

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST. GILES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

South Mymms, Potters Bar

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117564

Headteacher: Mrs E. Hartland

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson  
23742

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 194876

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blanche Lane South Mymms Hertfordshire
Postcode:	EN6 3PE
Telephone number:	01707 642170
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Cameron
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson 23742	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education	How high are standards? Pupils' results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Len Shipman 14061	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jean Peek 25281	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
Sonia Bosworth 30573	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Giles Church of England Primary is situated in an attractive rural setting in the village of South Mymms. It is a small village school that currently has 96 pupils on roll (46 boys and 50 girls). Most pupils live in the local village and some come from nearby Potters Bar. Pupils live in a mixture of private and rented housing and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. They are mainly of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Twenty-three per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, most of whom have moderate or specific learning needs. This is above the national average of 18 per cent. No pupils have specific Statements of Special Educational Need. Eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Children enter reception with a broad range of attainment. Standards on entry are average overall.

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

St. Giles Church of England Primary is a friendly and harmonious school community. Its strengths outweigh its weaknesses and its overall effectiveness is sound. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They behave well and relationships are good. Teaching is sound overall and often good. Good teaching promotes good learning in reception and in Years 1 and 2. Junior pupils achieve soundly and attain average standards. The leadership of the headteacher, supported well by key staff and an active governing body, is focused increasingly effectively on school improvement. The school makes good use of its resources and provides sound value for money.

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

- Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and in the playground.
- The arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are good and promote good relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils attain standards in art and physical education that are above nationally expected levels.
- It has good links with the community and involves parents successfully in the work of the school.
- The headteacher has successfully involved staff and governors in establishing a shared vision and a commitment to succeed.

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

- Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' expectations to a consistently high level.
- The use of assessment information to ensure that learning activities match consistently the needs of pupils in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes.
- Pupils' levels of attendance

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

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

The school has made good progress overall since the last inspection in June 1997. It has made rapid progress recently on most of the key issues identified in the last report. Staff have made good use of national guidance to improve curriculum planning and teachers' subject knowledge. The school uses a good school improvement plan to identify priorities and to target resources successfully to improve them. The school has improved its procedures for assessing pupils' work, although teachers do not use assessment information consistently to ensure learning activities match the range of pupils' needs. The role of subject co-ordinators has improved, especially in literacy and numeracy. It has yet to be developed consistently in other subjects. Teaching has improved. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, although teachers' expectations of pupils' work are not always consistently high enough. Infant pupils maintain above average standards of attainment. Junior pupils attain average standards, similar to those reported previously. The school has maintained pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A	B	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	B	C	E	
Science	E	C	E	E*	

*E\* indicates that the school's standards are in the lowest 5 per cent nationally.*

Pupils attain standards that are higher at the end of Year 2 than at the time of the last inspection. Year 6 pupils attain similar standards than previously reported. Although there is some yearly variation due to differences in the number of pupils and their range of ability in small year groups, the results of national tests over the last four years show that standards are just above the national average in English and mathematics. They are below average in science. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The school exceeded its target of 86 per cent in 2000 for the proportion of pupils to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 or above in English and mathematics. It has set a very challenging target of 93 per cent for 2002. Inspection evidence shows that it is unlikely to achieve this target due to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. Inspection evidence shows that pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. The school has focused strongly on science and this has successfully raised standards. Good teaching, pupils' positive attitudes and very detailed curriculum planning have contributed to improvement.

Inspection evidence shows that Year 2 pupils attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is consistently good and promotes above average standards. The school has soundly implemented its strategies for literacy and numeracy, which are improving pupils' skills, especially in the infant phase. Pupils use these skills soundly to support standards in other subjects, for example history and design and technology. Year 2 pupils attain standards in information and communication technology that meet those expected for their age. The standards of Year 6 pupils are below national expectations. Limited and unreliable resources prevent pupils from having enough opportunities to extend their skills. The school is improving these resources to increase the range and frequency of opportunities for pupils to use computers. Pupils attain above expected standards in art and design and physical education. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall in meeting their learning targets. It is good when teachers match the learning activities closely to their specific needs, although this is not consistent in each lesson. Pupils from a Traveller background make sound progress overall. They are fully involved in learning activities and make good progress when they benefit from good quality support.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school.	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy school. They are keen to learn and to succeed.
Behaviour in and around school.	Good in lessons and in the playground. Some pupils are noisy and run in the building when moving between activities.
Personal development and relationships.	Good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils take on responsibility well and show respect for each other.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, caused mainly by excessive authorised absence by 3 or 4 pupils.

Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are strengths of the school and support their learning. Good relationships contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. The poor attendance of a few pupils restricts considerably the progress they make in their learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good	good	sound

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

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is sound in the junior phase and often good. Teaching was good in 14 out of the 30 lessons observed during the inspection. It was very good in a further three lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of English is good, especially in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of mathematics is sound overall and often good. Teachers are helping pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills successfully, especially in the infant phase where pupils achieve above average standards. Teachers use pupils' literacy and numeracy skills soundly to support work in other subjects, for example history and design and technology. Teaching is good in art and design and in physical education. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to help pupils to achieve above expected standards. Teaching is sound in all other subjects. Teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly recently. It is now good in all areas of learning except in creative development where it is sound. The strong team approach between the two teachers has led to improvements in planning, an attractive learning environment and better use of assessment to monitor children's progress. Teachers use detailed planning to provide a clear focus for pupils' learning. They manage their classes effectively to sustain pupils' attention and concentration. Some teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations. They do not always ensure that they match activities closely to the range of pupils' learning needs. Taking all subjects into account and the range of pupils' work since the start of the school year, the quality of teaching and learning is sound overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. It provides a satisfactory range of interesting and relevant areas of learning for the infant pupils. It is enhanced well by good community contributions, good extra-curricular opportunities for junior pupils and French lessons in Year 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound. The school identifies their special educational needs early. Teachers write clear action plans. They lack consistency in monitoring pupils' progress closely to ensure that they set work at an appropriate level.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Strengths in moral and social development promote good relationships and pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Sound in spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' knowledge of the beliefs and traditions of a broad range of cultures are not fully developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Sound. Staff know their pupils well and provide good care and support for their personal development. The school's use of assessment to match activities to pupils' learning needs is not consistent.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Sound and links are improving. A very supportive Friends Association, together with a number of parents who help in school, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

The school enhances the curriculum successfully. It has increased the range of extra-curricular activities, especially sports clubs. Some lack of resources in information and communication technology limits the development of pupils' skills in some required aspects.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall. The headteacher works closely with staff, governors and parents to encourage a team approach and to provide a clear direction to the work of the school. Improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and in the school building. The school has yet to establish a consistent expectation of high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound overall and improving. Governors are more actively involved and are kept informed well. They meet their responsibilities and have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. The headteacher and key staff analyse an increasing range of attainment information to target improvement. They are monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. This is not rigorous enough to focus strongly on its impact on raising standards of attainment.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its finances efficiently to support improvement priorities. Governors closely monitor spending levels and apply the principles of best value effectively. They are improving strategic planning to focus closely on school development. Staffing levels meet the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation and range of learning resources are adequate overall.

The school benefits from good outdoor provision. The indoor accommodation lacks space for physical education, school administration and medical facilities. The building is currently being extended to improve library and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. The school plans to improve inadequacies in resources for ICT and for outdoor play equipment for reception children.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parental responses from 34 questionnaires (35 per cent), six written comments and the views of the 19 who attended the pre-inspection meeting. In addition, many parents were interviewed during the inspection.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• Quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• The school works closely with the local community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistencies with homework.</li> <li>• Better curriculum information to support learning at home.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Clearer information on the behaviour policy and in pupils' annual reports.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence fully supports the positive views of the parents, although expectations were not consistently high in each class. Inspectors found that homework is generally used consistently in line with the policy. The quality of the annual report varies between classes. Parents are due to receive details of the revised home-school agreement and behaviour policy. Considering the size and type of school, the range of extra-curricular activities is good, although there are fewer for younger pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the reception class with varied levels of skills and knowledge. Their attainment on entry is wide, although broadly average overall. The school has established a new teaching team since the start of the spring term. The two teachers in the reception class work very successfully together. They have improved planning and the organisation of the reception area. The teachers work closely with classroom assistants and establish good relationships with the children. These help children to settle quickly and happily into class routines. Good teaching helps children make good progress in their learning. By the end of reception year, all children are on track to meet or exceed the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> set for children aged five in all the areas of learning. They attain standards in their personal, social and emotional development, and most aspects of physical development that are above expected levels.
2. The results over the last three years of the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that standards have been well above average, especially in writing and mathematics. In 2001 the results were well above average in mathematics and above average in reading compared with similar schools. Last year's results in writing were in the top 5 per cent nationally and compared with similar schools. The size of each group of pupils taking the tests varies from year to year; for example, there were only 12 pupils in last year's Year 2 compared with 14 this year. However, the school has maintained high standards. Inspection evidence confirms that standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They have improved since the last inspection. The school has set itself a challenging target of 93 per cent of pupils to achieve the nationally expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, which is above the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that they are likely to be close to achieving that target with a good proportion of pupils achieving above average levels, especially in reading.
3. Consistently good teaching, pupils' enthusiastic attitudes to learning and the good use of challenging resources, for example for the more able readers, are promoting high standards. The school successfully targeted pupils' writing standards last year. This resulted in one in three pupils achieving the higher than average Level 3 at the end of Year 2. Both boys and girls achieved well. The focus this year has been on the more able readers. Inspection evidence confirms that teachers challenge these pupils successfully, especially in reading. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well throughout the school. Teachers promote these skills successfully through a wide range of activities. Pupils achieve above expected standards. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from a Traveller background, are fully included in all activities and extend their skills very successfully.
4. The results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 over the last three years show that pupils attain just above the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Standards fell in English and mathematics in 2001. They were below the national average in English and well below the average of similar schools. Results in mathematics met the national average, but were well below the average of similar schools. Pupils attained standards in science that were well below the national average and in the bottom 5 per cent compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils coming in and leaving the school during their primary years resulted in variations in the range of abilities

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements children make in the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

in the different year groups. Inspection evidence confirms that the standards vary significantly between different year groups within the school. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 5 attain standards that are above average in English and mathematics. Year 6 pupils attain standards that are similar to those reported in the last inspection and are in line with the national average.

