

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MERYL'S JMI PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117166

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Cogan

Reporting inspector: Mr David Cann
2009

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 March 2002

Inspection number: 194781

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Mead
Carependers Park
Watford
Hertfordshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Hardstaff

Date of previous inspection: 9 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20009	David Cann	Registered inspector	English as an additional language English Geography History Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9306	Barbara Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31862	Julia Coop	Team inspector	Foundation stage Special educational needs Art Design and technology Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12367	Anthony Green	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Information and communication technology Mathematics Physical education Religious education	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Meryl's JMI Primary School has 223 pupils on roll aged four to 11 years. It serves the immediate area where there is a variety of accommodation, much of which is owner occupied. Three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly in line with the level expected nationally. Currently 14 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is in line with the national average. There are six pupils who receive support to help them learn English as an additional language and fifteen per cent of pupils come from non-white ethnic backgrounds. There have been many recent personnel changes and over 60 per cent of teachers have joined the school in the last year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Meryl's JMI Primary School offers a sound quality of education. The school benefits from the clear leadership of the headteacher who gives very good direction for staff. Good teaching has created a very caring environment in which pupils develop an enthusiasm for learning and relate well to staff and other pupils. Pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science is satisfactory and by the time they reach Year 6, most attain the levels expected for their age. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, staff are good at analysing the school's performance and setting priorities for improving pupils' achievements.
- Teaching is good. At the Foundation Stage, staff help children settle into school well. Older pupils benefit from well-managed lessons in which their opinions and ideas are valued and discussed.
- Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning which are reflected in the way they apply themselves and enthuse about school. There is a well-established climate of mutual respect and relationships are very good between staff and pupils. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in the school is very good.
- Staff provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- The school is very good at developing pupils' understanding of their responsibilities to one another and provides a good programme for extending pupils' understanding of moral and cultural issues.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' writing by Year 2.
- Challenge for higher ability pupils by providing more demanding aspects to their learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997 and four key areas were identified as being in need of improvement. The school has made sound progress in addressing these but extensive changes in personnel have meant that some procedures and roles are not yet fully established. The school has done well to improve standards in literacy and numeracy since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes have become even better and there is a higher quality of teaching. Teachers gather good assessment information to monitor pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics, but this needs development in other subjects. In planning their lessons, teachers provide good support for the learning of less able pupils but do not always challenge the more able. The headteacher has worked closely with teachers to improve teaching skills and these are effectively promoted by the school's programme for professional development. Importantly, the school maintains a close check on its performance and is highly effective in evaluating its strengths and areas for development. It is in a good 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	A	C
Mathematics	C	B	B	C
Science	C	C	B	C

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

Standards have risen since the last inspection and reflect the impact of improved literacy and numeracy teaching. In 2001, pupils' results in tests at Year 6 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Presently pupils are attaining levels in line with expectations in all three main subjects. In comparing their current achievements with their results at Year 2 pupils are making sound progress. Pupils' results at Year 2 in 2001 were below average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Current pupils are attaining levels which are broadly average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. The progress of most pupils is sound but a minority have underachieved. This has been caused by a lack of challenge in the quality of teaching, which the school is currently addressing. At the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress and achieve the goals expected for children of this age in language and exceed them in number and in the development of personal, social and creative skills. Throughout the school, more able pupils are not regularly set tasks, designed to help them explore the patterns of number or the causes of phenomena in science. The number of pupils achieving above average levels is lower than expected and pupils do not have enough opportunities to carry out their own experiments and investigations. Pupils attain levels in all other subjects which are in line with expectations except in music where they attain good standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. The vast majority are keen to learn and apply themselves willingly although a handful of pupils do not accept class routines without support and clear guidance.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally, pupils behave very well in class and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities but opportunities for pupils to organise their own work and research are limited.
Attendance	Very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in 50 lessons seen:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last report, with ten very good lessons observed during the current inspection. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers create a stimulating, well-ordered atmosphere which encourages pupils' involvement. Lessons are generally well planned and purposeful. Learning objectives are shared and pupils' progress evaluated at the end of sessions. At the Foundation Stage, adults work well together to help children understand class routines and participate actively in the tasks set for them. In Years 1 and 2, there have been considerable changes in teaching personnel and not all pupils have made the progress expected, especially those of above average ability. The teaching observed during the inspection was good in just over half the lessons with good quality teaching in literacy and numeracy making good use of the national strategies. Teachers extend pupils' literacy skills well but do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in numeracy in other subjects. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good at encouraging pupils to discuss and explain their ideas but in science, for example, tasks are often over directed and pupils are not given the chance to set up their own experiments and test them out. In most classes, teachers and pupils work well together but a small minority of pupils need clearer guidance on what is acceptable, co-operative class behaviour. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of the valuable contribution of classroom assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. There is also good use of specialist teaching to promote standards in music and learning for those pupils for whom English is an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a balanced range of activities, which are relevant and stimulating to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils receive good support, which is well organised and monitored.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good support for pupils, tailored to meet their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is a very good programme for developing pupils' social awareness and pupils' moral and cultural development is good. Spiritual education is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know their pupils well and keep a careful check on their academic and personal development. Pupils' progress is well assessed in the main subjects and this is being further developed across the curriculum.

The school works well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a very clear idea of how she wants the school to develop and provides very good direction to the school. She is well supported by her deputy but the roles of subject managers are yet to be fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meet their responsibilities in full.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has improved the way it measures its achievements and makes very good use of this to identify areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	The headteacher and governors work closely with staff to make the best use of financial and human resources.

The school successfully applies best value principles in setting its budgets and deploying its staffing and accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good • School expects children to work hard and do their best • School helps children to become mature and sensible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More homework, regularly set • More information about children's progress • Better links between home and school • The quality of leadership and management

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. They judge that the school provides good information on pupils' progress and is working to establish better links between home and school. Homework during the inspection was satisfactory but there have been inconsistencies in the past. Inspectors judge leadership and management to be very good but have drawn parents' comments to the school's attention.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2001, pupils' results in tests at Year 6 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Current pupils are attaining levels in line with expectations in all three subjects. In comparing their current achievements with their results at Year 2, pupils make sound progress. Pupils with special educational needs attain levels close to those expected and make good progress. Higher ability pupils are not always challenged and the number attaining high levels in science and English is below average. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and are well supported. Results have risen in all three subjects since those recorded at the last inspection although there have been significant changes in teaching staff which have adversely effected continuity. School results are in line with those achieved in similar schools. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.
2. Pupils' results at Year 2 in 2001 were below average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. These results were lower than those achieved in similar schools. Current pupils are attaining levels which are broadly average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. The progress of most pupils is sound but a minority have underachieved. Current teaching is effective in raising attainment but progress has been slow for some pupils in English, mathematics and science. There have been changes in teachers over the current year and the quality of teaching seen in lessons was good during the inspection.
3. On entry, children's skills vary from year to year but are generally in line with those expected. They are often above average in physical development, personal and social skills and mathematical development and average in other areas. The teaching and the balance of learning activities is good in the reception class and the majority of children are in line to attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. They exceed them in physical development, mathematical development and personal and social skills. All children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make a good start to learning and achieve well in relation to their abilities.
4. Throughout the school, more able pupils are not regularly set tasks designed to help them extend their learning and skills. The number of pupils achieving above average levels in writing and science is lower than expected at both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 have not developed their writing skills enough although their reading and speaking are at good levels. The number attaining higher levels in national tests at Year 6 is below average and this reflects some inconsistencies in teaching in earlier years. The way teachers assess pupils' progress has been significantly improved but this is not yet reflected in tasks set to challenge pupils to write with greater insight on all subjects. In science, pupils do not have sufficient experience of planning and carrying out investigations. They do not have enough opportunities to work independently and pursue their own ideas. In mathematics, pupils make better progress but again opportunities to develop mental skills are limited and they have too few chances to apply their learning to real-life situations in other subjects.
5. Pupils attain levels in all other subjects which are in line with expectations except in music, where they attain good standards. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils attain standards in information and communication technology which are in line with national expectations. This represents a decline since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. However, this has been caused by changes in teaching staff, especially in Years 1 and 2, the lack of a suitable computer suite until recently and teachers' knowledge and skills not keeping up with the fast changes in information and communication technology. The new computer suite is beginning to have a positive impact on raising skills and standards, as whole class lessons can now be taught.

6. In the reception class, children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their ability. This is in part because they have individual learning targets. They know in simple terms what they need to do to improve and this is having a positive impact on their progress and self-confidence. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall in Years 1 to 6. In classes where teachers match work appropriately to pupils' levels of ability they make better progress. In general however, staff do not involve pupils enough in target setting and as a result pupils are not fully aware of what they need to do to improve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were judged to have good attitudes to school. This has been improved, as pupils' attitudes to school are now very good and are a strength of the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and are keen to participate in school activities and the day-to-day life of the school. This enthusiasm is reflected in the good quality of behaviour. In an assembly presented by the children of the reception class, older pupils' behaviour was exemplary; they were attentive and enthusiastic in the praise of these very young children. Pupils behave very well in and around school, and in the majority of lessons are able to enjoy their learning. There are occasional lapses of behaviour by a minority of pupils when class control is less effective and work is less challenging. Pupils are courteous and polite and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils form very good relationships with one another and with adults. In personal, social and health education lessons, pupils respond well to each other, they listen to each other's ideas, and co-operate well with each other. Through these lessons pupils develop a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on the lives of others.
8. Staff, led by the headteacher, set a good example in their relationships with one another and with the pupils. This is reflected in the very good way pupils relate to one another, without any apparent aggression. There have been no exclusions. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour and a high degree of harmony exists between all pupils. Pupils talk proudly about the lack of bullying and they were able to show they know the procedures to follow should bullying ever take place.
9. The personal development of pupils is very good. Year 6 pupils take on a good range of responsibilities, for example, organising the music and chairs for assembly. They also work with younger pupils, listening to them read as part of the 'buddy' scheme. A pupil from Year 6 was able to give an articulate description of the work of the school council, including thoughtful ideas for future development.
10. Pupils are happy to come to school and the attendance rate at the school is very good. The school focuses well on maintaining a high level of pupils' punctuality. Through the daily life of the school, pupils' understanding and respect for others reflects the strong ethos of the school and its close links within the community. This strong community involvement was reflected very positively in the celebrations for the school's Golden Jubilee.
11. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school have very good relationships with the learning support assistants and most teachers. They behave well in lessons where they are supported in small groups and in these situations can remain focussed on tasks. However, some pupils, especially in the lower juniors, do not generally have a positive attitude to work, especially in those classes where teaching is not matched to their needs and fails to interest them. As a result, these pupils display immature attention seeking behaviour. The school has worked hard to support these pupils and staff but this is yet to impact more positively. Pupils for whom English as an additional language settle well into school and participate in all activities and learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed teaching was very good in one fifth of them and good in half of them. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents a

significant improvement from the time of the last report, when three per cent of lessons were judged as unsatisfactory and only one in ten lessons was judged to be very good or better.

