

INSPECTION REPORT

HATFIELD TRAVIS CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Hatfield

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106766

Head Teacher: S Turner

Reporting inspector: R A Sadler
13752

Dates of inspection: 19-22 March 2001

Inspection number: 195069

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 Nursery
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cuckoo Lane Hatfield Doncaster South Yorkshire
Postcode:	DN7 6QE
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Silvester
Date of previous inspection:	17-20 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
R Sadler 13752	Registered Inspector	Art History	What sort of school is it? What the school should do to improve further. The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed?
M Hackney 15181	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
A Puckey 04302	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology (D&T)	How well are pupils taught?
S Shetra 31529	Team inspector	English Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
P Spencer 27022	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education (PE) Under fives	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hatfield Travis Church of England infant and nursery school with 212 full-time pupils on roll and 62 part-time children in the nursery is larger than average. A road separates the nursery from the main school site. More than half of the pupils come from outside Hatfield. Most children spend a year in nursery before joining the Reception year full-time in the September of the school year they become five. Almost all pupils are white, no pupils have English as an additional language and the school has four children from traveller families. Around 5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is well below the national average of 20%. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, at 10%, is well below the national average of 23%. Three pupils have statements of special educational need which is below average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is around average for most pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hatfield Travis is a good school with clear and appropriate priorities and pupils are served well by the staff. The school has a good record of seven-year-old pupils achieving above average or well above average results in National Curriculum tests. Last year, results achieved by seven-year-olds fell to levels that were in line with averages achieved nationally and below averages achieved in similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that the school's current Year 2 pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music, and PE. In art, standards are well above average and in history, geography and design and technology standards are at the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes to school are very good. Teaching is good and the school is very well led and managed. In view of the good progress pupils make and the good quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils throughout the school learn well and make good progress.
- In English, mathematics, science, ICT, music and PE pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and seven-year-olds' attainment is above national averages.
- Attainment in art is well above national averages and some pupils achieve outstanding work.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and 30% is very good. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- The school teaches pupils right from wrong very well and pupils' attitudes, personal development, behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are very carefully assessed and this helps to ensure effective learning. The school provides very good care for all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because provision is very good.
- The school works in a very effective partnership with parents. Many parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in design and technology, geography and history so that standards are in line with the higher levels achieved by pupils in other subjects.
- The use of time during some parts of the school day.

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 improved considerably since it was last inspected in March 1997. The head teacher and governors now provide clearer direction for the school and plan and check improvements very effectively. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above average. Seven-year-old pupils achieved well above-average National Curriculum test results in 1998 and 1999. In summer 2000, test results dropped. The school's very effective system of assessment confirms that this was due to the nature of the particular year group. The school's own assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that the current oldest year group are achieving above average levels. In art, the school's well above average levels have been maintained and many pupils now do outstanding work. Overall, teaching remains good for pupils aged 3-7 and the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced from one lesson in ten to three lessons in a hundred. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, although good at the last inspection, has improved so that it is now very good and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

Very good progress has been made on the four key issues for action indicated in the last report:

- child protection arrangements are now good;
- the school now has a very good system of monitoring by the head teacher, coordinators and governors;
- day-to-day assessment is now very effective and tasks are invariably well matched to pupils' learning needs. Higher attaining pupils are more appropriately challenged and pupils' enquiry skills have improved well and they now learn more independently;
- standards in ICT, which were below average in some aspects of the subject at the last inspection, are now above average due to the improvements in resources, teaching and management.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	B	A	B	C
Writing	A	A	C	D
Mathematics	A	A	D	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

Well below average E

In National Curriculum tests, results achieved by seven-year-olds, in reading, writing and mathematics, were above or well above national averages from 1997 to 1999. In 2000, results declined to a much lower level than the school's record of high attainment. It is clear that this dip in attainment was due to the nature of the 2000 year cohort. Inspection findings show that the current oldest year group are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Seven-year-olds achieve standards in art that are well above those seen nationally. In ICT, music, and PE they achieve above average standards. In history, geography and D&T seven-year-olds achieve average standards.

Overall, pupils achieve well in the school. In the nursery and Reception classes pupils make good progress in all areas of learning and, in Years 1 and 2, this good progress continues in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils show very good self-discipline and have a good understanding of what is expected of them. They are polite, helpful and friendly. No child has been excluded recently.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: Relationships are excellent. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to help as monitors and to take part in a range of activities.
Attendance	Satisfactory: pupils arrive punctually and enjoy school.

The atmosphere in the school is very good and pupils play and work together in harmony and security. The school operates as a very orderly and pleasant community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 10% of lessons were unsatisfactory. Overall, 97% of the teaching is satisfactory or better, more than three quarters good or better and a quarter very good. A small proportion of teaching is excellent and instances of unsatisfactory teaching are rare.

In the nursery and Reception classes teaching is good overall. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is very good in art and good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, music and PE. It is satisfactory in geography.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and sometimes very good and this leads to good standards and progress. This is because teaching is sharply focused on clear learning objectives and most pupils show interest, increase their understanding of literacy and numeracy, work hard and at a good pace, think and learn for themselves, and know what they have to do to improve. No judgement could be made on teaching in history and D&T because they were not timetabled during the inspection.

All learning support staff make a valuable and significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They are fully involved in planning and assessment, know the pupils well and have very good understanding of how they learn. They work in close partnership with teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: The strategies to teach literacy and numeracy are effective. The curriculum is enriched through visits to other places and visitors to the school. A small proportion of teaching time is not used fully effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: this is very well coordinated and teachers work very effectively to plan learning in line with pupils' individual educational plans. The support given by teaching assistants is very good and pupils are included in all areas of school life. Pupils with special educational needs therefore make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: pupils are taught right from wrong and how to get on with others very well. Good opportunities are given for pupils to learn about other cultures. Occasionally in Collective Worship opportunities to enhance spiritual development are missed. Pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: procedures for checking pupils' progress in the core subjects are very good and assessment information very well used to help pupils learn well, especially in literacy and numeracy. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. All staff are aware of child protection procedures.

The school works very closely with parents, many of whom make an important contribution to the learning of their own and other children. The curriculum strongly emphasises literacy, numeracy, science and art. ICT is also becoming more prominent. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good: the head teacher provides very effective leadership. She works well with a capable senior management team to give clear direction to the school's work. Coordination of English, mathematics and science is very good and leadership of all other subjects is satisfactory or better.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well: the governing body has good ways of finding out about the school's work and gives full support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the school has a good range of very effective systems to evaluate and improve standards, the progress of all pupils and the quality of education.
The strategic use of resources	Good: the staff, the buildings and other resources are well used to help pupils learn. ICT resources are much improved and are now good. All the school's resources are used for their designated purpose.

Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection. The school has sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and support staff who work hard and work together as an effective team. Accommodation is very good, kept very clean and tidy and is full of stimulating and attractive displays. The amount and quality of learning resources are generally very good. The school is consulting parents effectively and comparing its results with those in similar schools to assess the value it gives.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The good quality of teaching and of pupils' behaviour.• Their children like the school and make good progress.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school and believing it to be well led and managed.• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.• The school helps pupils become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of extra-curricular activities.• Pupils getting the right amount of homework.

Parents express full confidence in the head teacher and all staff. Inspectors agree with the very positive points made by parents. However, the inspection team considers that extra-curricular provision is satisfactory and homework is appropriate and well managed.

Parents are involved very well in the life of the school and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Overall, pupils achieve above national standards and make good progress throughout the school. The high standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved to above average levels.

2 When children start the nursery their early attainment in all areas of learning, including language, literacy and mathematics is in line with those of most four-year-olds. Within the foundation stage (nursery and Reception) they make good progress in all areas of learning so that, by the time they leave reception classes, they mostly achieve above the expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, personal development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development.

3 The school has a strong record in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics, although the latest set of results for the pupils who left the school in July 2000 were not as good. From 1997 to 1999 the school achieved results that were well above the national average. In 2000 results fell to the national average and were below the averages scored by pupils in schools with similar characteristics. The school has undertaken a careful analysis of why results declined so much and, although some pupils attained well, it is clear that the year group that left the school in 2000, on average, was not as able as those of previous years. Standards in reading from 1997 to 2000 have been either well above or above national averages. From 1997 to 1999 results in writing were mostly well above the national average but in 2000 dropped to the national average. The largest drop in 2000 was in mathematics. From 1997 to 1999 the school had an impressive record of well above national average results, but in 2000 scored below the national average. For three years, from 1997 to 1999, mathematics was consistently the school's best subject in tests but in 2000 mathematics results dropped to become its worst subject. No national tests are taken by seven-year-olds in science but teachers' assessments indicate that in 2000, pupils reached above national averages and in line with averages achieved by pupils in similar schools.

4 Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving above national average levels in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is the result of the good teaching, and the effective leadership and management that ensures that teaching and learning are effectively monitored so that well-focused improvement actions can be taken. All teachers have a very secure knowledge of how to teach basic skills. Higher attaining pupils are being extended better than at the last inspection and assessment information is being used more effectively to guide planning and teaching. Pupils are now often effectively involved in their own learning and progress by having clear targets for learning and these set high expectations in a way that is supportive to pupils' learning and attitudes.

5 In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in English and standards overall are above national averages. Seven-year-olds currently achieve standards that are well above those nationally in speaking and listening. They talk fluently and confidently and listen well. They achieve above national averages in reading. They can use a range of phonic and other strategies to read new words and read fluently with expression. In writing, seven-year-olds achieve levels that are in line with national averages. They write with an interesting vocabulary using capital letters and full stops correctly to write in sentences. In independent

tasks and when writing longer stories all pupils make good attempts at spelling new words using their phonic skills. Handwriting is carefully taught and pupils' handwriting and presentation is above national levels. These good standards and progress are mainly the result of good teaching, the very well organised and effective support provided by teaching assistants and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in English and higher attaining pupils make good progress.