5. The school achieved its target of 86 per cent of Year 6 pupils to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 or above in English and mathematics in 2001. It has maintained its challenging target, set before the current headteacher took up her post, of 93 per cent in 2002. Inspection evidence shows that the school is unlikely to achieve this target as the small year group contains some pupils with special educational needs and some lower attainers who are unlikely to achieve average standards. The school is currently using booster sessions, especially in mathematics, which are beginning to improve standards, although there was limited evidence of pupils being consistently challenged to achieve above average standards in lessons. The school has focused on improving the below average standards in science. Inspection evidence confirms that standards have improved and are now in line with the national average. Pupils have better investigative skills and a greater understanding of scientific enquiry. Key factors in improvement are: (a) consistently good teaching enthuses pupils to adopt a positive and enthusiastic approach; (b) teachers making good use of a detailed and well-planned curriculum which builds successfully on pupils' prior knowledge; and (c) an analysis of test information showed that pupils needed to revise knowledge completed earlier on a two-year topic cycle. Teachers have now built this into their planning.
6. Pupils make good progress in their learning in Years 1 and 2, especially in literacy and numeracy. They make sound progress overall in the junior phase. Pupils make sound progress in their reading, although more able readers are not challenged consistently to use a wide range of different reading books. Pupils write in a good range of different styles, although teachers' expectations of the accurate use of punctuation are not consistently high enough. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills soundly in a range of other subjects, for example history, science and design and technology.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall in their learning. It varies considerably depending on how closely teachers set work with a level of challenge to meet pupils' individual learning needs and the effectiveness of learning support assistants. Pupils with a Traveller background make sound progress overall. Some make rapid progress from very low levels of attainment when they start the school. They benefit from effective support from class teachers and teachers from the local education authority's support service. They make slower progress when the learning activity is not matched closely to their learning needs. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Some are starting to look for ways to take account of their rapid development through extension and more challenging activities, although this is not consistently developed in all classes.
8. Pupils attain standards in information and communication technology that are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. Year 6 pupils attain standards that are below national expectations. The school does not have sufficient resources, for example in control technology, to enable junior pupils to develop the required skills. The range of computers is limited and does not allow pupils to have enough opportunities to apply their skills. Pupils attain standards in art and design and physical education that are above those expected nationally. These have improved since the last inspection and are promoted very effectively by enthusiastic and good quality teaching. Pupils attain standards in all other subjects that are similar to those reported previously and meet those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

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

9. The overall attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good and consistent with the previous inspection report. Relationships and the pupils' personal development are also good. Most parents have praised the standards of behaviour promoted in the school.
10. Pupils come into school in an orderly manner. The younger ones, many with smiling happy faces, arrive with their parents. The headteacher has a high profile in the playground to greet the children and meets the parents informally. This creates confidence between pupils, parents and the school. Once in their classes, the children quickly settle down to engage in quiet reading or other activities. Others talk with their teacher. This creates a good, prompt start to the day and encourages positive attitudes to learning. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils stated they like to learn and completed some good research projects in mathematics, as part of their homework.
11. Behaviour in class is good and pupils are motivated to sustain their interest and concentration, especially where the quality of teaching is good. The more able pupils are self-motivated to succeed and are capable of working well, either individually, in pairs or in small groups. Friendly rivalry spurs their enthusiasm to succeed. The less able pupils generally behave well. On occasions, they become easily distracted and talk between themselves unnecessarily. Their attention span is less developed. Teachers manage their classes effectively overall. This results in lessons flowing with the minimum of disruption and this has a positive influence on learning.
12. Pupils do not always behave as well when moving around the school or in the church assembly. Some pupils tend to rush and push into each other. For example, a small group of pupils ran boisterously through the corridors, knocking into adults. Behaviour during playtime is good and well supervised by staff. The pupils can 'let off steam' safely, using the good variety of playtime resources. There was no evidence of anti-social behaviour or bad language during the inspection. A group of Year 6 pupils thought that behaviour is now good. They recognise that last year there were individual incidents of bad behaviour. There have been no exclusions this school year.
13. Pupils show respect for their school, to the teaching staff and to each other. Classrooms are kept neat and tidy. Pupils listen attentively and are capable of speaking with maturity using a wide vocabulary. During question and answer sessions, they put their hands up to reply but did not interrupt if another was asked to speak. This good relationship was used to good learning effect in a design and technology lesson. During an end of lesson feedback, each group explained and demonstrated their design of a bridge. The class was encouraged to ask questions on each design. One group had tested their design and explained their experimentation in detail. Pupils listened respectfully to the explanation and then asked sensible searching questions. The respect and good relationships between the groups of pupils enabled a very good discussion to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
14. The pupils care for each other and take responsibility. In wet play, the older ones look after the younger ones. For example, at playtime an older pupil took a small boy who was crying to the midday supervisor. In and around school, pupils willingly take on different tasks, such as taking the registers to the office or, in assembly, switching the tape recorder on and off. Pupils show initiative and take increasing responsibility for their learning. For example, in a mathematics class, a more able group finished their assigned work. As the teacher was busy with another group, the group took the initiative by carrying on to another page of the textbook work.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory and just below the national averages. This is a small school where any sustained absence has implications for levels of attendance. One pupil from a

Traveller background has been absent for months and the school has been informed that the pupil is now living elsewhere. Two other pupils have regular periods in hospital. The school supports them both academically and socially so that their progress is not affected.

16. Punctuality is good, though traffic congestion can affect those few pupils who come some distance by car. Registration is taken swiftly and with the minimum of fuss. This creates a good start to the day and encourages pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

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

17. Teaching is sound overall and frequently good. It is good in the Foundation Stage and infant classes. Teaching was good in 14 out of the 30 lessons observed during the inspection. It was very good in a further three lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of English is good, especially in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of mathematics is sound overall and often good. Teachers have implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies soundly. They are helping pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills, especially in the infant phase where pupils achieve above average standards. Teaching is never less than sound in other subjects. It is good in art and design and physical education. This promotes standards above expectations. Teachers plan their lessons in detail. They identify lesson objectives clearly and share them with pupils to give a good focus to their learning. Teachers manage their classes effectively to ensure that pupils sustain their attention and remain focused on their learning activity. Some teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations in some lessons. They do not always ensure that they match learning activities closely to the range of needs in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. This does not always help pupils, especially the more able and those of lower attainment, to achieve consistently the standards of which they are capable.
18. Teaching and learning in the reception class are good and have improved since the previous inspection. This is because the new teaching team works closely together. Their planning has improved and is closely based on national guidance. An area for improvement that teachers have correctly identified is the use of the outdoor area as a learning environment. The recent improvements in the organisation of the classroom have increased children's interest in learning. The very good relationships teachers and classroom assistants have with the children, clearly established classroom routines and very good management of behaviour successfully foster their confidence. Children enjoy coming to school because teachers make learning fun and frequently praise their efforts and achievements. For example, they all brought in teddy bears from home to measure their size. The teaching and learning of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are good. Teachers have improved the use of assessment to regularly monitor the progress children make. Children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
19. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. They know and control them well to enable them to focus attentively and try to achieve the lesson objective. They use praise and encouragement to recognise achievement and pupils respond well. For example, in a good Years 3 and 4 science lesson, the teacher's good control and encouragement provided pupils with good opportunities to contribute their ideas to a class discussion on 'forces'. The teacher praised individuals for their ideas. This led to most of the pupils putting up their hands and willingly putting forward their own ideas. The teacher used questions successfully to challenge pupils to clarify or extend their answers. He questioned pupils carefully about 'magnets' to develop their replies. This helped them to extend the use of such phrases as 'it forces something to come to it' and 'only one side sticks' into using the words 'magnetic force' and recognising that 'it only works with metals'.

20. Some teachers, especially in reception and infant classes, have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond enthusiastically and achieve well. For example, in a very good Years 1 and 2 literacy lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to identify how many phonemes there were in particular words. She expected them to refer back to their reading text to find out the meaning of words, for example 'slither'. The teacher expected the 'task manager' for each group to get the resources ready to help the pupils settle quickly to their activity. Pupils responded very positively; they were keen to get on with their work. This enabled the teacher to maintain a good pace to the lesson. She used the end-of-lesson feedback session very effectively to review pupils' understanding of how the phonic aspects taught in the lesson related to their homework spellings. This reinforced then extended pupils' learning successfully. Teachers' expectations are not always of a consistently high level in each class, especially in the juniors. This does not help pupils to make consistently good progress in their learning. For example, in two mathematics lessons observed, the teachers required pupils to use the textbooks to complete a large number of very similar number questions. These were mainly checking on pupils' knowledge and understanding of specific multiplication facts. Many pupils, especially the more able, had secure knowledge of these facts and completed the activities accurately. However, they spent too long on consolidating their number knowledge. The teachers did not ensure that these pupils were required to apply their multiplication skills and knowledge to solve more challenging problems. This did not enable them to achieve a higher standard of work.
21. Many teachers have good subject knowledge, for example in physical education and information and communication technology. They use it well to raise the standards achieved by pupils in a lesson. For example, in a good Year 5 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge of the computer program helped pupils to know and use the different icons. They gained in confidence and when the teacher used her knowledge to prompt pupils' thinking further, for example by questioning 'is there anything else on the menu bar that will ..?', they extended their skills. Teachers do not always use their ongoing assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge to ensure that they provide activities that meet the range of ability within the class. This does not ensure that pupils consistently achieve well. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 literacy lesson, the teacher did not build effectively on pupils' knowledge and understanding from the previous lesson. The teacher spent too long on reviewing rather than building on the writing and their understanding from the previous lesson. She did not ensure that the follow-up writing activity enabled pupils to use their prior learning fully. Some more able pupils were not challenged to build on their previous work and became frustrated initially on not being given the opportunity to extend their skills. It was only when they began to develop the previous lesson's ideas more fully that they became more engrossed in what they were doing.
22. Teachers use homework soundly to reinforce then extend pupils' skills and knowledge. They use it well to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example, to promote pupils' spelling and comprehension skills. Some teachers encourage parents to become involved in working with their children on homework projects. For example, there were some outstanding efforts when Years 3 and 4 pupils were challenged, as part of their design and technology work, to use newspaper and tape to create as tall a structure as possible. Teachers use information and communication technology successfully to support learning in some subjects, for example, through gathering information from the Internet and CD ROMs in science and history. However, they do not provide enough opportunities currently to help pupils to apply their skills sufficiently to promote higher standards.
23. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs and for children from a Traveller background are sound overall. Teachers write clear individual action plans with good targets to cover all aspects of their development. However, they do

not consistently monitor the progress these pupils make to check that it is good enough. Pupils' progress varies considerably from sound to very good, depending on how closely teachers set work with a level of challenge to meet pupils' individual learning needs. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the needs of gifted and talented pupils and are starting to look for ways to take account of their rapid development. Teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to ensure all pupils are fully supported and included in whole-class work. They have good relationships with their pupils and effectively encourage and praise their efforts so that pupils noticeably develop confidence.

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

24. The school's curriculum is good. It provides a satisfactory range of interesting and relevant areas for learning for infant pupils. It is good in the junior classes as French lessons enhance the curriculum for Year 6 pupils and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is available for pupils. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in all subjects except information and communication technology. Resources for control, modelling and monitoring technology are not adequate enough to help teachers to teach the full junior phase requirements for this subject. However, the school has plans to provide the necessary hardware and software. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory for children in the reception class and promote most areas of their learning effectively. The school now has a sound framework for children's learning that builds carefully on the recommended steps towards the targets set for the end of the reception year. It provides a generally satisfactory balance across the different areas of learning, except that the range of outdoor activities is too limited. The school gives a high priority to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and to extending their literacy and numeracy skills. This effectively meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and those from a Traveller background. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. There is satisfactory access to the curriculum for all pupils. The school prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.
25. The last inspection found weaknesses in the design and technology curriculum, practical work in science and opportunities for purposeful play for children under five. The school has made good progress in addressing these issues. For example, there is more detailed written guidance for teachers. Subject leaders have attended subject training courses or have sufficient relevant expertise themselves. Pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding than at the time of the last inspection, but this aspect of mathematics is still not fully developed.
26. Curriculum planning is good. Since the appointment of the headteacher and in response to national initiatives, the school has undertaken an extensive review of the curriculum and the roles and responsibilities of staff. All areas of the curriculum have a co-ordinator with a defined role to play in developing the subject. The school has given high priority to the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these have been implemented satisfactorily. The school has adopted mainly the national guidance on schemes of work for science and the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. It is in the process of integrating the schemes of work into well-planned units, based on a two-year cycle, to meet the needs of mixed-age group classes. The school has recently purchased useful published schemes of work for music and science to support these subjects. The guided reading homework across the school has been initiated and planned well. Other homework is in line with the school's policy and provides sound support for the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and French. Some projects are carried out at home, for example researching a subject for history. These promote good links between home and school.

