

INSPECTION REPORT

NASCOT WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117311

Headteacher: Ruth M East

Reporting inspector: David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 15 - 18 October 2001

Inspection number: 195629

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Nascot Wood Road Watford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD17 4YS
Telephone number:	01923 238784
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lyn Trodd
Date of previous inspection:	16/03/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English Geography History	Attitudes, values and personal development
3349	Jacqui Ikin	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 242 pupils on roll, aged from seven to 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average; and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well below the national average. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. Twenty eight pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), which represents a higher proportion than is present in most schools. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in pupils' standards but most are achieving the level expected for pupils at the age of seven, including in English, mathematics and science.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which benefits from outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is mainly good. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in nearly all subjects and achieve standards which are above those normally expected in Year 6. Pupils' personal development is catered for very well, and their attitudes and behaviour are a credit to the school. There are no marked weaknesses in this effective school. However, there is scope to raise the satisfactory standards achieved in art and design and in information and communication technology (ICT) to match the good standards achieved in all other subjects. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has excellent leadership and management skills, the governors are effective, and co-ordinators carry out their roles well.
- The quality of teaching is mainly good and is sometimes very good or excellent.
- Pupils make good progress and demonstrate above average standards in nearly all subjects, including in English, mathematics and science.
- The school caters well for pupils with special educational needs and for those with EAL.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are all very good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Very good links are established with parents, and they hold the school in high regard.
- The school is a caring community, where pupils' welfare is a high priority.

What could be improved

- The satisfactory standards already achieved in ICT and art and design could be raised to match pupils' good standards in all other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has rectified the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, and is now a better school. Curriculum planning has improved and there are good procedures for monitoring pupils' standards and progress. The school development plan is properly costed, has realistic time scales and is a more effective management tool. Teachers now make good use of their day-to-day assessments, including marking, to inform their planning; and staff have increased their confidence and competence in teaching

gymnastics. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory in the last inspection to mainly good in the current inspection, and pupils are making better overall progress in their learning.

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	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	A	C	B	C	

The table shows the results of the statutory tests in 2000 were above the national average in English and science and were in line with the results of similar schools. In mathematics, the 2000 results were well above both the national average and the average results of similar schools. At the time of the inspection, there were no national averages to compare with the school's 2001 results. However, they are a significant improvement on the school's 2000 results in English and science, and are a little higher in mathematics.

Inspection findings confirm that most pupils demonstrate standards which are above those normally expected in Year 6 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They also achieve well and reach above average standards in Year 6 in all other subjects, with the exception of art and design and ICT where standards are average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form very constructive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks and respect each other's opinions. They respond positively to opportunities they are given to take responsibility and to show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to make mainly good progress in their learning, across the school. The most effective teaching is in Year 6, where both classes benefit from teaching which is often of a very high quality. Teachers plan their lessons well, and make effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Lessons are characterised by very positive relationships between pupils and teachers, clear explanations of tasks, effective use of questions to probe pupils' understanding and good use of the time available. The teaching generally motivates pupils very strongly and they try hard to meet their teachers' high expectations by concentrating well and persevering with their tasks.

The quality of teaching is good, overall, in English, mathematics, science, geography, music, physical education and religious education. While insufficient lessons were observed to judge the teaching in art and design, design and technology, ICT and history, evidence from pupils' work shows it enables them to make good progress in their learning in design and technology and history, and satisfactory progress, overall, in ICT and art and design.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a rich and varied range of worthwhile activities, and meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for these pupils, and teachers are sensitive to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community, where pupils' welfare is a high priority. Teachers know their pupils well and assess their needs skilfully.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has excellent leadership and management skills and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. Her effective analytical and communication skills, together with her high expectations, contribute very significantly to the school's success. She delegates responsibility wisely, and the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators fulfil their roles well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from an effective governing body. Governors regularly visit the school to observe it in operation, are well informed and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They are influential in shaping the school's work and have a good awareness of its performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance rigorously. The headteacher uses a good range of effective monitoring strategies, including lesson observations, the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' completed work, and the careful analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results. Co-ordinators check pupils' standards and the quality of learning in their subjects, and have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Governors monitor the school's performance well, including through regular visits and careful analysis of test results.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed thoroughly and financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. Overall, the school makes good use of its resources.

The school applies the principles of best value effectively when using its financial resources. There are sufficient teachers and they have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Accommodation is good and the school is generally well resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vast majority of parents believe the school is well led and managed. • The vast majority of parents believe the school encourages high standards of behaviour. • The vast majority of parents believe that staff have high expectations. • The vast majority of parents find the staff easy to talk to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents would like more extra-curricular activities. • Some parents would like more information on their children's progress. • Some parents would like there to be more, and some less, homework.

Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views about the school. However, they do not provide evidence to justify the need for improvements suggested by some parents. The school offers a sound range of extra-curricular activities and also strongly promotes local sporting and musical opportunities. The school provides detailed information on children's progress, including comparative data on standards, both in consultations and in the written reports. Children are set an appropriate amount of homework, and it makes a valuable contribution to their learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in pupils' standards but most are achieving the level expected nationally for pupils at the age of seven, including in English, mathematics and science.
2. The school's results in the statutory assessment tests in 2000 were above the national average in English and science and were in line with the average results of similar schools. In mathematics, the 2000 results were well above both the national average and the average results of similar schools. At the time of the inspection, there were no national averages to compare with the school's 2001 results. However, they are a significant improvement on the results in 2000 in English and science, and are a little higher in mathematics. The overall trend in the school's results has risen from 1996 to 2000, in line with the national trend. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for its results and is successful in meeting these targets.
3. Inspection findings confirm that most pupils demonstrate attainment which is above the expected standard in Year 6 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and show there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points at the school in the core subjects, and their overall progress in learning is good. This is a direct result of the effective teaching pupils receive.
4. In English, most Year 6 pupils are articulate, express their views clearly and succinctly, give reasoned explanations and use well chosen words whether engaged in general discussion or talking about very specific subject content. Pupils are good listeners. They value and respect others' ideas and are able to construct and uphold logical arguments, for example, when taking sides in a debate about a proposal for a new 'park and ride' scheme in Bushey. Most Year 6 pupils read well. They are also able to bring a high level of critical appreciation to what they read in class, responding in a mature way to ideas, characters and the deeper meanings in the texts. Pupils' writing skills are mainly good. The best writing is of a very high standard, with exceptionally good control of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and with interesting content which captures the reader's interest. When writing poetry, pupils chose their words for the precision, economy and impact, for example, when creating their own versions of 'Things I have loved' after discussing the poem by Rupert Brooke. Most Year 6 pupils spell well for their age and have fluent and legible handwriting.
5. In mathematics, pupils usually have good numeracy skills, can accurately describe the mental strategies they use to answer number problems and understand there are a variety of ways of reaching the correct answer. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the equivalence between fractions, percentages and decimals, and their knowledge of space, shape and measures is above average. In science, Year 6 pupils demonstrate effective investigation skills as well as good knowledge and understanding in the subject. They make good progress, for example, when undertaking experiments to discover how well different materials conduct heat, and create well organised tables to show their results. They have a good understanding

- of scientific vocabulary, and achieve well when discovering the conditions which can cause evaporation and condensation.
6. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good overall progress in their learning, including in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve good results in relation to their starting points in the national tests at the age of 11. Indeed, many attain the standards expected of pupils of their age. In the case of pupils with EAL, most attain the standards expected at the age of 11, and some are amongst the highest achievers. The most able pupils, including those identified as 'gifted and talented' make mainly good progress throughout their time in the school. In Year 6, where pupils are taught in sets for English and mathematics, they are given particularly challenging work and achieve very well in lessons.
 7. In design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education, pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points at the school, and demonstrate standards which are above those normally expected in Year 6. This is a credit to the school and reflects the good quality of teaching and curriculum planning.
 8. In art and design and ICT standards are in line with those expected nationally in Year 6. There is scope for pupils to make more consistent use of ICT to support their work in other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and science; and pupils' skills in art and design are sometimes underdeveloped due to weaknesses in the implementation of the scheme of work. Nevertheless, pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory, overall, in these subjects. The school's high expectations for pupils' standards mean that art and design and ICT have already been identified as subjects for attention in the development plan. As a consequence, it is in a good position to raise the sound standards in these subjects to match the good standards otherwise achieved across the curriculum.
 9. Only in art and design are pupils' achievements lower than those found when the school was last inspected, in 1997. In English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education, pupils' achievements have improved, while their progress in all subjects has been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL were making satisfactory progress in 1997, but improvements in the quality of teaching now enables these pupils to make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils of all ages speak highly of their school and of the staff. They enthuse about the lessons in most subjects, and they enjoy the extra-curricular and enrichment activities provided for them. In particular, they welcome: the chances they are given to have a say in the school's development, for example through the school council; the fact that they know how well they are doing in their work - and how to improve; chances to work independently in class and on research projects at home; the opportunities they are given to use their own ideas and their own initiative, for example by using 'golden time' to plan fund-raising activities for charities; and, not least, being treated as responsible citizens capable of doing meaningful jobs for the school, for example by manning the library, organising playground activities, looking after visitors and helping in the dining-room at lunch-time.

11. In almost every lesson, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They are genuinely interested in the discussions that take place in class, and they concentrate well. They are very keen to answer questions, and they feel confident enough in themselves to raise questions or comments of their own. When required to work independently, they apply themselves conscientiously to their tasks, whether working on their own or in groups. They make ready use of the resources available to them, sharing equipment, books and other materials agreeably. When engaged in collaborative work, they value others' ideas and build on them. They are warm, encouraging and completely natural in the support they extend to pupils with special educational needs, to pupils with EAL, and to any pupil who, for whatever reason, may be feeling momentarily ill or unhappy. Whatever their ability, pupils in most lessons strive to use their individual talents well, to apply what they have already learned, and to produce their best effort.

12. With very rare exceptions, pupils are consistently very polite, helpful, friendly and outgoing. They establish trusting relationships with one another, with their teachers and with other adults in the school. They observe the social conventions of turn-taking very well, for example when queuing for lunch or when answering questions during discussions. Pupils are guided by a strong moral code acquired from home and from their schooling. They are very clear about the school aims, which they helped to draw up, and they respond very well to the school's provision for their moral and social development, for example through religious education and through personal, social and health education sessions. They have learned to accommodate 'other' viewpoints, to respect other faiths, and to observe everyone's need for safety and for tolerance. They understand very well what constitutes right and wrong behaviour, both within, and beyond, the school environment. Behaviour is very good, whether in lessons, in the dining-hall or in the playground. Very occasionally, relatively minor incidents identified as 'bullying' or of a racist nature are observed. These are duly recorded, as is required, in the school's incident book, and are dealt with very quickly and effectively. Support for one another, team effort, pride in the school and the appreciation of others' needs and talents are the norm.

