

INSPECTION REPORT

THE LEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harpenden, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117327

Headteacher: Sue Riding

Reporting inspector: Mr D Maxwell
8798

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 April 2002

Inspection number: 195276

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moorland Road
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Hertfordshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Dunsterville

Date of previous inspection: 9 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Foundation stage English Information and communication technology (ICT) Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30724	Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design Design and technology Geography Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14806	John Stevens	Team inspector	Equal opportunities History Music Religious education Science	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Lea is a community school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years and is smaller than most other primary schools. It is situated to the north of Harpenden town centre and serves the local and wider community. There are 159 pupils on roll, of whom 19 attend part-time in the nursery. Several children attend from outside the immediate area through parental choice. Several parents enrol their children at the school while waiting for places at nearby primary schools: this causes difficulties with planning, although some of the children stay when it is realised that the school has a special atmosphere. At the time of the inspection six children were under five in the reception class. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and seven are at an early stage of English acquisition; they are quickly integrated into school life. There is a wide range of ability amongst the children and, overall, their attainment on entry to the school is average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little above the national average. The socio-economic circumstances of the community serving the school are similar to those found nationally. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average and three pupils have a statement. The school gained an achievement award from the Department for Education and Employment in 2001 and another in 2002, underlining the school's good progress.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school with many strengths and provides a good standard of education for the children. There is a warm atmosphere where children are secure and are encouraged to learn. They are lively, well-mannered and work hard. By Year 6 pupils talk easily together and with adults, and relationships are very good. The good quality of teaching through the school has a direct positive impact on standards, which are higher than in most schools by Year 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The good leadership of the headteacher and governors has a focus on creating a good climate for learning so that all pupils may succeed. The support and provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The curriculum is planned carefully to include all pupils. The headteacher and governors recognise that the work for improvements that they have done recently needs to continue for aspects of subject schemes of work, assessment and whole-school planning. There have been several changes of staff recently, which concerned parents, but having a stable teaching staff is a high priority. The school provides satisfactory value for money since the cost per pupil is currently high.

What the school does well

- Current standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good so that pupils achieve better than usual.
- The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development is very good, supported through the school's very good provision. Teachers ensure all children are included in the activities.
- The Early Years Unit is managed well to provide many good experiences for the children.
- The provision for children with special educational needs is very good.
- The headteacher and governing body give good leadership and have good insight into school needs.

What could be improved

- The schemes of work and curricular statement do not give sufficient direction for lesson planning. Worthwhile connections between subjects are not always recognised or exploited.
- Assessment procedures for the foundation subjects, such as history, are under-developed.
- The support and monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators are not fully effective.
- Priorities in the school development plan are not clear enough about the intended impact on standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. It has made satisfactory improvements in the key issues identified at that time and several further good improvements in matters identified through the

headteacher's clear analysis and evaluation. Standards in each of English, mathematics and science have improved by Year 6. The school has adopted national guidance to support subject planning. Assessment procedures are established in English, mathematics and science although they are still at an early stage for the other subjects. The quality of teaching is now good throughout the school. The headteacher has introduced thorough procedures to monitor standards, teaching and the curriculum.

STANDARDS

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

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

Standards in English, mathematics and science in the work seen during the inspection are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. This indicates that pupils make good progress through the junior years. The school exceeded its target for English in 2001 but was below the planned target for mathematics, for the percentage of pupils expected to gain Level 4 or above. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are above average. Standards overall are broadly average by Year 2; and above average by Year 6, an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in art and design, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music, physical education and religious education meet the expectation. Standards in design and technology and geography exceed that normally expected by Year 6. On average, pupils achieve appropriately by Year 2 and achieve better than usual by Year 6. The identified gifted pupils make good progress and achieve well.

The table above shows that standards in Year 6 in the most recent national tests were above average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. It is the smaller percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in science that is most significant in these results. In relation to similar schools, standards were well above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Those pupils who were in the school from Year 2 performed relatively well by Year 6. The trend in standards is in line with the upward national trend. The school has set suitably challenging targets for pupils in the current Year 6, consistent with predictions using internal assessments.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to their work and want to do well, although a few need support to maintain their concentration. The pupils' interest in their work is a significant factor in promoting standards.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The majority of pupils develops good self-discipline and understands the school's expectations. Pupils in Year 6 give a good example and often have very good behaviour. Pupils play together well and often enjoy extensive discussions. The few pupils with challenging behaviour receive very good support so that they learn self-control.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils show increasing personal responsibility and initiative through the school. Many pupils take a good pride in their work and co-operate. Relationships, including race relations, are very good. Children have wide-ranging discussions during lunch, helped by the high standard of the meals.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Nearly all pupils attend regularly, although a few are not very punctual. They enjoy school and want to be with their friends.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and promotes good learning. Three quarters of the teaching in lessons observed was good, very good or excellent. In all but two lessons teaching was at least satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is a little stronger in the junior classes, where teachers have very good subject knowledge, and as a result pupils achieve above what is normally expected. Lesson planning is good and generally takes good account of the learning needs of differing groups of pupils, so that pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language learn well. In a few lessons the higher attaining pupils are not given a specific challenge. Teachers give very good attention to teaching a wide range of basic skills, including those of literacy and numeracy, so that pupils usually make good gains in understanding. For example, pupils are rapidly learning the skills needed to access the Internet for information. Most pupils work hard and produce a good amount of written work. The teaching of English and of mathematics is good. Teachers assess pupils well in their daily contacts, but the quality of written comments on pupils' work varies in stating how to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Schemes of work provide suitable structure and support, although further work is needed to adapt them to the emphasis of the school and to make productive links between subjects. There is some very good oral work in numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school provides a broad, very well-planned range of worthwhile opportunities to meet their needs. The teaching assistants provide perceptive and effective support so that the children make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are given thoughtful support, often with good individual provision, so that they settle into school happily and are ready to learn. The pupils make good progress and are helped to take a full part in lessons. Other children are friendly and help in many ways.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good. The school's provision is a strength of the school. All members of staff encourage pupils to be responsible and to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils' involvement in the school council helps develop

development	self-confidence and to understand about citizenship and how to take decisions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. All members of staff are alert to individual children's needs but should have further specific training in child protection. The school has good assessment systems for English, mathematics and science but does not make full use of this to inform teaching. Assessment in the other subjects is at an early stage. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory although routine checks are not formalised sufficiently.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school has well-established links with parents. Many parents, governors and other adults give frequent help, with reading for example.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher bases her decisions on very good educational principles that are evident in the strong community spirit and thirst for learning by the pupils. Priorities are clearly identified but forward planning is not so well documented.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school, gained through frequent planned visits and discussions. They provide good direction for developments, such as forming a stable staff. They take a very active role in reviewing and agreeing policy. They monitor the effects of spending decisions carefully to ensure that money is spent well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has put good procedures in place recently to monitor standards and provision, although analysis of the information is at an early stage in the effort to drive up standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its resources effectively to improve pupils' skills and understanding as well as their personal development. Specific grants are used well for their intended purposes. The school is not yet making full use of new technology in school management or in the curriculum.

The level of staffing, accommodation and resources is good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; and behaviour is good. • They can discuss a problem with the school. • They think teaching is good; and children work hard and make good progress. • The school is managed well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several parents do not think children get the right amount of work to do at home. • Several parents feel there is not a good range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Several parents were rightly concerned at the many changes of teacher and the effect this had on their children, including the irregular setting of homework. All of the staff changes were beyond the school's control; it seems likely that staff turnover has settled down. There are more activities outside lessons than in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in the work seen are average by Year 2 in English, mathematics and science and above average by Year 6. This maintains the position by Year 2 since the last inspection but indicates good improvement by Year 6 in each subject. The school's initial assessments of children as they enter the school in reception class, and inspection evidence, indicates that attainment on entry is broadly average. Children make satisfactory progress in the reception year and they are likely to meet the expected standards in the Early Learning Goals for young children by the time they enter Year 1. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, and progress is good from Years 3 to 6. Overall, pupils are achieving as expected in the infant classes. They exceed the expectation in the junior classes through the impact of good teaching and provision, together with good systems for support by the subject co-ordinators and the monitoring procedures set up by the headteacher.
2. Standards in the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds were below the national average in reading, writing, and in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, standards were average in all these subjects. The performance of boys and girls was similar over the past three years. The trends in reading and writing have been downward over the past three years although standards are still above the school's results for 1997. The school is aware of this, and has identified the chief cause as high turnover of staff causing discontinuity of learning, and is concentrating on early English skills with additional literacy support in place. For mathematics, the trend is upward in line with the national trend.
3. Standards in the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds were above average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. In comparison with similar schools standards were well above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The performance of boys and girls was similar over the past three years. Fewer pupils than usual gained the higher Level 5 in English and science, although more gained Level 5 in mathematics. The trend in standards has been broadly in line with the upward national trend over the past four years. This indicates that the school is making generally good provision in teaching and learning through the choice of tasks, so that the impact of the school's work is raising standards.
4. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in most other subjects meet the expectation, with standards in design and technology and geography exceeding that normally expected by Year 6. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has set very challenging targets for English and mathematics that relate to projected attainments of the pupils by Year 6 in 2002, and the school is on course to meet them. It met the target for English but not for mathematics in year 2001. The well-planned activities across all subjects and the generally good teaching are having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets through the good support, as do those with English as an additional language (EAL). The school has focused clearly on strategies for positive behaviour management in line with the recently agreed policy, and these are beginning to improve pupils' self-discipline and to raise standards.
5. The school has identified an above average number of children as having special educational needs (SEN). Most classes have around one third of pupils on the SEN register, which tends to lower standards. There has been a high turnover of staff to the school recently as well as changes of teacher to classes which has adversely affected learning. This has now stabilised, and the school management is giving clear direction through curriculum support and monitoring procedures to promote higher standards.
6. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different ethnic groups, language, background or in relation to gender. The gifted children in Years 1 and 2 are considered to be making satisfactory progress. The mixture of specifically planned activities and full immersion in