27. Procedures for monitoring the curriculum are better than at the time of the last inspection. Subject leaders and the headteacher monitor medium and short term plans carefully to ensure that there is sufficient coverage of the schemes of work. They regularly scrutinise pupils' work to assess the levels of attainment in the subject and to advise other teachers. The headteacher and local education authority advisers have observed classroom practice in literacy and science across the whole school and also practices in the reception class. The mathematics co-ordinator has observed a numeracy lesson in all classrooms. Curriculum monitoring is, however, at an early stage of development and not always focused rigorously. There are strengths in aspects of the curriculum in all year groups. However, teachers do not always match curriculum tasks to the different needs and attainment of pupils. There is sometimes an over-reliance on published resources and this leads to variation in teachers' expectation of pupils' performance.
28. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest. Work related trips are organised to such places as Verulamium and Clay Lane Environmental Centre with residential visits to Cuffley Camp for Years 3 and 4 pupils and to France for Years 5 and 6. The school uses the village area well in its studies for history and geography and good drawings of local buildings by infant pupils were seen during the inspection. Pupils have planted bulbs in the Glebelands field. Visitors include clergy, firemen, builders, road safety officers, a storyteller, a visiting drama group and two chefs from the Academy of Culinary Arts. The school has good links with the community, taking part in sports competitions, the National Schools Music Festival, organising the village annual firework event and regularly participating in the local town art exhibitions. The school contributes to the parish magazine. Several adults help in the school, for example by acting as librarian, taking gymnastics in the reception class or helping in classrooms generally. There is good attendance at extra-curricular clubs, which include three recorder groups, choir, rugby, soccer, netball, orienteering, rocketeering and French for junior-aged pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to receive peripatetic instrumental teaching and 15 pupils learn to play the flute and four learn to play the trumpet. The school has an annual production, which was 'The Lion King' last summer.
29. The school provides satisfactory personal, social and health education. There is sound provision for drugs awareness and sex education in Years 5 and 6 and other health education across the school in the science curriculum. The themes discussed in 'circle time'<sup>2</sup> are relevant to pupils' needs and allow pupils to communicate their feelings. Other issues, such as safety, attitudes, relationships and understanding of other cultures are included in religious education lessons, assemblies and particular projects like the cycling proficiency scheme. The school celebrates good behaviour, attitudes and work in its merit award system. Pupils can communicate problems in Years 5 and 6 by contributing to the 'Worry Box' and are able to write confidentially in their 'Think' books. Pupils have sound opportunities to think about the needs of others and have raised funds for Marie Curie, contributed to the 'Jeans for Genes' day and sponsor a child in Bolivia.
30. There are satisfactory links with partner institutions. Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to visit Mount Grace School and all pupils make a visit to their new secondary school. The headteacher has been invited to three of the secondary schools to see ex-pupils and their current teachers to discuss progress. There are sound induction procedures, which include visits to two nurseries each term to share information.
31. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This provision has remained successful since the previous inspection, especially in moral and social development where it is good. It is sound in spiritual and cultural development.

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<sup>2</sup> During Circle time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease.



32. Religious education, assemblies and church service assemblies led by the local vicar are now an integral and important part of the school's programme. Pupils have frequent opportunities to read and discuss teachings from the Bible, both in class and in church. Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are taught as part of the religious education syllabus. Jewish festivals and customs are taught, many involving members of the school community. As part of its 'five year' vision statement, the school is developing closer links with the local clergy. Pupils in Year 6 are now being offered confirmation classes. There are few artefacts or displays to reflect the school's church status and to promote spiritual awareness in and around the school. In assemblies, the Bible, a candle and model of a church are displayed prominently. Yet there are few references to them nor is the candle lit to create a focal point. There is little time given for reflection on the theme or moral of the assembly. During the inspection, there was little evidence of pupils' extending their spiritual awareness during lessons.
33. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development. This is evident from the quality of their responses, behaviour and their relationships observed in lessons. The 'Golden Rules' provide a clear code of conduct and expectation of pupils' behaviour towards each other. Teachers quietly ensure that respect and consideration for others are essential for a harmonious learning environment. Pupils are taught to understand the difference from right and wrong from the reception class onwards. Circle time and other activities, such as assemblies, promote respect for each other and their own and other's property. Pupils discuss a range of issues that affect their life. Formally and informally, pupils care for each other. For example, Year 6 pupils help the younger ones in lunchtime activities when the weather is wet. The absence of any graffiti, damage or litter in and around the school confirms pupils' respect their school and property. Caring for the less fortunate is exemplified by the pupils' supporting a child in Bolivia.
34. Staff provide good role models for the pupils. Year 6 pupils respond very positively to the extra responsibilities given to them since the new headteacher started. The strong sense of community and supportive ethos of the school foster pupils' social development effectively. It is woven successfully into the daily routine of the reception class. For the older pupils, the 'Worry Box' and 'Think Book' are a confidential means of airing concerns. In the 'Think Book' the pupils write down their actions and what the outcome is. The 'sharing assembly' allows the pupils to celebrate each other's achievements, such as merits. This promotes their self-esteem and develops their willingness to learn. Pupils from minority groups are fully involved in all curriculum areas. There is meaningful display of the lives of pupils from a travelling background, using photographs and artefacts. Comparisons and similarities in the way we all live are thought provoking. School trips, such as to Cuffley Camp, help broaden the pupils' social understanding of their own relationships and the wider world.
35. The provision to enrich the pupils' appreciation of their own heritage and culture has some strengths and is sound overall. It is promoted successfully through art and music. The village and Parish Church are used well to support pupils' knowledge of local cultural traditions. Many of the annual, popular fund raising events involve the whole local community. French lessons are taught to Year 6 pupils and trips are organised to France. These extend pupils' French speaking and listening skills and their knowledge of the French culture and way of life. Year 2 children visit Hatfield House. The area is rich in history, for example Tudor and Roman times, and a display of pupils' work showing Roman baths is used to good effect to promote interest and understanding. Teachers use drama and poetry successfully to extend pupils' understanding of ancient traditions.
36. However, the opportunities to appreciate the diversity and richness of a broad range of cultures are underdeveloped. In geography, pupils study the lives of other people living in different continents, for example India. They use their reading research and the Internet to find information about other parts of the world. However, due to a small library area and

unreliable information and communication technology resources, pupils have limited opportunities to apply these skills consistently and extend their knowledge of other cultures.

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

37. The school continues to provide a caring and pleasant learning environment as featured in the previous inspection report. Many parents have expressed their satisfaction with the care and support their children receive. They are treated as individuals, with their background taken fully into account. All aspects of child protection are sound and the headteacher is the member of staff with designated responsibility. The school has adopted sound procedures, agreed with the local authority. With the exception of new staff, everyone has been trained in basic awareness. There is no governor representative for child protection issues. This does not ensure their full understanding of this aspect of the school's procedures.
38. Health and safety including maintenance checks are all in place. Records of annual inspections and risk assessments are properly maintained. Health and safety is practised effectively in lessons. For example, in a physical education lesson, the class teacher taped her rings up and all jewellery was removed from the pupils prior to the activities. Provision for first aid is secure. There is a named member of staff and sufficient numbers of staff trained. Appropriate records for injuries or accidents are in place. The first aid point is the school office. This restricts the space for the administrative area. There is no suitable area available to provide for the care of sick pupils. For pupils with medical problems, details are displayed in the staff room and school office. These displays include photographs, symptoms and action to be taken. They ensure that all staff are aware fully of any potential problems. Fire drills are conducted and recorded systematically
39. Procedures to monitor and promote good attendance are sound. The headteacher monitors the registers accurately. The education welfare officer visits regularly, discusses concerns and supplies a written report. Being a small school, attendance statistics do not always reflect the school's good procedures. For example, last year's below average attendance rate was due to three or four pupils. Support services for pupils from a Traveller background are aware of the problem and are working to find a solution.
40. The school does not have its own attendance policy, but has adopted the local education authority's guidance. Certificates are awarded in the end of term assemblies for good attendance. The importance of attendance is not a feature of either the prospectus or the governors' annual report to parents. The registers are generally recorded accurately. However, some teachers omit causes for absence and do not add up totals. This makes monitoring more difficult.
41. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are good. The class rules have been replaced by the whole school's 'Golden Rules'. These are displayed in a conspicuous place and were produced in consultation with the pupils. As a result, behaviour both in lessons and playtime is consistently good. Parents are due to receive copies of the home-school agreement, the homework and the behaviour policies, which include the 'Golden Rules'. This is in response to concerns expressed in the school's own questionnaire to parents. The midday supervisors believe that overall behaviour is improving since the 'Golden Rules'. In their experience, the children easily understand the rewards and sanctions. All the pupils are fully integrated into all the activities, including playtime. Staff are alert to taunting, teasing or anti-social behaviour. Racism is not an issue at this school. If a problem persists then the headteacher has thorough systems in place to monitor and track them. These consist of a 'Bullying Incident Log' and a 'Personal and Social Achievement Record'. These systems involve parents in all stages of monitoring.

The special education needs co-ordinator has regular contact with the external agencies, such as a local centre for pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties.

42. Procedures to monitor and promote the pupils' personal development are good. Being a small school, staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils very well. Regular monitoring of their academic progress through homework or marking is in place. All aspects of their personal and social development are featured in the annual report for parents. Close liaison with agencies, such as the Traveller Education Service, is in place to support learning. For example, one pupil has made rapid progress socially and academically and is now close to achieving the average national attainment level for that age group. Pupils from the minorities are fully included. The 'Sharing Assemblies' encourage pupils to celebrate each other's work. The school awards 'Merit' certificates for good work, endeavour or taking responsibility. This raises the pupils' self-esteem and gives them a sense of pride in their achievements. However, opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills or take further responsibility, for example through a school council, are not developed fully.
43. The school has made sound improvement in its procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress since the previous inspection. These procedures and their use are now satisfactory. For example, there is whole-school agreement on the tests that are to be used throughout the school. Reception teachers assess thoroughly and use the information effectively to inform their future planning of the curriculum. They now regularly observe and discuss children's progress towards reaching their learning goals. Co-ordinators in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have improved their role in analysing national test results. They monitor thoroughly to identify strengths and weaknesses, such as the performance of boys and girls. They share their findings effectively with the rest of the staff and use the information to guide future planning of these subjects, such as to improve science standards. However, the school does not identify how to improve standards consistently in other subjects.
44. The school has improved its use of assessment data. It carefully tracks the progress of pupils in the core subjects and predicts their future standards. These procedures are good in English because all pupils have individual targets for improvement. The practice of setting such targets is not yet consistently agreed and used throughout the school to ensure work matches closely the full range of pupils' abilities. For example, lower attainers may be given too difficult an activity and more able pupils are not always challenged effectively. Teachers quickly identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties to see if they have special educational needs. Such pupils and those from a Traveller background have clear individual action plans that are used satisfactorily to guide teaching. Teachers identify gifted and talented pupils, but have not yet assessed specifically what such pupils do well and how they might improve. However, the school is in the process of developing an assessment policy as a priority in its improvement plan. It has identified appropriate areas for improvement, such as to keep parents better informed of their child's test results and how the school intends to help their child improve.