6 In Year 1 and 2 pupils also make good progress in mathematics and achieve standards above national averages. Most Year 2 pupils add and subtract confidently to, and beyond, 100. Many pupils understand place value and can solve money problems. Some pupils can make sensible estimations. They have good mental arithmetic skills and are able to explain their methods to teachers and to other pupils.

7 Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in science is above national averages and pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Seven-year-olds understand the significance of 'push, pull, squeeze and twist' in manipulating materials. They can talk convincingly about what constitutes a fair test. Skills in experimental and investigative work are less well developed but the school has recognised this and is working well to improve these.

8 By the age of seven standards in ICT are above average in a number of important aspects. In Reception classes, pupils become proficient with mouse and keyboard skills because they are well taught and their learning builds on the sound start made in the nursery. In Year 1, pupils can use different fonts, size, style and colour and enjoy using these skills when word-processing. Most Year 2 pupils can confidently use ICT to generate, develop, organise and present their work in writing, mathematics and science. Almost all are good at using ICT to find and use stored information, for example when using CD-ROMS. Attainment in ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection. New equipment and resources have been acquired and used and these are used effectively to promote higher standards.

9 Pupils achieve well above national average work in art and design and make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils produce outstanding work. In music and PE, attainment is above average and pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Attainment in history, geography and D&T is in line with that nationally but Travis pupils achieve less well in these subjects than they achieve in others.

10 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school because of the careful way the school assesses their progress and teaches them so well. Similarly, traveller children are equally well taught and make very good progress. At the last inspection higher attaining pupils often underachieved. The school has secured improvement in the provision for higher attaining pupils and they are more often challenged in lessons, although occasionally their learning could be extended further by giving them more opportunities to work independently and use their own ideas. Learning is consistently good in most sessions in the day. There is some inconsistency, however, in teaching and learning in a few sessions, mainly in the twenty-minute period before lunchtime.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and are keen and eager to learn. Through the high quality care and support, most pupils in the nursery and Reception classes settle quickly into school routines. Pupils in all classes are enthusiastic and interested and show their enjoyment in a range of activities. The '*Golden Rules*' which pupils helped to write

are well known to them, and pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations. The school is a very orderly community where pupils show care and consideration for each other. During assemblies pupils display very respectful attitudes, listen attentively yet confidently and spontaneously take an active part when required. In all classes, pupils participate willingly and most are keen to contribute their own ideas and to answer questions. They listen well to their teachers and to each other. In all classes, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, were seen concentrating well on their work and talking with enthusiasm about what they were learning. The very positive attitude of pupils in all classes makes a strong contribution to their learning and the progress they make.

12 Behaviour in lessons is mostly very good and pupils behave well in the playground and at lunchtime. Pupils show very good self-discipline when moving around the school, and this is particularly impressive as they enter and leave the hall for assemblies. At lunchtime behaviour is very good as pupils sit together at tables in the hall to eat cooked meals and packed lunches. They respond very positively to lunchtime arrangements and this helps their social development. Pupils are very polite and friendly towards visitors. The respect they show towards other people and property results in a very well-maintained, pleasant and clean environment in which to learn. During the inspection pupils responded particularly well to each other and no evidence was seen of bullying or harassment of any kind between pupils. Parents are confident that the school would immediately and effectively deal with any incident.

13 Relationships throughout the school are excellent. During lessons pupils share resources sensibly and willingly. Examples were seen in the nursery of children under five playing well together and sharing resources very amicably and thoughtfully. Pupils show care for each other, and many examples were seen of them working cooperatively together in groups and readily helping each other to achieve a common task. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved and familiar with daily routines and they support each other well in classrooms, at lunchtime and in the playground. The very high quality of relationships makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal and academic achievement.

14 Personal development is very good, and pupils enjoy acting as monitors and taking responsibility for tasks around the school. For example, pupils act as energy conservation and classroom monitors. Pupils' response to the school's high expectations of self-discipline makes a major contribution to their personal and social development. Regular opportunities are given for pupils to visit a range of places of educational and cultural interest. Pupils' personal development is further enriched through the school's strong links with the church and local community.

15 Attendance is satisfactory, and at 93%, is broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is low. Lessons start on time and there is an efficient and well-ordered start to the day in all classes. This has a very positive effect on standards and on pupils' personal and social development. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development were positively evaluated in the last inspection report. Parents recognise these as strength of the school and these have improved well.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16 Overall the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. This is a major strength because it ensures pupils learn well and make good progress throughout the school. The good teaching also promotes the above average standards pupils achieve by the age of seven, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. By the time they leave the school most pupils are achieving well in line with their abilities. Teaching is good in the nursery and Reception classes. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is very good in art. It is good

in English, mathematics, science, ICT, PE and music and satisfactory in geography. No judgements could be made in D&T and history because no lessons could be observed during the inspection.

17 The quality of teaching in 81% of lessons seen was good or very good which is a big improvement since the last inspection. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons well and teach effectively. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was reduced to 3% which is also a good improvement since the last inspection when 10% of teaching was unsatisfactory. Since 1997 the National Curriculum has changed considerably and the school has kept up with all developments. Teachers have attended a good range of training courses and have brought new knowledge and skills back into the school for the benefit of both pupils and other staff. This has had a positive impact on classroom practice. Almost all the weaknesses in teaching in the last inspection report have been remedied although further improvement is still needed with the provision of work which causes pupils to investigate, solve problems and work independently. Opportunities to ask open questions, particularly of higher attaining pupils are sometimes missed and this occasionally inhibits their learning.

18 The main features of the school's teaching are:

- teachers' good knowledge of most subjects which enables them to give good explanations and ask searching questions to extend pupils' thinking and vocabulary. For example, in a poetry lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to really think about loud and soft words. One pupil imaginatively and appropriately suggested "*I can drive storm clouds*" as a 'loud' phrase to use in a poem;
- clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils and planning that caters for the learning needs of all groups of pupils;
- very good skills of classroom management used to create a workshop ethos that emphasises effort and the need for good quality work;
- effective direct teaching. However, the amount of direct teaching sometimes limits opportunities for investigative work or independent research;
- almost all lessons end well when the teacher reinforces new learning, often by carefully analysing work and showing pupils how to improve, or makes connections with the next lesson. In one art lesson, for example, the teacher undertook an expert analysis of a few pupils' art work, skilfully drawing from pupils how the work could be improved. All were encouraged to look at their work afresh and had clear ideas about how to improve it during the next lesson;
- high expectations of pupils' academic performance so that they are appropriately challenged and try hard. They are expected to do their best;
- teachers' and teaching assistants' questioning is mostly good although sometimes opportunities are sometimes missed to ask open questions that require pupils to use their own ideas more;
- good use of assessment, first with pupils so they know what they have to do to improve, and then the use of assessment information to guide lesson planning, this is a major improvement as it was a key issue for development from the last inspection;
- very good management of behaviour and relationships;

- good team spirit and corporate working which includes all staff and helps to ensure continuity and progression of learning for pupils;
- very good use of learning support staff and parent helpers to enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and be included in all class activities. Teachers include pupils with special educational needs in whole class lessons very well. For example, in a music lesson, the teacher skilfully used eye contact with an individual pupil with special educational needs to encourage and enable her to follow the teaching and to be fully engaged in the activity.

19 As a result the learning needs of all pupils are met and pupils' learning is good. Pupils:

- make generally good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding;
- have targets and understand what they have to do to improve;
- behave very well, have very good attitudes to learning and often apply sustained and concentrated intellectual and creative effort;
- work at a good and productive pace.

20 The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced and a high proportion of time is devoted to literacy. Teaching in English is good and this maintains the standard of the last inspection and most of the weaknesses listed in the last report do not now apply. Work is carefully planned for all ability levels and teachers use technical vocabulary confidently and accurately and pupils gradually acquire it for themselves.

21 The National Numeracy Strategy has also been introduced successfully. Teaching is good which maintains the standards of the last inspection and most teachers have good knowledge of both numeracy and the pupils they teach. Appropriate levels of work are planned to meet the needs of different pupils which helps them to learn effectively, but tasks for more able pupils could be harder and more open ended to increase the level of challenge. All pupils do their best and when working in pairs, learn with and from each other. They are not afraid to ask questions or make mistakes when trying out new methods aloud.

22 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good because the inclusive ethos and excellent relationships in the school mean that teachers know all their pupils' progress and learning needs very well and are familiar with the targets on IEPs. These targets are well used, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that pupils are given work which enables them to make good progress. In lessons, support staff and parent helpers make a significant contribution to pupils' progress because they interact closely with them and make sure that, whatever their special educational needs, pupils play a full and active part in all class activities.

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

23 The overall curricular opportunities offered by the school are good. Provision for all subjects meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and promotes effective learning. The school has adopted the national guidelines (QCA schemes of work) to support teaching and learning. Systematic planning is undertaken jointly by teachers in the same year group and this builds effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. The provision for information and

communication technology has greatly improved since the last inspection with the development of the ICT suite.

24 The curriculum within the foundation stage is good and an appropriate variety of activities cover each area of learning. Nursery and Reception teachers and teaching assistants regularly plan together and ensure that the curriculum is based closely on the early learning goals and enables pupils to build on their prior learning. In the Reception classes, careful planning ensures a smooth transition from the curriculum based on the early learning goals to the requirements of the National Curriculum.

