. They recalled what they learned previously about the advantages and disadvantages of using fabric pens or wax crayons on material and had sensible ideas for making improvements. They modified their designs, using evaluations written previously, to solve problems and to search for better ways of implementing their ideas. One boy, for example, rearranged the layout of his design, while another thought about how better to convey the quality of a diver half submerged in water. Pupils expressed their ideas well and had the confidence to evaluate their own work critically.
83. The art club significantly enhances the skills of those pupils who attend. Visits are undertaken, such as to the National Gallery, and competitions are also run to keep the pupils interested in the subject. An art week has been held for bookmaking skills which included marbling techniques. Pupils' work is very attractively displayed throughout the school; this recognises achievement and adds significantly to the learning environment. Even school rules are enlivened by cheerful paintings. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Planning is monitored but no formal observation of teaching has taken place. In the absence of a co-ordinator the headteacher ensures that art has a high profile in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection, although the subject is not always given a sufficiently high priority for all aspects to be developed systematically. Attainment in lessons and in a scrutiny of work on display was close to national expectations at the end of both key stages. An increased emphasis has been placed upon the design aspect. Pupils draw sketches of what they intend to make, identifying the materials and resources needed. These generally match well the intentions of the task the pupils have been set. Pupils have the opportunity to work with a variety of materials throughout the school. They learn to handle tools carefully and begin to appreciate the importance of measuring and marking out materials accurately before starting work.
85. Year 2 pupils were observed measuring and cutting out fabric to make simple versions of 'Joseph's coat' that they had already designed on the computer. The lesson was well-organised and benefited from additional adult help. Most pupils worked with interest and enthusiasm and took considerable pleasure in their success. Cutting and stitching were well executed after the pupils had chosen the materials they intended to use. Pupils in Year 3 were introduced to the principles of simple pneumatics as a means of powering the moving parts of monster models that they had designed. Many were able to explain clearly how they intended to use this technique in their models, some being particularly innovative in their ideas. A well-organised lesson in Year 4 enabled pupils to apply techniques that they had learnt to making a storybook with pop-up sections. The teacher carefully showed the pupils how to use double-sided tape as a means of fixing, placing considerable emphasis on the safe way to use a craft-knife. This lesson built on well from previous work undertaken. The pupils had already produced annotated designs and began to realise them during this session. A valuable review session enabled pupils to discuss some of the difficulties they had faced and how they could be overcome.
86. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with planning usually based securely on national guidance. Lessons build skills systematically and are generally well-prepared and appropriately resourced. No formal monitoring of teaching has taken place although teachers' plans are seen together with the pupils' finished products as a method of establishing how effective provision for the subject is. Some staff training has taken place, but the timetabling of the subject needs to be reviewed at Key Stage 2 to ensure that all aspects of the subject are given sufficient emphasis to develop progressively so that standards can become secure. Generally, the subject needs to have a higher priority in all classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY

87. There has been some improvement since the last inspection when standards in geography were below national expectations at both key stages. Standards now are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 but below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.
88. Pupils in Year 2 show an awareness of their local area and places beyond their own locality. They can identify the physical and human features of a place, such as when they talk about what they can do in Barnet and what they can do by the seaside. The pupils can also compare their lifestyles with that of other people who live by the seaside. In their discussion and writing they learn to use geographical terms such as 'beach', 'jetty', 'harbour' and 'pier'. They can describe clothes for different kinds of weather. Map work skills are appropriate for their age. Pupils in Year 1 learn about their own environment and how to make it safer. Much of the work in Year 1 is well presented in photographs and pictures. Overall, pupils achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1.
89. Pupils achieve as expected and the work seen in Years 3, 4 and 5 indicates that pupils' learning