13. Pupils of all ages undertake routine duties and responsibilities willingly and reliably within their classes. They rise well to the challenge of leadership roles, for example as representatives on the school council. Older pupils assume responsibilities within the wider school, for example by setting up the hall for assemblies, organising resources in the school library and generally helping younger pupils in the dining-hall and in the playground. They delight in seeing younger pupils enjoy themselves as a result of their efforts, and they ensure that all pupils feel secure and included. As a result of pupils' efforts, just as much as those of staff, pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into every aspect of school life and are valued members of the school community. Caring attitudes of the kind already described are also extended by pupils to those in need outside the school. Pupils work enthusiastically to raise funds for various local, national and international charities. At the time of the inspection, for example, they were busy organising a raffle and subsequent auction of bottled water to support the charity 'Water Aid'. They have ongoing links with the elderly in the local area, and they speak with pleasure of their visits to entertain them in various ways or to present them with gifts at appropriate times in the year. Even in their work, pupils demonstrate great sensitivity and care for others. In history, for example, pupils in Year 5 write with empathy about the appalling conditions at sea for sailors in Tudor times, while pupils in an English lesson in Year 6 are visibly moved by the death of a character –

Spit Nolan – who dies when his trolley collides with a coach during a dramatic race with a rival trolley-owner.

14. Attendance at the school is very good and there are no unauthorised absences. Registration procedures fully meet statutory requirements. The school has allowed pupils to enter school earlier in the mornings and this makes it easier for all pupils to arrive in good time for the start of lessons. School sessions start promptly throughout the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to make mainly good progress in their learning, across the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the teaching and pupils' progress were mainly satisfactory. During the current inspection, nearly half of all lessons seen were good, and about a quarter of all lessons were very good and occasionally excellent. The most effective teaching is in Year 6, where both classes benefit from teaching which is often of a very high quality.
16. Teachers have at least secure knowledge in all subjects and are well informed in most. This is evident in their clear explanations and the way they are able to respond spontaneously to any unforeseen opportunities for learning that arise in the course of lessons. They are rigorous in introducing and reinforcing the correct vocabulary for the subjects they teach. This is particularly marked in literacy and numeracy lessons but also extends across the curriculum. For example, pupils are taught to refer to the viscosity of fluids in their science lessons and to describe music in terms of its tempo and dynamics. Teachers plan their lessons well, and individual lessons form part of a coherent series of lessons which address key elements of pupils' learning. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used effectively across the school.
17. Teachers have high expectations and work very hard to ensure that pupils achieve well. A strong feature of their work is the very positive relationship they develop with the pupils. They take care to encourage and support individuals, and value their opinions. As a consequence of the atmosphere of trust which is created, pupils confidently describe their emotional responses to literature, music or world events and are not afraid to admit, for example, in mathematics, when they do not understand. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils receive fair attention and there is no gender stereotyping. The teaching generally motivates pupils very strongly and they try hard to meet their teachers' expectations by concentrating well and persevering with their tasks.
18. Teachers develop pupils' own knowledge of their learning by explaining the learning objectives of lessons at the outset, and providing opportunities for pupils to discuss their achievements at the end of sessions. They make good use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to assess their future needs. When the school was last inspected, teachers needed to make more effective use of assessment information to inform their learning, but this is no longer the case.
19. Classroom organisation is very good, pupils are very well managed and there are high standards of discipline. This ensures that efficient use is made of the time available. Routines and procedures are well established, and the rules and boundaries to guide pupils' behaviour are consistently applied. Good behaviour is praised so that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Classroom assistants are well briefed by teachers and deployed sensibly. This helps them to provide good support for the pupils. Good use is made of homework to reinforce and extend what is learned in school.
20. The quality of teaching is good, overall, in English, mathematics, science, geography, music, physical education and religious education. While insufficient lessons were observed to judge the quality of teaching in art and design, design and technology, ICT and history, evidence from pupils' work shows it enables them to