25 The school has correctly focused its priorities on the implementation of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to raise standards in English and mathematics. The strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science and ICT means that overall curricular provision has become imbalanced. The place of design and technology, history and geography has not recently been sufficiently considered. As at the last inspection, the provision for art remains very good. The school already plans to undertake a review of its whole curriculum using the revised National Curriculum. Action plans for each subject area are included in the school improvement plan. These include revision of policy documents and schemes of work. The curriculum for the foundation subjects is effectively blocked in the form of topics taught through the year although time spent on D&T, history and geography is too short to support the achievement of higher standards. The school has an effective plan to evaluate, review and improve provision in history, geography and D&T during the forthcoming year.

26 Available teaching time is not always used effectively. Sometimes the time allocated for a lesson is too long. Teachers spend the specified amount of time for the literacy and numeracy so that pace of learning does not drop. However, the remaining time within the overlong sessions is not always planned for and there is inconsistent practice between teachers within the same year group and also between teachers teaching different year groups. This is particularly true of the fifteen to twenty minute period before lunch. A careful evaluation is needed of how each part of the school day is used to best suit the teaching and learning of each subject.

27 The school provides a curriculum that effectively meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is due to be further enhanced with the creation of the multi-sensory room. Teachers plan carefully to meet pupils' needs and they are very well supported by the special needs teaching assistant and other teaching assistants. Pupils are fully included in all areas of the curriculum and all teachers have specific time allocated so that additional support can be given or assessments carried out to help with future planning. Reviews of progress on individual educational plans are completed regularly and parents consulted and informed from the earliest stages. The weekly non-contact time given to the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is used very effectively to support colleagues, direct the work of parents in producing games and other resources for teachers and parents to use and to liaise closely with outside support agencies. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils well and makes good arrangements to ensure that their learning needs are met in lessons and by arranging additional learning opportunities to meet their needs. Occasionally, during these extra sessions, opportunities are missed to enable pupils to use their own ideas, imagination and observation skills by asking more open questions and giving pupils time to give extended answers or to raise questions of their own. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education through planned curricular opportunities. The school takes effective account of the cultural needs of its four traveller pupils who make very good progress.

28 Although there is not a programme of regular activities after school, the curriculum is enriched by the school's involvement in the local and wider community and through the educational visits, which are linked to the topics being studied. Links with St. Lawrence's Church are particularly well established and the major Christian festivals are celebrated in the church. Other regular visitors to the school include a peripatetic music teachers' band to give pupils experience of other forms of live music. The aspect of the schools provision that was most criticised by parents on their responses to the questionnaire was the range of activities provided outside lessons. Overall the inspection team judges that the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

29 The school effectively participates in the Hatfield pyramid of schools designed to ensure the continuity of pupils' education as they move from one phase of learning to the next. The teachers ensure that liaison is effective through discussion and transfer of records with the junior school before and after pupils have made the transition.

30 The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. The provision for these aspects is evident implicitly in lessons and interwoven well into assembly themes and stories.

31 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. A good start is made to the children's spiritual development in the nursery, where prayers are said at the end of each session. Daily collective worship provides insight to the Christian values and beliefs promoted by the school. Occasionally, in collective worship, opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development are missed. The ethos of the school is reinforced by the use of Bible stories, prayers and hymns. On most occasions, artefacts are well used to support the assembly and in one case, various items from nature inspired awe and wonder in the pupils.

32 The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and staff are consistent in promoting high standards of behaviour and consideration for others. Pupils behave responsibly towards each other, their teachers and other adults and towards their school environment. The pupils understand the school's code of conduct and plenty of opportunities are taken to celebrate their achievements.

33 The provision for social development is also very good. Pupils work well together in mixed-gender pairs and in small mixed-attainment groups. They are able to share equipment and organise themselves during the guided reading session at the beginning of the day. They are confident in expressing their opinions and ideas in all areas of the curriculum and school life. Pupils are helped to take on responsibility for organising themselves. Nursery children use their picture cards to show that they have moved from one activity to the next. The calm atmosphere and very good relationships between catering, supervisory staff and pupils in the dining hall, make lunchtimes an enjoyable social experience. The achievement assembly is also another good social occasion to celebrate successes of individual pupils as well as those of a whole class.

34 Pupils' cultural development is good. Many opportunities are given to enable pupils to value their own cultural traditions and those of other cultures. These include topic work in geography, history, music, PE and art. The school has a range of artefacts that are used appropriately to support the topic work. The school makes very good use of visits within the locality to the local church as well as to other places such as the Chinese restaurant. During the week of the inspection, the school ran its very successful annual community event for pupils in the Reception classes and their parents. This focused on tasting foods from different countries. The school is planning to create e-mail links with schools where the cultural backgrounds of the pupils are more diverse.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 Since the last inspection the school has maintained its high standards of care and educational support for its pupils. The school community remains secure with an atmosphere that continues to promote the wellbeing of all pupils very effectively

36 Parents speak very highly of the help and encouragement their children receive from all adults in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated and supported to enable them to make good progress. Staff know pupils and many of their families well, and have a strong commitment to pupils' welfare and safety. Teachers and support staff respond very positively to the individual, physical and emotional needs of all pupils. Good provision is made for personal and social education and this is well monitored and promoted. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good with all pupils being set targets for improvement.

37 The procedures for monitoring child protection issues are now very good. Staff training is now up to date and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are fully aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of any concerns. Good personal records are kept for all pupils and these are regularly updated and amended. The health and safety policy is closely followed with a regular risk assessment well recorded and followed up. Good attention is paid to reminding pupils of safe practices in classrooms and during outside activities. Good provision is made for First Aid and a number of staff are qualified First Aiders.

38 The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Registers are completed accurately and consistently. In an attempt to improve attendance, in the event of any unexplained absence, the school contacts parents immediately after registration. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good with a consistent approach throughout the school. A good and positive system is in place for rewards and sanctions, and pupils work hard to get their names in the Achievement Book and celebrate their successes at a special weekly assembly. Although incidences of bullying are very rare, the school has very good procedures to handle any problems occurring between pupils. All pupils, including those children who are under five, are well supervised in the playground both in the nursery and main school.

39 Very good provision is made for the induction of children into the nursery and parents and their children very well supported and transfer arrangements to the junior school are good.

40 The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress in the core subjects and using the information to help them learn are very good. At the time of the last inspection, while the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment were good, the use of assessment information to guide medium-term curriculum planning and to plan future activities for pupils was not sufficiently rigorous. The head and staff have tackled this issue well. Assessment now effectively guides planning for the needs of all pupils at their own particular levels of prior attainment. Assessment in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy is now a strength of the school. Parents, when helping in school, are carefully briefed and well supported by teachers to ensure that they can assess individual pupils' progress when they are working with them and modify activities and questions accordingly. Parents' questioning in mathematics workshop sessions is effective and this helps pupils make good progress.

41 The school has a very comprehensive and effective assessment system which begins when pupils first enter nursery. Teachers' assessment and the *Performance*

Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) scheme are the basic tools used by the school to record attainment. The progress of each child is tracked throughout the school. All teachers have been trained to use and understand the assessment system and to apply it within the classroom, taking decisions, after assessment, on targeting work appropriately for individual children. Teachers are very adept at planning work for lower, medium and higher attaining pupils and pupils are continually moved between these groups to ensure that teaching matches learning needs well. The highest attaining pupils and those with special educational needs often receive work that is modified to meet their personal learning needs. Target-setting is now used across the whole school and pupils and teachers together have discussed and set appropriate targets in English and mathematics. Parents are informed about targets and are able to work with the teachers, by means of the home-school target books from Reception, to help their children achieve their targets. This means that teacher, pupils and parents are often clear about where to focus their efforts and how to improve their work and this helps pupils learn.

42 The developments in assessment have been very well led. The school has sought a range of outside help and has developed the school's approach into a logical and consistent system which benefits pupils' learning. The system for tracking pupils' attainment is well developed and the school is refining its systems to track the attainment of boys and girls and of sub-groups such as summer-born pupils, travellers, pupils with special educational needs, children looked after and children travelling into school from outside its normal area. The assessment and marking policy was revised in January 2001 and clearly sets out what will happen throughout the school. The marking section of the policy supports the assessment and target-setting processes and is known and understood by all staff though, in practice, although most marking is effective and indicates to pupils where and how they should improve their work, marking is not yet consistently effective in all classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 The school has a very good partnership with parents who are very satisfied with the quality of education provided. Parents speak very highly of the progress their children make and the care and support they receive from the school. The majority of parents support the school very well, and they feel welcome and valued as partners in children's learning. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement which was drawn up in consultation with them.

44 During the inspection many parents were seen taking children into classrooms, talking to teachers and helping with activities. A significant number of parents help in classrooms and in the nursery. Many more parents help when pupils are taken out on visits and provide very good support for all social and fundraising events organised by the school. An open week is held during the summer term when parents have the opportunity to observe lessons in literacy and numeracy and to have hands-on experience of ICT learning programs. A group of parents, very effectively led by the school support a weekly mathematics workshop for pupils in each year group and this provides a particularly good learning experience which pupils enjoy and make good progress. The games workshop organised by the SENCO and a group of parents is a good initiative which promotes the home/school partnership well. The school has developed an '*Alphabag*' scheme to promote learning about the alphabet, and this is being well used by parents to assist their children at home. During the inspection a very well attended and successful community event was held when parents/grandparents and Reception pupils enjoyed a range of sensory activities together. Pupils had the opportunity to taste a variety of foods from different parts of the world and adults and pupils worked very well together to complete a worksheet on sensory experiences around the school.