is satisfactory within the key stage. The teachers provide interesting tasks that are generally well matched to the needs of the pupils. They also make good use of resources to stimulate pupils' imagination when studying distant localities. This was observed in a Year 4 lesson, where the teacher used resources very effectively to help the pupils to compare their own locality with a place in India. Their study of settlements links learning in geography and history. The pupils in Year 3 study weather round the world and they plan their holidays in different parts of the world. Year 5 pupils study the water cycle and discuss environmental issues such as whether the high street should be closed to traffic. However, by the age of eleven, only more able pupils reach the standard expected for their age. The majority can find places in an atlas using an index, although their skills in geographical enquiry and map work are not sufficiently developed for their age. Pupils have only a limited knowledge and understanding of places. This is mainly due to the fact that geography is not systematically taught and when taught, it is not planned to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in sufficient depth. Research skills are promoted when pupils are encouraged to use the Internet to find information on various geography topics.

90. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching has several strengths but one lesson had shortcomings and was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons effectively using strategies that match learning objectives. The unsatisfactory lesson was poorly planned with tasks that did not well match learning intentions. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are generally good.
91. The policy has been updated and national guidance to support teachers' planning introduced. This is an area of improvement but the medium-term plans are not sufficiently rigorous in indicating the knowledge, understanding and skills pupils should acquire.

HISTORY

92. There is not sufficient evidence to enable a judgement to be made about standards or teaching at Key Stage 1 as no lessons took place in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Standards have improved since the last inspection for eleven-year-olds and are close to nationally expected levels. The pupils work with interest and enthusiasm, and make good progress in lessons but their progress over time is only satisfactory as history is taught infrequently with gaps of time in between. Consequently, pupils do not always retain what they have learnt.
93. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about the past through studying some of the main events and lives of great people in history. For example, the pupils in Year 2 study the life and time of Florence Nightingale. The pupils in Year 1 study the history of toys and compare toys used by their families now and then. They also learn about the past by comparing seaside holidays now and an hundred years ago. Pupils learn using pictures, photographs and artefacts such as old souvenirs and swimming costumes as evidence. This evidence also helps to develop concepts of old and new. The pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and much of the work produced by Year 1 is of good quality.
94. Pupils achieve as expected and make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils can learn through research and investigation. As a result these skills develop satisfactorily. Teachers encourage pupils to study the past using primary and secondary sources. For example, very effective teaching was observed in Year 5, where the teacher used a visitor from the local museum to give pupils an experience of a Victorian school. The pupils took part in role-play where they had to pretend to be Victorian children in school. They responded to this approach with enthusiasm and dressed up in appropriate clothes, which they made for the occasion. The pupils recorded their findings in writing and drawing. By the age of eleven, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of some of the main periods and events in British history. They also know about past civilisations such as the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans. Pupils in Year 6 make an in-depth study of ancient Greece. They compare ways of lives in Athens and Sparta. They learn using pictures, photographs and reference books as evidence. The pupils in Year 5 study Britain since 1948 in depth through

research using documents, photographs and pictures. They have learnt about the post-war Britain and its health and welfare system. Pupils show their good understanding of chronology through a time-line of schools from the 1950s to 1990s.