English during the day supports children with EAL well in their developing competence. This helps pupils to move on swiftly in the initial stages as they learn from each other as well as teachers and other adults. There is no significant variation in achievement for different subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The pupils' good attitudes make a very positive contribution toward standards throughout the school. Parents and pupils confirm that most children enjoy school and come ready and eager to learn. That pupils relish learning was very apparent in many lessons. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils showed great pleasure in volunteering information about vowel sounds they had learnt in a previous lesson that they could see linked with this one; they were clearly enthusiastic about the written word/sense of language. The pupils' keen participation in extra-curricular activities is further evidence that they like school and all it has to offer. Throughout the school pupils mostly work very well in lessons. They settle quickly and sustain concentration, though this is much less evident in the few lessons that are insufficiently challenging. The great interest many pupils take in their work, and their almost total involvement in it, is particularly striking. Despite this, few children take real care over the presentation of their work because teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on the importance of good presentation. Many pupils respond well to challenges, persevering well; for example, to interpret a text and find characterisation, and showing pleasure when they succeed. A key principle of the school's philosophy is that children should be encouraged to make choices. This is applied well from the early years onwards and, as a result, the pupils' self reliance and sense of personal responsibility are particularly well developed. In addition many classroom activities are based on the key elements of enquiry and interpretation, so that by the time they reach 11, many pupils possess unusually good independent learning and research skills.
8. Because it is encouraged from the earliest stages, most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They are keen to answer questions and most take turns when doing so. Many have the confidence to participate in discussions making thoughtful contributions appropriate to their age and level. A good example of this was in a Year 6 geography lesson when pupils considered very perceptively the possible effects of natural forces on the landscape. The pupils' good conversational skills are another noteworthy feature of the school. Pupils talk very well together, whether it be when discussing work or socially over the appetising lunches.
9. Relationships amongst pupils and with adults at the school are very good. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix well, working and playing together harmoniously. They collaborate constructively and very amicably in groups; for example when working together at a computer. Pupils are also very positive about one another's efforts and achievements. This was apparent, for instance, when classmates spontaneously clapped two others who had successfully demonstrated 'limbo travel' in a Year 3 dance lesson. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection, although parents, and pupils, say bullying does occasionally occur. Through class discussion times and in assemblies pupils learn respect for others and their differing needs and views. This was manifest in the considerate way a boy in Year 6 'saved' another pupil's work on the computer before inputting his own, and the interest pupils showed in stories about other people's faiths and experiences.
10. The previous inspection reported that behaviour throughout the school was generally at least good. In lessons during this inspection pupils were calm, quiet and attentive despite distractions caused by the open plan nature of the buildings, and they moved around the school in a disciplined fashion showing due consideration for the needs of others. This, with a few exceptions, for example in lessons that lack pace, challenge or relevance, continues to be the case. Indeed more parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire said that behaviour in the school was good than did so last time. A few parents expressed concern about a small number of pupils with very challenging behaviour that they perceived as disruptive and detrimental to the progress of others. Inspection findings show their anxiety to be unfounded. There are several children with identified behavioural problems at the school but they are generally well integrated and if their behaviour does become distracting they are taken from the main group by a learning support assistant until settled. Overall other pupils show great tolerance towards pupils with such special

educational needs. This is exemplified by the way classmates so caringly participate in a 'buddy system' for an autistic boy. The school applies its behaviour policy to all pupils and this resulted in five pupils being given fixed-term exclusions for unacceptable behaviour in the year prior to the inspection.

11. Teachers provide good role models. They treat pupils with politeness and this is reflected in the very courteous and considerate way pupils behave towards staff, each other and visitors. Pupils also take care of their own and the school's possessions; no graffiti and very little litter were seen during the inspection.
12. Pupils of all ages respond very well to opportunities for taking responsibility. They keenly volunteer for messenger and monitoring duties, which they perform conscientiously and with pride. Older pupils willingly accept greater responsibilities such as helping the younger ones at lunchtime and showing visitors round the school. School council representatives undertake their role seriously and sensibly: to witness the chairperson in action was a real joy. They much appreciate being able to participate in the democratic processes at the school. For instance some were pleased to be involved in the recent appointment of a new teacher and in doing so confirmed the governors' opinion of the most suitable candidate! Several examples of pupils showing initiative were seen during the inspection. For instance a boy in Year R replaced cones which had become displaced on the cycle track in the lower school playground and a girl in Year 6 instinctively helped a small boy with the actions to a song being sung in assembly. The school's considered arrangements for pupils to take appropriate responsibility have a very positive impact on their personal development. Inspection evidence fully supports most parents' view that the school enables the pupils to become mature and responsible.
13. Overall attendance in the last full reporting year before this inspection was lower than at the time of the previous inspection, and slightly below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence was higher than before, and above the national average. Registers are marked at the beginning of the morning session, although not always promptly, and again in the afternoon. Most, though not all, registers are returned immediately to the school office for safe-keeping. However, teachers do not total class numbers regularly and there is no provision in the registers for an on-going record of each pupil's attendance. Scrutiny of the current year's registers indicates that most absences are due to common childhood ailments or other medical reasons, although 28 children are shown to have had time off for holidays so far. Whilst most of these were for a week or less, five exceeded the 'discretionary' 10 days by a day or two. Overall attendance in the spring term was particularly good and if this is maintained, overall attendance this year is likely to be higher. The previous inspection reported that many pupils arrived a few minutes after the commencement of the school day at 8.55 a.m. making an efficient and effective start difficult. This continues to be the case particularly in the infant classes. A few pupils are often considerably late. Clear attendance details are given on the pupils' annual reports but those in the prospectus are incomplete because there is no information about the rate of unauthorised absences, and the attendance data in the governors' annual report to parents is incorrect.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good through the school and has a positive effect on pupils' learning so that they gain new skills and extend their understanding. Learning is often good in lessons so that pupils make good progress. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and follows from the clear sense of direction and support given by the headteacher. Thoughtful teaching focused on providing a rich quality of experience for the children in the Foundation Stage is followed by interesting and generally well-planned tasks in Years 1 and 2, so that the children's learning builds on a good foundation. Teaching is also good in Years 3 - 6, where it is a little stronger and results in pupils making good progress in their learning. The few unsatisfactory elements of teaching were caused mainly by weaknesses in lesson planning, behaviour management, making provision for the children's stage of learning, and in the quality of recorded assessments in the foundation subjects. A quarter of teaching was very good or excellent, and three quarters of the teaching in the lessons observed was good or better, indicating a substantial depth to the quality and skills of teaching. All but two lessons were at least satisfactory. Examples of good or very good teaching were noted in all subjects and across all the year groups, showing that the school's procedures for curriculum planning, monitoring and guidance are effective.

15. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, although the planning for and implementation of national guidance for literacy and numeracy is still being worked out in a few lessons. The teachers' understanding of how to employ the Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy is good overall so that they are having a positive effect on raising standards. Teachers are careful to include the recommended elements of literacy. While additional time is carefully planned for skills such as reading and hand-writing, opportunities for pupils' extended writing is given less direct attention. The arrangement to regroup pupils into their year groups for English is effective both in simplifying planning but also in ensuring that pupils' learning needs are catered for well within a smaller class size. Teachers use information gained from their observations of the pupils as well as their questioning to form good on-going assessments during lessons. These are brought to bear well through the teachers' further questions and responses to pupils, which help pupils improve the quality of their work. Marking is mostly up to date, and includes praise as well as some comment on how to improve, although there is evidence of varying and inconsistent practice. In general, teachers' daily assessments, for example in English, mathematics and science, are perceptive and teachers' responses help pupils to overcome difficulties.
16. Lesson planning is based on a growing body of medium-term planning which is beginning to provide a good structure. The daily planning is clearly set out, with clear objectives that provide a good focus for learning, although further attention could be given to the extended learning for higher attaining pupils. Teachers give good attention to setting out how tasks are to be adapted for pupils of differing attainment, although there is little indication of the teaching approaches to be used. The teaching and learning policy provides a good general approach and basis for teaching, and most of that observed was in line with it. In particular the focus on direct first-hand experience is a strength of many lessons, from the choice of literature for pupils to enjoy to the opportunities of young children to play the honey-pot game. There are exceptions, however, and on a few occasions the over-direction by the teacher limits the opportunities for pupils to experiment and gain worthwhile experience of their own, as was noted for example in a mathematics lesson. The methods teachers expect to use are seldom included, since most planning relates to subject content and what the pupils are to do. Many lessons have a good pace and are productive, although time allocations for different parts of lessons are sometimes imbalanced since a few introductory sessions are too long and limit the time available for pupils to do the main activity.
17. Most teachers give lively and well-presented introductions to lessons, using their good subject knowledge. Their explanations and discussions help to capture the pupils' interests and promote good learning. The teachers give good attention to the teaching of a wide range of basic skills, including literacy, mental calculations, ICT, and science investigation. The focused group-work usually offers worthwhile consolidation and extensions to pupils' learning. Most pupils sustain their effort and learning well, although on occasions a few pupils are not fully involved in the tasks through a lack of clear behaviour strategies. Teachers have a good sense of personal care for the pupils, including in the reception class, which promotes their personal development well so that they are ready to learn. By Year 6, this whole-school approach has the effect of supporting good levels of personal interest and concentration in the pupils so that they learn effectively.
18. The quality and use of on-going observations in the lessons are often good, with teachers and support staff responding to pupils' answers and using questions well to assess and extend pupils' learning. Procedures for assessing the core subjects are well established, although the school is still identifying effective methods for keeping useful records in the foundation subjects. Resources are used well in most lessons and they are generally matched to pupils' needs. Most class discussion sessions at the end of lessons are used carefully to reinforce pupils' understanding, although a few of these are too brief to be of real value. Teachers provide suitable homework for pupils to consolidate their learning.
19. Teachers' good management of the pupils and firm behaviour strategies are effective in most lessons, and maintain a good work focus. They encourage self-discipline in the pupils through positive reinforcement of good behaviour. Learning support assistants are frequently very perceptive in their handling of pupils, encouraging them through their quiet support to concentrate and take a good part in the tasks. The support assistants provide close support for pupils with special educational needs that is appropriate. Teachers make good arrangements for pupils with

special educational needs. Often, activities are modified, or provide more focused support to enable pupils to progress in smaller steps. The close dialogue between teaching assistants, teachers and parents ensures that everyone is well briefed. As a result, pupils' progress is continuous. Parents are involved in the review of pupils' needs and contribute to pupils' targets. Teachers are particularly skilful in their use of questioning in the early parts of lessons. This approach enables pupils to be involved and active throughout lessons. Equally, when pupils are withdrawn to work on specific skills to address gaps in knowledge or skills, this is an appropriate use of focused teaching for a short series of sessions.

20. Pupils learning English as an additional language are encouraged to learn through helpful classroom strategies such as placing a pupil with another who can help, or through selected questioning by their teacher. Good liaison with their teachers and other adults ensures support staff are given good advice on how best they should be working with these pupils. Pupils and staff also gain from the selection of teaching materials that are a developing feature in the school.