45 Most parents make a very good contribution to the work of the school by listening to children read and assisting with homework tasks and special topics. The school is committed to involving parents whose children have special educational needs, and to keeping them well informed about progress. The impact of parental involvement and the school's open door policy, and the effectiveness of the school's management and encouragement for parental support and homework makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress and achievements.

46 The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Regular helpful newsletters are sent home clearly informing parents of organisational issues and arrangements for school events and activities. A range of curriculum information booklets are sent to parents providing them with good and helpful instructions in the way that they can help with their children's academic progress at home. Parents receive a copy of the homework policy and their views are valued. Pupils in the Reception class have a Target Word Book which is well used as a communication between home and school. Open evenings, held each term and regular curriculum meetings are very well attended by parents. In addition, the school provides an opportunity for parents to speak informally with teachers on a daily basis. Parents receive good information about progress particularly for literacy, numeracy and science for which pupils also have personal targets for improvement that help them understand their learning needs. Three formal opportunities are given to parents to discuss their child's progress at parents' evenings held each term. The annual reports to parents are good and meet the statutory requirements. However, they do not yet include advice on what parents can do to help pupils at home, but the school is discussing this with parents with a view to improving this aspect of reports. The prospectus is attractive and provides good information about the school's aims, organisation and the curriculum.

47 The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a thriving and very supportive group of parents and teachers who organise a range of fund raising and social events for the school and community. The school benefits widely from the efforts of the group who have provided a variety of additional learning resources including equipment for the mathematics workshop and nursery resources. The PTA is currently working towards funding for improvements to the outside play areas. The PTA consults other parents effectively through a suggestion box and other means.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48 Leadership and management at all levels have improved substantially since the last inspection and are now very good. Very good systems are now used for evaluating the quality of education and pupils' learning and information gathered is used very well to ensure consistency, quality and the continual improvement of teaching and learning.

49 The head teacher, supported by a very effective senior management team (SMT), provides very clear direction for the work of the school and the whole staff are united in a common purpose of improving the quality of education and raising the attainment of all pupils. The head delegates clearly to the deputy head teacher, subject coordinators and other staff and supports their work very well. The head teacher also monitors the work of coordinators very well. For example, an effective system ensures that non-contact time for subject coordinators and the newly qualified teacher is used effectively in line with agreed plans. The SMT meets regularly and keeps a very close eye on the overall development of the school and uses a broad range of very effective ways of finding out what is going well and what needs further attention. Systems of monitoring, evaluation and review have improved greatly since the last inspection and are now very effective. Subject coordination has improved well. Core subject coordinators have an important influence on pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching. The coordination of all subjects is at least satisfactory and the coordination of

literacy, numeracy, and science, where resources have appropriately been focused, is very effective. All coordinators are enjoying having more responsibility for their subjects and their work is having a positive impact on pupils' learning in all subjects.

50 The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the SENCO checks that pupils make progress in line with their individual education plans (IEPs). IEPs are kept up to date and are used very effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. The work of teaching assistants is very well organised so that they invariably make a very good contribution to the very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The designated link governor for special educational needs plays an active role. Statutory procedures are fully carried out, parents are appropriately involved and the administration of special educational needs procedures is effectively organised.

51 The school's development planning was judged effective at the last inspection but the much improved monitoring and evaluation procedures means that better information is available to enable the school to focus the improvement plan on the most important areas. The priorities in the improvement plan are now determined through a thorough evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Analysis of test results, data on the progress of individuals, groups, year groups and classes, information obtained through examining planning, pupils' work and the results of the very effective programme of classroom observation is effectively used to determine the priorities of the plan. Recent school priorities have appropriately emphasised raising standards in mathematics and literacy. The effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the careful monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by the head teacher and the subject coordinators ensure that teaching is improving and that pupils achieve well in most subjects throughout the school. The progress of individual pupils and particular groups of children is carefully tracked throughout the school using rigorous and effective systems. Staff are now fully involved in the improvement plan's construction and each subject coordinator is usefully required to evaluate their work and indicate priorities for their work in the coming year. The SMT considers these reviews to help ensure that priorities for future attention are the ones that matter most. The governing body is effectively involved in determining the priorities of the improvement plan and allocates resources effectively in line with the plans agreed priorities. They are appropriately planning to spend some of the larger than average sum carried forward in line with the priorities of the improvement plan. The governing body's arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the improvement plan and for evaluating its effectiveness are satisfactory.

52 The head teacher has led the introduction of very effective systems for monitoring and developing the work of all staff. The work of all teachers and teaching assistants is very well monitored and each member of staff is given written and oral feedback following observation. These help them make further improvements and help ensure a consistent approach. Teachers have a positive attitude to this work and see it as helpful. This monitoring and feedback make an important contribution to the school's effective staff development systems. Observation of teaching sometimes leads to the sharing of best practice and opportunities are provided to staff to observe another teacher with a particular strength. These systems, the effectiveness of the improvement plan and the effective system of tracking pupils' progress means that the school is well placed to implement the new requirements of performance management and to gain good benefit from its implementation. The governing body has agreed the performance management policy, all staff have received in-service training and all teachers have performance management objectives, some of which are effectively related to achieving the key priorities of the school improvement plan. The school appropriately intends to extend the performance management scheme to include all staff next year and to apply for the *Investors in People* award to develop further its ways of ensuring effective communication and whole-team planning.

53 Governors already show a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have plans to improve systems further. The governing body carries out its responsibilities well and plays an important part in ensuring the school improves. The last inspection report criticised the lack of a child protection policy. This has now been dealt with and all child protection procedures are now effective.

54 The deputy head teacher manages procedures for parental and community involvement very effectively which enables parents to make a very positive contribution to their own child's learning and to the learning of other children in school. When parents are involved in the work of the school they are very well briefed and supported to ensure that their work with children is consistent and effective. For example over 20 parents regularly support the mathematics workshop when all pupils work once per week in small groups with parents on mathematics tasks that require good adult to pupil ratios. The way that this work is managed is thorough and effective and provides excellent support to enable parents to support pupils' learning well.

55 The school is beginning to apply some principles of best value to its management and planning, particularly in the way it compares its attainment to that in similar schools.

56 Parents are consulted on and involved in the implementation of major initiatives and appreciate the improved communication. Parents and pupils have been effectively consulted and involved in the playground project and the '*alphabags*' homework scheme and their views have been valued and used to modify plans and arrangements.

57 Financial planning, administration and control are satisfactory and the recommendations of the most recent auditors' report have been effectively acted upon. The school office effectively uses information and communication technology to ensure that the head and governing body can confidently check that resources and finance, including specific grants are effectively and properly used. The school uses additional funds for its special educational needs work very well to enhance the very good teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.

58 The school has sufficient qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of its pupils in all subjects well. The deployment of staff is good and teachers work effectively as a team. Staff development for teachers is very well managed to ensure that this is focused on the most important areas. The support provided for newly qualified staff is very good and resources allocated to this are very well used and effectively monitored. Teaching assistants and all learning support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, especially to the learning of lower attaining pupils. The work of teaching assistants is consistently very well supported and managed and their training arrangements are excellent. The site manager and cleaning staff keep the interior of the building very clean and all teaching staff ensure that classrooms, corridors and other shared areas contain very attractive displays of work and resources which provide a good stimulus to pupils' learning. The site manager not only keeps the building clean, but constantly evaluates its use and works effectively to bring about improvements. He also works well with teachers to help pupils take responsibility for aspects of the school. For example, all classes have energy conservation monitors who check taps and lights are turned off as the class leaves a room. Mid-day assistants also work effectively and contribute appropriately to the work and life of the school. Communication with support staff is very well managed by the deputy head who arranges regular meetings with staff to develop and review effectiveness and to ensure consistency and teamwork.

59 The school has some very good specialist accommodation, especially for literacy, special educational needs and ICT. The new computer suite provides the school with a very good resource to develop ICT further but this is not used enough at the moment.

60 Although the school's costs per pupil are higher than average, in view of pupils' average attainment on entry and the good progress made by pupils by the age of seven leading to standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science and its other important strengths, the school provides good value for money

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 The governing body, head teacher and staff should include the following key issues in its post-inspection action plan. They are listed in order of importance.

Further raise attainment in design and technology, geography and history so that standards are in line with the higher levels achieve by pupils in other subjects by:

- ensuring these subjects have sufficient time allocated to enable them to be taught effectively; (paragraphs 25, 105, 110, 112)
- in line with the school's existing plan, evaluate, review and improve provision in these subjects during the forthcoming year. (paragraph 25)

Improve the use of time during some parts of the school day by:

- ensuring that all available teaching time, particularly the period before lunch, is effectively and consistently planned for and used. (paragraph 26)

OTHER ISSUES THAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD CONSIDER FOR INCLUSION IN ITS ACTION PLANS:

- use open questioning more often, especially with higher attaining pupils, to extend thinking, learning and research skills; (paragraphs 17, 18, 80)
- make more use of the ICT suite. (paragraph 116)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	23	52	17	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR - Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	31	212
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	20	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	37	33	36
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	54	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (99)	85 (96)	90 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	36	34	39
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	54	50	58
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (97)	85 (99)	98 (99)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	162
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5:1
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31:1

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10:1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	465800
Total expenditure	459422
Expenditure per pupil	1938
Balance brought forward from previous year	11850
Balance carried forward to next year	18228

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	272
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	36	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	24	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	43	8	2	2
The teaching is good.	70	28	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	46	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	44	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	37	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	30	15	9	14

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Overall, parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in their responses to the questionnaire, were very satisfied with the school. In the questionnaire all parents indicated that their children like school, behaviour is good and the school is approachable. They all believe that the school expects children to work hard and do their best and helps their children become mature and responsible. Almost all parents indicated that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that it works closely with parents.