95. There has been some improvement in the provision for history since the last inspection. The policy has been updated and national guidance to support teachers' planning introduced, both of which have made a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. There has been a considerable improvement in the arrangements for teaching ICT skills since the last inspection and as a result standards are higher. All pupils have much greater access to computers. The school is very well resourced, with a well-equipped computer suite, further computers in each classroom and several other programmable devices. ICT has been a focus for development, with all classes having two hours of teaching each week. Additional financial resources have been directed towards ICT teaching so that the co-ordinator is released from his classroom to take each class for one of their two lessons. This enables the pupils to receive some expert tuition and provides other teachers, who work alongside the co-ordinator, with valuable training. There are plans to extend this arrangement further next year and release the co-ordinator fully.
97. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress in the development of ICT skills. As a result standards are close to those expected nationally at both key stages and several pupils in each class have developed quite sophisticated skills. Teaching is good. Lessons are carefully planned so that pupils develop their skills systematically in a context that they find interesting. Most pupils respond well to the expert teaching by concentrating and working hard. They generally consolidate and extend their skills when working in pairs, but there are occasions when some do not collaborate effectively, becoming easily distracted and as a consequence developing skills slowly. One weakness, of which the school is aware, is that not all teachers plan for the pupils to use their skills in other subjects.
98. Pupils learn to use the main features of the machines in the computer room from an early age. They are taught how to log-on to the network, load software, use the mouse and cursor keys and save and print their work. As a consequence, many pupils are able to use computers independent of adult help by Key Stage 2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn simple word-processing techniques, which are extended by Year 6 to include desk-top publishing techniques. Year 1 pupils have also learnt how to produce simple charts and graphs of a survey they undertook on eye colour. Pupils also learn how to write a sequence of instructions to program various devices, this skill developing well as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 1 put instructions into a 'roamer' to control its movement around the room, while Year 5 pupils learnt how to control the actions of lights, television screens and computer monitors in a 'virtual' bedroom.
99. Pupils have a good understanding of the use of technology in their everyday lives. They also understand how communication and information retrieval has improved in recent years through the development of the 'World Wide Web'. For example, Year 3 pupils applied their word-processing skills to write an E-Mail, while Year 6 pupils explored the Internet to find information about John Lennon as part of their history project on life in Britain in the 1960s.
100. Computer clubs are regularly run after school, enabling the pupils who attend to extend their skills considerably. The resources are also used to provide computer skills training for adults in the evening.
101. Staff expertise is developing well through training, by observing the co-ordinator teach and sharing teaching with him. No formal monitoring of teaching has taken place. Assessment of the pupils'

skills and progress is not sufficiently secure for the school to evaluate how effective are the chosen arrangements for teaching ICT. Improving assessment and monitoring teaching, along with providing pupils with more planned opportunities to use their skills in other subjects, are areas that need to be tackled if standards are to rise and the full potential of the resources available are to be realised.