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

21. The school provides a satisfactory range of worthwhile and relevant experiences for all pupils. All the issues identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed and the school has developed some good features. The school now has programmes of work in place for all subjects. Provision and schemes of work have improved as expected in mathematics, science, ICT, history, music and design and technology. Religious education is planned and implemented according to the locally agreed syllabus. However, the school has some way to go. All the elements of a broad and balanced curriculum are present but the school needs to link these together to create an overview tailored to reflect the distinctive needs of the pupils in the school. The curricular statement has not been reviewed recently to reflect the approach of the school and the mission statement therefore does not represent current practice. The school has made a good start in developing the curricular medium-term planning to provide support for teaching and learning, although there is not yet a comprehensive set of documents. Teachers make a few links between subjects within planning which help to reinforce skills and to make the tasks relevant for the children.
22. In the Foundation Stage the school plans activities for all the recommended areas of learning. Nursery and reception age children enjoy a good range of imaginative and thoughtfully planned activities. Across the Foundation Stage there is a strong focus on developing children's personal and social skills. There are very well planned activities for children who have individual special needs.
23. The school plans the teaching of literacy and numeracy carefully from the national frameworks. The emphasis on essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics is particularly strong in speaking, listening and mental calculation. The importance the school places on these skills is highlighted well through monitoring of planned priorities. As a result of checking pupils' books, the school has been able to improve standards in mathematics in Year 6 by successfully re-organising literacy and numeracy into separate year groups. This arrangement has a strong impact on pupils' achievements in Years 4, 5 and 6. Across the curriculum, there are planned opportunities to enhance pupils' skills of spoken presentation. An example of how the school plans enhancement activities is 'The Speech Awards' which require pupils to prepare and practise their delivery of their presentation.
24. The use of computers has improved and is beginning to have a clear impact on learning in all subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils purposefully searched the Internet in a geography lesson to locate relevant material. As a result, pupils improved their study skills significantly, as well as their computer skills. They gained appealing information, photos and graphics to contribute to their groups' presentation.
25. There are good arrangements for personal, health and social education. The school has adopted

the planned programme recommended by the local authority. This provides a series of lively and progressive activities, and messages, that contribute well to pupils' understanding of issues around them. Themes highlight relationships, drugs education, healthy lifestyle and citizenship. There is a planned and agreed programme for sex education.

26. Provision for pupils who are on the register of special educational needs is very good. Provision is particularly good for pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Pupils have individual plans that specifically address their personal or academic needs. Each plan defines clear measurable targets used to map out each pupil's progress. As pupils move through the school a good proportion of them no longer needs additional or differently planned support, having achieved very well academically in relation to their earlier skills. This success is because pupils' needs are identified early and because the school uses a range of outside experts well. Many members of staff attend specific training courses so that they understand the different kinds of need. The close dialogue between the SEN co-ordinator, class teachers and teaching assistants adds significantly to this achievement. Across the school, pupils receive a strong level of teaching assistant support. The school has made good progress in the task of implementing the changes needed for the new code of practice. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
27. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very experienced and has helped teachers to make the gradual transition to the new Code of Practice for children with special educational needs. As a result of the very good teaching in Years 3-6, many pupils have fewer needs. They can access the curriculum more easily because their needs were addressed early in the school life. There are close links with a variety of outside agencies who provide specialist knowledge and support for teachers, parents and pupils.
28. There is good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school liaises well with specialist teachers employed by the local authority to provide teaching strategies and advice. Pupils participate fully in everything the school provides. This was seen during the inspection as new pupils were admitted to school. They rapidly began making friends, smiling with delight as they began to realise that they could take an unobtrusive but active part in lessons. This is promoted well by the school support staff, who make a strong contribution to ensuring that all pupils are valued and encouraged.
29. The school is all inclusive and provides good equality of access to the curriculum. There is thoughtful provision to equal opportunity with all pupils included regardless of gender, ability or race. Provision related to equal opportunities for special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language, in particular, is very good. The school takes care over every individual child. The only blemish is the lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils in Year 2. A policy for equal opportunities is in place and the school is aware of the Commission for Racial Equality's statutory code of practice on the duty to promote race equality which comes into effect on 31 May 2002.
30. Provision for higher attainers in Years 2 and 3 has not consistently offered sufficient challenge, partly because of the high number of teachers who have taught these year groups. This has affected standards adversely since several pupils show evidence of slow gains in skills until recently.
31. The wide range of activities outside school time enriches the curriculum. Pupils develop their skills further in such activities as badminton, netball, football, cookery and gardening. Older juniors take part in a residential trip to Scarborough and this widens their experience with opportunities to try out new skills.
32. Links with the nearby primary and secondary schools are satisfactory. However, the school is seeking to establish and develop a network of partnerships with other schools. Currently, pupils and staff benefit from the expertise of staff from neighbouring schools in music and ICT. This is accelerating pupils' progress, giving technical help and heightened awareness of very good curriculum initiatives.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

33. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement on the last report where social and moral development was good, and spiritual and cultural provision was satisfactory.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Acts of worship are mainly Christian but other faiths are not neglected. The theme for the week of inspection was forgiveness and there was always a prayer and time for reflection at the end of assembly. In one, pupils were asked to think about forgiveness to God or to Allah, or just to consider forgiveness. Music, Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance", was played at the beginning and end of every assembly but a hymn was sung only once in the four days. There are opportunities in lessons for awe and wonder and an example of this was in English where special words conveyed meaning. Opportunities had been taken to explore what was happening in the world, with the events of 11 September last year in mind.
35. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. One of the strengths is the excellent co-operation between classroom teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils are not only taught the difference between right and wrong but also why something is right or wrong. When there are disputes, the school feels it is important to get to the truth and incidents are discussed. Assemblies often have a moral content, with forgiveness being the theme during the week of inspection. Staff are good role models and respected by pupils. They are taught to tolerate and respect the values and beliefs of others. The small number of minority ethnic pupils is integrated successfully into the school. Class discussion times help to promote moral understanding. The impact of this is that the behaviour by the great majority of the pupils both in and out of classroom is good.
36. The provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Pupils relate to each other and get on well. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. There is a school council which enables each part of the school to take responsibility. One boy and one girl are elected from each year group and in a meeting observed during the inspection, all members had a chance to speak. The council was very well chaired by a Year 6 pupil. The teacher overseeing the council took minutes which were available in all the classrooms the following day. Pupils also take responsibility for various parts of the school grounds. For instance Year 1 pupils have their own garden, Year 2 pupils are responsible for a wildlife area and Year 3 pupils are cultivating a garden in a courtyard in order to attract butterflies. There are school monitors and all Year 6 pupils become a monitor, on a rota system, during the school year. They also undertake office duties at lunchtimes. Older pupils look after the younger ones at lunchtime. The older pupils usually prepare the annual teddy bears' picnic for the younger ones. There is a buddy system where Year 5 pupils can play with Year 1 pupils in the infant playground. Pupils' social development benefits considerably from the personal, social and health education programme. There are fund-raising activities which help the pupils to increase their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. A large number of clubs and extra-curricular activities take place, mainly for those in the junior school. These include choir, recorder groups, netball, rounders, badminton, cookery, drama, chess, football and cricket and pupils benefit considerably from these activities in many ways. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience living together and sharing during a residential visit which this year will be in Scarborough.
37. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Artists have visited the school for an Arts Week. Themed activity weeks are a regular feature of the school. One example of cultural development is a sculpture which was created in the school grounds. A water audit by the pupils had taken place and in one assembly certificates were handed out to some pupils sent from the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Although Christianity is the main religion, the school promotes an awareness of different world religions in assemblies and as part of the religious education syllabus. Visits to other places of interest also take place. For example, pupils in Year 5 visited St Albans and dressed up as Victorian children to spend a day in a Victorian atmosphere. Children in the nursery and reception classes have visited a local garden centre, Year 1 pupils

visited a local supermarket and Year 3 pupils have been to Verulamium.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school continues to provide the supportive environment reported in the previous inspection. The teachers know the pupils well and take appropriate account of individual needs. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. Caring and friendliness pervade the school ethos and parents and children confirm that most pupils feel happy, secure and valued. This is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and the positive attitudes most show towards learning and in their play. Because of this, some 'new' parents, who had originally intended to remove their children to a 'better' school once a place became available, have decided to keep them at The Lea.
39. The satisfactory arrangements for the pupils' welfare reported in the previous inspection have largely been maintained. The headteacher has the designated responsibility for child protection and has undertaken training for this role. Although members of staff have not had any formal training, they are sensitive to child protection issues and are quick to alert her of any concerns. There is first aid cover throughout the day, and all incidents resulting in injuries are carefully recorded. Play-time supervisors are vigilant, although there are sometimes not enough of them to ensure that all children are within sight. Fire drills are held, evaluated and logged each term. All necessary equipment and apparatus are checked regularly by outside specialists. Members of the governors' premises committee make an annual health and safety check and deal with issues as necessary. However, between times, arrangements for identifying, reporting and recording concerns are only casual and risk assessments are not routinely made. This means that potential hazards could be missed. Some minor health and safety concerns were noticed during the inspection and were discussed with the headteacher, who has taken appropriate action.
40. The school is largely successful in promoting good behaviour amongst the pupils. Most members of staff have high expectations and, through the strong supportive ethos of the school, pupils become aware of the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This is underpinned by a behaviour policy that is based on a positive approach and the development of the pupils' self-esteem. Following behaviour management training from local authority advisors and discussion in the school, the policy is now reasonably well established throughout the school. In lessons, teachers usually apply discipline firmly but fairly. They consistently praise good work and behaviour that are further reinforced by the judicious use of rewards such as stickers, merits or acclamation in a sharing assembly where 'outside' achievements are also celebrated. Clear and attractive playground markings, the demarcation of specific areas for different games, and rotas for ball games and playing on the large wooden apparatus all have a positive impact on the pupils' behaviour at break times, which is also good. This is because pupils can engage in constructive play and there are no arguments about who should be where! The school accepts that the 'levels' system of sanctions for dealing with poor behaviour has not always been consistently applied. The headteacher has worked hard to address this by providing further on-going staff training. Despite this, some parents at the pre-inspection meeting complained that their child had been 'picked on' or they had not been informed when their child was on 'time out' in another class. Sadly only a few parents attended meetings that were organised to explain the system. Pupils with especially challenging behaviour are supported well by teachers and special needs assistants. In order to emphasise that it will not be tolerated, pupils are excluded for a fixed period if they exhibit particularly unacceptable behaviour such as physical assault on another pupil.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are not entirely satisfactory. A number of sound strategies are used. For example, parents are clearly reminded of the importance of good attendance in the prospectus, and through the home-school agreement they contract to send their child to school regularly and on time. Pupils who arrive after 9.05 a.m. have to report to the office and are recorded in a book. However, attendance procedures are not consistently applied. For instance, some registers are not taken until nearly 9.05 a.m. so that pupils who arrive a few minutes after the start of the school day are not recorded as late. Few

teachers annotate their registers well with details of the exact nature of absences or any action they have taken. The education welfare officer, who checks the registers each half term, does not remind teachers sufficiently about the importance of keeping their registers complete and up to date.