13. Throughout the school teaching is good in English, music and religious education. The teaching of mathematics, science and geography is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of physical education throughout the school is satisfactory. Not enough lessons were observed to make judgements about the quality of teaching of history.
14. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good and results in good learning by the pupils. The good teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. In three out of ten lessons teaching is very good. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching in half of the lessons observed was good and in almost one in ten lessons was very good. No lessons observed were unsatisfactory. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work and the monitoring of teachers' files indicate that prior to the spring term of 2002 teaching in the mixed age classes was often unsatisfactory. The appointment of a new full-time and new temporary teacher since January 2002 has had a positive impact on teaching and learning but has yet to impact on raising standards.
15. In the Years 3 to 6 classes the quality of teaching is good overall and results in good learning by pupils. Eight out of ten lessons were good or better and almost three out of ten lessons were very good. No lessons observed were unsatisfactory. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection report when three per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.
16. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good. Established teachers have worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. However, in some classes work is not always appropriately matched to the different ability groups being taught. Teachers provide many opportunities to extend the range of pupils' writing and speaking and listening across the curriculum. The opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects is less well developed.
17. The quality of teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. It is well focussed on the needs of the pupils whose English is at an early stage of acquisition. This mostly takes place in class and class teachers are sensitive to the needs and levels of understanding of the pupils. Where individual support is offered, this has been handled well and is having a strong impact on raising the rate of learning and pupils' confidence.
18. In many lessons, there are strong features that contribute to the very positive attitudes pupils have to their learning. Teachers generally manage their pupils in a consistent and positive way. This is based on the very good relationships between all staff and pupils. Teachers help pupils to meet their high expectations of behaviour by creating a calm, secure and purposeful atmosphere in the majority of lessons. For example, in a very good Year 4 English lesson the teacher stimulated pupils' interest and curiosity about characterisation in a story by encouraging them to share with each other their ideas and thoughts about the different characters. The teacher developed pupils' use of vocabulary in order to extend the language in the story and to find alternatives to simple words such as "nasty" and "like". Pupils were so motivated by the task that it resulted in excellent behaviour and attitudes throughout the lessons. Teachers have a good knowledge of individual pupils, which they use well to support and promote their self-esteem. They generally listen to and value pupils' ideas, helping them to develop their confidence in expressing them. Good examples of this were seen in lessons throughout the school. For example, in a very good Year 5 science lesson, pupils were asked to consider the conditions that might affect the germination of seeds. The teacher used questions well to challenge pupils' thinking and to develop their skills of reasoning, discussion and description. The pupils talked confidently and used the correct scientific vocabulary to describe their planning of a test to discover the best conditions required.
19. Other good features of lessons include the way that teachers brief and deploy the classroom assistants well, so that their skilled support has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Management of pupils is generally good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Many examples were seen of these teachers using good subject knowledge in effective questioning to both consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge in Years 1 and 2 but new teachers have had only limited experience of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Overall, teachers are careful to choose resources and contexts for learning that are relevant to the pupils and arouse their interest. As a result, pupils generally listen well and work hard. In most lessons they settled quickly and sensibly to group activities, showing how well they can concentrate and work independently.

20. The impact of such features on pupils' rate of learning was illustrated in a very good Year 6 lesson in the computer suite which used the Internet to find information about the different climatic conditions of Kathmandu, Innsbruck and Quito. The very challenging task set by the teacher, the sharing of the key objectives of the lesson and the very well matched work, meant that all pupils knew what they were learning and why, felt challenged and worked very hard in pairs to produce a table of their results. The teacher used the review session at the end of the lesson very well to continue to extend pupils' computer skills, the use of data from the Internet and the use of geography skills to investigate the reasons for the different climatic conditions. This resulted in pupils making very good progress during the lesson. They were very well motivated and interested by the teacher's clear and lively explanation and were totally absorbed in the well-matched and interesting task.
21. There were many examples of teaching where elements of good or very good practice were seen but also where there was some inconsistency between teachers. These frequently made the difference between good, very good and satisfactory teaching. Generally, lessons are well planned. However, in some lessons, although teachers have clear objectives in their planning, they do not share these effectively with pupils. By contrast, in some very well taught lessons, teachers not only discuss the objectives with pupils so they know exactly what they should be learning, but they encourage pupils to evaluate their work against them, so that they know how well they are doing. End of lesson recap sessions are sometimes used well to help pupils not only to review what they have learnt but to extend their learning and also to set the context for what they will learn next. For example, in a good Year 6 religious education lesson, the teacher ended the lesson by asking the pupils to recap what had been learnt about the symbolism used by Christians when celebrating Easter. The pupils answered with confidence, which led to the teacher developing their ideas into a discussion about the sacrifices made by people today in order to pursue a cause or idea. Overall opportunities for pupils to review their understanding of the lesson objectives are satisfactory. Teachers work hard to help pupils develop their skills of independent working. Where these are not yet secure and, in a very few lessons, where the teacher is not insistent enough on pupils' full attention and concentration, pupils' learning is only satisfactory. Not all teachers plan opportunities to use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Teachers are becoming more confident when teaching whole class lessons in the suite but classroom computers are not always used to support subjects.
22. The overall use of assessment in lessons is satisfactory. In some subjects it is used well where teaching is good or very good but in the satisfactory lessons it does not always support pupils' learning to move them on. For example, in the scrutiny of pupils' previous work, many of the pupils' books contained similar work, irrespective of their ability. Teachers do not always accurately assess rates of learning in order to present the higher attaining pupils with more challenging tasks. Satisfactory use is made of homework.
23. Children with special educational needs are identified early in the Foundation Stage and are given support that is appropriate to their needs. As a result pupils make good progress overall. In the rest of the school teachers try hard to match work to pupils' abilities and interests, but the variety of teaching strategies is not yet fully developed. In general teachers rely on the good support provided by classroom assistants. They have positive relationships with the pupils who in turn respect their support. This ensures that pupils are able to complete their work and are fully included in lessons. Where teaching is stronger, pupils are given tasks similar to the class but at

a level that they can understand. This was seen in a science lesson when pupils had a planning frame to ensure that they could work independently at a task similar to the class.

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

24. The school has continued to offer the broadly based and relevant curriculum that existed at the time of the last inspection. It provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities for pupils in the school, and meets the requirements of the national curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the aims of the school. Through careful monitoring procedures, the school has increased the length of the school day to ensure that all pupils now have the statutory curriculum time. In addition, in response to the school's analyses of standards, increased emphasis and time have been given to reading and science across the school. This is a positive and well thought out development, but has not yet been in place long enough to positively impact on standards. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has been appropriately revised in line with the new Early Learning Goals and provides a good range of learning opportunities. Many opportunities are provided for children to learn through investigations, practical and open-ended tasks as well as some more formal ones that provide a positive start for children in the school. Policy documents and schemes of work have improved since the last inspection. Most have been revised and recently updated. National guidelines are being followed in all subjects and ensure that all aspects of subjects are being taught. The school is monitoring these closely and gradually revising them, to better meet the needs of the school.
25. The National Numeracy Strategy has been appropriately implemented. Mathematical skills are taught well in lessons but these are not fully developed in other subjects such as geography, or design and technology. Where pupils are provided with opportunities to use their numeracy skills or to learn through investigative and problem solving tasks, learning is enhanced. This good practice, however, is not yet fully developed in all classes. Literacy skills are also taught well, and because staff use evaluations of pupils' learning well, set individual targets, and recognise what pupils need to do to improve, these skills are better developed in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons by dedicated and well-trained classroom assistants and the provision for their needs is good across the school. This ensures that they are fully included in lessons and have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' targets on their individual education plans are generally specific and measurable, but vary in quality across the school. This reflects the amount of time which the special educational needs co-ordinator has had to support staff. In addition pupils are not always fully aware of their targets. However, the school has relevant plans to further develop these in line with the revised Code of Practice. Good procedures are in place to support pupils with behaviour problems. The school is sensitive to their emotional needs.
26. The good provision for extra-curricular activities has been further developed since the last inspection. Pupils in most year groups have a wide range of opportunities to participate in an interesting and varied range of activities, including drama, dance and sports. Staff work hard to ensure an interesting and relevant range is available. Parents are mainly positive about the improved range on offer, however, the inspection team does not agree with some parents' negative comments.
27. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum in line with their philosophy of being an inclusive school. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is by way of the school's general teaching programme and additional work. This is effective, particularly with good support from classroom assistants. The school carefully monitors the achievements of girls and boys and tracks progress to ensure that needs are appropriately met.
28. The school has improved and further developed the provision for personal social and health education; this is now good. Pupils develop very good personal and social skills through their every day encounters in school and the school places great emphasis on personal development through normal day to day relationships. Teachers provide effective role models. 'Circle time' and 'golden time', sessions in which pupils discuss things which concern them, are regular features of the curriculum and help pupils to develop self-confidence, while understanding that their individual

efforts will be rewarded. Appropriate emphasis in relation to the age of the pupils is placed on health and sex education, through science, physical education lessons and visits from the school nurse and outside agencies. Pupils receive valuable guidance on issues such as drug awareness and healthy living.