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

45. The school has worked hard in the last year to improve its links with parents. This is now a developing area of the school. The parental support has continued since the previous report. This positive view is supported through the questionnaires, the views from the parents' evening prior to inspection and some parental interviews.
46. A number of parents viewed different schools within the locality. Many were attracted to a small school with church links. Either through established links with local nurseries or as enquiring parents, the induction process was efficient and welcoming. It enabled children to settle in quickly and with confidence. This creates a positive attitude to learning, especially in the reception class. Parents have commented on improvements since the headteacher was appointed. She gathers parents' views from the Friends Association, parents on the governing body and her day-to-day contact with parents and pupils. To help provide further information for the school improvement plan, a detailed questionnaire was sent to every family last term. This term, the school provided each parent with the statistics of the survey with an explanatory letter answering specific points. For example, 65 per cent of parents felt behaviour was good or better in the OFSTED questionnaire, while 10 per cent had no view. In the school's own questionnaire, 73 per cent felt behaviour was good or better, another 20 per cent felt it was acceptable; 50 per cent felt there was no bullying. The school's data is based on a higher return rate.
47. Information about what is happening in school is circulated effectively through regular newsletters and use of the parents' notice board. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents do not quite meet regulations and require updating. Pupils' annual progress report shows wide inconsistencies from class to class. One class shows clear 'tick box' targets so parents can easily see areas for development in the academic progress. This approach was not consistent in all classes.
48. The homework diaries and reading records show inconsistencies in quantity and quality of homework. Some parents lack clear information as to what is going to be taught in the curriculum. However, many parents find the diary a valuable means of keeping informed and monitoring progress. Staff do provide written feedback to queries raised. One parent praised this system. A teacher helped both the parent and child with guided reading support. As a result, an improvement in reading was soon apparent. Parents of pupils with special educational needs or with behaviour problems are fully involved in the review and monitoring process.
49. Parents help in school to improve the quality of education. Some parents who began as helpers have developed their role into classroom assistants. Their input helps raise standards, particularly with the lower ability groups. One parent helps with netball. Another parent, using her gymnastic expertise, supports physical education classes effectively and helps to promote high standards.
50. The very resourceful 'Friends of the School' involve the whole community, together with the school and staff in fund-raising and social events. For a small school, their efforts raise extraordinary sums, which are given to improve resources, such as a television or library books. The 'Friends' have their own website. With the school extension work underway, they are presently fund-raising towards creating the information and communication technology suite to benefit all the pupils.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management are sound overall. There was no judgement made on the effectiveness of this aspect in the last report. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. She is working very effectively with key staff, for example the literacy co-ordinator, to encourage a strong team approach, which is increasingly focused on school improvement. Most parents value the clearer direction being given by the new headteacher. She worked closely with staff, the governing body and parents to agree a new vision statement and to review the school's aims. This vision sets down clearly what the school intends to achieve in the next five years. The aims stress equality of opportunity for all pupils and that the school aims to provide a caring and supportive community. The headteacher has developed a school improvement plan that links very well with the vision statement. They are giving a clearer direction to the school's work. The school's aims and values, especially those relating to pupils' personal development, are soundly reflected in the daily life of the school. A consistent expectation of achieving and maintaining high standards is not yet firmly established.
52. The school has made good improvement overall since the last inspection. It has made good progress recently on many of the key issues; for example, making good use of national subject guidance in science, design and technology and information and communication technology. The headteacher successfully targeted building improvements and improving the decoration and storage within the school. Staff, governors and parents have worked very effectively together to plan and raise the funds necessary to extend the building. This project enabled the headteacher to encourage a strong team approach with a clear and specific focus. New staff have settled quickly and contributed positively to promoting an effective staff team. The school now has good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher worked closely with the school development adviser from the local education authority to establish sound procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. These procedures, together with a significant level of staff changes, have led to improvements in teaching. The role of subject co-ordinators is being developed soundly. The co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy monitor teaching plans and have looked at samples of pupils' work. They have observed some lessons, but the school has yet to involve them effectively in evaluating teaching rigorously and its impact on pupils' learning.
53. The headteacher analyses an increasing range of attainment information to identify areas of under-achievement, for example science standards in Year 6. These are beginning to be used to inform school improvement priorities. Inspection evidence shows that the school is using this information with increasing effectiveness and improvements are being made in these areas. The school is planning to introduce a computer program to enable individual pupils to be tracked closely and to set specific and challenging school targets. Teachers have successfully introduced individual pupil targets for literacy. Some Year 6 pupils felt that these targets gave them a better understanding of what they needed to improve. They valued the merit certificate, which they received once they had achieved their target. They also thought that their work would improve if the school introduced similar targets in mathematics and science. The school has established a sound performance management programme. This helps the headteacher to gain a good understanding of the many strengths of her staff and to link any training needs, where possible, to school improvement priorities. Although these procedures have only recently been fully established, they are already making a positive contribution to school improvement.
54. The role and contribution of the governing body have improved since the last inspection. The partnership between governors and the headteacher and her staff is growing successfully. Governors are more actively involved in working with the school than at the time of the last inspection. They have been especially supportive and influential recently in

planning and applying for grants for the building extension. Governors are enthusiastic in their approach and have a sound and increasing knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Some governors observe lessons regularly and others are involved in the day-to-day running of the school. They give feedback to other governors to keep them fully informed, although this is not always focused on teaching and learning. Governors have benefited from training and advice from the local education authority. They receive detailed reports from the headteacher at their twice-termly meetings. This helps them to keep well informed about what is happening in school and to contribute to identifying improvement priorities. Governors fulfil their statutory requirements, although some of the requirements in their annual reports to parents are not fully met.

55. The headteacher works closely with the governors' finance committee, the school's secretarial and clerical staff and the finance officer from the local education authority. They have established effective and efficient financial procedures. They ensure that finances are monitored carefully and targeted successfully on improvement priorities. The school has budgeted carefully to overcome recent deficit budgets, following its change from grant maintained status. It is now projected to achieve a balanced budget. The school benefits from considerable funds from the Friends Association, for example, to contribute to the finances needed for the building extension and improved resources for information and communication technology. The governors make good use of the principles of best value, for example, to review their annual contracts in line with quality and value for money. The school links funds very efficiently from the initial stages of identifying and planning for the priorities in its improvement plan. It has begun to develop a more strategic three-year financial plan to link school developments even closer to available funds and to the size of the school. The school makes sound use of new technologies, with good support from the school's finance officer, to ensure efficient general and financial administration.
56. The management of the arrangements the school provides for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The school is planning to write a new special educational needs policy taking into account the revised Code of Practice<sup>3</sup>. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils make as much progress as possible. Not all learning support assistants have sufficient experience and expertise to teach the basic skills confidently. This affects the rate of pupils' progress. The leadership for the Foundation Stage is good with a clear, shared commitment to improve what the school provides for these children and their standards. They have a clear understanding of the areas to improve for future development, such as the outdoor environment.
57. After a period of uncertainties in recruiting or retaining staff, staffing levels are now satisfactory. There are sufficient members of staff, who are suitably qualified and experienced in the primary phase. Subject co-ordinators have been appointed for all subjects and areas of responsibility clearly defined. All the staff have job descriptions and teachers have performance management targets established. These are beginning to be used successfully to promote further staff professional development and to support school improvement. The teaching job-shares enhance the range of learning opportunities. Close liaison and communication ensures that planning and assessment is dovetailed. Classroom assistants and other support staff are used efficiently and ensure that pupils are supported soundly in their learning. Clerical and administrative staff contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school.

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<sup>3</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

58. Staff have benefited from good quality in-service training through courses organised by the local education authority as well as after-school sessions. There are thorough induction procedures for staff new to the school. For example, in the reception class, two advisors from the local education authority worked closely with the headteacher to monitor and advise on planning, class layout and resources. As a result, both teachers had a confident start and were able to provide a good range of learning resources for indoor activities. That class is now bright, cheerful and stimulating. This has a positive impact on the pupils' learning in their first stage of education.
59. The building is satisfactory and the accommodation meets the requirements for the teaching of the full curriculum. The décor has been improved, although some areas need improving to provide a more stimulating learning environment. Teachers make good use of attractive displays of pupils' work. A lack of space in junior classrooms restricts the development of some aspects of pupils' practical learning activities. The building is maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. However, provision for the library and information technology is unsatisfactory due to shortage of space. There is no quiet area for pupils to develop their research or computer skills to improve their learning. Space in the main hall is significantly restricted due to the storage of the piano and dining tables. As a result space for physical education, though safe, is severely reduced. The school has clearly identified areas for improvement and building work is in the process of improving the overall provision. Currently, there is no outdoor space designated for pupils in the reception class for to use. As a result there are few planned opportunities for frequent physical activities, compared to indoors. The 'Friends' are fund-raising towards providing modern and up-to-date computer equipment. The school itself is sponsoring a 'brick by brick' scheme towards the intended computer suite.
60. The outside grounds are spacious and well maintained. The playground is suitable in size for the number of pupils and is set out well to enable ease of supervision by adults. Strong fencing provides the pupils' safety from the adjacent car park. The playing fields are spacious and used for games and running activities.
61. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, both in quantity and quality for the curriculum and range of abilities, including those with special educational needs. However, there is a variation in the adequacy of those resources. Physical education equipment is good and well maintained. Resources for information and communication technology are limited, although planned for improvement very soon. Playtime resources are varied and allow for the social and physical development of the pupils in their play. The school improvement plan has correctly identified the necessity of improving the quality of resources. There are no wheeled toys and few other outside play resources for the reception class. The library stock is dated and there are a limited number of multi-cultural books to promote understanding of other traditions within our society.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to raise standards and improve the effectiveness of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) improve pupils' skills in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6 by:
    - improving the range and quality of resources to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills;
    - ensuring that pupils apply these skills frequently to support work in other subjects;(paragraphs 8, 22, 24, 84, 91, 113, 120 and 123)
  - (2) raise teachers' expectations of the standards of pupils' work to a consistently high level by:
    - helping teachers to share good practice;
    - encouraging teachers to use a good range of methods to challenge and inspire pupils of different abilities;(paragraphs 17, 20, 78, 81, 92 and 101)
  - (3) ensure teachers use assessment information consistently to match learning activities closely to the range of pupils' needs in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes;  
(paragraphs 7, 17, 21, 44, 82, 87, 91 and 96)
  - (4) improve the procedures to monitor and promote pupils' attendance levels.  
(paragraphs 15 and 39-40)

In addition to the key issues listed above, the less important issue of improving the outdoor play provision for reception children should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Reference to this can be found in paragraphs 59 and 65.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	3	14	13	0	0	0
Percentage	0	10	47	43	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. (Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points).