42. The headteacher is aware of these issues and has started to address them. She has tried to ensure that staff always indicate reasons for absences in the registers and that they use the correct 'codes'. This has resulted in fewer apparently unexplained absences, and a consequent decrease in the rate of unauthorised absences in the current school year. However governors have not yet fully considered all possible strategies for improving attendance and punctuality. They have not given sufficient attention to thoroughly reviewing the attendance policy and procedures, making detailed analyses of registers to establish any patterns of absence or setting targets for improvement.
43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. Teachers keep on-going written records in each pupil's file, and work closely together as children pass through the school. This good exchange of information means that their individual needs are met effectively. Each pupil is made to feel valued and respected whatever their academic ability, strengths or problems. Teachers make suitable written comments about pupils' personal development on the annual report to parents.
44. The school has addressed the issues highlighted in the previous report and assessment procedures in the school are now satisfactory. The school has begun to raise the profile of assessment across the school but insufficient use is still made of information collected. There are few links between the information gained in tests with curriculum planning. This is a significant point of development that the school has not yet addressed. The school is at a pivotal point currently and is beginning to grasp the opportunity with teachers in new management roles for the core subjects to identify ways to gain an assessment overview. This is expected to inform curriculum planning so that pupils' next learning steps are closely and precisely targeted. Teachers are setting targets for each pupil but have limited understanding at present of how best to use the information gained. Some of the schools' assessment information is inaccurate and does not present a clear picture. On-going monitoring of pupils' progress is at an informal stage and the school recognises that further steps need to be taken to address the tracking of pupils' progress across the school, to ensure that pupils achieve as well as possible. There are a few examples of teachers encouraging pupils to carry out self-assessment, and these contribute well to pupils' achievement. There are also examples of new assessment initiatives in the early stages of development, such as writing portfolios of work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The good links with parents reported in the previous inspection have been maintained and continue to have a beneficial impact on the pupils' attainment and their personal development.
46. Nearly all parents whose views were obtained during the inspection have positive opinions about most aspects of the school. They like the working atmosphere it promotes and consider the teaching to be good. They see their children as happy at the school and making good progress there. Inspection findings support these positive views. Some parents express concern about the amount of homework given and a number say there are not enough 'out-of-lesson' activities. Inspectors found these opinions only partly justified. The school now has a homework policy that complies with government recommendations but inspectors accept that there are inconsistencies, both in the setting of homework and in the 'usefulness' of the marking. However, they do not agree that there are insufficient extra-curricular activities. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after school clubs for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and older pupils have the opportunity to participate in a week's 'school journey'. Pupils in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 are taken on trips, for example to the local garden centre, and are entertained by local theatre groups. Inspectors consider this provision to be good for a school of this size.

47. The parents' satisfaction with the arrangements for keeping them informed about their child's work and progress is also well founded. There are formal consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms, and parents are encouraged to approach staff at any other time to share concerns about their child's education. Most feel able to do so because they find teachers very willing to listen and to help; several parents were seen seeking advice from teachers during the inspection. Pupils' annual reports give a good general overview of the individual's achievements and progress, and include targets for improvement. However, only the best examples give precise details of the pupils' attainment in terms of the National Curriculum in English, mathematics and science. The opportunity for parents to make written comments on the report is a good feature. Following criticism in the previous inspection report, the school now ensures that parents receive their child's report in sufficient time for them to discuss it with teachers before the end of the summer term, should they wish.
48. The school keeps parents well informed about its work. The prospectus and governors' annual report both give a very clear picture of the school in accordance with statutory requirements, except insofar as attendance data is concerned. The style and presentation of the governors' report are of an extremely high quality and the next prospectus is to be produced in the same format. This is intended to further enhance the feeling of professionalism about the school. Regular newsletters give diary dates, reminders about such things as school rules and details of changes to school organisation and the curriculum. To encourage parents to read the newsletter the school has instigated a system for parents to sign and return slips and a class league table. Another good feature is that the latest newsletter is always posted on the school's web site. A brief but clear overview of the curriculum is given in the prospectus. Teachers also send parents a termly letter informing them about the curriculum, although these vary in their usefulness. Some merely state topics whilst others expand just sufficiently to give parents an idea of how they might help their child with 'out-of-school' activities. Curriculum evenings on such topics as standard attainment tests and approaches to the teaching of science are also sometimes held. Because it appreciates the role of parents as 'consumers', the school takes great care to consider their views, which are obtained via questionnaires and a regular 'parents' forum', when developing plans and policies.
49. The school considers it important that parents support their child's education and actively encourages them to become involved. Most do so for example, by listening to their children reading at home. Many also enjoy attending special assemblies, musical events and school picnics with their children. An impressive number of parents and 'friends' are more actively engaged in the life of the school. Several make a positive contribution to standards of attainment in English by helping children with reading on a regular basis, or in the library. Others give valuable classroom support by assisting with woodwork or computers every week, and there is never a shortage of volunteers to help on trips! A few give 'one-off' talks on areas of expertise such as 'Life during the Second World War', or help with school clubs and the choir. Some also assist by lending photographs, toys and other artefacts so as to widen the opportunities for pupils to handle 'real' objects from the past, or from other cultures. All these contributions strengthen the partnership between home and school, and have a beneficial effect on standards as pupils see parents and the school working together.
50. The school continues to enjoy, and much appreciates, the support of the active parent-teacher association: 'The Lea School Association'. The association works hard to raise funds and engender a community spirit through such things as cake sales, race nights, fashion shows and a range of social events. The money raised is used to purchase 'extras' such as plants for the jubilee garden and large play apparatus. It is also used to subsidise the school journey and the cost of visiting experts. Members also make a valuable contribution by running discotheques for the pupils each term, providing refreshments at special events and helping with special projects like the construction of the jubilee garden.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher has used her considerable leadership and personal skills to give the school a

clear sense of direction since her appointment. She has a good, perceptive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and is using this very effectively to bring a coherence to the range of improvements needed. She bases her decisions clearly on providing a rich learning environment and building a purposeful team spirit amongst the staff. There is a very good sense of community throughout the school, supported by the staff, the many visitors and the governors, who share a clear vision for the school. The procedures for performance management are well established. This, together with the introduction of good monitoring and evaluation of teaching, is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and hence on standards. She has ensured that the governing body is much involved in the work of the school.

52. The headteacher has a good insight for the priorities of the school and, with the governing body, she has made decisions that are having a clear, positive impact on the quality of work and standards in the school. The school has made the improvements expected since the last inspection and the key issues identified then have been addressed. There are good arrangements to include all groups of people connected with the school in contributing to further planning. She has ensured that all members of staff, the children and the governors contribute to the task of forward planning, although the school development plan has yet to be finalised in a helpful format. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good, with clear procedures to monitor and discuss the quality of teaching. Good assessment procedures have been established for the core subjects, and work is continuing on the foundation subjects. The school recognises the need to develop further the effectiveness of curriculum co-ordinators.
53. The governing body has a good understanding of its responsibilities and fulfils them well. Governors make good use of relevant training to develop their effectiveness. They have very good arrangements to visit the school, for example through both formal visits and times to hear children read, so that they are active and informed in fulfilling their role. They are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the related needs. They are committed to giving a good lead for the direction of the school and take an active part in making decisions. The governors have appropriate procedures to monitor financial planning and are clear about the educational priorities for the school, such as improving the learning conditions and space for the children in two classrooms. They look appropriately for the benefit to pupils' learning and standards in their spending decisions. For example, the arrangements for the new computer suite were discussed with a view to meeting curricular requirements and the need to raise standards. They have a good understanding of school priorities through a combination of independent observations and frequent discussions with all members of the school community.
54. The provision for and co-ordination of special educational needs is very good. Funding and specific grants for special educational needs are used well for the benefit of the children. The teaching assistants make a particularly good, daily contribution to the children's learning so that they make good progress. The governors ensure that provision for special educational needs is fully in place.
55. There is good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language so that they make good progress. Teachers and assistants in classes provide all pupils with effective learning opportunities and access to the curriculum. The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff.
56. The identified priorities are thoroughly costed and the school's financial planning is effective. The governors' finance committee takes careful account of all forms of need and sets a balanced budget based on priorities. The school secretary and bursar work well with the headteacher and governors to ensure that there is good oversight of the finances and budget. Funding from specific grants is used effectively for its designated purpose. The school's use of new technology to support management is satisfactory, but developing.
57. There is a good level of teachers and support staff to provide for the pupils' learning, although there are currently decisions on whether the budget can sustain the present level of staffing. The school secretary provides a friendly first point of contact for parents with the school and is efficient and reliable in her service to the school. The caretaker and cleaning staff ensure that the school is

cleaned and maintained to a good standard, in accordance with the headteacher's standards. The accommodation is satisfactory, with several good features such as the Early Years Unit with outside play space. A central space is used effectively as a computer suite, which now provides good facilities and a valuable resource for all subjects. There is also an attractive library. The level and condition of learning resources are satisfactory, and good overall in the Foundation Stage. A few artefacts from different cultures complement some displays in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to raise standards and make improvements, the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following:
- (1) Discuss and agree a curricular statement that reflects the rationale and emphasis of the school, alongside a review of the mission statement. Develop the curricular medium-term planning, to provide support for teaching and learning, so that it matches the emphasis of the school, includes creative and supporting connections between subjects and is relevant to the children's lives and needs. (Paragraph 21)
 - (2) Strengthen the procedures for assessment and their effectiveness by: (Paragraphs 44, 52, 91, 98, 107, 117, 122, 126, 131, 136)
 - setting up manageable procedures to collect and record information, including in the foundation subjects.
 - establish systems to track pupils through the school.
 - ensure that the information is used to inform teaching and learning.
 - provide suitable training in the analysis and interpretation of data, including for the core subject co-ordinators.
 - (3) Develop the monitoring and support roles of the subject co-ordinators. (Paragraphs 44, 52, 83, 117, 136)
 - (4) Ensure that the school development plan is a thorough synthesis of identified priorities that provides an effective management tool and is clear about the intended impact on pupils' progress and standards. (Paragraph 52)

Minor issues

The school should consider how to include the following minor issues within forward planning:

- (1) Monitor the approach to marking pupils' work to ensure that it is effective and suitably consistent. (Paragraph 15, 88, 91 98)
- (2) Improve the procedures for monitoring attendance. (Paragraph 13)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	22	10	2	0	0
Percentage	2	27	46	21	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	10	140
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	8	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	21	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (78)	79 (83)	92 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	20	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (78)	92 (87)	92 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The figures have been omitted where the number of boys or girls is ten or fewer so that individual pupils cannot be identified.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	9	12
	Girls	9	7	8
	Total	20	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (71)	64 (64)	80 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	11
	Girls	9	7	7
	Total	20	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (79)	68 (71)	72 (93)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	6.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Total number of education support staff	2.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	46
Number of pupils per FTE adult	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	8	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	374,192
Total expenditure	372,834
Expenditure per pupil	2,421
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,749
Balance carried forward to next year	24,107

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	146
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	40	7	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	58	31	9	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	67	11	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	49	16	4	0
The teaching is good.	56	33	7	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	49	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	29	9	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	27	7	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	47	7	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	36	47	9	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	36	11	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	40	18	2	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

59. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. The school has 18 places for nursery children and admits them on a part-time basis after they have their third birthday. Children transfer to reception classes in September and January during the year in which they are five. Most children in the reception class have attended the school's nursery before they enter school full-time. The provision for the children's all round development and education is good. The members of staff in the Early Years Unit make good provision for all children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. The work for children of reception class age builds well on that for nursery children. The curriculum for all children in the Foundation Stage promotes the Early Learning Goals effectively in all areas of learning and development. This inspection shows good consolidation of positive aspects of provision since the last inspection and further good improvements.
60. There is a purposeful atmosphere of busy learning as children work and play together. Curricular planning for all children of nursery and reception age meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage of learning for young children, and is good. The teacher and support staff work closely together to ensure there is carefully planned progression of tasks and ideas and there is a smooth transfer to the work for Year 1 of the National Curriculum. The management of the Unit is good, with many carefully considered opportunities for children to explore ideas and materials as they acquire early skills. All members of staff work hard and develop close and effective relationships with parents and carers which help to ease the transition from home to school. The record keeping system is clear and manageable. It gives members of staff a useful base for planning activities. There is an entry assessment to help identify children's level of development which gives a clear indication of the children's early abilities, for example in language and personal skills. The procedures for record keeping and setting targets are good and comprehensive. This supports staff in focusing on the next stage of development for children to make progress. All members of staff ensure that all children have full and equal access to the activities and choices planned for them. Parents have a good opinion of the support and work children do in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. All members of staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development well. The quality of teaching and learning is good within a varied and well-planned environment. The members of staff are consistent in providing good role models as they treat children politely and respond to them thoughtfully, valuing their ideas and contributions. Children settle quickly and happily into the security of the Unit and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. They quickly become confident in moving around the Unit or outside and they learn to take turns amicably, for example when at the water play or outside with building blocks. They concentrate well on their tasks and are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy their work. They co-operate well with each other and adults. They continue this good progress in their personal development when they enter the reception year. Children co-operate in the activities, for example in sorting toy animals into groups, where the language barrier of having one child with English as an additional language did not prevent them sharing and communicating about the task. Children understand the routines of school life, such as taking the register and taking it back to the school office with a friend, and they move in an orderly way around the school. The teacher has a thoughtful, interactive style, which she uses well to encourage the children to think and respond during activities. The members of staff take many opportunities to develop and promote calm behaviour and independence. Their organisation and expectation places a strong emphasis on children making independent choices and the children respond well to this with a good level of maturity for their age. By the time they start Year 1, most children are likely to meet the expected levels in the development of their personal and social skills. The school has maintained and built upon this area of children's development successfully since the previous inspection.

Communication, language and literacy

62. The quality of teaching and learning, supported by the overall provision for the children's development of communication, language and literacy skills, is good. There is a good range of books and language material in the Unit to meet the needs and interests of the children. The members of staff ensure that children learn the correct way to hold and handle books and to enjoy looking at pictures. The class teacher uses elements of the National Literacy Strategy effectively to develop children's understanding of letter sounds and word building. For example, children considered the initial sound 'p' in relation to words such as 'pea' for their garden centre. This experience helps children to hear the sounds and leads into a secure basis for reading. All members of staff provide opportunities for children to develop their language through the many incidental as well as directed activities. These encourage children to express their ideas and to learn new language related to the activities. For example, the class garden centre has been a very good source of focused language, not only in the exchanges while children buy items but in the early writing skills required to prepare a catalogue. Most children gain early reading and writing skills through the purposeful activities and their writing ability is broadly average by the end of reception year. The teacher successfully promotes children's skills in listening and speaking, for example by reading stories which children enjoy. They develop a love of books and begin to understand how to follow the print. Children's language and communication skills improve steadily.
63. Adults give an effective level of support to children through sharing books and in the role-play area. As a result, children make good progress in their ability to share ideas, experiences and feelings as they act out real life situations. This level of support enables children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language to develop confidence in speaking English. The children learn to hold and use pencils correctly. For example, the imaginatively set up garden centre allows children to explore adult roles and children make purposeful marks on paper in their early writing. The regular assessments of children's writing are used to guide further planning. Children improve their early writing skills by taking part in a range of activities that encourage good hand and eye control. The great majority of children make good progress in their learning and most children are forming recognisable letters. Most children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection.

Mathematical development

64. The quality of teaching and learning are good, and the provision for children's mathematical development is good. Children enter the nursery with broadly average skills and understanding of early mathematical ideas. Most children make good progress in consolidating and developing their number skills through the well-chosen activities. Members of staff develop these skills through a carefully structured programme of activities which include counting and early ideas of number. For example, children follow the sequence of the days of the week and many know the next day. They sort objects such as animals into organised groups and thread beads in a simple sequence. A computer program enables children to establish skills of matching flower symbols one-to-one. Other mathematical ideas include building simple symmetrical patterns with bricks or using money in the garden centre, where children demonstrated a developing understanding of spatial patterns and number. They have good access to sand and water play to develop their ideas of capacity or simple properties of materials, and the addition of bubbly water added to their experiences and kept the activity fresh. The good organisation and planning allows for regular access to a variety of materials such as large or small bricks to develop awareness of space and of how things fit together.
65. Children are interested in number and are helped to count and consider numbers to ten or more in both informal contexts such as sand play and in teacher-led sessions. The reception-aged children are introduced to aspects of the Numeracy Strategy appropriately as children are taught to count correctly and build their early numeracy skills. For example, children build patterns and sequences and have many opportunities to count in an organised way. The water play also

provides good opportunities to build up ideas of quantity and informal measure. The good focus on number language provides an effective level of support for children who have special educational needs or English as an additional language. Children usually have a session of structured number work each day. Several children count and order objects to ten confidently, and others are learning to count consistently one-to-one. Most children are likely to reach the expectation by the time they enter Year 1 since they are developing secure skills in counting and space. This indicates a similar level of attainment to that seen during the last inspection.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. The teacher and all members of staff ensure that there is a rich and varied selection of activities and resources to promote and develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The very thoughtful planning and provision enable children to make good progress in their understanding of materials and how things work. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have many opportunities to explore their world, including very good provision for outdoor play. Children have investigated how plants grow and they have watered seeds in the raised garden bed. They know how to handle the tricycles outside on the playground and recognise the varying properties of sand, water, wood and plastic as they play. They have an early understanding that people, animals and plants need water, food and warmth to grow, helped for example by planting seeds.
67. Children use a computer with simple programs that encourage control of the mouse, such as dragging pictures of flowers into position to match a given sequence. They understand how several construction materials can be used and have the early skills to fit and construct models. Children use a good variety of materials such as playdough, paint, sand and water, adapting their skills to the materials in recognition of the differing properties. There is good progress in the children's development in all areas of this aspect of learning. Most children are likely to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1, indicating a broadly average level of understanding for their age. This indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Physical development

68. The Early Years Unit makes good provision for children's physical development and they make good progress. The quality of teaching is good so that children have a wide variety of good experiences and learn well. The children have opportunities to use pencils, crayons and paint brushes and learn the fine control required to produce early letter shapes or a picture. A few children have not yet learnt to control a paintbrush, for example, and tend to scrub it over the paper, although several produce quite delicate brush strokes. Many children have the early skills to use scissors with satisfactory control and skill.
69. There are good, planned opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills, such as running, jumping or riding a tricycle. All members of staff promote the development of physical skills well so that children learn well and make good progress. The children develop their climbing and balancing skills through access to a climbing frame and in the school hall. They have opportunities to run, jump and use wheeled toys with increasing skill and control, for example keeping inside a wide track. The outdoor play area is very good for many physical activities. The children have access to a selection of large and small apparatus, although the range of large equipment is not sufficient. The children generally make good gains in their physical development, with control and co-ordination skills, and are likely to reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. This indicates a similar standard to that found during the last inspection.

Creative development

70. The quality of teaching and learning is good, supported by good provision for children's creative development. All members of staff include ideas for children to explore materials or situations as a rich part of their experiences. Some of these are planned carefully into supported activities, such as writing a brochure and using colours and designs for a good effect or when children made

feather trees using brightly coloured yellow feathers. Others occur incidentally, such as the use of a comb to make patterns in the sand or when children choose to paint. The perceptive support given by all staff promotes the children's creative development and results in good learning. Adults have a good awareness of creative dimensions to children's work and this informs their good expectations of what the children may achieve. Children make good progress as they learn how to use these skills to control materials well. Many children explore the colours formed through colour mixing as they apply paint to paper, and learn the techniques of modelling playdough. Good teaching ensures that children learn well and understand how to shape and assemble materials. The children have good opportunities to develop and build links with rhymes and word patterns, for example when playing a 'honey pot' game. There are appropriate opportunities to develop their creative skills in making sounds and rhythms with musical instruments. There is regular access to music and a variety of songs and number rhymes are enjoyed. Most children are likely to reach the expectation by the end of reception year and standards are average. This indicates a similar position to the time of the last inspection.

ENGLISH

71. Standards in the work seen are broadly average by Year 2, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils reach the expected level in speaking and listening, reading and writing and several exceed this level. A few pupils, who have been identified by the school, attain below this level. Standards in the work seen by Year 6 exceed the expected level and are above average, although the range of attainment across the year is wide. This is an improvement on the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. The school has addressed the concerns expressed by several parents of many changes of teacher by focusing on forming a stable teaching staff. There is some evidence that pupils have not gained confidence in their writing skills where the teaching provision has not been stable. By Year 6, the proportion of pupils working at Level 5 is a little above that found nationally in the work seen.
72. Standards in reading and in writing in the national tests at Year 2 for 2001 were below average. The trend in standards of reading in the national tests over time indicates an overall improvement over the past five years, although there has been a decline in the past three years to just below the national average. The most recent national tests show that the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in reading was a little above the national average, although fewer pupils gained the higher Level 3. In writing, standards have followed a similar trend to reading, although fewer pupils gained the expected level than nationally. However, more pupils gained the higher Level 3 in writing. Standards were in line with those of similar schools in both reading and writing. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates improvement by Year 2 to broadly average.
73. The performance of pupils in Year 6 in the national tests of 2001 showed an improvement in standards over the previous year. Standards were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 or above was higher than usual although fewer pupils gained the higher Level 5. Standards were well above the average for similar schools. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards are continuing to improve and are now above the national average. Improved subject planning and focused teaching contribute significantly to this improvement.
74. Progress overall is satisfactory to Year 2 and good through the junior years to Year 6. Pupils are achieving appropriately in the infant years and achievement is better than usual in the junior classes. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers, often making rapid progress in their early command of English. Pupils with special educational needs are making the expected progress in relation to their targets. In those classes where there have been changes of teachers there is some evidence of variation in progress, although this is now being consolidated rapidly through the generally good teaching.
75. The very great majority of pupils take an active part in lessons, enjoying the text and discussions with the teachers. Apart from a few pupils who have not gained the skills to concentrate, most pupils listen attentively and speak confidently. They follow the development of ideas and are generally keen to offer their own thoughts and reasons. Most pupils understand routine

instructions and work out together what is expected for group tasks. They take an active part in discussions. By Year 2, pupils use a good range of vocabulary, with interesting expressions, to discuss their ideas. They generally have a satisfactory understanding of the language in stories and texts and interpret phrases and ideas clearly in their own words. Most pupils describe the main events in a story adequately in their own words, shown for example in their recall of previous parts of a story before reading a further passage. They make careful observations; for example, when talking about characters in a story.