29. Links to the community are good and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents and visitors support many curriculum areas such as reading, sports, and music. Community groups such as the Horticultural Society help foster pupils' interests by holding flower and cake competitions for the pupils. The support from the wider community, visits and visitors enhance many subject areas. Donations received have helped provide playground and sports equipment and also helped refurbish the computer suite. Partnerships with partner institutions is less well developed. However, meetings with the local consortium of schools enable staff to share ideas.
30. As found at the last inspection, the school makes good provision overall for pupils' moral and cultural development. Social development has improved considerably, and is now very good. This is due to the increased range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. The school makes satisfactory provision for spiritual development.
31. Assemblies meet statutory requirements and appropriately offer pupils opportunities to reflect on the existence of a Supreme Being. The programme of assembly themes is designed to provide pupils with a stimulus for spiritual awareness and self-knowledge, but these are not fully developed, for example times for reflection are often brief. Teachers do value pupils' ideas and on occasions give pupils opportunities to reflect on their work and appreciate each other's efforts but again these opportunities are not always fully developed in subjects across the school.
32. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils' behaviour is well supported through the school's behaviour policy and associated system of rewards and sanctions, which all pupils understand and respond to in a positive way. Pupils' efforts, both academic and social, are rewarded and these contribute well to pupils' moral development. Pupils in each class have considered the school's 'Five Golden Rules' and adapted them for their own classrooms. In this way pupils consider what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Pupils are made aware of the needs of others through their support for various charities. In addition opportunities for pupils to explore issues in planned class sessions such as 'Circle time' have recently been introduced and are beginning to further enhance pupils' moral development. The school council, which involves pupil representatives from all classes from Year 2 onwards, enables the school to take serious consideration of pupils' views. Suggestions made are often acted upon. In addition older pupils are given a range of responsibilities such as being 'buddies' for younger pupils. These are positive developments that enhance pupils' moral understanding well.
33. Provision for social development has improved considerably. A wide range of visits and visitors support this area very well. Pupils collaborate very well together in lessons and support each other in a sensible manner. Good examples were seen in Year 4 and 5 for example, when pupils worked very effectively together as a team to investigate and make chairs in art and design and to plan investigations in science. Pupils in Year 2, struggling with a computer programme, were helped by their friends' encouragement. This contributed very effectively to pupils' progress. In addition, the wide variety of 'out of hours' learning initiatives positively support pupils' social skills. The school also contributes very effectively to the development of pupils' social awareness through the support of charities such as collections for the Malcolm Sergeant fund. Pupils help choose the charities and support them through various activities for a year. In addition, visits to pensioners within the community help foster and develop social awareness.
34. The provision for cultural development remains good and the school has continued to provide an interesting range of opportunities to support and enhance pupils' own cultural awareness. Visits and visitors continue to make a positive contribution. However, although the school prepares pupils appropriately for life in a culturally diverse society, through celebrations of different religious festivals, assembly themes, and visiting musicians, opportunities to celebrate the richness of cultures of pupils attending the school are not fully developed.

35. The provision for equality of access and opportunity is good. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils regardless of their ability, gender, race or background. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They are given as many opportunities as other pupils to be involved in all areas of the curriculum and particularly in developing their skills in English and mathematics. All aspects of school life are open to boys and girls, irrespective of attainment, background and culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Since the last inspection the school has improved its good support for ensuring pupils' welfare which is now very good. Teachers understand their pupils well. They know the procedures to be followed to ensure that pupils are well protected and the level of welfare is very good. The school is vigilant in ensuring that staff has thorough training in first aid and through the school nurse older children are being encouraged to know how to deal with emergencies. The head teacher and governing body ensures that effective procedures are in place to promote all related matters of health, safety and security. Parents appreciate the way staff care for their children.
37. Procedures for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance are good, and the educational and personal support of pupils is also good. The monitoring and supporting of pupils' personal development are very good. Staff work hard to ensure that everyone in the school community is valued. In the best lessons there is a consistent approach which ensures the good behaviour of pupils and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. This effective support makes a positive contribution to pupils' well being, and enables them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered.
38. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' progress. Staff make good use of the information in monitoring the school's overall performance and in checking on how well individual pupils are developing. Pupils are assessed on entry and their progress is regularly checked and recorded. In English, mathematics and science, there are termly tests linked to the topics covered and these are used carefully to monitor how pupils are moving towards the targets set for them. In Years 3 to 6, pupils also undergo the government recommended tests annually and the results are used to redefine pupils' individual targets by the end of Year 6. Teachers also use these results to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. Co-ordinators analyse them in order to identify areas for development in teaching as demonstrated by recent changes in the way reading is taught. Teachers have also recently started to carry out evaluations of pupils' progress in other subjects although the school recognises that this needs further refinement.
39. The headteacher and deputy monitor how the assessment systems are used by teachers. They maintain a detailed file of all data collected by the school and share this with subject co-ordinators. Staff analyse the data these provide in order to set individual targets for pupils year on year. The data is also used to set school targets for Year groups of pupils. These enable the school to plot trends and to adjust planning to ensure complete coverage of the curriculum. Teachers keep good records of pupils' recent achievements in individual profiles which they have begun to share with parents.
40. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs have good support from staff. The school liaises effectively with parents and outside agencies to provide relevant and effective support. Annual reviews are focussed and new targets set are relevant to the pupils' specific needs. Delegated funds are used well. In addition the school provides additional funds to ensure that pupils receive support at all times. Other pupils with special educational needs also receive relevant support. Their individual education plans are generally of a good quality although not all learning targets are as specific as they could be. In addition pupils are not yet involved in the process. As a result they do not understand in simple terms what they need to do to improve. This has been identified by the school as an area of development to better reflect the revised Code of Practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The parent's views of the school are satisfactory overall, and the majority of parents have very positive views of the school. Of the returned questionnaires 97 per cent of parents said their child liked school. Parents were also pleased that behaviour in the school is good and that the school expects their children to work hard. There is a minority of parents who feel the school does not keep them well informed or work closely with them. Prior to the Ofsted questionnaire the school had themselves sent to all parents a very comprehensive questionnaire to obtain their views on many aspects of school life. On that occasion, views of the school were very positive from all sections of parents.
42. The inspection showed the school has good links with parents and sometimes very good links to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. During the week of inspection parents of children in the reception class were welcomed into school to attend a family assembly. Several parents help in school. Discussion with parents showed they are keen to be involved in the life of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their progress.
43. The quality of information for parents is good. Home-school agreements are in place. Reports on pupils' progress give an indication of what pupils should do next to improve. The school's prospectus gives parents a clear indication of the life of the school. The governors' annual report for parents is a very well produced and an informative document. The school holds regular meetings for parents to discuss their children's progress and workshops to keep parents informed about areas of the curriculum. Newsletters are friendly, clear and helpful. They provide parents with an opportunity to share in the life of the school.
44. Parental contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school is good overall, and is particularly good in the reception class. The funds raised by the friends' association provide many extras to support children's learning. They were fundamental in raising money to help with the very prestigious new computer suite. They organise many events both social and fundraising which enhance the life of pupils in the school and places the school firmly as a hub of community life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher provides the school with very good direction. In the short time she has been in post she has made an important contribution to raising the quality of education while effectively managing the many problems occasioned by a high number of staff changes. She has set out clear guidelines on teaching and learning and the expectations she has for the school. She is very well supported by the recently appointed deputy who has undertaken her responsibilities energetically and successfully. A senior management team has been established and subject management is well distributed among the staff. Inevitably most of these have been recent appointments and the post holders are settling in to their new roles well. They benefit from detailed guidance from the headteacher and training is being well organised to help them develop their responsibilities. Nonetheless some staff have not had enough time to become fully informed and confident in identifying areas of strength and weakness in their subjects. They are given good support to monitor their subjects and the school is in a strong position to move forward and establish consistent approaches to aspects such as assessment and self-evaluation.
46. The headteacher is much respected by governors and staff and she is aware of the need to improve communications and links with parents. While most parents comment favourably on the improvements in the school there are some who are still adjusting to the change in management style. The headteacher has made a strong impact on setting targets for pupils and has been active in monitoring the quality of teaching. She has high expectations of pupils' attainment and shares this with staff. Staff are closely involved in measuring the school's performance and this is linked effectively to the system of performance management. The headteacher and her deputy have helped staff to improve their self-evaluation and this is now well linked to the performance management programme which the school has introduced. Teachers' individual areas for

development are linked to and reflect the school's development plan. Non-teaching staff are also included in this process and training programmes have been well chosen to help personnel improve their skills. The headteacher undertakes regular reviews of progress with all staff.

47. The system of identifying areas for development has been revised by the headteacher and is good. Action plans are drawn up by subject leaders and discussed by staff. These discussions lead to establishing a set of whole school priorities which are regularly reviewed and revised as necessary. Budget planning reflects these but the school is moving forward rapidly in a number of areas and this has necessitated a greater degree of flexibility in agreeing spending. The school accrued a higher than average surplus last year by deciding to lease new computers rather than buying them. This has provided more money to increase spending on classroom support staff as well as a contingency fund for possible extra teaching staff and the equipping of the nursery which is to be built and established for the next academic year. In all these decisions the school has actively applied the principle of obtaining best value and this is also applied to deciding on contracts and purchases. Financial administration is well managed and properly monitored by governors.
48. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and is well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors provides considerable personal energy and commitment and works closely with the school to help developments, especially in improving links with parents and the community. Governors make good use of training to acquaint themselves with their responsibilities and take an active part in shaping the school's future direction. Through formal and informal contact with staff, parents and pupils and through the work of the committees, governors monitor the work of the school effectively. Governors monitor finances and health and safety particularly well and have recently appointed a new governor for special educational needs.
49. The school has an appropriate number of well-qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Support staff are well qualified and valued and a good training programme extends their skills. Staff development is linked both to the needs of the curriculum and to personal development. The procedures for the induction of new staff to the school and support for teachers in training are good.
50. Learning resources are good overall. The school makes good use of its funds and is very well supported by parents in raising further funds, which it spends well to enhance resource provision. There are enough resources for all subjects and the recent improvement in information and communication technology provision is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school makes good use of its accommodation which is maintained to a high standard. Outdoor facilities have been enhanced and the school has ambitious plans to improve accommodation to provide good quality nursery facilities in the near future.
51. The school's special needs provision is well led. The co-ordinator is hard working, committed, and knowledgeable. She has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's procedures and practices. She had begun to work with staff to develop and improve their skills, but the difficulty faced by staff shortages, and her lack of non-contact, time have impacted on this good start. She is well supported by the special educational needs governor, who monitors the provision well and provides relevant expertise and support to the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve the standards which the school achieves, the governors, headteacher and staff should

- (1) Raise standards in pupils' writing by Year 2 by raising expectations of what pupils can do, providing clearer instruction in handwriting, spelling and providing more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes

(Paragraphs 2, 72 and 75)

- (2) Provide more challenging tasks for pupils of higher ability throughout the school by using assessment more thoroughly to monitor their progress, extending the use of numeracy and information and communication technology skills across other subjects, developing teachers' confidence in using the new schemes of work to ensure they adapt activities to these pupils' needs.