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	96
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)<sup>4</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	4	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (87)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (100)	100 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	5	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	11	11	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (100)	73 (87)	67 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	13	14	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	87 (93)	93 (93)	80 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

<sup>4</sup> The existing guidance from OFSTED is that test and examination data should be excluded from inspection reports if the year group is 10 or fewer. This also applies to year groups of boys and girls separately.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	94
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	254,900
Total expenditure	228,099
Expenditure per pupil	2,280
Balance brought forward from previous year	-20,988

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate 35%

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	26	12	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	45	7	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	53	18	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	65	15	8	0
The teaching is good.	35	50	12	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	41	26	15	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	21	12	8	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	32	50	9	3	6
The school works closely with parents.	12	50	21	12	5
The school is well led and managed.	15	53	14	3	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	18	63	12	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	51	27	9	1

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

63. The Foundation Stage consists of a reception class with 15 full-time places. Children enter the reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. They have a wide range of abilities but their standards on entry are average overall. Teaching and learning in reception are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Two teachers share the work effectively, one teaching in the mornings, the other in the afternoons. They are supported well by a classroom assistant. The comparatively small class size means that children, including those from a Traveller background, receive good individual support when required. This effectively meets their different needs so that they show good achievement. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Teachers closely monitor any child giving a cause for concern. They keep the parents well informed about their progress. By the end of the reception year, children are on track to at least meet the early learning goals set for children in all the areas of learning. Standards in their personal, social and emotional development, and in most aspects of their physical development are already good.
64. Since the previous inspection standards have been maintained at similar levels. However, recent significant improvements in what the school provides for children in reception are improving their progress and starting to raise standards further. For example, the morale of the teaching team is now high. They work more closely together with a strong commitment to raising standards. This shows in the changes they have made to reorganise the classroom so that it provides an attractive, stimulating learning environment. Their planning is more effective and based closely on national guidance. They have introduced more effective assessment systems and use them well to monitor children's progress in all the learning areas.
65. The teachers have correctly identified that they need to develop the children's use of the outdoor environment for learning and have some good ideas to do this. Due mainly to the building work there is currently insufficient use made of available outdoor space.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

66. This is a strength because teaching and learning are consistently good. They reflect the high priority given to this aspect of children's development. Children soon feel secure in the welcoming atmosphere staff create. They settle happily into learning routines, so that they enjoy school and make good progress. Children are eager to try new experiences and they concentrate well. They quickly learn to select independently from the range of interesting activities and resources. Teachers develop children's responsibility effectively so they soon learn that they have to look after equipment carefully and tidy up at the end of a session. To help them do this, teachers carefully plan, prepare and organise resources to make them easily accessible. For example, after they had finished tasting porridge, children went independently to wash up their dishes in a bowl of soapy water put at their height. They show independence in dressing and in personal hygiene.
67. The adults in reception provide very good role models to develop children's attitudes. For example, 'If we practise we can all be as good as each other'. They always treat everyone with courtesy and respect. Children respond well to this and quickly learn to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Staff set clear, high expectations for behaviour and have very good relationships with the children. They guide and manage them effectively to have a clear understanding of right and wrong. As a result, children learn and play happily together because any difficulties are quickly discussed and resolved. For instance, staff use afternoon registration successfully to provide an opportunity for every child to talk about

whether they have had a good lunchtime. They use such questions as 'Do you think that is kind?' skilfully to involve children in decision making about how they could solve problems, for example by going to the lunchtime supervisors. The merit system is effectively used to praise children's efforts and to encourage them to do their best at all times.

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

68. **Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan closely together as a team so that children's learning builds successfully on their previous knowledge. They use talk effectively throughout the day and listen sympathetically to show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Children are likely to exceed the early learning goals for speaking and listening. Already nearly all children speak confidently, clearly and audibly. For example, they gave a confident performance of a rap of *Goldilocks and The Three Bears* to the whole school in assembly, speaking in different voices for daddy and baby bears. Throughout the day there is an interested buzz of conversation as children talk to their friends and adults. The more able children have above average standards. They talk and listen confidently using a wide vocabulary for their age. They ask many questions or make relevant comments about what they are learning.**
69. Teachers have good knowledge of the basic skills of reading and writing, so children make good progress. Children attain average reading and writing standards. All children enjoy listening to stories. They often choose to look at books in free choice activities and handle them carefully. Teachers foster their enjoyment effectively by ensuring that books are easily available and selecting suitable texts to appeal to children. They make good use of pictures to improve their understanding. Children understand that print carries meaning, goes from left to right and top to bottom. All children are starting to read simple text in their reading scheme books. They recall stories accurately and offer opinions about characters and the plot, such as giving reasons whether they preferred an old or a new version of 'Goldilocks'. The children's reading skills are promoted effectively by the good home support provided by parents, who regularly hear them read.
70. **Teachers successfully encourage children to 'have a go' at writing simple words and experiment with words by including writing in some play activities, such as writing a 'sorry' letter from Goldilocks to The Three Bears. They do not always challenge children enough to extend their writing skills, for example by having a noticeboard or paper and pens available in the 'Bears' House'. Children write their own names with most letters formed correctly. They are linking sounds and letters of the alphabet and write letters at the start of words accurately. Their understanding that writing is used for different purposes, such as writing a recipe, is developing soundly.**

### **Mathematical development**

71. Children receive good teaching and make good progress in developing numeracy skills. Children are likely at least to reach the early learning goals set for the end of reception. This is because different activities are planned accurately to provide good levels of challenge to meet the different needs of ability groups. Children confidently count forwards and backwards to 10 and many well beyond 20, recognising numbers, such as 100. Teachers use interesting methods to involve children in their learning. For example, they sang *Five Currant Buns* to reinforce counting backwards and the concept of 'one less'. Teachers make skilful use of questions to check and further children's understanding. For instance, a teacher asked children to find out if they could compare two different lengths using vocabulary such as 'longer' or 'shorter' correctly. They develop children's skills of measuring length effectively by using different units of measurement

and asking them to estimate and check their guess by accurate measuring and counting. They build on to children's previous learning effectively. For example, when a child proposed turning a square board round to find a longer side, the teacher reminded her to use her knowledge that all sides of a square are the same length. Mathematical skills are promoted well across other learning areas, such as using a minute timer when making porridge.

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

72. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan and organise a wide range of activities to develop children's knowledge effectively. Many show good general knowledge. For instance, different children made suggestions that a microwave oven works by buttons, batteries, fire and electricity. When talking about safety, one child said, 'Don't put in metal'. Children show much curiosity, respond eagerly to challenges and identify features of things they observe. For example, when they made and tasted porridge, they noticed that milk made the dry mixture sloppier. Children have a good understanding of how to use information and communication technology independently to support their learning. For example, they showed good 'mouse' control to dress a teddy in a computer program, and a cassette recorder to develop their skills of listening to stories. They show appropriate skills for their age in selecting from a range of resources and using them safely to construct and build.

### **Physical development**

73. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. It is very good in gymnastics where the teacher is supported effectively by a parent with specialist skills. Children already meet most of the set goals for their age and many exceed them. They move with good confidence, control and co-ordination in lessons in the hall, showing understanding of the reasons for a warm up and cool down. For example, they run, jump from a springboard and land safely with bent knees. They are learning to swim. They use tools such as scissors reasonably well, but their skills are slightly limited by the narrow range of tools and resources available. There are no large wheeled toys to develop skills such as pedalling and steering safely, although the school is planning to improve the resources in the near future.

### **Creative development**

74. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities and materials for children to explore over time. They are not all changed frequently enough to stimulate the children's imagination to high levels every day. For example, no paints or musical instruments were out for children to experiment with freely. Teachers use a satisfactory balance of structured and free activities every day. Children enjoyed choosing to go in the cottage and dress up to act the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Teachers provide good opportunities during the day for children to sing songs. They know a range of simple songs that they sing confidently from memory, adding actions and maintaining an accurate rhythm with sticks.

## ENGLISH

75. Pupils attain standards in English at the end of Year 2 that have improved since the previous inspection and are above the national average. The achievement of 7-year-olds is good due to the good teaching they receive across the range of English skills. Pupils at the end of Year 6 attain average standards overall with a strength being the good standards of speaking and listening. They are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. These pupils show sound achievement. The difference in standards over the years is due to variations between small year groups, the higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 and pupil mobility. A few more able pupils leave to join the private sector and others join during their primary years. This means that the school is unlikely to reach its current target of 93 per cent of pupils attaining average levels. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
76. Pupils attain good standards of speaking and listening throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils from a Traveller background, show good achievement because the school promotes these skills very effectively. For example, all pupils take part in a school verse speaking competition to encourage them to speak clearly to an audience. All teachers use good methods such as 'talking partners' to fully involve all pupils. So pupils throughout the school talk and listen confidently in different contexts, such as in lessons and assemblies. They eagerly answer questions and explain their thinking clearly. Older pupils are articulate and talk confidently, using increasingly complex vocabulary on a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 clearly spoke their views in a history discussion on 'slavery'. They used new formal vocabulary they had learned in English such as, 'moreover' to present their argument more clearly. Teachers provide good role models in their use of technical language across the curriculum, for instance, 'product evaluation' in design and technology, enabling pupils to master new vocabulary well.
77. Pupils at the end of Year 2 attain above average standards of reading. Pupils make good progress because they start Year 1 with average reading standards. Reading is taught effectively in Years 1 and 2. For example, in a whole-class guided reading session, the teacher ensured that all pupils made good progress in understanding a non-fiction text on snakes. She provided good opportunities for them to read together and individually from a big book, by keeping the place with a card hand on a stick. Any small mistakes, such as the difference between the two meanings of 'live' were corrected effectively. Pupils read confidently and mostly accurately. They use a good range of skills to help them tackle unfamiliar words, such as picture clues and their knowledge of phonics. They enthusiastically discuss the plot and different characters. More able readers receive challenging texts and activities that enable them to achieve good standards. Parents make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress throughout the school by supporting their reading homework.
78. **Pupils attain average standards of reading by the end of Year 6. However, there is variety in the standards of different year groups. For example, Year 3 pupils are above average. Pupils read fluently, accurately and with sound expression from a satisfactory range of texts in class, including modern and classic fiction, poetry and plays. Years 5 and 6 pupils expressively recited the poem *Jabberwocky* in assembly, co-operating together well in groups. Pupils justify their choice of authors and books clearly because teachers require them to write regularly in a reading log, 'I have tried very hard to keep my nose out of this book (in vain!)'. However, teachers could provide a wider variety of reading activities, such as asking pupils to record the range of books they read individually for interest and pleasure. This is sometimes too narrow. Pupils have good knowledge of library skills and confidently locate information in non-fiction books using the contents and index. Pupils' understanding of the text is less well developed throughout the**



school, although teachers are working hard to improve this by providing more practice at written comprehension exercises.