The aspect that was most criticised was the range of activities provided outside lessons. The inspection team judges the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents were pleased with the new system for setting targets for pupils.

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

62 At the time of the inspection there were 61 part-time children in the nursery and 68 in the Reception year. The Reception children are organised into three classes. Children start nursery at the beginning of the academic year in which they become four and there is a carefully planned transition from home to school, including a programme of home visits. They transfer into Reception classes at the start of the academic year in which they become five and, again, transition arrangements are well planned. Attainment on entry to nursery is broadly in line with national expectations for children of this age. Baseline assessment is carried out soon after children enter Reception classes and shows that their attainment on entry is very similar to the national average. The majority of children work well within the six areas of experience in the nursery and make good progress. This good early start is built upon in Reception classes and standards, by the end of the foundation stage, are at least in line with the early learning goals and many children are working within the National Curriculum.

63 In nursery, children's independence and exercise of choice is encouraged through the use of the *High Scope* approach that has the three key attributes of children having planning time, work time and review time. Children choose from a range of activities and take responsibility for 'signing on' for those activities through placing their photograph in the appropriate area. Some activities are adult-led in whole class time or group time. These methods are effectively carried through to Reception with planned 'carousel' activities. Children are effectively encouraged to make their own decisions but if they choose too many activities of the same kind adults carefully intervene to guide them to achieve a better balance. The good quality of provision noted at the last inspection has been maintained and some improvements have been made in aspects of teaching, assessment and planning.

Personal, social and emotional development

64 Children's personal, social and emotional development are good. Children are responsive, attentive and interested in the activities of others. They are happy and secure and relate well to adults and other children. They develop independence and have a growing ability to concentrate - some for considerable periods of time. They show a sense of pride in their classroom and are very willing to play their part in keeping them tidy and organised from a very early age. By the time children enter the Reception classes they can share, take turns and play independently and in small groups. In both nursery and Reception classes, opportunities are provided for children to develop as social beings and to respect the needs of others. In the café in nursery and in the opticians in Reception classes, children were polite to one another and to the adults who work with them.

65 The teachers and support staff care greatly for the welfare of the children and understand their needs very well. They know when to intervene and when to hold back and encourage independent actions. Manners and respect for others are encouraged at all times. The children benefit from the secure and caring environment and the emphasis on organisation. Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour throughout the foundation stage and the very good behaviour exhibited lays a strong foundation for school life in Years 1 and 2.

Communication, language and literacy

66 Children make good progress throughout nursery and Reception so that, by the time they leave the foundation stage, most have achieved the early learning goals. A few demonstrate speech difficulties on entry to nursery but many have good speaking and listening skills and engage readily in conversation with adults and their peers. Some children have special educational needs and are well supported by staff in their acquisition of the skills of language and literacy. Most children in nursery recognise their own names and many can write them. The acquisition of reading and writing skills is appropriately emphasised and the *alphabags* are used to support this. During the inspection week the letter 'J' was introduced and children were able to talk about objects beginning with that letter and to recognise when it was in their own name or that of others. Nursery children are encouraged to become writers and opportunities are provided for this such as materials for replying to party invitations and in the café when, as waiters and waitresses, they take orders.

67 Reception classes, where children are working towards the full literacy session, provide a good foundation for work in Years 1 and 2. Stimulus for reading, writing and role play is provided through such means as the book '*Not Now Bernard*' and children are encouraged to be interactive by, for example, writing on the whiteboard with the teacher and compiling word lists with the teaching assistant. Higher attaining children were able to explain that capital letters are used for the names of people and they knew about the role of the author and the illustrator. Parents sometimes attend the start of reading sessions and this helps them to acquire good ways of helping children at home. By the time they leave Reception classes, most children are keen to discuss their work, to read and to write and to play a full part in the literacy hour.

Mathematical development

68 From their entry to nursery and throughout Reception, the acquisition of numeracy skills is given high status. In nursery, number rhymes are frequently said or sung. Recognition of numbers is practised and correct figure formation is taught. Opportunities are taken to use number in role-play such as the use of a credit card in the café. As children progress through the year in nursery, the staff allow them to select the activities they will undertake but also direct children to experiences designed to strengthen their weaker areas of learning.

69 Children enter Reception classes with a good grasp of basic number and shape recognition. This is built upon and elements of the numeracy hour are added. Expectations of children are high and they respond well to these expectations. Warm-up sessions and mental activities are used well and resources are often taken from within the children's own home experiences. From the start, children are encouraged to describe how they arrive at an answer and alternative approaches are gradually introduced. Correct mathematical vocabulary is used and most become proficient in using such terms as 'more than' and 'less than' and can count, order and add numbers to 10. By the end of the foundation stage, most children have attained the early learning goals and a substantial number are working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. Higher attaining children are challenged effectively and target setting is used in Reception classes to help and challenge all children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70 Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is above national standards by the end of the foundation stage. In nursery, some opportunities are given for exploration of the world around us. For example, children were using magnifying glasses to look at shells and at the markings on a fish and were looking at repetitive patterns. In small

groups led by the teacher or nursery nurse, children were encouraged to use their senses to explore a collection of fresh fruit and vegetables, to sort and name them. A third group explored ribbons in a box and were introduced to the concept of a fair test. Links with mathematics were made by the use of vocabulary such as '*short, shorter and shortest*'.

71 In Reception classes, work is carefully planned to build on previous knowledge and understanding. Children begin to recognise similarities and differences in the animal world and in their own lives. They are made aware of the changes that the seasons can bring and learn about the months of the year. Many children are beginning to use the computer with confidence and are becoming adept at using practical equipment, which they can name correctly. They explore concepts such as texture. During the week of inspection, children were carrying out investigations and one group chose different materials to make a collage. They used terms such as '*rough, smooth, soft and silky*'. One child correctly used the words '*magnifying glass*' and said that it made an object look bigger and "*nearer to you*". They are respectful to each other and attentive in plenary sessions when groups feed back their findings. Teacher intervention is mostly pitched correctly, allowing children to find things out for themselves but intervening appropriately to move learning on when things slow up too much.

Physical development

72 Standards in physical development improve well during the foundation stage. In nursery, although the outdoor space and equipment are good, too few opportunities are provided for children to explore the outside environment. In Reception classes, the children use the hall and experience an appropriate range of gymnastics, games and dance activities. They are able to change their clothes for PE and are taught from the start the importance of health and safety and exercise. They are also taught the need to warm-up and cool-down. Children work well together and are developing a sense of space and body control and learn the need for self-appraisal and how to learn from others' work. Reception classes, a safe and enclosed 'outdoor classroom' has been developed and a range of exciting environmental activities is offered.

73 Throughout the foundation stage, children are taught to handle tools and equipment well, to access them and to put them away. Opportunities provided for children to use construction materials and to manipulate scissors, dough and a range of malleable materials. Progress in skills and knowledge is effectively built into teachers' planning.

Creative development

74 The children are introduced to a range of media and materials in nursery, including the principles and practice of colour mixing. Children's work is displayed in 'Our Art Gallery' where a variety of techniques such as finger painting, painting and drawing are displayed. Few opportunities are given for observational work. Opportunities are taken for music making and the children are building up a good repertoire of songs. Role-play is developed and the children are able to use their imagination such as in the café where a variety of interesting food is provided for a range of 'customers'.

75 In Reception classes the children experience a rich range of creative activities and are beginning to build an aesthetic awareness. Children work with a range of materials, are taught a wide variety of skills and are given the opportunity to explore design. They are also encouraged to use their imagination in role-play and in making up their own plays for performance to others. Children are introduced to a growing variety of musical instruments, are able to play softly and loudly and enjoy the frequent opportunities to sing well and with expression.

Teaching

76 The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is good. The strengths of the teaching come from a very good knowledge of the children and their capabilities and a high level of care for them. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and during the last year staff have worked well together to blend the nursery and Reception programmes into a strong foundation stage curriculum. Joint planning and assessment have developed well and both staff and parents have been very pleased with the continuity and close links between the nursery and Reception stages which helps to alleviate the difficulties of a split site. Good progress is made in the early acquisition of literacy and numeracy but not to the detriment of providing a broad and varied curriculum.

Curriculum provision

77 The nursery and Reception classes provide appropriately for the six areas of learning and the vast majority of children attain or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Many children are working within the early parts of the National Curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. The leadership and management of the foundation stage is good and the early years policy, revised in the autumn of 2000, gives clear guidance on the approach taken by the school. It also recognises the important role of parents working in partnership with the school. The joint planning between teachers in nursery and Reception classes is an important development and should be built upon and extended.

ENGLISH

78 In Year 2 pupils are attaining above national average levels in English overall. Attainment is well above the national averages in speaking and listening, above average in reading and in line with national averages in writing. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, standards of attainment in English fell below those achieved by pupils in the previous three years especially in comparison to schools with similar characteristics. The fall is more marked in writing than in reading. Inspection evidence and the school's own extensive monitoring and tracking systems show that the cohort of pupils in 2000 was a lower attaining group than the school's norm.

79 Standards in speaking and listening are well above the national average in the oldest year group. Pupils can talk fluently and listen very well to their peers. They listen attentively to their teachers and are confident in expressing their opinions of likes and dislikes when discussing texts within the literacy lesson. The school makes good use of hand puppets to support learning for all pupils. Those who need support receive sensitive and purposeful help from teaching assistants and parent helpers. Speaking and listening is now well developed in other subjects, for instance, in a music and movement session in PE, Reception pupils can tell the teacher why some pupils are more effective in reproducing the movements of a balloon. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. This is reflected in the national benchmarks comparing last year's teacher assessments of the school's performance at Level 2 and above with the performance of other schools.