(Paragraphs 4, 5, 16, 21, 22, 25, 38, 76, 79, 80, 86, 88, 89 and 119)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	10	25	15	0	0	0
Percentage	0	20	50	30	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	223
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	43

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	19
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	28	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (87)	91 (90)	97 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	30	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	94 (90)	97 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	11	9	14
	Total	22	20	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (89)	71 (86)	96 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	22	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (89)	79 (89)	79 (91)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	15
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	4
White	190
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	152.75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	482,465
Total expenditure	468,847
Expenditure per pupil	2,075
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,714
Balance carried forward to next year	51,332

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 60 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out	223
Number of questionnaires returned	132

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	57	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	56	11	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	65	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	55	18	4	4
The teaching is good.	35	55	8	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	52	22	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	34	44	17	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	55	5	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	21	46	22	6	5
The school is well led and managed.	17	47	23	5	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	60	6	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	54	14	2	8

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.

53. The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the last inspection. Currently there is no nursery provision at the school. A nursery is however due to open in the autumn term. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September or January following their fourth birthday and transfer to school in Year 1, the following autumn. Many, but not all, have previously attended a wide variety of pre school provisions. As a result the standards of records that the school receives vary considerably. This difficulty will be overcome when the nursery is open. Older children attending the reception class started school in September with Year 1 pupils. This arrangement caused some concerns to parents because these children did not have full access to the full Foundation Stage curriculum. This has been fully addressed by the school. Children have benefited considerably from a term in a newly opened reception area. Staff have worked very hard to ensure that children have had many opportunities to experience the full curriculum and make up any lost ground in learning.
54. Children start in the reception class with varied abilities and experiences, but overall, the majority are attaining average standards, when compared to children of a similar age. Standards on entry to the reception class are, however, better than average in physical development, personal and social skills and mathematical development. The varied and interesting range of learning experiences, together with the very positive relationships between staff and children and effective teaching, provide a stimulating learning environment where young children feel safe and secure. The curriculum for all children in the Foundation Stage is good and promotes the Early Learning Goals well, in all areas of learning and development. As a result all children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, have made a good start to their school career, and achieve well in relation to their abilities. By the time they start school, in Year 1, the majority of children are at least in line to attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. They exceed them in physical development, mathematical development and personal and social skills.
55. All members of staff work hard and develop effective links with parents. The record keeping system, particularly the children's personal diaries, is clear and manageable. It gives staff a well-informed basis from which to plan work. Children in addition have individual learning targets. These are simple but effective. All children, because of the very effective way they are presented, are aware of what they need to learn next. Baseline assessments are also used appropriately to track children's progress but this data is not yet fully developed to plan activities that are challenging and better matched to the children's abilities.
56. As found at the previous inspection, the quality of teaching is good overall and this leads to good learning. Activities are interesting and well planned and children enjoy learning. Staff have formed very good relationships with children and are very good role models. This ensures that children are happy and relaxed, and are thus able to benefit fully from activities. All members of staff ensure that children, including those with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are fully included and have full access to the areas of learning. Staff are supportive and encouraging in their conversations with children. They quietly reinforce the simple reception rules; this approach prepares the children well for their move into Year 1.
57. The provision is well managed, by a well-qualified and efficient co-ordinator who has clear vision for the future development of the provision. She is well supported by a classroom assistant, working within the class and together they form an effective team. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the new accommodation is bright and welcoming. Resources in particular are interesting and used imaginatively and effectively to support learning.

Personal and social education

58. Children start in the reception class with above average standards of personal and social skills. Teaching is consistently good and all members of staff promote children's personal and social development well. They treat the children politely, courteously and with respect. By the time they leave the reception class the majority have made good progress and are attaining standards well above those expected for children of this age.
59. As a result of this supportive approach, children enjoy coming to school; they follow the routines and join in activities with enthusiasm. They play well together, help plan their own learning, ticking their chosen activities, and know what they have to learn next when they consult their 'target teddies'. This is achieved because of the supportive relationships between staff and children that encourage them to become increasingly independent. In turn children feeling safe and secure in this positive environment and develop increasingly mature attitudes. Well-planned activities help develop mature and very confident young citizens. This was seen when children performed very confidently in assembly. In front of the whole school invited parents and inspectors, without help, they sang clearly, spoke prepared speeches and played musical instruments without faltering once. This was a credit to the hard work of the staff and the good level of support from parents.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Most children have average levels of attainment in communication, language and literacy when they start the reception class. They make satisfactory progress and the majority is in line to meet the national age related expectations at the end of their reception year. More able children are already attaining this standard, and are ready to start the national curriculum. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory with some good teaching seen during the inspection. Although staff are supportive and children are encouraged to talk, listen and enjoy a wide range of activities, teaching does not always challenge more able children.
61. Teachers and support assistants, use every opportunity to encourage children to talk, by joining in and talking about their activities. In the pirates' corner, for example, and when preparing snacks, staff extend children's vocabulary, through perceptive questioning, support and encouragement. Children are confident and articulate when they speak, and in this aspect of learning, many are attaining good standards.
62. All children enjoy looking at books, listening to stories and they engage well in imaginative play. Some more able children can read simple texts confidently, and most children recognise sounds at the beginning of words. Staff ensure that children at this stage of their development learn simple words and are supported to develop their reading skills, when they take 'key ring' words home to learn. Children take books home each night and are proud of the number of books they have read. Daily opportunities to enjoy and share books with staff, and with 'reading buddies' from Year 6, ensure that all children are fully included in activities and increasingly enjoy reading. This is appropriately extended when they participate in whole class reading activities with the teacher. In addition, displays of words and letter sounds, at child height, support learning well.
63. Increasingly children delight in making marks on paper. Staff are supportive and encourage them to hold pens and crayons correctly. In this way children are increasingly gaining control over their movement and most make good attempts to write their names and clues on 'treasure maps', in the pirates' den for example. However, currently children's writing skills are only developed informally. Although there are many relevant opportunities for children to practice their emerging skills, they do not use exercise books. This prevents them from easily seeing how well they have improved over time. Staff following guidance have not yet introduced the literacy hour but have implemented aspects of it well. However, the assessments of children's development in this area give good evidence that some children are clearly ready for a more challenging and formal approach, alongside the informal independent activities.

Mathematical development

64. Children starting with above average standards in this area of learning make satisfactory progress, and as a result, the majority is already attaining the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen, especially in whole class activities. Questioning supports this area well. Games, songs and activities, linked to stories, delight the children when they participate in daily 'fun with numbers' class activities. Deliberate mistakes motivate children who eagerly correct the teacher. Resources support learning well and as a result most children recognise and sequence numbers to ten. The nursery nurse sensitively supports less able children and as a result they are fully included in activities.
65. More able children count to 10 and beyond, many recording numbers accurately. Most can sort by colour and when playing in the water, because staff use questions well when they interact with children. Many are able to use terms such as 'full' and 'empty' accurately. Clear assessment procedures ensure that staff know each child's level of ability but these are not always used to plan small group tasks to better match children's different abilities. Aspects of the numeracy hour are in place and children are clearly ready for a more structured approach to learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Consistently good teaching, based on effective planning of a wide range of activities, encourages children to use all their senses. This effectively introduces the children to a wide range of interesting experiences, which all enjoy and from which they learn well about the world around them. This aspect of learning is a strength of the provision. Children, because of this good planning, make good progress and are in line to attain standards above those expected for children of this age when they start school in Year 1.
67. For instance, through looking after their fish, children understand what animals need to live. One little boy for example, whose turn it was to feed them, clearly was aware that they must not be fed too much food. When 'Dennis the Tarantula' visited, to support the theme 'Incy Wincy Spider', children also learned about the habitats and needs of different creatures. When making kites children learned different ways to join material and began to recognise the force of the wind when they flew them outside. This was also effectively supported by a visitor with a Power Kite. Children use a camera to photograph the playground and use the pictures to draw simple plans. All staff are readily involved in these well planned experiences and this ensures that children are interested, motivated and challenged. Children also confidently use the computer, controlling the mouse to draw lines and swirls. As indicated, visitors support this area well. Celebrations of festivals, such as Chinese New Year, develop children's awareness of the importance of different events in people's lives. During the inspection, children learning about fish watched fascinated as the headteacher cut up different kinds of fish for the children to examine closely, a 'smelly', but highly motivating and stimulating experience, that challenged children of all abilities well.

Physical development

68. When children start in the reception class, many are already attaining above average standards. Satisfactory teaching and the planning of a range of interesting formal and informal activities, ensure that children make satisfactory progress. As a result the majority of children are in line to attain standards above those expected when they start school in Year 1. Children move confidently and can avoid collisions appropriately through good body control. They show a good awareness of space when moving around. Construction kits and varied activities such as cutting and weaving help develop children's hand co-ordination. In the outside area children enjoy climbing and jumping and increasingly become more adventurous because of sensitive support. In addition, children have planned time in the hall. They recognise the effects of exercise on their bodies when they feel their hearts beating before and after exercise, although opportunities to 'cool down' are not always developed by staff. Children, however, move with imagination to the music, as 'fish', and respond well to instructions, using creative and imaginative movements well. However, opportunities are not always fully developed by staff to demonstrate good moves and to extend more able pupils, by allowing them to evaluate and improve their movements.

Creative development

69. In the reception class, staff work hard to provide a good range of interesting activities. Teaching is good and good subject knowledge is used effectively not only to challenge children but also to plan increasingly interesting activities. Children enjoy exploring wet and dry sand, water and painting on a regular basis and are highly independent. For example, all children mix their own paints. In this way, because of good teaching, children not only know how to mix two colours to create another, such as orange, but also confidently use white to make paler shades. Role-play plays a significant part in developing children's imagination, and small areas that are well planned with a range of imaginative equipment provide a wealth of activities. The pirates' corner, with boats, 'oxygen tanks', appropriate pirates' costumes and a treasure map area, is just one of the interesting activities planned that supports children's creative development. Staff support children effectively in their chosen activities. They use every opportunity when interacting with children to develop language and creative skills. This effectively supports learning.
70. The quality of teaching especially in structured activities is particularly good and ensures that children learn well from direct experience. In particular because of the teachers' good musical knowledge, children really enjoy and greatly benefit from a range of challenging experiences. They recognise instruments, can identify them in music, and play with good control and technique, following the 'conductor' well. They listen in rapt attention to the 'aquarium music' and when listening to 'The Arrival' with the headteacher, children could explain with some maturity what they liked about the music. One boy, for example, explained that the music made him "*feel happy, like being in the water floating*", comparing it to the aquarium music well. As a result of this consistently good teaching and planning children who started in the reception class with average ability have made good progress and are in line to attain above average standards in this area of learning when they start school in Year 1.