79. **By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in writing are above average due to the good teaching they receive in all writing skills. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils were effectively helped to identify the different phonemes in 'birth' and refer back to the text for 'slither' so they made good progress with their spelling. Most pupils write stories with their ideas organised in sentences, starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. They spell simple words correctly and more complex words are phonetically correct, such as 'blev' for believe. More able pupils write confidently, with imagination and at length. They experiment with interesting vocabulary, 'Just in that sudden moment the basket started to wobble'. They try to use punctuation within sentences, such as speech marks and commas. They show good understanding of the features of different forms of writing. For example, in play scripts they write the narrator's part and stage directions in different colours. Most pupils' handwriting is formed correctly and consistent in size. The lower attaining pupils in Year 1 make satisfactory progress when they receive extra support from a classroom assistant following a national, very structured scheme.**
80. By the end of Year 6, pupils show average standards in writing, grammar and spelling. Teachers ensure they have good opportunities to write in a wide range of styles, such as letters, reports, book reviews and arguments. However, average pupils are not accurate enough in writing correctly punctuated sentences to attain the levels expected. Although the school aims to correct this in booster classes, teachers' expectations of basic punctuation in the older class are not high enough. Most pupils' handwriting lacks consistency in size and joining, except for more able pupils. They write neatly in ink, with fluent joined handwriting. More able pupils achieve good standards of writing, using lively language. For example, a Year 4 pupil experimented with his own verbs, "We are the winners", conversed the crowd'. These pupils show good understanding of the processes of planning, drafting, revising and editing. A Year 4 pupil revised, 'The hedgehogs are tempted to get to the park but they have to cross a busy road' to 'The hedgehogs can't resist the park. They know the dangers and the risks'.
81. Pupils with special educational needs and children from a Traveller background make sound progress overall towards achieving their individual English targets. Teachers know their pupils' widely different needs well and mostly write clear individual targets. However, they do not always monitor pupils' progress sufficiently over time to check if it is good enough. The result is that pupils make inconsistent progress, ranging from barely satisfactory to very good. This depends on how closely the work set is at an appropriate level of challenge and the quality of support received.
82. **The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy successfully to ensure most pupils make good progress in developing literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils write in a range of forms in history, such as writing from the point of view of Queen Eleanor. They teach the basic skills of reading, spelling and handwriting effectively, especially in Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the good rate of pupils' progress. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. However, they do not always take sufficient account of the different needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Particularly in the Years 5 and 6 class, teachers have a very challenging task to meet the very wide range of different learning needs. Teachers always share the learning focus with their pupils and check at the end of a lesson to find out if it has been achieved. They choose interesting texts to appeal to pupils. For example, a text with information about the Internet sparked off a lively discussion by Years 5 and 6 pupils.**

83. **Teachers use good methods to help pupils enjoy their learning. For instance, in Years 5 and 6, the teacher provided a good model of how to write a persuasive argument using specific vocabulary that effectively improved pupils' own writing skills. They use questions skilfully to check and further pupils' understanding. Teachers take care to involve all pupils. Teachers have improved their use of everyday assessment so that pupils have a better knowledge of their learning. They now set pupils individual English targets. These range in effectiveness as a way to improve standards, according to how frequently teachers guide pupils to use them. Teachers mostly mark pupils' work thoroughly and constructively and tell them how they can improve their work. Occasionally they do not give sufficient guidance to enable less able older pupils to improve. Teachers regularly set homework that enhances their progress soundly in reading and writing.**
84. **Teachers are aware of the need to increase opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to improve their literacy skills. For example, pupils word process the final copy of their writing and practise their spelling skills, but they have restricted opportunities to write directly on a computer due to the lack of resources. Pupils enjoy researching information on the computer. A weakness is that they print out the whole sheet that is too difficult for them to read and understand, rather than finding the most important points.**
85. The subject is very effectively led by a co-ordinator with a strong commitment to improving standards. For example, the introduction of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning across the school, with support from the local literacy adviser, has successfully improved its quality. It provided a clear focus for areas to be developed, such as improving writing in Years 1 and 2 that successfully raised standards. The school is aiming to improve the cramped library. Pupils regularly borrow books, but have a restricted range because it currently contains only non-fiction. The books are clearly organised, catalogued and well used. However, they are too tightly packed on the shelves, especially for younger pupils to find and select independently. The school is rightly proud of its drama productions, for example *The Lion King*, giving pupils an opportunity to perform in front of an audience. Pupils have good opportunities to see live theatre performances, such as *Twelfth Night*, that contribute effectively towards their cultural development, understanding and enjoyment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. Pupils attain standards that are above the national average at the end of Year 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Although there is some yearly variation due to the small numbers of pupils taking the national tests, inspectors confirm that standards reflect the above and well above levels achieved in recent years. A higher than average number of pupils achieve standards that are above those expected of their age. Pupils make good progress overall in their learning, especially in developing number skills and knowledge. The key factors in enabling pupils to achieve these above average levels are:
- good teaching in Years 1 and 2;
  - pupils' positive, enthusiastic attitudes to mathematics;
  - the use of a new commercial scheme of work to ensure that all required aspects of mathematics are covered fully, especially pupils' knowledge and use of number skills;
  - the teacher's good use of assessment information in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that pupils, especially the more able, are frequently challenged to extend their skills and knowledge.
87. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with the national average. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection and reflect the most recent national test results for Year 6 pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving above average levels is in line with that achieved nationally. Pupils make sound progress

overall in their learning. They make good progress in lessons where teachers ensure that mathematical activities are matched closely to pupils' learning needs. Teachers do not always ensure that junior pupils, particularly the more able, are challenged consistently to extend and apply their skills and knowledge. On occasions, pupils spend too long on activities that consolidate rather than extend their knowledge. The school is currently using booster sessions in mathematics to try to raise the number of pupils achieving above average levels. This has yet to improve significantly the proportion who achieve above nationally expected levels. Pupils with special educational needs and those from a Traveller background make sound progress overall in their learning. They make good progress when teaching and support staff provide good individual guidance and support. This helps them to participate fully and achieve well for their ability. For example, a pupil from a Traveller background was given good support in reading an activity sheet. This helped her to understand clearly what was required and to tackle the work with confidence. However, on occasions, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils do not benefit from specific support. They are involved in similar learning activities to other pupils in the class. They are unable to make enough progress as parts of the activity prove too difficult for them to fully understand. They have to wait until the teacher can provide further guidance and this limits the amount of work they achieve

88. Most Year 2 pupils are confident in counting in twos, fives and tens up to 100. They recall mentally some multiplication facts, for example the five times table. Many show an understanding of other multiplication tables, for example four times and three times, which is above the level expected of their age. Almost all pupils, including lower attainers, have a secure knowledge and use of addition and subtraction facts up to 20. Many are beginning to use a range of strategies, for example doubling, to work out addition and multiplication problems accurately. Most lower attaining pupils confidently count on to and back from 20 and show a generally secure understanding of addition number bonds to 10. More able pupils apply their increasing understanding of multiplication and division facts to accurately work out answers to challenging problems, for example the total price of different shopping items. Most Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of different two- and three-dimensional shapes. Many correctly identify them by their different properties, for example the different lengths of the sides of a cuboid.
89. Pupils build their number skills soundly in Years 3 and 4; for example, when using their knowledge to work out multiples of 2, 5 and 10 quickly as part of an introductory mental activity. Year 4 pupils consolidate then extend these skills by completing questions in the text book which require them to apply their knowledge of multiplying and dividing by nine. Many have a good recall of how to use their knowledge of multiplication, for example  $9 \times 7 = 63$ , to calculate quickly that  $63$  divided by  $9 = 7$ . This allows them to complete a good number of questions from the textbook, although they do not then use this knowledge to tackle more challenging number problems. Year 6 pupils extend their number skills soundly, for example to use a doubling technique to work out more difficult multiplication problems such as  $32 \times 13$ . Pupils do not consistently show how their working out helped them to get their answer. This does not always allow the teacher to point out, or the pupil to understand, any inaccuracies in their work or how it could be improved. Some higher attaining Year 6 pupils confidently work out the areas of different shapes, for example a triangle, although few were able to apply this knowledge to work out the areas of more complex shapes.
90. Teaching is sound overall and often good. Teachers have implemented the school's numeracy strategy soundly. Many use introductory activities successfully to develop pupils' mental skills, for example when Year 5 and Year 6 pupils used their flip-number cards to quickly work out and show larger and smaller decimal numbers. On occasions, teachers do not ensure that the pace of this introductory activity is sufficiently brisk to ensure that they grasp the interest and attention of all pupils. For example, a teacher used a multiplication activity that required pupils in a large class to follow on from the previous

answer. The teacher did not ensure that they remained focused after they had given their reply. This led to some lapses in concentration. Teachers organise their lessons well. They use detailed lesson plans and share the specific learning objectives with pupils to provide a clear focus for their learning. Teachers control their classes effectively to ensure that pupils stay focused on their learning. They use a good range of strategies to help them get pupils' attention; for example, some use a 5 to 1 counting down pattern to ensure that every pupil is listening by the time the teacher reaches one. This enables them to give out further instructions or guidance and refocus pupils' attention.

91. Teachers do not consistently ensure that they plan learning activities that meet closely the broad range of needs in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. Teachers organise different ability groups within the class, but the learning activities are too often very similar. For example, they use similar multiplication activities and expect the more able to achieve more work rather than requiring them to apply their knowledge in more challenging ways. Teachers make sound use of pupils' numeracy skills to support work in other subjects; for example, when Years 5 and 6 pupils designed a beam bridge in design and technology. Teachers make some use of information and communication technology to support number work and data handling, for example to produce graphs, although this is not used enough to promote higher standards.
92. Year 6 pupils felt that they benefit from having two teachers share their mathematics lessons during the week – 'they have different strengths and this helps us understand better in different parts of maths'. However, teachers do not always have consistently high enough expectations of pupils' work. This is reflected in the different ways in which pupils present their work in terms of neatness and in showing clearly what strategy they used to calculate their answers. This variation, particularly in the juniors, does not ensure that pupils develop their skills and knowledge consistently. Pupils are not clearly aware of what they must do in order to improve the accuracy and quality of their work.
93. The numeracy co-ordinator, working closely with the new headteacher and local education authority's adviser, has a good understanding of the school's strengths in mathematics and the areas for development. She has analysed the results of national tests to identify where pupils have weaknesses. The co-ordinator has used this information to inform teaching plans, which she monitors regularly. She has observed some lessons in other year groups, although this has yet to focus strongly on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

## SCIENCE

94. **Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 that are above average. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are close to the average overall. Standards are higher in the infant phase and have been maintained in the junior phase since the last inspection report. However, there have been fluctuating standards at the end of Year 6 over the last three years, with some test results below the average. There are a small number of pupils in each year group so one pupil greatly affects the overall percentage scores. Nevertheless the school has given high priority to the development of the subject and that continues. Pupils now have greater experience of scientific enquiry and have better investigative skills than at the time of the previous inspection. From analysis of test information, the school has found that pupils need to revise scientific knowledge so that they do not forget previous learning in the two-year cycle of work.**
95. Pupils make good progress in the infant years. The consistently good, and often very good, teaching encourages pupils to develop an interested and enthusiastic approach. This is supported effectively by a well-planned and detailed curriculum. This includes a good range of opportunities for pupils to work practically in groups with guidance from the

teacher and support assistant. It enables pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to build successfully on prior learning.