make good progress in their learning in design and technology and history, sound progress in ICT and adequate progress, overall, in art and design. However, in art and design, weaknesses in the implementation of the recently introduced scheme of work for the subject mean that pupils' skills are not developed progressively and good standards are not consistently promoted by the teaching. Evidence suggests that some teachers would benefit from in-service training if they are to make better use of the tasks included in the current scheme. In ICT, pupils' progress would be improved further if they were given more regular opportunities to use their ICT skills to support work in other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and to develop their skills in control technology. In addition, the teaching is inhibited by a lack of appropriate software for the school's new laptop computers and resources to help teachers in whole-class teaching.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, is effective. Teachers plan suitably matched work for these pupils in the vast majority of lessons, and additional adult help in the form of learning support staff, classroom assistants or parent helpers is often available, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. The quality of their intervention and support is such that pupils are helped to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and towards the learning objectives defined for specific lessons. Some pupils with special educational needs are occasionally withdrawn from mainstream classes for short sessions when they are taught by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Again, they are taught by a very skilled practitioner who is having a significant impact on their progress, particularly in aspects of literacy. The Tracks phonics programme, for example, is very well taught. A number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 also benefit from effective, additional support with numeracy. In mainstream lessons, support staff are well briefed about what pupils are intended to learn, and they play a vital part in monitoring pupils' progress. They note what pupils have achieved and what they find difficult, and their notes are passed on to staff who then plan future work for the pupils in the light of the progress they make. All class teachers know their pupils well. They take particular care to involve pupils with special educational needs constructively and naturally in all activities, and they value the contributions the pupils make to discussions and to learning in the class as a whole. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are both precise and rigorous, with achievable but challenging targets. Effective use is made of the support teacher provided by the local authority service for pupils with EAL. The teacher monitors the pupils' progress closely and her time is well deployed according to needs. The more able pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented, are usually given suitably challenging work in lessons, particularly when they work in groups, either with their teachers or independently. In literacy and numeracy sets in Year 6, the more able pupils are taught particularly well and make very good progress. Pupils with more specific talents, for example in music and in physical education, benefit not only from generally good class teaching of these subjects, but also from the additional opportunities provided by extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

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

22. The previous inspection report found that curriculum provision was broad and balanced and made relevant to pupils. The school's curriculum plan did not, however, provide enough detail to ensure progression in the development of pupils'

skills and knowledge. There are now schemes of work to support planning for progress, and the current curriculum is well matched to pupils' learning needs. It provides a rich and varied range of worthwhile activities, and meets statutory requirements. A strong feature of the curriculum is the links that are generally made between subjects. This gives relevance to the work that pupils are doing and provides important opportunities for pupils to apply the skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum. However, the school appropriately recognises that more use should be made of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to acquire the key skills of learning, particularly those of working with others, investigation and problem solving.

23. The school is implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and the standards they attain. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, which includes provision for sex and drugs education. The very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils, and the resulting atmosphere of mutual trust and respect ensures that pupils are not afraid to discuss their deepest concerns. As a result, they ask questions and express their opinions openly and honestly. The school's aims emphasise the importance of responsibility, respect and care for others, and this is reflected in the good range of opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in decision-making. For example, there is a school council, and pupils are encouraged to think about how they can improve the school and the local environment. The school provides a sound range of extra-curricular activities, which include after-school clubs on four days as well lunch-time sessions.
24. The school has good procedures to ensure an inclusive curriculum. Suitable learning challenges are set for all pupils to ensure that they make progress and there are good arrangements to ensure that potential barriers to learning are removed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and special educational needs assistants. In addition, the arrangements that the school makes for setting in mathematics and English, ensures that pupils work in small groups, and that teachers can respond flexibly to their individual needs. As a result, many pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their ages. Pupils with EAL are provided with good support from assistants who give help with communication according to their level of language acquisition. As a result, they are able to work at levels commensurate with their abilities, have full access to the curriculum and make good progress. Appropriately challenging work is provided for higher attainers, particularly in Year 6, where breadth and depth is provided by planning work requiring the application of skills in a range of investigations. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Particular attention is paid to the timing of music tuition from visiting specialists to ensure that pupils do not miss key elements of their learning in other subjects.
25. Good use is made of the local community to enrich the curriculum and a wide number of visitors are invited into the school to contribute their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of pupils. For example, the school has good links with Watford Football Club and the Saracens Rugby Club. Pupils also visit places in the local area and further afield in the course of their work and this makes a substantial contribution to the curriculum. For example, pupils in all year groups visit Cuffley camp, where work on team building gives excellent support to the development of the personal and social curriculum. In Years 5 and 6, pupils visit Castle Hedingham and the Isle of Wight, respectively and these experiences are used well to extend

the history and geography curriculum. Business links are well established with significant financial contributions made towards the new library provision. Funds have been earned when the school was used as a film set, and employees from a local company volunteer to help in classes. In addition, pupils learn about the history of printing through its links with a local print works.

26. Links with partner institutions are sound. The school is developing further activities with the adjacent infant school, with plans to have joint training sessions and for staff to discuss common interests in curriculum subjects. Many pupils benefit from attending music workshops at the music centre on site and enjoy performing in concerts. Pupils also have the chance to compete with others at local sports festivals and matches. Students are welcomed on work experience and pupils have the opportunity to see displays and performances at several secondary schools.
27. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school's aims emphasise the all-round development of pupils and this is evident as an integral part of the school's life and ethos. Pupils are encouraged to develop their thinking beyond the here-and-now throughout the curriculum, but particularly in English, religious education and music. For example, in one lesson, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the love and care that members of the Buddhist community put into their temples and religious artefacts. They expressed awe at the beauty and splendour of some of the buildings and statues in the photographs that they saw. Literacy lessons include thoughtfully chosen texts, which result in pupils reflecting on questions about meaning, purpose and the human condition. For example, as a result of discussions about the work of Rupert Brooke, pupils have written sensitively about the wonders of the world about them, and thought about the special things in their own lives. The music curriculum promotes pupils' deeper understanding of how lyrics and melodies, for example, 'Candle in the Wind', are influenced by purpose and the context in which they are written. Assemblies and daily opportunities for prayer are also used well to promote pupils' spiritual development. The themes of assemblies are well planned. In most classes there are regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings and emotions, and to discuss their thoughts as a part of the school's personal and social development curriculum.
28. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong, which is firmly rooted in the positive attitudes towards self and others that the school promotes. They are encouraged to apply these principles in a range of situations, for example, in thinking about how they should behave towards others, within their own families and within the school. They also consider the constant struggles that exist between right and wrong and the dilemmas in making choices between them in their own daily lives. There are regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and their relationships. The school actively promotes sensitive and thoughtful relationships with others. All members of staff set good role models and frequently share their own experiences and feelings with pupils. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on when they find relationships difficult and on ways in which these difficulties can be overcome. Pupils work and play well together, share equipment sensibly and respond thoughtfully to the needs of others. For example, when older pupils are given the responsibility of looking after younger, more vulnerable, children at lunchtime and playtimes they do so sensibly and reliably. As a result of the school's promotion of a clear code of conduct, which includes the need to be thoughtful, courteous and polite, pupils are keenly aware of appropriate behaviour in a range of social