ENGLISH

71. Attainment is in line with the levels expected nationally for the current pupils in Year 6 but below expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2. In 2001, test results in Year 6 were well above the national average and higher than the results achieved at the time of the last inspection. These pupils made good progress from the levels they achieved in Year 2 tests. The results were average in comparison with those achieved in similar schools. Current pupils are making satisfactory progress from the levels they achieved at Year 2. Their results are likely to be lower than those achieved in similar schools but this reflects a relatively higher proportion of average and lower than average pupils within the year group. The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and was particularly stimulating in the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6.
72. The 2001 test results in Year 2 were well above average in writing and below average in reading. These results indicate an improvement in writing and a decline in reading since the last inspection. Current pupils are not attaining the expected levels in writing but their reading skills are in line with those expected. Pupils have been given better opportunities to acquire reading skills and develop an interest in books. However, the younger pupils in mixed age class have not been given the necessary guidance to master basic writing skills such as handwriting and spelling. The school has been aware of deficiencies in teaching during the year and has provided considerable support to try to rectify this. A new arrangement of class teaching now offers pupils well organised help which suggests that these pupils should not be disadvantaged for long. In all the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching was good or better.
73. Pupils listen well to both teachers and each other and their skills in speaking are good. They benefit from discussion sessions in English and other lessons in which adults encourage pupils' comments and observations. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were highly stimulated by taking turns to play a character in the Billy Goat Gruff story. They had to answer a number of difficult questions put to them by other pupils and the level of speaking, listening and sensible communication was good. Generally pupils listen politely and accept class routines for taking turns. The very good

relationships and respect, which is evident between adults and pupils, creates the environment in which pupils are keen to contribute. A discussion in Year 5 about the difference between spoken and written English produced some very mature and thoughtful comments from pupils. In this class and in Year 6, pupils are evidently confident about presenting their observations and many express themselves articulately. In a minority of lessons, however, there is a tendency to over direct pupils rather than let them question and develop their own ideas. They were good at taking turns and maintaining their attention to the discussion. Pupils are confident in expressing their ideas in front of the class, with each other and adults. They use a sound range of vocabulary that is consistent with what is expected of pupils of this age.

74. Pupils' standards in reading are in line with those expected. Throughout the school there is a well-maintained home-school reading programme and pupils change their books regularly. Comments in pupils' diaries indicate that parents support the programme well and pupils take a lively interest in both fiction and non-fiction. Teachers encourage a positive attitude to reading and regularly review what pupils have read. Nearly all classrooms have displays on books which pupils have enjoyed and questionnaires, which they have completed, about the stories they like. Pupils make good use of the after lunch session when all have time to settle with a book. Some read individually, some in groups and some older pupils assist younger ones in their reading, which is a successful experience for both parties. Younger pupils know the letters of the alphabet and most know how to sound out and build up words. They correct mis-readings with reasonable confidence and suggest rhymes when asked. Most use pictures, context and meaning to help them. Teachers monitor the progress of pupils' skills effectively through shared reading activities and maintain good records of the material covered. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in group sessions which focus on their identified needs. Below average readers receive valuable assistance in sessions with trained assistants who take pupils through a well-structured programme of developing their recognition of words and sounds. All pupils make use of reference books and research information from the library, which is well stocked and accessible. In Years 3 to 6 pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of how to find references using indexes and contents pages. They also now have greater experience of using the Internet and computer based encyclopaedias.
75. The current attainment in writing at Year 2 is below expectations. In the mixed age class, a significant number of pupils have not acquired basic skills such as handwriting and spelling to the expected level. There are too few written tasks completed in pupils' books but pupils are now catching up and practising the skills well. Year 1 pupils describe balloon travel in short, recognisable phrases and their handwriting is generally well formed. They want to express their ideas and are keen to use spelling guides to write common words accurately. They use the computer to create graphics and text, which helps them to develop writing and computer skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants and tackle tasks set for them individually in Years 1 and 2 and as a result they progress well. Pupils have some good opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects like history, geography and religious education, where activities extend their vocabulary. However, this has not been in the case in all classes, which again has contributed to unsatisfactory progress.
76. In Year 3, pupils are attaining appropriate levels of writing for their age but tasks for higher ability pupils are not always regularly organised to challenge them. The quantity of the work is satisfactory and pupils use their skills in creating different story settings, writing poetry and plays. Handwriting is satisfactory and spelling is in line with that expected for pupils of this age. Year 4 pupils produce a satisfactory amount of written work, covering aspects studied in science, history and geography. Their writing shows a good command of grammar and punctuation. Year 5 pupils express themselves well when writing in different styles and make good progress. They study language with considerable insight, considering dialects and plays on word. They appreciate the qualities which differentiate written from spoken language and provide examples to illustrate these. In Year 6 pupils were studying how to structure stories and had some complex ideas to include in their accounts. They used vocabulary like '*dilemma*' and '*resolution*' and worked hard to incorporate these. Some pupils produced very good expressions like "*the boy recoiled in horror*" and "*all he had was a parcel of memories*" but the number of higher attaining pupils is

fewer than expected. Average and lower average pupils do well by Year 6 and those with special educational needs are well supported with extra guidance given to them as they work in class.

77. The school implements the Literacy Strategy effectively and in analysing last year's results identified the need to extend pupils' reading skills. Rearrangements to the timetable have provided focussed times for reading, which has had a stimulating effect on standards. The quality and use of assessment is generally good and has been the subject of whole school discussion. Teachers are keeping a much closer check on how pupils' writing and spelling skills are developing and using this to set targets for themselves and pupils. They are good at sharing lesson objectives with pupils and evaluating how successful their learning has been. Teachers keep records of pupils' reading development but do not use a standard test to quantify progress.
78. The quality of teaching is good overall with strong teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge and good expectations of pupils' behaviour and output. As a result pupils apply themselves co-operatively and profitably in discussions and in carrying out tasks. Planning is good, as is the pace and expectations of pupils' work in the lessons seen. The co-ordinator has had a valuable impact on raising standards and works closely with the headteacher and staff to ensure all have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to maintain improvements. She keeps a close eye on planning and pupils' work but with other responsibilities she has not extensive time to observe lessons as yet.

MATHEMATICS

79. Results of the national tests for 2001 showed pupils' overall attainment by the age of seven to be in line with the national average. By the age of eleven national tests results for 2001 show pupils' overall attainment to be above the national average. Inspection findings show that by the age of seven and eleven present standards are in line with national expectations. However, in the mixed age class of Year 1 and 2 pupils, a third of the pupils have not progressed as well as they should because of the disruption caused by staff changes, which has affected continuity and learning. Although overall standards for the present Year 6 cohort of pupils are in line with expectations, the results for this group of pupils when they took the national tests in 1998 were slightly below the national average. Therefore, they are making good progress and are achieving well. The deputy headteacher has begun to take groups for booster lessons, which are expected to raise standards further by the end of Year 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. Although past test results indicate a difference between the achievement of boys and girls no evidence was observed of any gender differences during the inspection week and in the scrutiny of pupils' work.
80. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In a third of lessons teaching is good. However, although teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, new teachers in Years 1 and 2 are not confident with all elements of the National Numeracy Strategy and this is impacting on pupils' ability to learn and make progress. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and is resulting in good learning by pupils. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' subject knowledge is good. Lessons are generally taught at a good pace and with a good level of challenge. Throughout the school, teachers use activities that motivate and interest pupils, which results in them enjoying mathematics lessons. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher began by challenging pupils to add and subtract pairs of numbers with two places of decimals and then to position and order numbers with two decimal places on to an unmarked number line. The lesson quickly moved to addition, subtraction and division of decimal numbers, using common written strategies and personal mental strategies. The teacher and the classroom assistant gave good support to the pupils, which ensured good learning by all. Pupils felt challenged by the task and were eager to share their strategies with their neighbour. At the end of the lesson the teacher brought the pupils together to recap the objectives and to assess the pupils' understanding and to set relevant homework. Teachers use questioning well to assess understanding but not all use pupils' errors and misconceptions as further teaching points or ask pupils to explain and share their personal mental strategies. The pace of lessons is often good and ensures pupils are motivated. All teachers display or discuss with the pupils the objectives of the lesson, so that they know what it

is that they will be learning. At the end of the lesson the objectives are recapped but not all teachers ask pupils to self-evaluate whether they feel that they have met the objectives or not. Lessons are appropriately planned but do not always make specific reference to individual targets of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Although planning shows activities and objectives for the different ability groups within a class, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that in some classes work for the higher attaining groups is very similar to that for the average attaining pupils. Sound use is made of assessment of pupils, against the lesson objectives, which then helps teachers plan future learning. Work is regularly marked but not all teachers comment on pupils' strengths and areas for development. Other than in Year 6, there was little evidence of individual targets being set for pupils. The management of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good and very good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers generally create a good atmosphere for learning.