MUSIC

102. Music is taught mainly by a part-time teacher. Pupils sing well but no other lessons were seen for seven or eleven-year-old pupils so no judgement is possible on the remaining aspects of the music curriculum for pupils at the end of either key stage.
103. Class teachers join in enthusiastically, being particularly helpful in supporting part singing. However, teaching is best when the specialist has the full control of the lesson, because then pupils concentrate on her teaching and follow her lead, making more sustained progress. Lessons start with well-structured warm-up sessions that prepare voices for singing and include appropriate teaching points. Key Stage 1 pupils learn to follow a wide range of voices from loud and soft, to the spoken word. They learnt 'Down where the water melon grows' by first listening carefully to the teacher singing each line, repeating it, then following the refrain on the piano. Their timing is good and with practise they are able to sing a sustained note at the end of each phrase while listening to the repeated melody.
104. Key Stage 2 pupils began their lessons by practising scales. They sang particularly well without accompaniment, picking up pitch from the teacher. They are making good progress in part singing, moving successfully from two to three parts in a rendering of 'Walk that road'. They found the round 'Moving' more challenging with its more complex phrasing and rests, but with practise on the pauses, improved their performance. The songs are well chosen to appeal to the pupils and are drawn from different music traditions.
105. Pupils have a good experience of using instruments and in composition. The topics and approach are sensitively adapted to the age of the pupils. The music teacher prepared Year 1 pupils for creating a musical story by having them sing 'Little White Duck', make animal sounds and then select percussion instruments. They experimented with sounds, ably supported by the class teacher and assistant. Pupils used instruments well such as sliding movements on the glockenspiel and careful tapping on the wooden block. Good feedback by the music teacher enabled groups to create quiet water sounds and lively frog and bug sounds. Pupils are still at an early stage in listening to other groups, but are co-operative and concentrate well. Skills develop well as pupils move through the school, so that by Year 3 they have made good progress in learning how to compose and perform rhythms associated with dragons. They learn simple ideas about music notation.
106. In the absence of a music co-ordinator the planning and organisation of music in the school is mainly in the hands of the external music specialist who plans for both key stages on a termly basis. Visiting musicians and theatre groups enhance music in the school. Jazz musicians have been in to talk about their playing and instruments. The African 'Iroko Theatre Company' is due to visit shortly. At Christmas time pupils are active in the community singing at the shopping centre, the London hospice, to the elderly and Save the Children charity.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. The school places considerable importance on physical activity as part of the development of pupils by providing two lessons of physical education each week for all classes. One lesson is usually for swimming while the second is for another aspect of the physical education programme. A limited range of activities was observed during the inspection because of the time of year and the order in which activities are taught. Therefore it is not possible to make overall judgements about standards at the end of both key stages in physical education; however, the skills and understanding demonstrated by pupils in the lessons seen were as expected for their age. This is similar to the standards at the last inspection. Planning indicates that over the course of a year pupils are taught an appropriate range of skills and National Curriculum requirements are met.
108. Swimming is taught well in small groups of up to a dozen pupils in the school's covered pool. Lessons are enjoyable and the pupils are given confidence by the encouraging approach of the swimming instructor. Skills are developed systematically and the important features of each stroke are carefully taught. Most pupils try hard to follow the instructions that they are given, and to improve their technique by careful practise of the skills being taught. The help provided by parents during swimming sessions is much valued. Pupils mostly make good progress in lessons and, by the age of eleven, all but a few meet or exceed the requirements of the National Curriculum.
109. The teaching of other physical education lessons was satisfactory overall, a similar position to the last inspection. Pupils achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress in the development of specific skills. Year 1 pupils improved both their throwing and catching skills once they had become used to the height of the ball's bounce. The teacher worked effectively with individuals to improve their skills by emphasising the correct technique to be used. This style was also adopted to good effect in a Year 5 circuit training lesson. The lively, well-organised session contributed significantly to the pupils' level of fitness. Most pupils responded well to the teacher's demonstrations and instructions by pushing themselves quite hard during each of the various exercises in the circuit. Many Year 4 pupils also tried hard to improve the accuracy with which they could throw a bean-bag and enjoyed scoring points for hitting the target.
110. Satisfactory progress has been made in the development of physical education since the last inspection. No formal monitoring of teaching has taken place but training has been provided to improve the teachers' confidence and expertise in the teaching of all aspects of the physical education programme. Good links have been established with a local gymnastics club and extra-curricular activities are provided which extend the skills of those participating. Other sporting activities such as a football club have met with less success because of an unwillingness on the part of parents to pay for coaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at both key stages. There are strengths in the moral and social aspects but weaknesses in understanding the values and beliefs of the major world faiths. Pupils have visited a synagogue and a church and parents sometimes come in to tell pupils about different faiths.
112. Those pupils who visited the synagogue learnt some of the tenets of the Jewish religion. They found out what a rabbi does and saw the 'Torah' and some religious artefacts. Other pupils are introduced to Islam, discovering where the religion is found around the world. By the time they are ready to leave the school pupils have begun to ask some fundamental questions about God but express only very brief thoughts about this.
113. Teachers make good links with personal and social education. One teacher used the story of

'Moses in the Bulrushes' to help pupils think about people who care for them. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to think about expressing feelings and respect. However, the links are sometimes at the expense of an equal emphasis on pupils' understanding of the values and beliefs involved. For example, pupils were asked to think about rituals and routines in their daily lives and the relationship between routines and rules but without considering rituals such as weddings or naming ceremonies, which are common to all societies. In another lesson pupils shared codes of conduct very successfully but the teacher only briefly linked these to various religions.

114. The headteacher has temporary management of the subject and recently launched the locally Agreed Syllabus. The intention is to find a more structured scheme to support teachers, which could go some way to help them to overcome current gaps in provision.