situations. The school supports a good range of charities that make pupils aware of people less fortunate than themselves.

29. Provision for cultural development is very good and is strongly promoted through the school's values of respect and appreciation of different beliefs and cultures. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their cultural awareness, through their work in English, geography, history, art and design, music and religious education. A good range of educational visits and visitors to the school, as well as extra-curricular clubs also support their cultural development. Opportunities to learn about the cultural traditions of other faiths include Islam and Judaism, and these result in raised awareness of the significance of religious events and celebrations within those faiths. This helps pupils to develop an appreciation of the richness and diversity of cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school is a caring community where the promotion of self-esteem and the emotional well-being of all pupils underpins all aspects of school life. Adults know the pupils well and relationships are based on respect, care, encouragement and high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. This environment helps pupils feel secure and enables them to flourish.
31. The school has comprehensive procedures to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Regular assessments are made of their personal development, and all staff keep a sensitive watching brief over concerns about behaviour or other problems. The headteacher and staff have built up very good relations with parents and this allows for problems or changes in circumstances or performance to be discussed openly and for agreed strategies to be put in place to support the pupils. This integrated approach ensures that any significant changes in pupils' performance or behaviour are quickly identified and appropriate action is taken.
32. Child protection issues are well handled and the school is careful to vet all adults who may come into contact with pupils during the school day. Staff have had appropriate training and there are clear guidelines for them to follow. The school regularly monitors levels of attendance, and the importance of good attendance is communicated clearly to parents. Pupils are awarded certificates which recognise good attendance.
33. The school is very successful in promoting high standards of behaviour, independence and a sense of personal responsibility. All adults in the school have benefited from training in positive behaviour promotion and this ensures consistency of approach in the implementation of the behaviour policy. Pupils have a clear understanding of the high standards expected of them and respond positively to the variety of opportunities to undertake responsibilities in the school. The school is particularly good at listening to pupils' views expressed through the school council. Wherever possible, the school meets their requests and this helps pupils develop a sense of ownership and pride in the development of the school. The use of 'golden time' whereby pupils can choose activities for the last period of the week is very popular and any loss of such time through poor behaviour helps pupils learn the consequences of their actions. The school keeps good documentation on the occasional incidents of poor behaviour or rare incidents of racism; and takes care to ensure that the pupils involved are listened to and have the opportunity to reflect on their actions. The school strongly promotes the valuing of each child and this leads

to a community where there is good racial harmony. No pupil is excluded from any activity because of financial hardship.

34. There is a well-planned and comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education which includes regular reminders about the importance of road safety. Healthy eating, drugs awareness and sex education are appropriately covered. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their feelings and some staff have specialist expertise to support pupils through crises such as bereavement. All staff renew their first aid training regularly and there are well-established procedures with appropriate supporting documentation to deal with medicines, accidents and emergencies. The health and safety policy is implemented through regular site inspections, and pupils are reminded of the importance of safe practice in lessons such as physical education. Risk assessments have been completed for most aspects of school life, and the headteacher is alert to the dangers caused by inconsiderate parking by a minority of parents. The school buildings and grounds are clean, tidy and well maintained and provide a safe and secure environment for the pupils.
35. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic standards and progress are good and are used consistently throughout the school. The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed rigorously, and the results used to set targets for pupils in English, mathematics and science. Comprehensive and thorough systems are used well to evaluate and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. The use of assessment to inform planning was identified as a weakness in the last inspection report. This has now been addressed, and teachers are now using assessment information effectively to guide their work. Teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn in lessons, and are therefore able to assess their progress against the stated criteria in their planning. They use questions skilfully to probe pupils' understanding, for example, to establish what they already know at the beginning of lessons and to discover what they have learned by the end of lessons. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection, and is good. Pupils' work is regularly marked and includes the use of constructive comments which motivate pupils and help them to improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. The school has built up a very strong partnership with parents. Parents have positive views about the school and rightly hold it in high regard. The headteacher, staff and governors understand the importance of keeping parents well informed about all aspects of school life. The prospectus and annual report to parents are well written and informative, and the curriculum summaries sent to parents each year give a clear indication of aspects to be studied in each subject. The school organises helpful meetings to explain about Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) and to help parents with the complexities of secondary transfer applications.
37. The headteacher uses the frequent newsletters, not only to keep parents up to date with school activities, but also to reinforce to parents that she is always happy to talk about any concerns. This is good practice, and parents are unanimous in their praise for how easy it is to talk to her. This inclusive approach is further emphasised by consulting parents about their views on school matters and proposed developments and, wherever possible, implementing their suggestions for improvements. This gives parents a sense of ownership and commitment to the school, and a trust that the best interests of children are central to all concerned.