96. Pupils make sound progress in the junior years. Teaching is sound and often good. Teachers' lesson plans are good, although they do not always allow for activities and recording to be appropriately matched to the abilities of the pupils. There is not consistent challenge to the most able pupils. Where the pace of the lesson is good and the teachers' expectations are high, pupils respond with a high level of motivation, co-operate with each other well and have good discussion of the ideas involved. Where pace is slow, some pupils lose their concentration and do not participate fully and contribute their ideas. Subject knowledge of teachers is generally secure. When teachers cover topics that have been introduced earlier in the school, for example 'Forces and Magnetism', they ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are reinforced and then extended. Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, particularly when the work is well matched and supported by an adult. Pupils from a Traveller background contribute fully to the lessons and make sound progress.
97. Most Year 2 pupils understand simple properties of materials and compare two variables accurately in sorting. They record results well in Venn diagrams, with the more able using intersecting diagrams. They recognise changes in materials and that some changes cannot be reversed. They make sensible predictions and compare these with actual results. This was seen in their topic folders. Pupils predicted realistically what would happen to bread after it had been toasted for short and longer periods of time. Pupils used their literacy skills effectively to write up the experiment, with the older and more able pupils using explicit and very good explanations of what had happened. Pupils apply mathematical skills well to work in science. This was seen in an investigation into the amount of 'stretch' of various types of socks, where pupils applied their knowledge of mass in grams. In a well-planned lesson about electrical circuits, pupils worked together well and were delighted when one group made a buzzer work. Good questioning techniques by the teacher encouraged the most able pupils to think of ways of making a switch in the circuit. During the plenary session of the lesson, pupils talked confidently about what they had done and why they thought the switch had worked.
98. Scrutiny of work in Years 3 and 4 shows that pupils continue to extend their skills of experimentation and investigation successfully. For example, pupils recorded in tabular form the results of their investigation into sound and whether it travels equally well through all materials. They made reasonable conclusions on evaluation of their results. In a lesson about forces and magnets, pupils consolidated their knowledge and understanding of forces as the teacher skilfully guided their ideas. Pupils were eager to participate in activities and discussion and were encouraged to use the correct vocabulary, for example 'attraction' and 'south pole' instead of 'sticking to it' and 'the blue end of the magnet'.
99. Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge and skills confidently when challenged to investigate forces in the design of a bridge. They used their understanding of fair testing to ensure that they kept all factors equal - for example, the same length of string, the same size and strength of paper and to make a basket to hold masses so there was no additional force on the bridge each time. Effective links were made in this work to design and technology and information and communication technology research. Pupils apply their mathematical skills well, such as in constructing graphs for an investigation of links between heat and the rate of evaporation. Good planning links the subject to the 'real' world. Pupils visited Three Valleys Clay Lane Environmental Centre when studying filtration and 'cleaning' dirty water.
100. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has promoted a positive attitude to the subject by staff and pupils throughout the school. During the last year, she has used the

national subject guidance effectively to ensure that all the required topics are covered and are met at higher levels in each class. A newly purchased published scheme for science provides additional support for teachers. The co-ordinator monitors curriculum planning satisfactorily to check on how pupils' skills are developed. She has had training with the local education authority's science adviser and monitored samples of pupils' work to check achievement. The school plans to use a portfolio of pupils' work at different levels of attainment to guide teachers in their assessments, although this is currently not established. The headteacher and science adviser have monitored and evaluated teaching in each class. Even so there are inconsistencies in the quality of practice throughout the school, particularly in the use of assessment. Levels of pupils' attainment in science are not always taken into account when teachers plan lesson activities.

101. The co-ordinator has analysed test results and teacher assessments well in the past year to identify areas of the subject that need further development. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 are having booster sessions for science this year to revise areas of knowledge. The school is in the early stages of tracking the results of annual testing to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress each year. Teachers have appropriate class targets this year for groups of pupils to raise standards, but pupils do not have individual targets for their own improvement. Although most of the monitoring and assessment procedures in the subject are developing satisfactorily, some have been introduced very recently. Therefore they have not yet had sufficient time or focus to impact on raising standards or to share good practices in teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. Pupils attain standards that are above those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, in the infant class. Further evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' previous work, a scrutiny of displays around the school and by talking to staff and pupils. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Some pupils with special educational needs provide good role models in the mixed-ability grouping. They achieve good standards and make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge, similar to others in their class. Pupils from a Traveller background take a full and active part in all lessons and also make similar progress to other pupils.
103. Teaching is good in the infant and junior phases. In the infant phase the teacher uses effective teaching methods, with initial clear demonstration and instructions. She encourages independence in tasks and appropriate use of adult support to promote safety. Pupils work carefully with concentration and respond with perseverance to the teacher's suggestions to extend their skills. In a lesson observed during the inspection, a group of Year 1 pupils mixed paint successfully on a palette to get the shade of colour they wanted. They painted interesting sky patterns, bringing the sky down to the horizon, before they painted in the building. All added 'texture' to their building with brushwork and sponges. Another group of Year 1 pupils cut out their own clay 'house' tile with appropriate guidance from the teacher. She used pupils' ideas successfully to encourage individuality and demonstrated new techniques as needed. A group of Year 2 pupils exhibited very good use of pencil skills as they refined drawings of local buildings from their sketches made the previous week. Pupils were given good opportunities at the end of the lesson to evaluate their work and to share techniques with each other, for example 'If you use a 6B pencil you can smudge it'. Good links are made with other subjects. Pupils painted detailed pictures of a landscape in the style of Oscar Kokoschka and added collage when studying the stories of Katie Morag by Mairi Hedderwick. The shapes, detail and perspective of houses showed particularly good development from Year 1 to Year 2. Pupils develop sound graphical skills on the computer. Pupils' weaving links well with design and technology and scientific study of materials.

104. In the junior classes pupils also use their art skills to produce work related to other subjects. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 created innovative designs for Greek vases. Years 5 and 6 pupils produced good work with perspective from a photograph of the Pyramids and colourful pictures of Tutankhamen in their study of the Egyptians. Teachers have planned good research projects into the lives of a variety of artists, including Picasso, David Hockney and Andy Goldworthy. Pupils have good opportunities to develop artwork in the style of well-known artists, such as Monet and from Munch's *The Scream*. Teachers and pupils use sketchbooks well, to refine pupils' pencil skills particularly. Pupils in Years 4 extend techniques of shading to give drawings of trainers' depth and three-dimensional quality. They explore relationships well when more than one figure is included in a picture. Years 5 and 6 evaluate their own work critically as they attempt to interpret 'movement' of figures and draw 'full face' and 'three-quarter face' pictures of their peers. They demonstrate refined skills in their sketches of their own coiled clay vases, using shading, pointillism and hatching.
105. The school is making good use of the national subject guidance, which has been modified to provide a structured scheme of work to cover a two-year cycle for each class. The co-ordinator has an enthusiastic approach to the subject and consistently encourages and promotes art. For example, the school contributes to local art exhibitions regularly. She has a good knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the subject and is keen to develop and extend the skills of both the staff and pupils. She has led professional development training for teachers. Assessment is at an early stage of development and not yet standardised, although teachers do record pupils' skills and knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator keeps a good photographic record of pupils' work and monitors teachers' plans. She does not monitor classroom practice, although provides good guidance on developing pupils' skills.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. **Pupils attain standards that are in line with those normally expected at the end of both the infant and junior phases. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was below average. Since the previous inspection there has been more effective written guidance for teachers, the quality of teaching has improved and a co-ordinator with good subject knowledge has been appointed.**
107. **Pupils across the school achieve satisfactorily, including those with special education needs. Pupils from a Traveller background enjoy the activities undertaken and make similar progress to other pupils in the class. Teaching is sound, with good features. There are particular strengths in the planning of lessons, the management of pupils and the teaching methods used. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the design, make and evaluation of products and respond with enthusiasm, interest and concentration on the tasks given. Pupils work particularly well in collaborative groups. Teachers are beginning to plan so that pupils' skills build successfully on prior skills and knowledge and some give pupils the opportunity to re-evaluate their work. However, this is not yet consistent in all classes or all lessons.**
108. **By the end of Year 2 pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of 'design' as they research buildings in library books before generating their own design of a building. Good planning for Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils use a wide variety of materials and components in their activities. For example, pupils joined strips of card with paper fasteners accurately for moving puppets. They worked with construction toys before building a model carefully with a moving hinge or swivel part. The teacher promotes safety techniques well and pupils use scissors, glue and tape confidently and safely. In a lesson observed, the teacher guided pupils effectively to make independent choices from available recycled materials for a model. All**

**pupils worked industriously and matched the shapes of materials to their design sensibly. Good links with mathematics were drawn at the end of the lesson, as pupils identified shapes of materials used, such as cuboids and cylinders.**

109. **In the junior classes pupils have good opportunities to apply knowledge from other subjects. For example, the current Years 5 and 6 topic on bridges links well with the work on forces in science and research using information and communication technology. In a Years 1 and 2 lesson, skilful questioning by the teacher helped pupils to increase their own skills in the evaluation of different cakes in terms of 'looks' and 'taste'. Pupils followed a flow diagram carefully to make and bake their own cakes. Using information from the previous activity, pupils discussed knowledgeably what could be added to the cakes to make them more interesting.**
110. Subject expertise has improved since the last inspection and is generally secure. The co-ordinator has a strong subject expertise from initial training. Medium and short-term plans for the subject are in the process of development from national guidance. These include separate topics which link together to enable teachers to cover all the required skills and knowledge in a two-year cycle for each class in the infant and junior phases. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans, has audited and improved resources effectively and keeps a photographic record of pupils' work to check pupils' achievement. However, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills are under-developed aspects of the role.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work since the start of the school year in folders and on display, and by talking to staff and pupils. Pupils attain standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 that are in line with those expected nationally. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. The school has implemented national subject guidance effectively to ensure that pupils meet all curriculum requirements. Geography is taught in a mixture of weekly, half-termly and termly topics. The course is enhanced well by the school making good use of visits; for example, infant pupils visit a local farm and the local village. Junior pupils visit Cuffley camp and a visit to France provides pupils with very good opportunities to compare their lives with others living in a different European country.
112. Year 2 pupils show a good understanding of how their lives differ from people living on the island of Struay. They know that the weather is different and that people have different shops, for example 'there is no Sainsburys!' They know that the islanders use different forms of transport, for example a tractor, to get around the island. Most Year 2 pupils show above expected mapping skills for their age; for example, they draw a very good sketch map of the island and use two-figure co-ordinates to locate accurately some of the island facilities such as the shop. Some more able Year 2 pupils use geographical vocabulary accurately in their writing, for example 'island' and 'beach'. Many Years 3 and 4 pupils show a sound understanding of life in an Indian village. A more able pupil had used his information and communication technology skills very competently to find out about some of the games played by Indian children. Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of the main countries, mountains and oceans of the world. They talk in detail about how people live on the Isles of Scilly. Some were clearly enthused by their teacher's liking of this group of islands and the good range of resources she provided to enable them to find out more about them. They use their literacy and numeracy skills successfully to provide detailed written descriptions and accurate weather graphs. There was limited evidence of pupils using specific geographical terms. Some more able pupils show a good understanding of how environmental factors, for example extreme weather conditions and oil pollution, can affect human and animal life.



113. There were no lessons to be observed during the inspection so no overall judgement could be made on teaching quality. The analysis of pupils' work and teaching plans show that all required aspects of the curriculum are taught. Teachers assess pupils' skills annually and the information is passed on to the next class teacher for use in curriculum planning. Teachers are making some use of information and communication technology, for example access to the Internet and mapping skills, although this is not consistently developed. The co-ordinator has a strong interest in promoting the subject. She has not yet monitored and evaluated teaching and learning. This is planned when the subject is a major improvement priority.

## **HISTORY**

114. Inspectors observed two junior lessons during the inspection. Further evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work in folders, on display and by talking to teachers and pupils. Standards are in line with those expected nationally of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make sound progress in their learning. Standards in Year 2 have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. They are lower at Year 6 because pupils do not have the same detailed factual knowledge reported previously. Teachers modify learning activities to help pupils with special educational needs and those from a Traveller background to participate effectively. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher used simpler statements of historical information to help them to read and understand about life in Athens and Sparta. They contributed their ideas to the class discussion and made sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of life in Ancient Greece.
115. Years 1 and 2 pupils show an increasing awareness of the passing of time; for example, when talking about toys and how houses were different when their grandparents were children. This knowledge is built on soundly in Years 3 and 4 when pupils know that ideas and practices that the Romans brought to this country have affected the way in which we build roads and houses. Many know the names of the main Roman gods and have a secure understanding of how the Romans worshipped them. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their research skills successfully to gain information about the Victorians from a wide range of sources. For example, many use questions competently to gain factual information about Queen Victoria from her family tree. They identify what is fact and what is opinion and show their understanding clearly by relating it to their school; for example 'there is only one male teacher' (fact) and 'all the teachers are strict' (opinion). Many pupils, especially the more able, make good use of their literacy skills to describe in detail the main features of a Victorian afternoon held in school. Pupils with special educational needs were fully involved in the different Victorian activities. They were provided with some Victorian classroom drawings to allow them to illustrate the main differences from their normal classroom lessons. This helped them to improve their historical knowledge by picking out many of the key features which more able pupils had identified in their written descriptions.
116. Teaching was sound in both of the lessons observed. Teachers used questions very competently to challenge pupils to develop their initial answers. For example, the teacher asked a Year 4 pupil to explain 'How do we know that?' when the pupil was identifying ways in which the Romans had changed Ancient Britain. This led on to a more detailed discussion on ways in which evidence was found, including the valuable work of archaeologists. Teachers use resources effectively to gain pupils' interest and attention; for example, by using an overhead projector to illustrate the map of Ancient Greece so Years 5 and 6 pupils gain a clearer understanding of where Athens and Sparta are located. They do not always maintain a sufficiently brisk lesson pace. On occasions, teachers keep pupils sitting on the carpet too long in introductory activities. This does not encourage them to retain their interest and attention. Many pupils then take considerable time to refocus their efforts and get involved fully in the written activity.