80 Most Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading is above the national average. As well as reading in the literacy lesson, pupils also read in an additional daily guided reading session. They use a range of phonic and other strategies to read new words. They use initial, medial and final sounds of words and picture clues to help them. These skills are used from a very early age and pupils in nursery can retell traditional stories with great confidence and ease. Most Year 2 pupils can read fluently and with expression. The pupils in a Year 2 class showed their understanding of the use of punctuation by reading poems with appropriate

changes in intonation. These pupils could tell how two poets have used words to create the different moods of the wind. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are fully included in reading out aloud with the support of their teachers and teaching assistants. Too few opportunities are created to allow pupils, particularly the higher attaining, to engage in research skills using the library. The coordinator is aware of this and will be focusing on this as part of the action plan for the subject. The home-school partnership for reading is very strong and is established in the nursery with the use of 'alphabags' which enable children to take home work to help them with their reading. The reading sessions in the Reception classes that are open to parents are very valuable in showing parents how to read with their child at home. A wealth of documentation is used to support parents and reading books are changed regularly.

81 Most of the oldest pupils' writing is in line with national expectations and progress is good in writing in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because teachers make effective use of targets from individual educational plans. The wide range of pupils' work includes writing accounts, diaries, labels, captions, extended stories, letters, reports and making posters. A good example of report writing is when lower attaining pupils in Year 1 were asked to write a report where they were the police officers looking for evidence that Goldilocks had been in the three bears' house. One pupil wrote about finding a golden hair on the pillow. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes given more open-ended tasks such as, *"If you were a character in this story, who would you be and why?"* These open-ended questions help them use their own ideas and imagination and extend their learning. By the age of seven, pupils write in sentences, using an interesting vocabulary, capital letters and full stops correctly. In independent tasks and extended story writing, all pupils make good attempts at spelling new words using their phonic skills. Homework is used effectively to support spelling and writing extended stories. Many children voluntarily bring work done at home, which has been modelled on work done in lessons. Pupils in Year 2 build on earlier learning of forming letters correctly and most develop a legible joined-up handwriting style. Most pupils also use ICT for writing on a regular basis within literacy lessons, for writing in different subjects as well as in work done at home.

82 At the last inspection the attainment of seven-year-olds was judged to be well above average in all aspects of English. Although the school has a good record in national curriculum tests and although the present seven-year-olds are attaining above national average standards overall, the high standards attained at the last inspection are not currently being achieved in English except in speaking and listening.

83 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they enjoy the subject. They sustain their concentration very well during the teacher directed session at the beginning of the lessons and during the plenary when listening to their peers. They improve their own performance with the help of group and individual targets to which they refer at the beginning of a new task. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good or excellent. Teachers have successfully adopted the National Literacy Strategy and all lessons are planned with reference to the learning objectives, which are relevant for different year groups and different terms. Joint planning by teachers teaching the same year group is effectively designed to match the needs of all pupils. Lessons are very well prepared and teachers use good quality resources such as enlarged texts, big books, laminated speech bubbles, masks and puppets to make the lessons interesting. Pupils know what they are going to learn because teachers communicate the objectives and focus of the lesson to pupils at the beginning and make clear links to prior learning. Teachers make very good use of carefully selected open and closed questions which are addressed to specific groups of pupils. Although marking of pupils' written work is generally sound, the quality of comments is inconsistent between teachers. Where marking is effective, it is characterised by comments and targets for the pupil to refer so that future work is of a better quality and standard.

Comments such as, *“Well done, you have remembered to use a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence”*, show that the teachers refer back to their own marking comments. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop reading and writing in other subjects like science, history, geography and RE. They use a very good range of resources such as fiction and non-fiction books, games, tapes and posters to enhance teaching in English and other subjects.

84 The leadership, management and coordination of English are very good. The coordinator has worked very effectively with the senior management team and the governor for literacy to focus on changing practice in the subject to further raise standards. The coordinator uses a range of strategies to monitor the quality of provision in English, including sampling pupils’ work, scrutinising medium-term planning, conducting classroom observations and giving individual feedback to teachers. The summary report produced as a result of the monitoring is not always sufficiently shared with all staff and governors. The English coordinator has liaised well with other coordinators to ensure that provision for English improves. The additional session for guided reading outside the literacy lesson is a recent initiative in direct response to the analysis of National Curriculum tests. Good liaison and teamwork leads to a high degree of consistency and continuity of approach in teaching English across the school. The school needs to review the time allocation for lessons. Some lessons are too long and teaching time, especially before lunchtime, needs to be better planned and used in some classes.

MATHEMATICS

85 Seven-year-olds attain above the national average in mathematics. In the national tests carried out in 2000, the attainment of pupils at Hatfield was below the national average at Level 2 and above and at Level 3. Attainment was also lower than schools serving pupils with similar backgrounds both at Level 2 and above and at Level 3. This is a fall back when compared with the position at the time of the previous inspection and the results in 1999. The attainment of boys in 2000 was slightly higher than that of girls. The school has carried out detailed investigations in order to diagnose the reasons for the fall back in 2000 and have sought the assistance of an outside consultant. Their analysis provides well founded and convincing evidence that 2000 cohort was weaker and the Baseline information gathered on entry to Reception for the 1997-8 cohort supports that view. The school has taken active steps to try to ensure that the 2001 results restore the school to its above-average position against similar schools and schools nationally. These have been successful because inspection evidence indicates that standards are now above national averages.

86 Much evidence was gathered during the inspection from a range of sources. Numeracy teaching was observed in all classes, pupils’ work was scrutinised, discussions took place with teachers, support staff and pupils and a range of documentation was studied. Standards in numeracy were judged to be good with the needs of all pupils catered for. In Year 2 most pupils are confident in addition and subtraction to, and beyond, 100. Many pupils have a secure understanding of place value and can solve problems involving money. Some pupils understand estimation and use and apply the concept with confidence and pride. They enjoy using their increasing skills in mental arithmetic and are able to explain their methods to teachers and to the other pupils.

87 Pupils make good progress in mathematics. The staff have undertaken a close analysis of standards and, as a result, work is very tightly planned for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Teachers’ assessments are rigorous and supported by individual and group target setting. Teachers, pupils and their parents work together to help pupils achieve their targets. Pupils are fully involved in the target setting process and the target books that they

take home enable parents to help their children achieve. The school's homework policy is also helpful with targets introduced in nursery and the target books brought in at Reception.

88 Overall teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers plan lessons well and make the learning objectives very clear to pupils. Tasks are well selected and use a range of interesting and relevant resources, including ones made by the pupils themselves in previous lessons across the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and expectations are high. Teachers and teaching assistants intervene appropriately to promote pupils' learning. Questioning is targeted well for pupils of all abilities and pupils with special educational needs or pupils gifted at mathematics are well catered for. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for stretching pupils' ability to explain methods of mental working out and problem solving.

89 The work of the class teachers is well supported by classroom assistants and by parents. An example of parental support is in the mathematics workshop. This is a very well planned feature of mathematics in the school. All classes are timetabled once a week and, in attainment groupings, they work with a parent on a mathematics game. The games are selected by the teachers and the parents are trained in how to work with the different groups of pupils and in the use of the correct mathematical language. Good quality resources are provided. Parents report back to teachers about achievement and also about any problems encountered. The parents who take part are pleased to be able to assist with the work of the school in this practical way and support pupils' learning well.

90 The attitude of pupils and their behaviour in mathematics lessons are very good. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other and, when they move into group work, they settle quickly and with interest to their tasks. They work diligently and cooperate willingly. They are keen to share their knowledge with adults and fellow pupils and they take a pride in their achievements.

91 The coordinator leads the subject well and, in an action plan for 2001-2, shows a clear view of where the subject needs to go. This plan includes the need for further work on checking for consistency in the assessment of pupils' work and the possible production of a school mathematics portfolio. As part of the school's planned programme, the coordinator has monitored the subject through a range of strategies including lesson observations. The outcomes of observations have been fed back to individual teachers and the general findings will be fed back at staff meetings. A written report will be given to the governing body through the designated numeracy governor. The mathematics policy that was revised in Spring 2000 sets out clearly the approach to mathematics and numeracy within the school. It also gives guidance on the different elements of successful mathematics teaching, assessment, target setting and the links between mathematics and other subjects. The scheme of work is effectively being built up incrementally by drawing together the medium-term plans.

92 The system for mathematics assessment, target setting and monitoring is very good. All teachers have been trained in their use and effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

93 In 2000, teachers assessed standards in science as well above average compared to those of other schools nationally at the expected Level 2, and above them for the higher Level 3. In comparison with similar schools standards were average at both levels. Analysis of the results within science indicates that the school did better than schools nationally in life and living processes, materials and their properties and with physical processes, but only average in experimental and investigative science. As a result the school is making determined efforts to teach this important aspect of science more effectively. Overall

standards have risen since the last inspection when standards were average at Level 2 and below average at Level 3. This is because of good leadership, improved teaching and effective planning for science.