38. Parents find all the staff easy to talk to and readily approach teachers for informal discussions. They value the detailed information they receive about progress and targets for improvement given at the two formal consultation evenings during the school year. Annual written reports also give clear indications of pupils' attainment and areas for improvement, and are particularly detailed in English and mathematics.
39. Many parents make a regular commitment to working in school, for example, by helping in classes, by assisting with swimming or by undertaking other jobs such as improving the library. Offers of help are always well received and the school uses parents' particular skills, where it can, to benefit pupils' learning, for example, in music and physical education. Some parents visit to explain their particular religious or cultural celebrations to pupils, and share their national dishes at the school's summer fair. The flourishing parents' association runs well supported events which raise useful additional funds to buy resources and to improve the school environment.
40. The school has established very positive links with the parents of children with special educational needs. They are informed of their child's needs when these are first identified, and they are almost always involved in reviews of progress when new targets are set. Parents are very supportive of the school's efforts to help their children. Many parents willingly help their children by getting involved in work sent home, by hearing their children read, and by reading with them.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The school benefits from a highly committed governing body which contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school. They visit regularly to see the school at work, debate the results of statutory tests carefully and work effectively with the headteacher and the local education authority to agree challenging targets for the school's future results. The governors have high levels of expertise and are well organised. The governor with responsibility for literacy discusses provision with the subject co-ordinator, has a good awareness of the National Literacy Strategy and the school's planning, and has observed lessons. The numeracy governor is very recently appointed and is continuing the effective work of his predecessor. He has already met the subject co-ordinator to discuss the school's performance in mathematics, has looked at the planning for the National Numeracy Strategy and will soon be visiting to observe the strategy in action. There are also governors with particular responsibility for special educational needs, ICT, science and gifted and talented pupils. These, together with the committees and working groups of the governors, make important contributions to the school's work. The governors fulfil their roles as critical friends to the school by asking challenging questions, and have established very constructive relationships with the headteacher. In summary, the governors have a good awareness of the school's performance, are influential in shaping its work and ensure that statutory requirements are met.
42. The headteacher has excellent leadership and management skills. Her leadership provides a clear sense of direction for the school, and her expectations are high. The headteacher uses a good range of effective monitoring procedures to evaluate the school's performance, including regular lesson observations, the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' completed work, and the rigorous analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results. She delegates responsibility wisely and has

developed the roles of co-ordinators significantly by providing them with clear guidance and effective support. The headteacher has good inter-personal skills and develops positive relationships with parents, governors, staff and pupils. Her strong commitment, energy and clear thinking contribute very significantly to the school's success.

43. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role well and works closely with the headteacher. Co-ordinators monitor and develop their subjects effectively, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. They analyse planning, provide valuable advice to their colleagues, organise resources efficiently and evaluate the standards and progress achieved by pupils. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have observed teaching, across the school, and provided useful feedback to staff. In addition, the science co-ordinator has taught exemplar lessons in all year groups to guide the work of her colleagues. Co-ordinators make good use of the information gathered from monitoring and have formulated pertinent action plans to secure further improvements in their subjects.
44. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are effective. The SENCO is well qualified and has a background which includes extensive experience in special needs work. Although only employed part time, she is effective in her role, and she receives very good support and guidance from the headteacher. Support staff have had appropriate training and are deployed well. Teachers are appropriately involved in drawing up individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs in their own classes, and all staff play a significant role in monitoring pupils' progress and planning suitably challenging work. Pupils' special educational needs are identified early, and regular assessments are made of pupils' progress. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place. The special educational needs governor fulfils his role as 'critical friend' effectively. He pays regular visits to the school to monitor provision and to keep abreast of development, and his written reports to the governors raise useful points for action as well as confirming good practice. Professional contacts between the school and external agencies are constructive and work in the best interests of the pupils concerned. There are also strong links between the SENCO and staff in the infant school from which most pupils transfer. Children with special educational needs are able to visit the junior school before they transfer in order to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings and with their future teachers. In their turn, teachers receive records of progress which help them to ensure that pupils' learning proceeds smoothly in spite of a change of school. Similar transition arrangements have begun with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the age of 11. The SENCO also monitors the progress of those pupils in the school EAL, and the school distinguishes clearly between the needs of EAL pupils and those with special educational needs in the provision it makes.
45. All staff have had training to develop their awareness of equal opportunities and this is apparent in the daily work of the school. There are very good procedures to monitor the progress of each pupil and this allows for the performance of different groups of pupils to be studied carefully. Effective strategies have been put in place to address possible underachievement by groups of pupils, for example, the apparent lack of confidence that some girls had in some aspects of mathematics. The needs of the more able, gifted and talented pupils are also specifically monitored to ensure lessons include sufficient challenge. This is a school which positively celebrates the ethnic and cultural diversity of its pupils in all aspects of the

curriculum and ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, feel that their contribution to school life is valued.