76. By Year 6, many pupils take part in mature discussions, both formally in class and during lunch times, for example. They listen well to each other, having gained good conversational skills that take account of others' points of view or fresh points. In class discussions, many pupils offer well thought out opinions and contribute positively to develop an argument or line of enquiry. Teachers generally provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects, giving good attention to technical language and meaning so that pupils' vocabulary is broadened in context. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are helped to understand what is being said through the sensitive support of learning assistants.
77. The youngest children in the reception class recognise that print has meaning and they know most initial sounds and many familiar words. They understand about how books are laid out and join in with the class teacher to read simple stories. Standards in reading by Year 2 are broadly average. Most pupils read simple texts fluently, recognising how punctuation is used to form phrases or sentences so that they read with meaning. The high attaining children read with good expression, interpreting the sense well and using their voice to give emphasis to significant words. The few low attaining pupils read familiar words confidently, but are at an early stage of using decoding skills to support them in building up new words. The teachers follow national guidance appropriately to provide shared reading activities within the class or group. These help pupils to gain confidence and to make steady progress with their reading. There is a suitable routine for pupils to take books home to read, and most read with their parents or an older brother or sister.
78. Standards of reading by Year 6 are above average, and most pupils have developed a good love of books. The school has good arrangements for children to have quiet reading time each day and this supports pupils in gaining a good knowledge of books and authors. By the time they leave the school, most pupils read a wide range of styles and genres. They have good skills at reading text for understanding, so that they interpret the ideas well and extract information. Many pupils have learnt to apply these skills in reading for other subjects such as religious education. Most pupils enjoy the humour or hidden meanings within text and are able to distinguish fact from opinion. Many pupils have gained the higher level skills to locate information, and to skim and scan text.
79. Standards in writing are at the national average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6, indicating good progress and achievement in the junior classes. In the infant classes, pupils gain appropriate skills to form letters correctly. They know several spelling patterns and letter blends, using these with increasing confidence to write words and simple sentences by Year 2. The higher attaining pupils usually spell familiar words accurately, while other children write several words using recognisable phonetic sounds. Pupils' handwriting shows steady improvement in formation and style during Years 1 and 2. They tend to write more consistently during practice sessions than when they apply these skills for writing in other contexts when the expectations are different and their minds are on other things.
80. Standards in writing have improved by Year 6 since the last inspection. The trend in standards is above the national trend during the past five years. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide range of texts and styles during their English lessons, and these are supplemented well through material selected for other subjects. The carefully planned lessons, with very focused teaching, ensure that pupils have a good grasp of language structure and expression. For example, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in understanding how to present an argument, firstly through the teacher's encouragement to express their ideas verbally. Then, she provided a very good role model by building on the pupils' ideas and by giving good attention to producing well formed sentences using an overhead projector so that pupils' learning was good. The majority of pupils

wrote out full sentences and understood the reasons to support or disagree with their arguments, such as whether it is best to line up in the order boy, girl, boy, girl and so on. Pupils in Year 5 made good gains in their understanding of how to convey persuasive writing through the teacher's good discussion about how selected passages created interest. Several pupils wrote catchy headlines for their writing, such as 'Are you a water waster?' which showed a growing recognition of style and purpose in writing. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated good understanding of contrast between two authors' styles while discussing passages from two books. The teacher brought out how a boy's encounter with a fox was related by one person, using expressive verbs to convey ideas. The pupils had a good understanding of the use of language, and recognised that the story was enjoyable because it expressed how the boy felt. They had a good understanding of the structure and development of the story. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have developed good standards of handwriting, overall. Standards of spelling are also good overall, although a few pupils make simple mistakes because they are not yet sure of spelling rules.

81. Children enjoy their English lessons, particularly the well-chosen stories or texts. The teachers' good relationships and lively presentations capture pupils' interests well so that they are keen to learn. Children in the infant classes mostly work with good concentration and effort, although a few require consistent support in order to make progress. Classroom assistants provide good, thoughtful support, particularly for the lower attaining pupils and for those with English as an additional language, so that these pupils take a full part in lessons. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 demonstrate a growing maturity in their approach to English, enjoying the tasks and working hard to complete them. The higher attaining pupils, in particular, respond well to the teachers' high level of challenge, although in Year 6 the boys took on the challenge by writing out their ideas while the girls spent most of the time in reading the text. The children who were heard reading, either within lessons or for the reading sample, showed generally good confidence and interest in their books.
82. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a few examples of very good teaching. The teachers follow national guidance sensibly to plan carefully thought-out lessons with a good focus on the many basic skills, including standard English, spellings, punctuation and parts of speech, as well as style and use of language. This provides a good structure for the lessons so that pupils generally learn well, particularly within the junior classes. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge; for example, in discussing how metaphors are used to convey ideas about a fox 'bounding' or the emphasis on phonic knowledge to find words with 'er', 'ir' and 'ur' in them. Teachers have a good questioning style to ensure pupils understand words, phrases or punctuation, so that pupils are encouraged to think and check their work. Teachers manage pupils well so that they are usually on task and produce a good amount of work, although there is a little variation. Their behaviour management is good, using strategies that the pupils understand; this helps to ensure that pupils make good progress.
83. The subject co-ordinator provides good management for the subject, although she has only taken on the responsibility since September. With the senior management team, she has identified several priorities and has taken positive action to raise standards, which are having a good impact particularly in Years 3 to 6. The planning is monitored, for example, and the headteacher makes lesson observations with constructive feedback for the teachers. The subject fully complies with requirements. The school has introduced good procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress. Marking is generally up to date with helpful comments on both good aspects and points to improve, although this is not fully consistent. The co-ordinator has begun to audit the resources and to identify areas to improve. There are sufficient reading resources overall to provide for the range of interests and attainments of the pupils. The library provides a good resource and the time-table for pupils to select books enables them to gain suitable skills. The selection of books is satisfactory, though needs to be extended as funds allow.

MATHEMATICS

84. Standards in mathematics in the work seen are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Standards in the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6 were above average. When

compared to similar schools, they were well above average. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 were close to average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level in Year 2 was more than in most similar schools. Since the last inspection there has been a substantial improvement in standards, particularly by Year 6. The work seen during the inspection indicates that this upward trend will be continued. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to improve on standards achieved in 2001. Taking into account the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 and in Year 2, this indicates good improvement. Standards are likely to be maintained for the current Year 2.

85. There are a number of reasons for the improvements in standards in Years 3 - 6. The school has successfully implemented the Numeracy Strategy and has prioritised aspects of oral and mental work very well across the school. Most lessons are now planned well and build closely on pupils' prior achievements. These improvements have been further enhanced by the re-organisation of numeracy lessons into specific teaching groups for Years 4, 5 and 6. These changes have been particularly effective in driving up standards. The quality of teaching in these lessons is very good. The subject leader, who is new to the role, demonstrates an excellent model of teaching. An instance of successful teaching was seen where pupils were guided through difficult mathematical ideas to acquire ways to subtract large numbers. The pupils were encouraged to use their mental agility to take away numbers in hundreds and thousands using different recording methods. Pupils, who have reached this stage with ease, were able to handle 6 or 7 digit numbers – millions. This high level of understanding is a result of the step-by-step teaching emphasising place value. However, some pace of learning has been lost in Years 2 and 3 where the time spent on number work has narrowed pupils' experience of shape, space and measures. As a result, these pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of standard units of measurement, such as centimetres, metres, and litres. This gap has been recognised by the current teacher who has already taken some action to meet this need.
86. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In Year 1 the rate of achievement is faster than that of Year 2 because lively teaching in Year 1 catches pupils' interest and enjoyment. Staffing difficulties in Year 2 have adversely contributed to pupils' overall achievement but most pupils have continued to make satisfactory progress over this period of disruption. In the same year group, teachers have planned different or slightly more challenging activities for higher achievers but the level of challenge is not high enough. This is partly because the school has not yet developed procedures which use assessment information to good effect. As a result teachers in Year 2 have not been aware of the skills and understanding that pupils might gain.
87. Pupils achieve well in Year 3-6. Progress is good in Years 4, 5 and 6 because teachers have very high expectations. These are realised by clear incremental teaching steps devised to reach higher levels. Higher achieving pupils tackle mathematical ideas, problem-solving and algebraic formulae systematically. Pupils are expected to use their skills to think through methods. Teachers explain the purpose of recording and annotating their work so that misconceptions can be tracked back and remedied. This rigorous teaching, combined with mathematical games keenly aligned to learning intentions, is accelerating pupils' achievement and enjoyment. At the end of a Year 5 lesson, one pupil led a pupils' 'Tables Orchestra' conducting with great zest and pace. Nine and four times tables were practised with delight. By Year 6, two thirds of pupils have very good knowledge of large numbers, decimals to 3 places (thousandths) and of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.
88. Pupils with special educational needs often make a rate of progress better than that of other pupils in their basic number skills. This is because teachers plan carefully graded activities. Teaching assistants provide good support and care. They are well briefed about expected learning and closely follow teaching plans. This was seen during a Year 2 lesson where pupils were supported to count in twos and threes using a number line by looping across numbers correctly. This approach enables pupils to achieve at least as well as other pupils and sometimes better. No significant differences between boys and girls were seen during the inspection.
89. Pupils who have English as an additional language make similar progress to that of other pupils in

the school. This is because teachers are aware that pupils may have additional misunderstandings because of the mathematical terms used. Consequently, teachers keep a careful check on pupils' progress even when pupils' language skills are well beyond the early stages of English. In one notable example in Year 4, the teacher was aware that a pupil had been taught a different way in another country to subtract hundreds, tens and units. The pupil was asked to show her method to the class. This was a successful learning exchange for everyone.

90. One notable strength of the teaching of mathematics is the way in which teachers start each lesson with mental arithmetic. This part of the lesson steps up the level of mental challenge very well. It is then linked through into the different activities so those pupils can see mathematical strategies to tackle calculations and problem-solving. As a result, pupils see the connections between practice and use of skills such as doubling and rounding up and down. Teachers use resources well. There are exceptions to this in Year 2 where pupils find it difficult to use number fans to place tens and unit numbers in the correct order. Most teachers have very good subject knowledge and ensure that lessons have a good pace. Any factors that may inhibit learning are managed as well as possible so that each pupil moves on. This drive to raise pupils' achievement is a key focus of the school and is supported well by the subject co-ordinator. This is lifting standards.
91. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and target setting are not always in line with the pupils' actual achievement. This is the case from Year 2 to Year 6. Measures to adjust these anomalies would provide teachers with a sharper picture of each pupil's capabilities and ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. There are some weaknesses in the quality of marking, some of which contribute little to pupils' understanding. In the good examples seen in Year 4, pupils were encouraged to think about their work and evaluate it by comparing it to the learning intentions at the beginning of the lesson. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in using and applying mathematics across other subjects. In an example of this, Year 6 pupils used a scatter graph in their science activity, enabling greater analytical understanding of the phenomena in the world around them.