94 Standards in the current Year 2 are above average. In their work on forces, teachers challenge the pupils well. Pupils understand the significance of 'push, pull, squeeze and twist' in manipulating materials. They can talk convincingly about what constitutes a fair test and teachers require them to apply the principles, for example, in seeing how far a wheeled toy will travel on a range of selected surfaces. This also helps to improve their skills of estimating and measuring. Pupils have very positive attitudes and work with genuine effort and enthusiasm, cooperating well in pairs. Teachers recognise that pupils need much experience to develop experimental and investigative skills. For example they extend pupils' learning by skilfully leading them to draw the conclusion that, if the tests are to be fair, a ramp is needed to standardise the force applied to make the toys move. They also give opportunities for pupils to talk about their results and clarify their thinking before they start to record, which greatly improves their knowledge and understanding. Pupils normally work on sheets prepared by teachers and are given too few chances to devise their own methods of recording. Computers are sometimes used to record results but, generally, chances are missed to use ICT in science. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of forces and fair testing are above average for their age because of the high expectations of teachers that pupils will take care with the investigative tasks provided. They provide appropriately difficult work for different groups of pupils to help them all make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are given too few chances to devise simple tests for themselves through the provision of more open-ended tasks. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

95 Younger pupils are also introduced to the ideas of prediction, gathering evidence and reaching conclusions. In Reception classes for example, children used all of their senses to identify the nature of four colourless liquids, an enjoyable as well as informative task which the teacher also used to stress the danger of drinking from unmarked containers. In Year 1 pupils test the effectiveness of a range of wrapping papers using simple criteria drawn up from well-managed class discussions. They carry out a simple version of a fair test with enthusiasm and many can talk clearly about the advantages and drawbacks of wrappings, subtly guided by the teacher to make appropriate generalisations. All pupils enjoy investigative work and this is especially beneficial to pupils with special educational needs who receive very good quality support from teaching assistants, parent helpers and other pupils in the class.

96 The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good which is an improvement since the last inspection when it was generally satisfactory. Teachers plan together in year group teams so they regularly share ideas about what works well in lessons. They plan tasks in lessons for three different levels of prior attainment which enables all groups of pupils to make good progress. This is also an improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. Effective planning gives a secure structure to lessons, with a clear exposition including the clarification of learning objectives to the pupils which the teacher then returns to in the plenary. At the end of lessons teachers often re-visit and reinforce new learning, make a link with the next lesson and sometime set homework for pupils to complete alone or with their parents or carers. Teachers sometimes lack the confidence to divert from this planning if spontaneous opportunities for improved learning occur, such as an open-ended challenge for pupils to explore further. Teaching is based on good subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask probing questions to make pupils think. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking to others to help clarify their understanding and they emphasise important aspects of a scientific approach. For example, in a lesson on materials, the teacher stressed the importance of careful observation in testing the effectiveness of wrapping materials. This led to a very good discussion about strength, ease

of use and appearance of packaging. Teachers have very good skills of class management so all the school's good collection of resources are readily available for pupils and no time is lost by them in undertaking well presented and purposeful tasks. This results in very positive attitudes to science and pupils work together on practical work in a self-disciplined and mature manner. Teachers make good use of on-going assessments to plan future learning, for example in judging when to intervene in the work with forces and toys and lead the pupils towards the idea of using a ramp and to get them to want to try it out in the next lesson.

97 Coordination of the subject is very good, marked by the joint planning that occurs within year groups. The coordinator leads by example and monitors the effectiveness with which plans are implemented across the year groups. She is successfully leading the school's plan to improve investigative and experimental work throughout the school and although science is not currently the focus of formal review until next year she is continually improving teaching and learning in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

98 The attainment of seven-year-olds is well above what is expected nationally and higher attaining pupils achieve excellent levels. Pupils enter Year 1 with above average standards developed in nursery and Reception classes and, due mainly to effective teaching and good leadership of the subject, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and make very good progress. The high standards and effective teaching at the last inspection have been maintained.

99 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their well-developed pencil drawing, painting and printing skills to enhance their work in other subjects. They talk about their art work confidently and enthusiastically. They use materials very carefully and skilfully to produce very clean and neat work in painting, printing, drawings and textile work. Three-dimensional work is less well developed but clay work is satisfactory. Year 2 pupils undertake long-term projects in art using their skills effectively and they are able to produce imaginative and interesting work of real quality and variety. In one lesson, the class was beginning a piece of work that would be completed over several lessons. Pupils used a photograph of a part of a room as a starting point for an imaginary design of a whole room. Some copied and mirrored patterns and others produced contrasting designs. All thought carefully about their work and produced interesting results. A rich variety of high quality work is on display around the school and pupils talk keenly about their work and higher attaining pupils show impressive language and evaluative skills in describing the ideas and techniques that led to the completion of the piece. Observation and imagination are well used and pupils use the work of other artists as starting points for undertaking their own work. For example, pupils had completed some very good quality work in the style of Kandinsky based on his work and stimulated by music. Year 1 pupils learned skills of weaving one week and the next week used these imaginatively and creatively to produce a range of high quality work either individually or as part of a group.

100 The quality of teaching is mainly very good, often because subject knowledge is good. This enables teachers to plan effectively, to set high expectations for pupils' work, to assess work well and to use this assessment to guide pupils on how to improve their work and extend their learning. Skills and techniques are well taught and build effectively on earlier work. Higher attaining pupils are challenged to achieve well. For example, in a Year 2 class, one pupil used excellent skills of blending pastel colours to create interesting shades of green. Higher attaining pupils were helped by the teacher to develop their first attempts and to add an extra dimension of quality to their work. Pupils are encouraged and shown how to analyse their own work. This helps them sustain very good concentration and many pupils show a growing pride in the results they achieve. Lessons and resources are invariably thoroughly prepared and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, in a

Year 2 lesson an excellent collection of natural objects has been used as a starting point for some very high quality work that was inspired by the resources. The teacher sensitively directed pupils of different levels of attainment towards different resources so that all were working within their capability and making good progress. Teaching assistants work very effectively with groups of pupils and help pupils to reflect on their work and make improvements. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support by designated teaching assistants to enable them to have full access to art and design work and achieve good results and show pride and enjoyment in their work.

101 The pupils know that the care they take with their work will be recognised by their teacher and other pupils and will be well mounted and displayed in the classroom and in other areas throughout the school. Good quality art displays were a feature of the school at the last inspection and this is still the case. Art is also well used to illustrate and enhance pupils' understanding of other subjects by enabling them to observe detail closely. Pupils sometimes use ICT effectively and pupils undertake art and design work using a drawing and painting programme.

102 The leadership and management of the subject is effective. The coordinator gives good support to other staff with ideas, plans and resources. The school places strong emphasis on the importance of art and design and this is reflected on the very high standards achieved, the very good progress made and pupils' very good attitudes to art. Building on a strong base, art has continued to improve since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103 No teaching in design and technology (D&T) was planned or seen during the inspection and therefore no overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching.

104 Examination of teachers' planning and records and discussions with pupils suggests broad coverage of the D&T programme of study. Sometimes it is in conjunction with art and design, for example in aspects of designing and in weaving, and there is a degree of overlap between the two subjects. Only a few examples of pupils' work from each year group were available for scrutiny, and this revealed insufficient evidence of both the design and evaluation components of D&T. Other work seen indicates that progress and standards in D&T are around national expectations by the age of seven. This does not represent any improvement since the last inspection in 1997 when attainment and progress were also judged to be in line with age-related expectations and where the quality of teaching was satisfactory.

105 The curriculum policy for D&T pre-dates the last inspection and provides insufficient guidance for staff. Teachers are starting to draw on the recent national guidelines but these have not yet been effectively assimilated into planning and teaching. Some teachers are unsure how to do this because of their lack of knowledge and confidence in the subject. The school recognises that, if standards are to be higher, more time needs to be spent on D&T and school has a plan to tackle this.

106 Since the last inspection the school has rightly given highest priority to the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and to the improvement of ICT. The successful development of these has provided rich experience to plan further development of the foundation subjects and in the next academic year D&T will be the major priority. This coincides helpfully with the recent appointment of a coordinator who has a degree in D&T. She is excited at the prospect of developing the subject and has a clear understanding of what needs to be done and an allocation of time to do the job. She is starting to introduce D&T into her class, for example pupils produced lever, pivot and sliding mechanisms in animated pictures. She is drafting a development plan for the subject, starting to look at planning and is

auditing resources with a view to using them to assist improvement of the subject. The school is now very well placed to restore this subject to a strong position within the curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

107 The oldest pupils attain standards in geography that are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are generally knowledgeable about their own locality and are aware of places beyond their own environment. Some older pupils are able to recognise the countries of the UK on a map and several other countries on a world map. They are able to make their own simple maps such as '*Our route to Hatfield Water Park*' and to understand the use of symbols and keys. They are interested in the concept of similarity and difference and Y2 pupils greatly enjoy finding out about the life of *Katie Morag* on '*the Isle of Struay*' and comparing it with their own life in Hatfield. Some Y2 pupils were very excited by seeing aspects of Hatfield through aerial photographs.

108 The travels of '*Travis Bear*' and his fellow bears have triggered pupils' interest and the records of his world travels have developed learning. A photographic and written diary of '*Travis Bear's*' Scottish island holiday helps excite interest in other places. Some pupils were able to talk knowledgeably about where the bears have been and to point out the localities on the world map. Younger pupils have been stimulated by finding out about Dr Foster and have explored weather patterns including using ICT to produce weather maps with appropriate symbols. Due attention is given to weather and seasonal changes on a frequent basis in classes and many pupils demonstrate a good level of knowledge.

109 Pupils' attitudes to geography lessons are very good and there is no difference in the attitudes of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to contribute and the contributions of able pupils are valued. Teachers share their aims for learning in this subject with pupils and the pupils respond well to teachers' expectations by behaving well and working hard. Most pupils respond very well orally and some sophisticated discussion takes place on why, for example, children might or might not like living on a remote Scottish island with its transport and schooling differences and whether they would find a difference in enjoyment levels in winter as opposed to summer. They freely use appropriate geographical vocabulary such as '*jetty*', '*ocean*' and '*mountainous*'.