46. The school development plan has been created through very effective leadership by the headteacher with appropriate staff and governor involvement. In addition, account has been taken of the views of parents, gained through questionnaire returns, and of the views of Year 6 pupils, sought by the headteacher. The plan is well organised, with a clear vision statement which emphasises the school's commitment to high standards. Action plans are formulated for the current educational year and these include sufficiently detailed and precise planning. When the school was last inspected, the school development plan did not include success criteria for many of its initiatives, costings were not consistently identified and time scales were unrealistic. This is no longer the case. Overall, the plan, which extends to 2004, demonstrates effective strategic thinking, and is making a valuable contribution to school improvement.
47. The administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher with support from the school secretaries and the finance adviser from the local education authority. Spending is also carefully monitored by the chair of the school's finance committee. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the initiatives in the school development plan. The governors carefully consider the likely benefits of spending decisions and are well aware that they need to ensure the school makes the best use of its resources.
48. Overall, the school provides good value for money. The leadership and management by the headteacher are outstanding and the governors are effective. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is mainly good. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in most subjects, and their attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good. It is clear that the school makes efficient use of its resources.
49. There are sufficient teachers and the staff have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Good provision is made for their professional development, and the school's performance management policy is being implemented effectively. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good. The school benefits from learning support assistants who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are well briefed by teachers and develop positive relationships with pupils.
50. The accommodation is good. There is sufficient space and the environment is enriched by attractive displays of pupils' work. The school is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff. There is sufficient playground space and a school field. Learning resources are well organised and are mainly good. However, in ICT, the school's current software is not compatible with the recently purchased laptop computers, and more resources are required for teachers to use in the course of demonstrations and instructions to whole-class groups.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to increase further the performance of this effective school, the following issues should be addressed:

- **Raise standards in ICT and art and design to match the good standards achieved in all other subjects.** (see paragraphs 8, 20, 22, 75, 76, 77, 78, 97, 98 and 100)
 - a. In ICT, extend opportunities for pupils to develop their skills by:
 - i. making more consistent use of computers to support work across the curriculum, including in English, mathematics and science;
 - ii. improving software provision for the new laptop computers; and
 - iii. increasing work in control technology and multimedia.
 - b. In art and design, ensure that pupils' key skills are developed progressively and that all teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to maximise the benefits of the recently introduced scheme of work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	11	26	12	0	0	0
Percentage	9	20	48	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	242
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	31

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	28

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	30	29	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	27
	Girls	26	24	27
	Total	51	51	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (88)	86 (85)	92 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	29
	Girls	25	24	27
	Total	50	52	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (81)	88 (75)	95 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	12
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	212
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	550,974
Total expenditure	557,311
Expenditure per pupil	2,257
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,323
Balance carried forward to next year	19,986

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

242

Number of questionnaires returned

101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	41	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	55	8	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	59	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	59	16	3	6
The teaching is good.	34	59	1	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	50	18	3	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	41	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	42	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	54	14	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	50	46	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	49	9	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	39	42	8	5

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

ENGLISH

52. On entry to the school, most pupils attain the standards expected of pupils aged seven, although there is a wide spread of attainment.
53. The school's results in English in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 were above the national average and in line with the average results of similar schools. These results were lower than in the previous three years when the results were well above the national average. Although there are, as yet, no national averages on which to base comparisons for 2001, the school's results for this latest year show a significant improvement on the 2000 results: almost all pupils attained or exceeded the expected standard for their age, and well above half attained a higher level than that normally expected of 11 year olds. As in trends nationally, pupils' performance in reading is significantly higher than in writing, and this disparity is an issue which the school is taking measures to address. Inspection findings broadly confirm the patterns of attainment reflected in national tests in recent years, and show that most pupils demonstrate overall standards in English which are above average. Pupils of all abilities, including those identified as gifted and talented, pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL make generally good progress throughout the school. In Year 6, their progress is very good.
54. Most pupils in Year 6 are articulate, express points of view clearly and succinctly, give reasoned explanations and use well chosen words and phrases whether engaged in general discussion or talking about very specific subject content. They are confident speakers who readily answer questions in front of large audiences, as in assembly, and who can also use talk constructively to achieve common aims, for example in group work. They are well aware of the need to adapt their speech according to purpose and audience, and they do so accordingly. Most pupils are at ease both with spoken standard English and with colloquial, non-standard forms. All pupils are good listeners. They listen politely to their teachers and to one another, take turns in discussion, and concentrate well for considerable periods when necessary, for example during shared text work. They value and respect others' ideas, and they are able to construct and uphold logical arguments, sometimes supporting viewpoints with which they basically disagree, as, for instance when taking sides in a debate about the proposal for a new 'Park and Ride' scheme in Bushey.
55. As a result of effective teaching, most pupils in Year 6 read well for their age. They are able to bring a high level of critical appreciation to what they read in class, responding in a mature way to the ideas, language, story-line, characters and deeper meanings in the texts they share with their teachers. The maturity of their emotional response to literature is evident when pupils from both classes listen to the ending of the story of 'Spit Nolan' by Bill Naughton. There is a stunned silence when the character Spit dies, and the subsequent discussion, though tentative, is laden with genuine empathy, not only for Spit, but also for all other characters who witness his death, including the narrator. Pupils have a good understanding of the techniques used by authors to engage their readers and to create effects, and they are able to draw on evidence from a text to support their views. They also recognise, and can explain, differences between fiction and non-fiction texts. They know the key features of texts written for a variety of different purposes throughout

the curriculum. They are, therefore, able to produce written work which is appropriate in terms of style, organisation and format in their own work in different subjects. There are also some excellent examples of topic books produced by pupils in connection with educational visits. These beautifully presented books show that pupils are competent in reading for information and note-making. The pupils have used a variety of sources to inform their work. The way they then present the information gathered, complete with illustrations, captions, sub-titles, contents lists, indexes and glossaries, reveals their good understanding of the nature and purpose of information texts. In their independent, personal reading, some pupils read widely, choose suitably challenging materials, both fiction and non-fiction, and explore a variety of genres. However, there are also some pupils who read well but whose personal reading is rather more limited than it should be at this stage of their development: they know few authors and, routinely rather than occasionally, opt for titles which, though enjoyable, present few challenges and little variety.