SCIENCE

92. Standards of work seen by Year 2 are in line with the national average. This is an improvement on teacher assessments for 2001 where the school's performance was below the national average, although compared with similar schools the school's performance was close to the national average. This maintains the position of the last report which stated that standards were broadly average.
93. Standards of work seen by Year 6 are above the national average. This is an improvement on the National Curriculum tests for 2001 which were below the national average at Level 5 and well below the average at Level 4. However, compared with similar schools, standards in 2001 were close to the national average. From 1997 to 2000, the school was in line with the national average. The last report stated that standards in science were average.
94. Pupils in Year 1 have satisfactory knowledge of the body and can label the main parts correctly. They have investigated loud noises, such as those from aeroplanes and radios, and tested them with ear defenders using satisfactory skills. They have also investigated shiny and dull materials to gain a satisfactory understanding of their effect on light. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory understanding of forces, and have experimented with surfaces to find out which are the best to travel on. They know that pushing and pulling exert forces. These pupils also know the importance of keeping fit and having a healthy diet.
95. Year 3 pupils have the skills to undertake experiments on electrical circuits, identifying which materials are good conductors and what it is dangerous to do. They also know that plants need light and have experimented with plants in the sun, in shade and in darkness. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have recorded relevant observations about bones and understand their main functions. They have investigated materials to see which hold more water. They demonstrate good developing

investigational skills. They know the properties of solids and liquids. Year 6 pupils have the skills to investigate how bacteria multiply and spread. They have also carried out fair tests to compare the solubility of two well-known washing powder tablets.

96. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers use questions effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and to probe their understanding. They are also active in their approach. For instance, in one good lesson with Year 1, the teacher compared the growth of pupils from birth to the present day. She invited a mother and her three-week old baby, whose sister was in the class, in order to make comparisons between the baby and themselves. In another good lesson, Year 2 pupils used the school grounds to look for and compare plants, animals and mini-beasts. Clear objectives were set and pupils were well managed and supported.

97. On a few occasions, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge. Their probing questioning enables them to elicit very good answers from the pupils. In a very good lesson observed with Years 4 and 5, the pupils were able to brainstorm on their knowledge of forces. The pace was very good and the pupils worked well together which had a good effect on their learning. The teacher was very competent and the pupils had a very good attitude and were well behaved. By undertaking a fair test, pupils understood which was the better surface for moving things across and were able to give some good answers. In a very good lesson on light, pupils in Years 5 and 6 understood why light was needed in order to see things. Pupils in four different groups performed four different tasks. They were keen to succeed and carried out their work well within the groups. This very good teaching matched the work and expectations closely to pupils' needs and ensured they all made good progress. The literacy skills of speaking were developed when pupils were selected to talk to the class about their observations. Some pupils are very articulate. Numeracy skills were noted in two lessons where pupils drew bar charts and scatter graphs of their investigations. There is very good support in science for pupils with special education needs and for pupils who have English as an additional language. They are integrated well into the lessons. In the lessons observed there was at least one teacher's assistant or parent present but more often two or three.
98. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, the deputy head, who is qualified in science. Unfortunately, he was absent during the inspection. There is an agreed policy for the subject and a nationally published scheme of work is used effectively. Resources are adequate but more resources are required to meet the specific needs of some topics. Marking of work is of variable quality, ranging from a few ticks to good examples where useful comments extend pupils' learning. The school has identified the more able pupils and needs to continue to ensure work is appropriately targeted for them. Further work needs to be done on assessment and monitoring. Currently, assessment is under-used and not fully effective.

ART AND DESIGN

99. In Years 1 and 2 standards are average. They make satisfactory progress. There is no subject co-ordinator currently and this has resulted in limited developments in art and design since the previous inspection. Little work was evident in the school and only one lesson was observed because no others were planned during the inspection days. However, pupils' skills seen through other subjects such as design and technology indicate that standards of achievement are close to those typical of most pupils for their age. This is a similar picture of standards of achievement to that of the previous inspection.
100. In infant classes, pupils have a broad range of media to explore, particularly in Year 1. Their work shows keen observation and a range of satisfactory skills. Pupils' portraits using natural materials were seen in a collection of pupils' work. Year 1 teaching makes very good links with traditional arts such as oral story telling. Pupils have made beautifully expressive clay figures in the style of the artist Helen Cordero. The use of traditional blues, creams and terracotta colours shows good teaching guidance enabling pupils to create three-dimensional stylistic effects. Infant pupils show satisfactory achievement overall.
101. The school has adopted the national guidelines for art and design. This is planned to develop knowledge and skills progressively across the year groups. Evidence from Year 6 pupils shows that their skills are satisfactory overall with a proportion of pupils showing very good use of charcoal and chalk. A small group of pupils modelled sculptures in the style of Henry Moore with fluidity and movement in their interpretation. Adults and pupils alike value this link with such an important artist who was born in the area. Pupils particularly like the piece of sculpture in the school grounds constructed with the help of a local sculptor. Pupils who are lower achievers in art and design are offered activities to develop their observational drawings or understanding that promote their progress well. The single example of teaching seen in Year 6 was good. Pupils were encouraged to explore and choose activities suited to their talents. Some pupils made wire frames expressing movement of human figures very well. They showed sensitive handling of the materials beyond that normally seen in Year 6. There was little evidence to show how these skills

progress across Years 3-6 and across the aspects of the art and design curriculum. However, pupils' design skills, seen in other subjects, are good.

102. Despite the limited evidence seen during the inspection, pupils in both the infant and junior classes progress appropriately and some pupils have talents that could be further nurtured. The value placed on pupils' work displayed in Year 1 serves as an example of good practice that might help develop the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards across the school are above those seen in most primary schools. One of the main reasons for the good improvement since the previous inspection is the school's implementation of the nationally recommended programmes of planned activities. This has helped teachers to raise the standard of pupils' work by providing a challenging range of activities and experiences so that pupils can progressively build up skills.
104. In the infant classes, pupils learn skills well. Skills include handling material, simple designing alongside cutting and pasting accurately and neatly. These important skills are taught particularly well in Year 1. In a lesson planned to make three simple hinges for windows and doors, the teacher guided pupils to generate design details very well. Designs were based on those seen during a walk around the local area. In the lesson, pupils were encouraged to make choices, and add their own flavour to simple paper designs. The teacher built on pupils' ideas by celebrating creative moments with them all. The colour and shapes of roof patterns were discussed and imaginative or real features were added. These included a rabbit flap and a buzzer near the ground on the front door for a dog to request entry. Pupils demonstrated a good level of achievement, often pausing to explain and reflect on their ideas with others.
105. This level of achievement continues into the juniors and is enriched outside school time. In a gardening club, pupils' helped to arrange flower baskets and containers outside the school. Skills achieved earlier were refined in a design and technology curriculum that offers good coverage of all the main elements of the subject. For example, as Year 4 pupils designed purses, they researched materials and examined the construction and functional needs. After making some well-designed purses, pupils evaluated them. Much worthwhile discussion ensued in the analysis pupils made of products in the pre- and post-design stages. Self-evaluation of work is a key strand in the subject that runs throughout the school.
106. Teaching is good. A key strength is the way that teachers enable pupils to draw out ideas, modify them in the light of functionality and, above all, value pupils' creativity. Teaching assistants are well aware of the learning intentions in lessons and provide good support for pupils who need encouragement or help with skills such as cutting. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported. Higher achieving pupils are well catered for. Pupils for whom English is an additional language enjoy the hands-on activities very much and achieve as well as other pupils.
107. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator has ensured that skills and knowledge are mapped out across the school in a coherent and effective way. The time allocated to this subject causes some organisational problems because the length of teaching sessions is too short in Years 3-6. The school has addressed previous issues well. Plans to assess pupils' work to provide on-going information are rightly noted as a priority.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards in the work seen are above those in most schools by Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. By Year 2 standards are average and maintain the position at the time of the last inspection. The school has made improvements in the planning for the subject. The nationally recommended guidelines are in place to support teachers' planning. This ensures

that pupils' skills and knowledge are progressively developed appropriately across the school.

109. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. In Year 2, pupils know about island features and have linked this with a Katie Morag story about an island. They have composed rules for the island and compared them with rules elsewhere. This is a fine example of a good link with pupils' personal education. Pupils gained a satisfactory understanding of the features of this island, benefiting particularly from their own experiences on holiday. Links with pupils' experiences in other countries have been used well by the school. Teachers seize opportunities for pupils to take 'Barnaby Bear' on their travels. Parents take photos of Barnaby and send postcards from different countries. These rich opportunities provide strong links with pupils' work in school and contribute well to their wider knowledge of the world. Barnaby's passport is stamped appropriately and children take great pleasure in seeing him in different countries such as Cambodia and Australia. The school also makes very good use of its immediate surroundings. The small courtyard garden and playground features contribute well to pupils' understanding and gives them a strong message about respect and care for the environment. It enables pupils to make comparisons between different parts of Harpenden. As a result, pupils can express their opinions about the effects of litter and pollution on the land. As one Year 4 boy explained, 'The smoke from bonfires causes pollution and it affects the ozone layer.' A good example of a link between geography and design and technology in Year 1 occurred when pupils observed features of streets and houses close to the school and then used them well in their own house designs.
110. By the age of 11 pupils demonstrate good standards and achievement. They have carried out a search on the Internet to research for information, showing good skills. Purposeful activities enable pupils to direct their thoughts towards an audience for a planned presentation about their group focus on tourism, wild animals, or rocks. Pupils use observational drawings and identification of different kinds of rocks with good understanding. They have also examined the impact of tourists on ski resorts. Pupils make well-informed judgements, express clear views and are able to use their enquiries to form opinions and hypothesise. Where teachers plan links to other subjects and extend pupils' thinking, expectations are high. Pupils achieve more because they use key skills that are valuable for their future learning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their skills so that they make at least good progress in the subject. Other pupils are very helpful in ensuring that everyone is supported and that resources are shared fairly.
111. The good quality of teaching seen in Year 6 and the enthusiasm for the subject have helped to lift standards. Pupils have a good understanding of geography. They demonstrate a keen interest in absorbing facts and make perceptive observations about the origins of rock formation in the Arizona landscape.
112. There is no subject co-ordinator for geography. Since the previous inspection, there has been revision of the curricular plans and some updating of resources.

HISTORY

113. It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff. This evidence indicates that standards meet the expectation by Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement on the last inspection when attainment was judged to be below national expectations in both years.
114. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate an awareness of differences between past and present. For example, they studied pictures of houses from Roman, Tudor, Victorian and modern times. They had sequenced household objects from oldest to newest. By Year 2, pupils were able to talk about Guy Fawkes and Samuel Pepys. They were currently studying Florence Nightingale and, in one lesson observed, some pupils were able to give correct answers orally to seven questions.
115. Pupils in Year 3 had undertaken work on Sutton Hoo as part of their study of the Anglo Saxons. They could locate it on a time line and were able to relate how the Anglo Saxons settled in England. Archaeological evidence was also examined. Year 4 pupils had studied the Tudors and

the problems that Henry VIII had to solve, in particular those concerning his marriages. They could elaborate on the good and bad points of his divorce. Year 5 pupils know and understand the improvements made as a result of inventions during the Victorian era. They had spent a day dressed as Victorian children in St Albans and, from their writing, they understood the harshness of schooling in those days. Much research had been done by Year 6 pupils on life since 1940. There was some perceptive work from pupils who wrote letters as West Indian children arriving in England in the 1960s and the less than good welcome they received.