81. Lessons are well organised and most teachers apply the components of the National Numeracy Strategy well. Lessons start with a whole class mental warm-up session, in which teachers involve everyone. In all lessons, after the warm-up activities, pupils work in groups, often organised by ability. Teachers and classroom assistants give pupils with special educational needs good support. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, work on doubling numbers with two or three digits was well matched to the needs of all the pupils in the class. The teacher ensured that questions in the end of lesson review period were targeted to the needs of each pupil.
82. Inspection evidence indicates that there are differences in the standards between the different strands of the mathematics curriculum. For example, teachers do not always develop the use of pupils' mental strategies to use and apply their skills and knowledge in real-life situations. Data handling has been identified by the co-ordinators as an area to develop. By the age of seven standards in numeracy are in line with expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The majority can confidently add and subtract two and three digit numbers, see patterns in number, continue a sequence to 50 and 100 and identify halves and quarters. The scrutiny of work indicates that pupils in the mixed aged class of Year 1 and 2 have not always recorded their methods of working out. By the age of eleven pupils have a sound recall of number bonds and the strategies for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of number. They can describe their mental strategies for recalling number facts. The majority can multiply and divide whole numbers by 10, 100 and 1000 and numbers with decimals to two places. They can explain strategies for multiplying by 25 and 50. The average and higher attainers know the relationship between equivalent fractions.
83. In their work on shape, space and measurement, Year 2 pupils can describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes and simple three-dimensional shapes using the appropriate vocabulary. By Year 6, the average and higher attaining pupils can calculate the area and perimeter of regular and irregular shapes. Lower attaining pupils are not confident when classifying 3-dimensional shapes by their attributes. The majority of pupils can tell the time using hours, half hours and quarter hours and the average and above average use minutes accurately.
84. At the time of the inspection, there was little evidence of Year 2 work on data handling as it was not the time of year for it to be introduced in the Numeracy Strategy. However, work scrutiny showed that some use was being made of data handling in other subjects although mainly in the form of bar graphs. For example, in science, Year 2 pupils construct a graph to show the distance travelled by a toy car from different gradients of slope. By Year 6, pupils construct bar and line graphs of their results and interrogate the graphs for information. For example, they produce line graphs to help convert temperature from Celsius to Fahrenheit. They also use the Internet to collect data on climatic conditions around the world. The use of mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Although examples were found, there was no evidence of its extensive use.
85. The two co-ordinators are new to the role and are still developing their knowledge and understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas to develop. Both have a sound understanding of mathematics teaching in their own age range but have not yet observed or worked alongside colleagues outside of their preferred age range. The use of information and

communication technology to support the subject is underdeveloped. Not all classes clearly display number lines for pupils to refer to.

SCIENCE

86. Standards for pupils in Year 2 at the time of the last inspection were reported to be good overall. The results of teachers' assessments in 2001 show that at the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 2 continued to be above the national average and in line with similar schools. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was well below both the national average and that of similar schools. Inspection findings show that currently pupils attaining level 2 in science is broadly average at the end of Year 2 and their achievements are sound. However, not enough pupils are attaining the higher level 3 which represents some underachievement. This also represents a fall in standards from the last report and last year's results. This is a direct consequence of unsatisfactory teaching in the recent past, which did not challenge pupils or fully develop science skills. The school has acted to rectify the situation; teaching has improved, but too late to enable many pupils to catch up. Recruitment difficulties continue to impact on the attainment of a significant group of pupils, despite the school's best efforts to provide additional support.
87. Standards of pupils at the end of Year 6 in the national tests of 2001 indicated that pupils were attaining above average standards. They achieved satisfactory standards in relation to their ability and had made satisfactory progress over their time in school. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was also good when compared to national expectations. This was similar to the findings of the last inspection report. The findings of the current inspection, however, indicate that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 has fallen and as a result standards overall are broadly in line with national expectations. However, because of the ability level of the current Year 6, this still represents satisfactory progress over time. There is still room for improvement, however. The school has recognised this and has increased the taught time for science and provided additional support for the large Year 6 class. This has ensured that during the current year all pupils have made better progress. However, because of previous weaker teaching, too much ground needed to be made up and this has also had a significant impact on standards.
88. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' planning and carrying out of investigations is the weakest element in science. This is confirmed in the teacher assessments of 2001 when pupils' attainment was well below average in this element. This is a result of teachers' lack of confidence and skills to develop this aspect of learning and some unsatisfactory teaching in the past. Although staff have begun to plan an increasing range of opportunities and pupils' planning and obtaining of evidence is satisfactory overall, there are still too few opportunities for more able pupils to turn their own ideas into a form that can be investigated. Most pupils have developed the basic skills of handling equipment and materials. The majority make satisfactory observations, record results and some more able pupils understand appropriately how to represent results in a simple chart. But, in general, investigations are overly teacher directed.
89. This continues to be an area of weakness through Years 3 to 6. Although pupils are attaining satisfactory standards, more able pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Although, increasingly as they move through the school, pupils are aware of fair testing, the controlling of variables, predicting then testing their predictions under the direction of the teacher, there is limited evidence of pupils taking personal control of their work. They are, for example, not always challenged to compare or explain their predictions. In addition, when pupils do explain their work and evaluate their results, writing is too descriptive and does not use key science words as a matter of course. Pupils' uses of key mathematical and computer skills are not fully developed to support learning.
90. In Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of materials and their properties. They recognise well why certain materials are used to make specific objects, such as glass for windows, and recognise that some materials cannot be changed by the force of push or pull for example. They also have a satisfactory understanding of forces and the effects of friction on the speed of travel.

They are less secure in their knowledge and understanding of life and living things. Although pupils recognise the role of medicines in life and that food is needed for activity, their understanding of plant and animal life is less secure. This is a consequence of the timing of topics, which has impacted on the continuation and progression of pupils' skills in this aspect of science.

91. By the end of Year 6 however, pupils have a secure understanding of the needs of living things. This is because teachers are more secure in their knowledge and opportunities are planned appropriately to develop pupils' skills. As they move through the school, pupils increasingly understand the importance of a healthy diet and that different shaped teeth have different jobs to do. They can name major organs and bones of the body and know that muscles help them move. They also, when challenged, as in Year 5, plan fair tests to consider the conditions that might effect germination and recognise different methods of seed dispersal. Pupils know how circuits work and the conducting and insulating properties of materials. Currently Year 6 pupils are learning about light. Teaching is challenging but based on good prior learning. As a result pupils are becoming increasingly aware that light changes direction when it is reflected from a surface. Pupils' mathematical skills were well developed when they used protractors to measure the angle of travel accurately.
92. It is evident that over time pupils make good gains in their scientific knowledge, and are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their ability. The area of weakness for pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, is that not enough opportunities have been consistently provided for pupils to carry out investigative and open-ended experiments where they have to make decisions for themselves. In some instances this is because investigative work is too teacher directed and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. This is especially evident in Years 3 and 4. As a result, there is a need for the pupils to 'catch up', in Years 5 and 6. Whilst most pupils are achieving standards of which they are capable, some more able pupils who should be working at the higher level 5, are underachieving. If progress was more even throughout the school, pupils would do better overall.
93. Teaching and learning is varied. In Years 1 and 2 there has been in the past unsatisfactory teaching and this has impacted significantly on standards. Overall teaching in these year groups is now satisfactory with some better teaching seen during the inspection. Teachers' teaching of key science skills is good and pupils are effectively managed. Support staff are used well to ensure that less able pupils and those learning English as an additional language are supported well, fully included and, as a result, able to benefit fully from the activities. As a result all pupils are eager to learn. As indicated teaching and learning in Years 3 to 4 is satisfactory overall and good and very good in Years 5 and 6. Again, staff use support staff well to support less able pupils. Teaching is at its best when good, open ended questions are used to extend pupils' thinking and pupils are expected to use this to help them to explain and understand why things happen as they do and are encouraged to use scientific language. The weaker elements are that not all teachers have high enough expectations and do not use their assessments of pupils' learning to plan activities that are better matched to pupils' abilities. In addition not all teachers have high enough expectations as to how pupils set out and present their work; marking does not always indicate targets for development. However, as a direct result of the monitoring of planning and pupils' work by the co-ordinator, there has been a recent improvement in marking, presentation and planning.
94. The co-ordinator of the subject has not been in post long enough to have a more direct impact on standards. In the past science did not have any designated manager, which resulted in some stagnation of practice. She has, with the support of the headteacher, carefully monitored the provision and identified relevant areas for development, which have begun to be implemented successfully. The school has clear views for the future and has already acted to raise the profile of science and increase the time given to teaching. The scheme of work better supports non-specialist teachers, but there is still scope for further development to ensure that pupils are challenged and that teachers' range of skills are further developed, to better support and challenge pupils.