110 At the time of the last inspection, no direct observation of the teaching of geography took place. Teaching this time, as judged through direct observation, discussion with pupils and staff and through scrutiny of pupils' work, is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teaching is supported by an up-to-date policy and the school is currently basing its classroom practice on the national guidance. The school's documentation indicates that too little time is spent on geography. However, it plans to review the scheme and time spent on geography during the coming year as part of its evaluation of the delivery of all the non-core subjects, and this is to be welcomed. A satisfactory range of resource materials support teaching and learning and the library has a good selection of books. ICT programs to support the subject are currently being researched and resources will be enhanced following evaluation.

111 The coordinator monitors the subject through planning, staff discussion and end-of-year summative assessment. She does not currently monitor the quality of teaching in the classroom as the current focus in the school development plan is appropriately on observing teaching of the core subjects. Although pupils' attainment is at national average levels, standards are below those achieved in most subjects in Travis school.

HISTORY

112 History is not taught in the second term of the school year and consequently no lessons could be observed and it was therefore not possible to evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in lessons. However, pupils' work was examined and discussions were held with pupils to enable tentative judgements to be made on attainment in history. These indicate that the attainment of the oldest pupils is in line with standards seen nationally and pupils make sound progress. In discussions pupils show good attitudes to history and Year 2 pupils show enthusiasm for history work and talk with interest and confidence about last term's work on Florence Nightingale. One higher attaining pupil knew the year when Florence Nightingale went to the Crimean War and another pupil knew that Russia fought Turkey. All the pupils spoken to could make valid comparisons between nursing practices and conditions in hospitals then and now, showed a sound sense of chronology and could empathise with the lives of people from the past. Most pupils could make sound inferences from observing pictures of the past and enjoyed talking about their work. The writing that Year 1 pupils had completed on teddy bears, as part of their history work on toys, supports the development of their writing skills well. Even though standards in history are in line with those seen nationally, they are not as high as the above average standards achieved by the school's pupils in the core subjects. One of the main reasons for this is the very small amount of time spent on history throughout the year. The school recognises that there is scope to raise standard to bring them into line with the higher standards achieved in other subjects.

113 A new coordinator provides satisfactory leadership for the subject and keeps a check on standards, mainly through considering teachers' planning and looking at assessment information. A plan to review the subject in 2001-2002 is included in the school improvement plan and, in line with the school's normal procedures, this includes the monitoring of teaching. Although pupils occasionally use computers to type up accounts, ICT is not sufficiently used in history. The coordinator recognises this and plans to extend the use of CD-ROMs and the internet in historical enquiry. Overall satisfactory improvement has been made in the subject since the last inspection and the school plans to bring about further improvements next year as part of its evaluation of the place of the non-core subjects in its whole curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114 By the age of seven standards in ICT are above average in a number of important aspects. Most pupils can use ICT to generate, develop, organise and present their work. They can record results in science and some produce extended and well-crafted pieces of writing in English. Almost all are good at using ICT to find and use stored information, for example when using CD-ROMS. They can programme mechanical toys with a series of instructions and enjoy describing their use of ICT outside school. However pupils have insufficient opportunities to explore real and imaginary situations through games and simulations. Most pupils are achieving well and are generally confident that they are skilled and secure in their ability to use computers. In Reception classes pupils become proficient in mouse and keyboard skills because they are well taught and their learning builds on the sound start made in the nursery. In Year 1, pupils can use different fonts, size, style and colour and enjoy using these skills when word-processing.

115 The good standards are the result of good teaching which is helped by the significant improvement of resources since the last inspection. Half of a former classroom has been converted into a very good ICT suite of seven PCs, with another PC to be added in the near future. As pupils work in pairs, half of the class is taught ICT skills directly by the teacher.

The other half of the room comprises the library so that the other pupils work on related library skills. In addition, the nursery and each classroom has its own PC which is used much more frequently than at the last inspection. Each class visits the ICT suite twice weekly for forty minutes. Teachers use a well structured scheme which secures progression and continuity in learning from the time pupils start in the nursery until they leave at the age of seven. Teachers' knowledge and confidence of ICT varies considerably but is satisfactory overall. All staff are involved in the European Computer Driving Licence initiative designed to develop their personal skills and confidence in ICT. They make good use of the resources and plan together well in year teams so that they know what they have to teach and how to do it. This results in good progress in learning because explanations are clear, learning objectives are shared with the class, pupils are continuously on task and support each other in pairs and there is a high degree of direct teaching of skills. Sessions close with a brief plenary session when new learning is effectively reinforced and, in the best plenary sessions, links are made both with computer work back in the classroom and plans for the next lesson. During this time the other half of the class works on related library skills and sometimes these pupils are less well motivated and the rate of learning drops because this work is not equally valued by pupils. The school needs to evaluate this aspect of work to consider what improvements can be made. Lessons have good pace and pupils have very positive attitudes to computers which means they are keen to progress and strive to improve their skills. Pupils work well together and more confident pupils give good help to less skilled classmates. In classrooms, teachers use some opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects such as literacy, numeracy, art, history and science although some opportunities are missed.

116 The effective coordination of ICT is marked by good knowledge and understanding of the subject and enthusiasm for its development. The coordinator rightly identifies further training for teachers and support staff to improve their knowledge understanding and skills as the major priority, along with the imminent use of the Internet and e-mail. The work of the 'library skills' half of the classes should be reviewed and evaluated. Although time spent on ICT has improved since the last inspection, pupils still receive too little direct teaching of ICT and only spend about 40 minutes per week in the ICT suite and the suite is only used for about half the week.

117 The school has made very good progress since the last inspection when provision for ICT was a key issue. Standards have risen markedly and the quality of teaching and learning is much better.

MUSIC

118 Pupils' attainment is above the national expectations and progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is also good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was in line with national expectations and progress was satisfactory.

119 Pupils enter Year 1 having gained a sound musical background from their experiences in nursery and Reception classes. They are able to copy, repeat and generate a range of rhythmic sounds by clapping and by using instruments. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully, with enthusiasm and control. They sing a range of songs including those with actions and perform with confidence. When accompanied by a pianist, they sing two part hymns accurately and confidently. The school takes part in many productions that have a musical emphasis. Music makes a good contribution to the community life of the school. Last year, the school produced it's own CD of Christmas songs which were subsequently played during both local and national radio broadcasts.

120 Pupils enjoy music lessons and have very positive attitudes to singing, playing and listening. They cooperate well when asked to work together in small groups. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked successfully to compose music, which matched the sentences from the poem, '*When the wind blows*' by John Foster. They had been studying the moods of the wind and the final outcome was a class performance reflecting the whole poem.

121 In the small sample of lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. Lessons are well planned with a clear structure to give pupils' opportunities to appraise their work and improve their performance. The range of pitched and unpitched instruments is chosen carefully to improve pupil's understanding and progress.

122 Pupils enjoy the opportunities created by teachers across the curriculum where they encounter a range of music styles. For example, in a PE lesson, Reception pupils use a tambourine to enhance the movement of a balloon and later the children are allowed to move freely to Glen Miller's '*Big Band*' music. In Art, pupils in Year 2 studied paintings produced by Kandinsky after listening to music and then do the same after listening to pieces of loud and soft music.

123 Pupils' progress is good because each class has a weekly lesson based on the QCA scheme of work. The confidence of teachers has increased and they all teach their own class. In addition, each week pupils work with the coordinator and one other specialist in a singing and hymn practice session. Although monitoring in the subject is not currently a priority, the coordinator is able to influence practice through the support she gives staff at the planning stage.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124 Standards in physical education (PE) by the end of Key Stage 1 are above those expected nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection. During the inspection, games and gymnastics were observed being taught well. Evidence gained from scrutiny of teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and teachers, records of in-service training and from display suggests that teaching and learning in dance is also effective.

125 The pupils have very positive attitudes to PE and participate with enthusiasm and a real desire to learn. They listen carefully to instructions and work hard to improve on their previous performance. A particularly marked feature of PE lessons is the pupils' understanding of the need to be mindful of personal health, hygiene and fitness and their commitment to the need for safe practice in PE. The warm-up and cool-down periods are effective and are not always led solely by teachers. One lesson effectively began with a pupil leading the warm-up. All pupils carry apparatus with care and, since the last inspection, the putting out and putting back of apparatus is built into lesson planning and is carried out well.

126 The behaviour of pupils in PE lessons is very good. Pupils work well with their teachers and with each other and are supportive and appreciative of the efforts of others. They follow instructions and carry them out well. For example, pupils working on bouncing large and small balls, worked in three groups with specific and quite complex instructions which they carried out well even when encountering some difficulties with ball control. They worked well together to overcome challenges. They are enthusiastic about the subject but show great self-discipline. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged by teachers, support staff and fellow pupils and pupils gifted in this subject are encouraged to, for example, use more demanding apparatus and to challenge themselves to vary the height and type of their balances.

127 The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers plan well and make the purpose of lessons very clear to pupils. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performances and to improve upon them. Assessments are made through observation but the school plans to consider a more structured approach similar to the one currently operating in the core subjects in order to ensure that all pupils are challenged in PE.

128 Coordination is good. Staff training has been focused on raising teachers' skills and confidence levels and on raising active pupil participation. All teaching staff have attended courses such as Top Play and additional resources have been purchased. The policy for PE has been recently revised and the school is currently trialing a detailed scheme of work which will be evaluated in the autumn term 2001. Adequate, well-maintained resources support the subject. The coordinator has worked on raising the status of the subject in the school through methods such as mounting a key display in the hall. PE has usefully been selected as the focused subject for monitoring pupils' learning. A range of pupils were asked their views on what they had learned in specific PE lessons and their responses showed a high level of understanding of the objectives of lessons and judgements as to whether they felt the objectives had been achieved.