116. The teaching seen was effective, particularly in Year 5, where it was very good. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and was able to inspire the pupils about rationing during and after World War II and how it affected people's lives. Ration books and identity cards were shown to the pupils who recognised how scarce some foods had been. The pupils were motivated by the teaching which had a definite impact on their learning.
117. The history co-ordinator has been in post since September 2001. She took it upon herself to interview some pupils throughout the school and gave results to individual teachers to help improve teaching and learning. A well-known national scheme of work is used in the school which enables the teachers to plan effectively. Worthwhile visits are made; for example, pupils in Year 1 went to a toy museum, Year 3 to Verulamium and Year 5 to St Albans for a Victorian Day. However, assessment and monitoring of the subject are under-developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. Standards meet the expectations of the National Curriculum by Years 2 and 6, although this is still a developing subject and pupils' skills are becoming established. The quality of teaching and learning is also satisfactory. A few pupils have good understanding and skills, gained through a combination of home support, interest and increasingly good opportunities in the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were found to be below average. The children's level of achievement is satisfactory, and during some tasks pupils are making good progress. Progress is satisfactory overall at this stage of ICT development in the school. Pupils who have special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve in line with their peers. The school has taken several decisions recently to improve facilities and standards and this is beginning to have the desired effect. For example, a central computer suite now offers good access and facilities so that a class or group may work together. Also, the headteacher as subject co-ordinator is providing clear educational direction and staff training is leading to increased confidence. All classes are time-tabled for at least one session a week, which ensures satisfactory subject coverage, and frequent further group-work takes place on tasks that link to other subjects. A few teachers have good ICT knowledge, and this is shared readily amongst the staff.
119. Children in the infant classes are making satisfactory progress and gaining new skills through the choice of relevant tasks. For example, children have used simple programs to improve the skill of controlling the mouse. In Year 2, children have used a program to draw and paint a design based on the style of Mondrian, showing competent skills and ideas. Most children have the skills to draw horizontal and vertical lines, to erase and to fill the created blocks using the 'flood' command. The high attaining pupils created a more sophisticated design, showing a good feel for the potential of the program. By Year 2, children have satisfactory word processing skills, and the early skills to enter information and to save their work. The children respond well to the challenge and interest of their tasks, supported by the teachers and classroom assistants. The recent introduction of the computer suite which complements the computers in classrooms is making a good impact on the quality of work and is helping to raise standards. The technology is beginning to be a natural part of pupils' learning.
120. The teachers manage pupils well in the suite. In a lesson with pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, the teacher demonstrated good planning by having one task on spreadsheets for pupils at the computers and a related task for others at the nearby tables. She was then able to focus most time on directly teaching the skills of spreadsheet use to pupils at the computers, who

enjoyed the challenge of deciphering her message. This high attaining group of pupils made rapid progress, demonstrating good understanding and generally good keyboard, editing and mouse skills. Several pupils tend to poke the keys, rather than use a good key-stroke style. One group of pupils in Year 6 accessed the Internet during a science lesson to find information on whether light travels in straight lines. They demonstrated satisfactory skills in locating pages on the Internet and printing them to use in their investigations. By the time they reach Year 6 children's understanding and skills meet the expectation in the skills and understanding of ICT. The teachers' knowledge and confidence is enabling them to tackle worthwhile tasks and to extend their skills.

121. The school is beginning to link computer use to other subjects so that children see a relevance and purpose to their ICT work in other subjects. This application of skills was shown, for example, when pupils logged onto the Internet to collect information. The school is successful in extending the work of higher attaining children in the junior classes, and has made useful links with a local secondary school. A computer club is planned to meet pupils' wider interests. Children also have some access to other equipment such as a camera, tape recorder and electronic keyboard to support work in other subjects.
122. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator, who works hard to support colleagues and to improve the use of ICT facilities. This, and the training, have helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge considerably since the previous inspection. The school meets statutory requirements for the subject and this is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Significant improvements in resourcing have been made since the previous inspection. The school is aware of the need to improve the assessment procedures for ICT and to include the use of simulations and the sensing of physical data in planned tasks. Careful financial planning has ensured that the school has made good recent progress, and subject development is set to continue in order to raise standards further.

MUSIC

123. Pupils throughout the school obtain the standards expected for their age. This is an improvement on the last inspection report where attainment was judged to be below national expectations. The main reason for the improvement is that the school employs two specialist teachers, one from the local education authority who teaches all classes for one day, and one from a local Beacon school who teaches the infants for half a day.
124. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall, and is sometimes very good. It is very good in the infant classes. In one lesson with Year 2, the pupils used ostinatos, a ground bass rhythm, when singing the song 'The sailor went to sea, sea, sea' and tapped their tambourines correctly. Maracas and claves were also used by the majority of pupils correctly. Year 1 pupils sang 'Don't drop litter' to the tune of 'Ten green bottles' and at the same time were able to clap, correctly, on certain words such as 'litter' and 'bin'. The teacher had supplied small cardboard boxes and plastic bottles for percussion which the pupils used at the correct time and showed good timbre-tone quality.
125. The teaching seen in Years 3, 5 and 6 was good. Pupils had started to practise for an end of term show and sang in unison, "This is the age of technology". They were able to develop the rhythm and pulse. If the teacher was dissatisfied she made the pupils repeat the words or actions. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6 moved confidently around the hall making good actions to the music. They improvised melodic and rhythmic phrases within a group performance.
126. Although there is a full-time teacher in the school who co-ordinates music, the school is fortunate in having two music specialists. The attitude and behaviour of the pupils is good and this has an impact on their learning and understanding and enjoyment of music. The school is adequately resourced. There is a clear policy for the subject. There is a choir and a recorder group. Neither of these was observed during the inspection. Although singing and performing with instruments were observed, it was not possible to witness pupils composing music although composition is

part of the music curriculum. Teachers work to targets in all the schemes of work. Assessment needs further development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Standards in physical education in the lessons observed meet the expectation by Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, teachers expect suitable warm-up activities such as moving freely then freezing. The majority of pupils in Years 1 and 2 display a developing awareness of space while exploring different ways of travelling. Most pupils move freely with satisfactory co-ordination but a few lack confidence in their movements. In Year 1, pupils are orderly in collecting mats. Most pupils are able to hold a balance on the mat when supported on a large part of their body, such as a side. The teacher's clear expectations and good evaluation encouraged pupils to try hard to improve. By Year 2 most pupils demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination; for example, in throwing a bean-bag and catching it with two hands. They are less adept at catching it with one hand. The high attaining pupils controlled the strength of the throw well and anticipated the movement. The teacher kept the pace and variety of tasks going so that pupils were active and had several similar skills to learn, promoting good reinforcement. In a more challenging task most pupils made a reasonable attempt at performing a turning jump although they found the combined movements difficult. In a further task most pupils showed satisfactory control for their age in throwing and catching a ball. A few higher attaining pupils have good agility and control of their bodies.
128. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 enjoyed the warm-up session, those in Year 6 receiving a particularly good lead from the class teacher. The pupils pay good attention to the teachers so that they are ready to carry out the tasks. In a lesson on carnival dance for Years 4 and 5, the teacher gave clear instructions for a 'limbo' start position and 'limbo travel'. Pupils demonstrated satisfactory skill in these new movements, and were keen to show how they could travel under a pole. In a gymnastics lesson for Years 5 and 6 pupils enjoyed forming letter shapes, such as N M A D H, with a partner. Several pairs produced attractive and imaginative shapes. The class teacher set very high expectations so that pupils tried hard to create new forms, and the quality of their learning was very good in the poise and control they showed. In a further task, pupils practised forward rolls, showing satisfactory skills. The pupils then negotiated very well, showing the strength of their personal development, in deciding and developing a group sequence which, after practice, they performed to the class. The teacher's very good encouragement for quality moves led the pupils to create several good sequences, particularly the higher attaining pupils. The pupils demonstrated satisfactory skill and good attitudes in the tasks.
129. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. Teachers make the learning intentions clear and choose challenging tasks. Their good relationships with the pupils encourages them to work hard, and the good practice of inviting pupils to demonstrate and evaluate their work helps to raise standards. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make effective interventions as the pupils are working, to encourage and help them improve. The teachers are suitably aware of health and safety issues. Pupils are well motivated and show good levels of concentration. They keep on task well, developing individual skills or group strategies. They learn to control their body in gymnastics, dance and games. Most use equipment with care and respect.
130. Most pupils enjoy physical activities and work hard. Their generally good behaviour enhances the quality of their learning, and this enables them to make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress both in lessons and over time. There is no significant gender difference in pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make sound progress. Most pupils demonstrate good standards of behaviour. Those who need constant attention find it difficult to sustain concentration.
131. The school offers a good range of experience in physical education and the subject meets statutory requirements. Resources are satisfactory and the well-appointed hall makes a good contribution to pupils' physical development. The co-ordinator was absent from the school during the inspection. The assessment of pupils' skills is at an early stage. The headteacher has

monitored lessons as part of the review of the subject following the last inspection, showing good attention to raising standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. Standards for pupils at both Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. The last report stated that standards were in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Observation of pupils' work and lesson observations show that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily over time.
133. Pupils in Year 1 study Christianity and other religions. For example, in Judaism, they recall the harvest festival of Sukkoth and Hanukkah, the festival of light. In a Year 2 class, the pupils learnt about prayer and why Christians pray, and demonstrated satisfactory understanding.
134. Year 3 pupils were able to link Muslim beliefs to their own when they compared the five Pillars of Wisdom with five special rules - belief, intention, generosity, ambition and hope. All classes study Christianity but Years 4 and 5 study Sikhism as well and Year 6, Buddhism. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have the understanding to compare Christian and Sikh vocabulary and link the five symbols to Christian symbols. They recognise the words and feelings that Christians associate with the Last Supper. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, pupils had to explain the significance of Christian ideas of God for members of their community. Pupils wrote and explained about the Christian God and Allah. One pupil wrote and shared with the class that 'God was the creator of the world; can be in any shape or form whose love never ends; he is everywhere; three persons in one; impregnable; loves us all '.
135. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory, enabling them to explain and discuss events and ideas. Sometimes teachers demonstrated good knowledge. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were generally at least good. Pupils are expected to think for themselves and some of the answers given by Year 6 pupils about God were well thought out. In several lessons, the teachers' probing questions helped pupils to explain their ideas and draw on their existing knowledge. In this way, lessons contribute to the development of speaking skills. Pupils participate enthusiastically and contribute to discussion. Most lessons contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development, as do the themes in assembly, where during the week of inspection the theme was forgiveness.
136. The subject co-ordinator has been in post since September 2001 and demonstrates a good understanding of the role and ensures the planning corresponds to the locally agreed syllabus. Worthwhile and carefully planned visits are made to churches, mosques, temples and monasteries. For example, Year 3 visit the Watford Mosque, Year 4, the local church, St Alban's Cathedral and a Sikh temple in Watford, and Year 6 visit a Buddhist monastery. Monitoring and assessment in the subject have yet to be developed.