ART

95. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their ability. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school has identified some talented older pupils. They are well supported and are challenged with open ended homework tasks. As a result of the commitment of staff to provide good support in class, these pupils make good progress.
96. In Years 1 and 2 pupils draw objects from observation with increasing skill and enjoyment. For example, pupils drew fruit and vegetables after looking at them closely in a viewfinder. They increasingly become aware of the use of line, colour, shape and texture in their work, and use observations as the basis of textile designs. Self portraits are bold, and pupils make reasonable attempts to depict facial features. Pupils' work is attractively displayed and pupils take a pride in sharing their work with others. Sketchbooks are used appropriately, but are not used consistently in all classes to aid planning, exploration and development of skills.
97. By Year 6, pupils have increasingly experienced a range of techniques and have made further progress. Art is used well to support and enhance other subjects, for example, when drawing Egyptians in Year 4 or when decorating models in design and technology. Through the study of famous artists, which are well represented in the hall, they have become increasingly aware of different methods and styles. Year 6 pupils have just finished hat designs. Great care has been taken and pupils have had the opportunity to research different designers through the world wide web. Different materials were examined for their effects, which supported pupils' science skills well. Finished designs of the more able pupils reflected the personality of the proposed wearers well. Talented pupils in particular demonstrated extremely mature skills. The commentary in their sketchbooks show clearly thought out processes with clever and imaginative ideas very effectively presented. All pupils finished work shows their enjoyment of the topic and the 'fashion show' with oral presentation supported pupils' speaking skills well. The use of perspective and sketches of people in action, however, was a more challenging concept for some pupils and this overtaxed their drawing skills.
98. Work in three-dimensional arts, however, is limited, as is modelling using a variety of mediums. This is an area identified by the co-ordinator as a priority. The school has booked a visiting sculptor to support both staff and pupils. In some younger classes sketchbooks are not used at all, while in some older classes work is mixed up with design and technology and sometimes history. This requires further development, with staff guidance on their best use to develop pupils' skills.
99. Limited teaching was seen during the inspection due to timetabling arrangements. Evidence from work on display and pupils' sketchbooks indicates that teaching in general is satisfactory. This is similar to the last inspection. During the autumn term the co-ordinator was able to teach in Key Stage 2. This was a good opportunity to develop and enhance pupils' skills and enjoyment of art.
100. The co-ordinator in post at the last inspection remains enthusiastic. The scheme of work has recently been revised and the newly drafted policy is well planned to support spiritual and cultural development. A portfolio of assessed work has been developed to better support non-specialist teachers. This is a good development since the last inspection. This could be further developed by including increased detailed evaluations of the piece of work in relation to National Curriculum levels to better support non-specialist teachers' knowledge about the assessment criteria. Resources are satisfactory overall, although some items, such as pastels, are limited and this does have an impact on pupils' work. There is also a shortage in the area of modelling and three-dimensional work. The co-ordinator has plans already to address this issue.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents a fall in standards in Year 2 when compared to the last inspection. This is a result of inconsistent and unsatisfactory teaching in the past. Pupils' making skills have, however, improved since the last inspection, due to an increased emphasis on this aspect of learning. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their ability.
102. Pupils in all year groups develop a satisfactory understanding of the 'design, make and evaluate' processes outlined in the National Curriculum. Pupils across the school are provided with appropriate opportunities to investigate materials before they make their choices. Pupils work with a range of materials and have satisfactory skills of joining materials together using different methods. In Year 1, pupils have been investigating playground equipment. A visit was used well to enable pupils to clarify their ideas, before making a variety of equipment using construction kits and junk modelling. Other pupils were using construction kits to learn about axles and chassis when making wheeled vehicles. In Year 2, pupils have investigated puppets, effectively planning what materials they need, drawing and testing their designs before making cat puppets, which they joined with simple stitching. In this way they understand that they may have to change their plans if they are not successful. They have taken pride in their work and many pupils have been moved to make different types of puppets at home. The way pupils are required to evaluate their work is not developed to provide different challenges to pupils of different abilities in a way which challenges the thinking of more able pupils.
103. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils have continued to make sound progress and by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment remains in line with national expectations. Increasingly their work is being linked to other subjects and this is a positive development that enables pupils to recognise the links in learning and the development of skills. When thinking about different types of sandwiches, for example in Year 3, pupils drew on their understanding of healthy eating from science. Similarly when making photograph frames and storybooks, pupils' research skills were developed alongside skills of measuring. In Year 5, pupils' musical instruments were based on a range of different instruments from a wide variety of cultures and, in Year 6, pupils have designed, tested and made shelters. This was linked to their work in history about World War Two. However, pupils' making and joining skills are a little immature for their age and ability. This is a result of limitations in subject teaching in the past. Although pupils researched different types of tents and shelters, examining life-size tents for example, the finished products were not fully tested or evaluated to enable pupils to see if the final products fitted their intended purpose. Evaluations were overly descriptive about the difficulties encountered for example. This was a missed opportunity to challenge pupils.
104. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that teaching in the subject is satisfactory overall although some good teaching was observed. Pupils clearly enjoy their work and are enthusiastic. Teachers show appropriate subject knowledge and are growing in confidence to use more imaginative ideas and to allow pupils access to an increased range of equipment. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and are encouraged to think about how their work could be improved next time. Opportunities are not always developed to challenge more able pupils as all work set is the same for all pupils and is overly teacher directed at times. This results in finished products being similar to each other and lacking in originality. Teachers are however beginning to use demonstration models appropriately to support pupils' learning.
105. The subject has been without a manager for some time. The headteacher, a subject specialist, has taken over in the short term. She has used her skills well to support staff and develop their confidence. The scheme of work has been developed but she has appropriately identified that this requires further development to better suit the needs of the school. Assessment procedures are in their early stages but plans are well thought out to develop pupils' self-assessment alongside teachers' on-going assessments. There is a very clear vision for the development of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make sound progress in their learning. Pupils' attainment was in line with national expectations at the last inspection and this level has been maintained. Teachers make good use of national subject guidance to ensure coverage of all the required aspects. The opportunities to use local study centres have extended pupils' knowledge and understanding of such aspects as coastal erosion and changes in land use.
107. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop their early mapping skills soundly, for example, by making a sketch map of the routes around the school. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the local area and talk about some of the features of Watford. They visit the local estate to observe the different types of houses and the street furniture and know why these have been used. They can identify areas which they have studied on World maps and maps of the UK. Teachers make effective use of links with literacy to extend pupils' knowledge. For example, pupils have written about their holiday travels and described the climate in Australia and Portugal. They describe the clothes which they needed and activities which they could follow. In class, pupils research the climate of different locations and identify what sort of holidays they could have there. Pupils' mapping skills are extended satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils in Year 3 use symbols and a key and compare their maps with aerial photographs. By Years 5 and 6 they show a developing knowledge and use of symbols and know how to identify and record city plans. Pupils in Year 5 reinforce and extend their mapping skills by using and drawing maps and diagrams with different scales.
108. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of contrasting environments. Pupils in Year 4 talk in detail about life in Egypt, drawing their learning from a good range of resources such as pictures, descriptions and maps. Year 5 pupils examine the effects of water on the landscape and the causes of erosion. Pupils in Year 6 know about the main climatic differences by studying information they obtain from the Internet. Pupils compare the traffic conditions in adjacent areas and have obtained the opinions of local residents considering the possible impact of building a by-pass. Teachers use a good range of strategies to interest pupils and extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, they make good use of pupils' own experiences of travel and holidays to promote their understanding of the life-styles and values of different cultures, such as those relating to food and clothes. Discussion of the suggested local by-pass enabled Year 6 pupils to gain a greater understanding of the value of local services and their impact on the local environment.
109. There was not enough evidence to give a clear judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school. An analysis of pupils' work and talking to teachers and pupils indicate that both teaching and learning are at least sound. Pupils' work shows that most use their literacy and numeracy skills effectively to develop their learning in describing their local area or drawing climate graphs. Improved resources for information and communication technology are now providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their skills as was evident in Year 6. Procedures to assess pupils' work and evaluate teaching have recently been introduced and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching.

HISTORY

110. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by Years 2 and 6. During the inspection, no lessons took place. No overall judgements can be made about teaching but a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them and teachers indicate that pupils make sound progress in the subject. At the last inspection pupils' attainment was judged to be in line with expectations and these standards have been maintained. Pupils have a good idea of elementary chronology by the age of seven as a result of studying what their parents and grandparents had as toys and the way people lived 20 and 40 years ago. By the age of eleven, pupils have an insight into the

different sources of evidence and have satisfactorily covered the range of topics expected in the National Curriculum.

111. In Year 1, pupils have a good understanding that life for their parents and grandparents was very different. They have questioned their parents and grandparents on the toys which they had as children and found out how they carried out domestic chores before the availability of modern electrical goods. They have studied events in the past such as the fire of London and have some appreciation of why it occurred. They know that there was no organised fire service and that the closely built wooden houses were a fire hazard. They know how to use contemporary pictures as a source of information and interpret them with insight. Pupils have an understanding of the stages of history by creating a time-line.
112. Visits to Verulamium have opened pupils' eyes to the value of studying archaeological remains and a visitor from the local history museum has introduced them to what they can learn from simple artefacts like carpet beaters and shoe stretchers. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate that they have good understanding of the different sources of historical evidence and discuss what they learn intelligently. They know where to go for information and combine descriptions which they read in books with data retrieved from computer based encyclopaedias. They make use of pictures and maps in looking at the lives of Ancient Greeks and Egyptians. They examine the experiences of evacuees during the war and have visited a living museum to gather information first-hand. Pupils' imaginary accounts of what it must have been like indicate that they have a good appreciation of conditions and difficulties at the time. One pupil commented that it was difficult to get on with the local children who would not let them play in their games. Others contrasted their experience with that of Ann Frank in Holland during the war. The amount of written work indicates that pupils use their literacy skills well in recording their work and ideas. By Year 6, pupils have acquired a satisfactory knowledge of British, world and local history through a rolling programme of topics. Teaching follows the national guidelines and introduces pupils to the expected range of skills.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

113. During the inspection week, it was only possible to observe direct teaching of information and communication technology in one class in Years 1 and 2. The majority of teaching observed was in Years 3 to 6. All teaching observed took place in the computer suite. No direct teaching was seen in classrooms. Therefore, judgements of Years 1 and 2 are based on the limited number of observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, teachers' planning and assessment records and discussion with pupils, teachers and the co-ordinator.
114. By the age of seven and eleven, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This represents a decline since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. However, this can be attributed to changes in teaching staff, especially in Years 1 and 2, the lack of a suitable computer suite until recently and teachers' knowledge and skills not keeping up with the fast changes in information and communication technology.
115. By the age of seven, pupils use the mouse to log on, select from an on-screen menu, delete and insert letters and words, drag and drop icons and pictures and print their work. The majority is able to find letters on the QWERTY keyboard with ease. Pupils know that information can be obtained from many sources. For example, television, video, tape, digital camera, CD-ROMs and the Internet. They can program a floor robot to follow a set of commands.
116. By the age of eleven, pupils confidently log on and close down the computer, manipulate screen icons using the mouse, select items from an on-screen menu, use the drag and drop features of a program, access the Internet and print their work. They word-process using different styles, size and colour of font. They use patterns and colours to produce pictures and are beginning to use spreadsheets. At the time of the inspection, pupils only had a limited knowledge of the use of external sensors and data logging equipment. However, this aspect of the curriculum is covered

during the Year 5 residential visit to the Kingswood Activity Centre and the Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight. For example, pupils use sensors attached to their fingers to record the effect of exercise on their pulse and use data equipment to record results during sports activities. Year 6 pupils confidently control the overhead projector and transparencies during assemblies. Throughout the school, pupils are prepared to help and support each other and experiment should anything go wrong.