117. History has not been a major improvement priority recently. A new subject co-ordinator has only just taken on the responsibility. She is beginning to improve her knowledge and understanding of standards attained, and plans to extend the range of educational visits, for example to St. Albans and Hatfield House, to support the different history topics.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. They have improved since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils attain standards overall that are below those expected nationally. This is similar to the last inspection. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection on the key issue of providing detailed guidance and professional development. It makes very good use of national subject guidance to provide a clear curriculum programme through which pupils' skills are soundly developed in most required aspects. Most staff have benefited from good quality training. They have improved subject knowledge and confidence in using information and communication technology. They use their improved knowledge well to help pupils to develop their skills, especially in the infants. Sound and often good teaching, together with some improvement in computer resources, enable them to achieve a level of skill in the required aspects that is in line with that expected nationally by the end of Year 2.
119. Year 6 pupils achieve standards in some aspects that meet nationally expected levels; for example, the use of Internet and CD ROMs to gain information on different topics in science, history and geography. However, the school does not have enough resources to help pupils to achieve a greatly increased range of skills by the end of Year 6. For example, the limited resources in control technology do not allow pupils to achieve expected levels in this aspect. Sound and often good teaching helps pupils to develop their word processing skills satisfactorily. The limited range of resources does not enable pupils to apply these skills enough in other lessons to maintain sound progress. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils showed above expected knowledge and understanding of the impact of information and communication technology on their lives when they debated the uses and misuses of the Internet. They valued the range of information that was available to them to help with their learning. Many pupils recognised the entertainment value, for example by downloading games. Some had a good understanding of how people could misuse it, for example, by sending dangerous or misleading information. The school successfully encourages pupils with limited opportunities to use computers at home, for example pupils from a Traveller background, to develop their skills at lunch and break times.
120. Some Year 2 pupils improve their control skills competently by programming instructions for a robot 'turtle'. They estimate accurately how far the 'turtle' will need to travel before entering the instructions into the robot's memory. Other pupils enter instructions into a computer to enable a 'pirate ship' to locate hidden treasure. This increases their understanding of controlling movements. It also supports the development of pupils' early mapping skills, for example their use of co-ordinates. Most Year 2 pupils have sound word processing skills and use them successfully to support their literacy skills, for example to write a letter. They show good mouse control skills when using a drawing program to create a 'picture' on screen. They save and print their work successfully. Year 5 pupils use the Internet, CDs and floppy discs successfully to locate information on 'bridges' linked to their design and technology work. With good support from teachers, most cut and paste the information and a picture successfully in to a word processing document. Year 6 pupils use their data handling skills well to support their work in science by creating block and line graphs linked to their 'water project'. They use good information retrieval skills to locate information, for example on nicotine, to help them to produce a document on 'smoking'. They do not use the opportunity to apply their reading skills, for example, through skimming and scanning the text to rewrite the information in their own words. Many Year 6 pupils enter text accurately and know how to edit, save and alter font style

and size. However, they do not have enough opportunities to apply these skills frequently. This restricts the amount and the standard of their work.

121. Pupils clearly enjoy working on the computers and are disappointed and frustrated when the older set-ups break down. However, they recognise that they will be given their opportunity to complete their work and willingly go on to other tasks, for example finding similar information from books. They are eagerly looking forward to working in the planned new computer suite and talk excitedly about watching it being built.
122. Teaching in the two lessons observed was never less than sound. It was good when two teachers combined their skills and expertise to provide good support and guidance. This helped all pupils to settle quickly to their research task. They located their information competently. Most pupils, some with help, met their learning objective by creating and saving a document. Teachers are well organised; for example, in a Year 5 lesson, they provided back-up discs which proved very valuable when a computer 'crashed'. They helped pupils to continue with their research activity rather than having to wait until another computer was available. Teaching is less effective, although still sound, when the teacher does not maintain a good pace to the lesson. For example, the teacher did not indicate to pupils how long they had for the research activity or how many minutes they had left to complete it. As many pupils had become so interested in researching the information, some did not complete fully what was required of them.
123. Teachers use information and communication technology to support work in some subjects, for example science and history. Many would like to extend these opportunities. However, the school currently organises most of its computers on to tables and trolleys. They are situated around the hall and the adjoining small library area. As they have to be relocated during lunchtime and for indoor physical education lessons, this reduces their use considerably. The school has committed itself to improving resources and facilities significantly. The subject co-ordinator has drawn up a detailed action plan to identify clearly how this is to be achieved. The governing body, with support from the local education authority and the diocesan education board, has planned very carefully to meet its financial commitment. The school is benefiting greatly from the very valuable support from the Friends Association. The building work has just started and the governing body is currently considering various hardware and software improvements. Once established, the school will be very well set up to meet all requirements and improve pupils' skills considerably.

## MUSIC

124. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. Standards have declined since the last inspection, as the school does not have the same level of expertise on its staff. Teaching is sound overall. No junior phase teaching was seen during the inspection. Judgements are supported by attendance at assemblies to hear singing, scrutiny of teachers' lesson plans, pupils' folders and the newly purchased published scheme of work and discussion with Year 6 and the music co-ordinator.
125. Teachers' planning is good and links closely with national guidance for music and the published scheme used by the school. In an infant lesson pupils were encouraged to listen carefully to the music and most were able to copy a rhythm. Pupils sang through a previously learnt song *Skeleton Stomp* with confidence, including contributions by soloists and individual chime bar accompaniment. Although praised well, pupils were not given sufficient guidance how to improve performance. The teacher used the taped resource satisfactorily to introduce pitch, with pupils copying the teacher in hand jive movements upwards and downwards to the trend of the song *Scaling the Heights*. Pupils are beginning to represent sound with symbols.

126. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher encouraged positive links between music and dance in response to Saint Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*. Effective plans show that pupils used their movements and their knowledge of tempo, duration and pitch to compose music to describe interaction between two animals. Pupils listened to repeated patterns in Dave Brubeck's *Unsquare Dance*. From this, pupils extended their own knowledge and skills by combining two and then three rhythmic patterns using different instruments. Years 5 and 6 pupils have been taught satisfactorily to analyse and compare sounds, such as in an activity to decide which melodies are made up of chords. They have had good opportunities to practise and present performances, for example in the production of *The Lion King*. Pupils have been given sound opportunities to work collaboratively. For example, groups of pupils have composed melodic 'rounds' using the pentatonic scale .
127. The co-ordinator taught two of the three classes for music in the infant and junior phases until recently. She monitors the plans of the junior phase. The school has adequate musical resources, although those from other cultures are not fully developed. The use of new technology in the subject is underdeveloped. Although there are assessment opportunities built into the newly purchased scheme, the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to standardise assessment procedures across the whole school. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices are at a very early stage of development. The music co-ordinator encourages pupils in the junior years to take part in extra-curricular activities. These include three recorder groups involving 18 pupils, and 16 pupils attend choir. The school has taken part in the National Schools Music Festival. A good proportion of junior pupils take advantage of peripatetic instrumental teaching of the flute and trumpet. No instrumental teaching was seen as these teachers attended outside the inspection period.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Pupils attain standards that meet nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2. They are above expected standards at the end of Year 6. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Infant pupils make sound progress in developing their skills and knowledge. Pupils make good progress in the juniors. All pupils are involved fully in the good range of activities. The key factors in helping pupils to extend their skills, especially in the juniors, include:
- the good subject knowledge of teachers and adult helpers;
  - the enthusiastic attitudes of pupils – they clearly enjoy physical activities;
  - the very good outdoor facilities encourage pupils to extend their games and athletic skills;
  - the curriculum is enhanced very well by a very good range of extra-curricular sporting clubs including rugby, soccer, netball, running and orienteering. The school participates regularly in competition with other local schools. It also enters teams successfully into larger competitions, for example the Hertfordshire Cross-Country Championships;
  - teachers make good use of national subject guidance to teach all required aspects. The school arranges for all pupils to have regular swimming sessions which helps pupils to gain confidence quickly then extend their skills;
  - pupils benefit from using a good range of games apparatus at break and lunchtimes, for example, to improve their skills by hitting balls against a wall.
129. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their movement and gymnastic skills soundly. They use a broad range of movements to travel around the hall, showing increasing control. Most pupils show a good awareness of the need for space for themselves and for others and they use it well. This is particularly important as space is restricted significantly due to the school having to store dining furniture, the piano as well as gymnastic equipment along the sides of the hall. Years 3 and 4 pupils have good football skills. Many boys and girls control the ball effectively and use the correct technique to pass the ball accurately to

another member of their team. They show a keen competitive spirit and try very hard to help their team to win. On occasions, this made it difficult for some pupils to accept defeat gracefully. The teacher intervened quickly and reminded pupils strongly of the need to maintain a sporting attitude and appreciate the skills of others. Most Years 5 and 6 pupils show above average levels of fitness. They use good co-ordination and strength to complete balance and weight-bearing activities as part of a fitness circuit. All pupils work very hard to contribute towards a team total for each activity in the circuit. Year 6 pupils were very appreciative of the recent improvement in the range of sporting activities. They valued the opportunity, through a pupil questionnaire, to indicate which activities they liked. Those who did not have high-level ball skills were very appreciative of the encouragement given to individual activities, for example running and swimming.

130. Teaching was good in the two lessons observed. Teachers and support staff, and an experienced and knowledgeable parental helper, have good subject knowledge. They use it very well to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, the teacher illustrated the correct passing and dribbling techniques in soccer. The parent helper helped pupils to adopt the correct body position when completing a particular fitness exercise. Teachers have an enthusiastic style, which encourages pupils to participate and to try to achieve a high standard. They control their classes very successfully to ensure that pupils stay focused on what they are trying to achieve. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 fitness activity, all pupils worked hard. They were encouraged by staff and other pupils in their team to try to get their highest score in the different individual fitness activities. On occasions, the teacher spent too long demonstrating a particular technique, for example a passing skill in soccer. This limited the time available for pupils to practise and improve their standard. Teachers used their expertise to identify ways in which pupils could improve their skills, although they did not always encourage pupils to evaluate their own performance.
131. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has only been responsible for managing the subject since the start of this school year. He is supported successfully by the headteacher, staff and parental helpers. He has already contributed considerably to ensuring that physical education activities play a full part in the school's programme. The co-ordinator has increased the range of activities and the number of pupils participating regularly. The school has improved resources and the current building work should enable space in the hall to be less restricted.