117. No judgements can be made about teaching in Years 1 and 2 as not enough lessons were observed. However, teachers' planning, and the one lesson observed, indicate that teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. In a third of lessons teaching is very good. Teachers' knowledge is generally satisfactory and a minority of teachers have good knowledge. Classroom assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The school starts a national training initiative for teachers in April 2002 so as to improve teachers' knowledge and personal skills. The upgrading of resources, the new computer suite and the good leadership given by the headteacher, who is acting as temporary co-ordinator, are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching although these recent improvements have yet to have an impact on standards. In a very good Year 6 lesson observed in the computer suite, the teacher's very good knowledge of the use of computers and the use of the Internet meant that she was able to cope securely with pupils' errors and guide them to useful web-sites, through a filtered Internet system, by her good use of questions and challenging tasks. The result was that pupils were quickly accessing data on the climates of Nepal, Switzerland and Ecuador and were completing tables in order to compare climatic conditions around the world. The lesson also made a good contribution to geography and map work, mathematics and data handling and English and speaking and listening. The use of assessment to inform planning and to track pupils' skills and knowledge has yet to be developed. The lack of a whole school system for assessment means that higher attaining pupils and those who bring skills from home have not been fully identified and so do not make the progress that they should.
118. Boys and girls have very good attitudes and the same growing confidence and interest. They are eager to learn new skills and will share these with their classmates. They are happy to experiment should anything go wrong. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed using a programmable floor robot. They worked well together in groups to program the robot to travel along a given path and learnt from their mistakes in order to correct the movements of the robot. Pupils have a good knowledge of what they are learning as teachers refer to the objectives at the start of the lesson. However, these are not always recapped at the end of the lesson so that pupils can self-assess whether they have been achieved. In all lessons observed pupils worked well in pairs or small groups. They ensure that each has equal access to the mouse, the keyboard and any additional hardware.
119. The use of information and communication technology in other areas of the curriculum is underdeveloped, although some examples were seen of the subject supporting English, mathematics and geography. In the scrutiny of pupils' books and wall displays there was limited evidence of computers being used regularly in classrooms and work being recorded. The new computer suite is beginning to have a positive impact on raising skills and standards, as whole class lessons can now be taught.
120. The headteacher is acting as temporary co-ordinator. She is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas for development. She has ensured that a nationally published scheme of work is being used as the basis for ensuring continuity and progression. To improve teacher skills and knowledge she has selected a training provider that meets the needs of the staff. Computers in the suite are of good quality. Some classroom computers need to be upgraded. The ratio of computers to pupils is in line with national guidance. The school has a scanner and has leased a digital camera from the local education authority but there was no evidence of these being used by pupils. A part-time technician is being employed to maintain computers, which allows the co-ordinator more time to monitor teaching and planning.

MUSIC

121. Pupils attain standards which are above expectations by both Year 2 and Year 6. At the last inspection, pupils' attainment was above expectations by Year 2 and in line with those expected by Year 6, so standards have been improved. There is good use of specialist teaching throughout Key Stage 2 and this and a well structured programme of teaching has helped to raise pupils' skills and interests.
122. Pupils benefit from a good grounding in the early years, where music is taught by the co-ordinator. This arouses their interest in music making and composing. Pupils have a good idea of different types of music and their natural response is to participate with enthusiasm. In the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1, pupils were greatly involved in creating a tune to accompany the story of the three little pigs. They suggested a variety of ways of reflecting the excitement of the story and used percussion instruments to develop their ideas. Teaching maintained pupils' attention and was successful in helping them to understand rhythm and the need to perform together in groups.
123. In Year 5, pupils sang songs in three parts and showed a good level of control in breathing and in phrasing the lyrics. They sang in harmony and were able to respond well to suggestions from the teachers and other pupils on ways to improve their performance. Pupils accompanied the songs on the violin and were sensitive in the way they played. In Year 6, pupils rehearsed a performance of chanted and sung music associated with their reading of Shakespeare's Macbeth. The whispered chorus of the witches was well performed with a musical accompaniment from 12 musicians playing cellos, violins and tuned and untuned percussion. The pupils again made good suggestions about ways to achieve a really professional level and participated enthusiastically. They were good at evaluating what succeeded and what needed to be improved in both their chanting and movements on stage. All pupils take part whatever their musical skills and everyone was committed to giving of their best in preparation for a later performance in front of the school. Higher ability pupils read music and receive tuition in strings and recorder playing.
124. Teaching is good and introduces pupils to advanced specialist vocabulary which they understand and use themselves. There is a good programme to guide teaching, which ensures that all elements of the subject are fully taught. The use of specialist tuition at Key Stage 2 provides a valuable boost to the skills of teachers who attend the lessons as well as enhancing pupils' learning. Music plays an active part in school life and is enhanced by regular participation in concerts outside school. As well as performing to local groups and in the local shopping centre, pupils take part in concerts for local schools, where the standard of singing is at a high level. Singing assemblies promote pupils' knowledge of assembly songs. However, the number of pupils present at each session is not the easiest way of teaching them a range of skills. Resources are good and pupils have a good knowledge of a variety of music from different cultures through hearing tapes in assembly and class lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. During the inspection week it was only possible to observe games and gymnastics lessons in Years 3 to 6. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 and no dance or swimming lessons were observed. Therefore, judgements in Years 1 and 2 are based on examination of the physical education curriculum, teachers' planning, assessment records and discussion with teachers and pupils.
126. By the age of seven and 11, standards overall are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to perform with suppleness, control, accuracy and safety, a range of basic skills such as throwing, catching, balancing and the use of a bat and hockey stick. Pupils work well in teams and understand the tactics and rules of a variety of attack and invasion games. For example, in a very good Year 6 hockey lesson, pupils used hockey sticks well to attack and defend a

goalmouth. All pupils from Years 3 to 6 attend swimming lessons. This results in standards in swimming being above expectations, with nearly all pupils able to swim 25 metres by Year 6 and the majority more than 50 metres.

127. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching at Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. In a third of lesson observed teaching was very good. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and manage pupils very well. They set a good example to pupils by dressing appropriately and leading by example. They ensure that all pupils dress appropriately and that earrings are removed for safety. Lessons include the essential elements of warming up and cooling down. In the good lessons teachers ensure that there is good pace and time is well used. In the satisfactory lessons pace is sound. Few opportunities are given for pupils to constructively evaluate each other to improve their skills from the comments made. This often makes the difference between a satisfactory and a good lesson. No overall judgement can be made about swimming lessons at the public swimming pool. These are taught by an instructor, who is supported by the teacher and a classroom assistant. However, discussions with teachers and the co-ordinator indicate that pupils are set appropriate tasks, which inspire them to feel confident in the water and to make good progress in lessons. Teachers are generally safety conscious whether teaching in the school hall or on the playground. For example, in an outdoor hockey skills lesson, the teacher stressed the need to hold the hockey sticks in the correct manner to avoid accidentally hitting other pupils. However, in an indoor lesson Year 4 pupils were asked to warm up with vigorous movements around benches and mats laid out for apparatus work. Although the teacher and classroom assistant ensured that pupils worked safely, the apparatus was an unnecessary potential hazard. Teaching assistants give good support for pupils with special educational needs.
128. All lessons start with an appropriate warm up session. In many lessons skilful questioning from teachers helps develop pupils' understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies and the need to warm up and cool down. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher began with a vigorous warm-up, which also included questions about the effect of exercise on the body. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were set a cooling down routine and asked to explain why they needed to cool down. Pupils' attitude and behaviour is good. In the Year 6 hockey lesson observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good as a result of a well-managed lesson, high expectations and clear objectives shared with the pupils. The challenging task, the quick pace of the lesson and the enthusiasm of the class teacher ensured that the objectives were well met by all pupils.
129. A policy and scheme of work are in place, although the scheme of work needs updating. The scheme covers all strands of the curriculum. The Year 5 residential visit to Kingswood Activity Centre and the Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight contribute well to outdoor pursuits and sporting activities. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, which include football, netball, rugby and tennis in the summer term. Teams have successfully won swimming, netball and rounders tournaments against local schools. Good links have been established with Watford Football Club who provide coaching activities after school. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject in school is underdeveloped. However, pupils make good use of computers and sensors during the residential visits to the Isle of Wight. For example, they use personal sensors to monitor their pulse rates when exercising rigorously and spreadsheets to interrogate scores in sporting events. Resources are satisfactory. The two playgrounds and the hall are adequate in size. The field is spacious. However, line markings in the playground have faded and the surface is uneven. There is a need to improve the provision of large apparatus suitable for the Foundation Stage. The subject contributes well to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils, for example, through team games, dance and extra-curricular activities. The use of assessment to inform planning, especially to target the more able pupils, is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator has been in post for just eight weeks but already has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus for Hertfordshire. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and language acquisition because of the good support they receive from classroom assistants and the visiting language teacher.
131. By the age of seven, pupils are familiar with the key events of the life of Jesus and the Christian celebrations of Easter and Christmas. They can recall the main events in the stories and parables told by Jesus, for example 'The feeding of the five thousand'. They know the important events from the Hindu story of Rama and Sita. Pupils are learning about themselves and are developing sensitivity and understanding. They explore and share their thoughts about feelings, love and friendship. They are beginning to develop an awareness of the signs, symbols and festivals celebrated by Christians, Jews and Hindus. By the age of eleven, pupils generally have a sound knowledge of the key beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. They can explain the importance of the Bible and the Qur'an to their respective faiths. They know the importance of religious festivals in daily life; for example christenings, marriages and funerals. Teachers plan effectively and relate moral issues to a religious base. The predominant religion studied is Christianity. The comparative religions studied are Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam, of which pupils have a basic knowledge and recall.
132. Teaching throughout the school is good and has improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. Overall, management of pupils is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. This results in good behaviour, good attitudes and good progress in lessons. Pupils listen well to one another and are eager to contribute their ideas sensibly. In half the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 and a third of lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, attitudes were very good. Pupils have a good understanding of what they are learning because teachers share the lesson objectives with them at the start of the lessons. However, not all teachers recap the learning intentions at the end of the lesson to ensure pupils know if they have met the objectives. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles to stimulate pupils. For example, in a good Year 4 lesson the teacher expressively read the Easter story to the class. The lesson quickly moved to a drama and role-play session where the pupils worked in groups to develop small plays about the resurrection of Jesus. By approaching the Easter story through drama, the pupils were able to understand more fully the main themes of the story. The lesson also contributed very well to literacy and speaking and listening. In a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher used artefacts, for example, a large crucifix, a palm cross, an Easter egg, a hot cross bun and toy chicks, to promote discussion about the symbolism of Easter. Pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to discuss the sacrifice made by Jesus and the sacrifice made by people in the world to promote an idea or a cause. The pupils spoke with maturity and interest and the discussion was guided well by the teacher. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that not all teachers ensure that work is carefully matched to different ability groups. In the scrutiny of pupils' work, it was evident that many teachers set the same work to pupils irrespective of ability of groups within the class.
133. The co-ordinator has been in post for less than one term. Therefore a judgement cannot be made about her leadership of the subject. However, she has monitored planning and is developing a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject, although she has not had the opportunity to observe lessons or work alongside colleagues. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development through discussion and study. Spiritual awareness is less well developed with opportunities missed. For example, there is no focus, such as a candle, used in assemblies and the music played is not discussed. The multiculturalism of society and the school is not celebrated in many displays around the school.