56. Pupils' writing skills are generally above average. The best writing seen is of a very high standard, with exceptionally good control of technical features such as sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and with interesting content which captures the reader's interest. By the time they are 11, most pupils spell well for their age and have developed a neat, fluent and legible style of joined-up handwriting. For the most part, they also present their work neatly when required to do so. Most pupils are able to develop well-structured narrative writing. They know how to vary the length of sentences to create particular effects. For example, to build suspense, they use descriptive detail, alliteration, simile and metaphor to good effect to define characters or to bring scenes to life. When writing poetry, they choose words for their precision, economy and impact. They are able to convey both powerful and sensitive emotions through their writing, as, for example, when they read a poem by Rupert Brooke, then produce their own versions of 'Things I have loved'. The written work of lower attaining pupils also has significant strengths in terms of its content, match to purpose, and vocabulary. Weaknesses, where they exist, are related more to structure, organisation, technical control and overall coherence. Sometimes, these pupils find it difficult to combine, at the same time, all the skills needed to produce truly competent writing. For example, they may lose their thread and, by omitting words, leave gaps in meaning. Some have not yet learned how to combine several ideas successfully within complex sentences, and most lower attaining pupils have not adequately grasped the finer points of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
57. Pupils' knowledge about language, and their ability to respond to questions about language, are generally good, whether in English or in other subjects. Their general vocabulary is fairly wide, and the good teaching they have received throughout the school has ensured that they know, and understand, many technical terms. For example, they understand what is meant when their teacher asks them to predict the 'denouement', 'unravelling' or 'conclusion' of a story.
58. The teaching of English ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. The most effective teaching is in Year 6 while the co-ordinator, who teaches a Year 4 class, also has very good teaching skills in the subject. All teachers plan well structured lessons and make sure, from the outset, that pupils know what they are intended to learn. In most lessons, teachers are very confident in their own subject expertise and are able to respond spontaneously to any unforeseen opportunities for learning that might also arise in the course of the lesson. They promote good

learning habits, including the use of dictionaries and thesauri. The teaching of reading, including provision for group reading, is a strength. Less evidence was seen of teachers working directly with pupils to show them how to bring pieces of written work up to a very high 'finished' standard, although pupils are certainly encouraged to draft and edit their work independently. The marking of work is also helpful, giving pupils useful pointers as to how to improve. Very occasionally, minor gaps in teachers' knowledge mean that the most able pupils, in particular, do not gain maximum benefit from all parts of a lesson. Overall, however, provision for pupils of differing abilities is effective in enabling all to make good progress over time. Teachers make sure they include all pupils in discussions and that all have opportunities to share and review their work towards the end of lessons. Setting arrangements in Year 6 work well. In other year groups, additional support for some pupils through the Tracks programme, for those pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils with EAL is well targeted and has a very positive impact on pupils' progress.

59. The last OFSTED inspection raised general criticisms about provision for the most able pupils. In most English lessons, these pupils are now suitably challenged, although their independent reading is not always as challenging as it might be. Weaknesses in assessment have been addressed. The school is now able to monitor the progress of each pupil, each class and each cohort, and the practice of setting targets for individual pupils as well as for groups means that pupils and their parents are also aware of what they need to do to improve their performance.
60. The English co-ordinator is new to the school, but procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards, planning and teaching are well established and effective. The co-ordinator has quickly informed herself of provision and is keen to extend the use of drama and of film. There is scope to improve the use of information technology to support work in English, and the library skills of the youngest pupils need developing. Resources for English are good. They are generally well matched to the needs, abilities and interests of pupils, and they adequately reflect the multicultural dimension of contemporary British society.

MATHEMATICS

61. On entry to the school, most pupils demonstrate standards which match those expected for their ages. The results of national tests for 2000 were well above national results and those of similar schools. The school has maintained high standards in mathematics for the past four years, and the proportions exceeding the expected standards for their ages have increased overall with variations representing the strengths and weaknesses of different cohorts. Results for 2001 are slightly higher than the 2000 results, and show that the school met the targets that it set. At present, there are no national averages available to compare with the most recent results. Inspection findings show that pupils achieve well in mathematics and, as a result of good teaching, standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above those expected in Year 6.
62. As they move through the school, pupils develop a good understanding of numbers and their properties, which they can describe with increasing accuracy using a well-developed mathematical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 3 accurately partition numbers using a range of appropriate strategies. In Year 4, they identify number patterns using negative numbers, understand the properties of odd and even numbers and know that inverse operations can be used as a method of checking their answers in

calculations. In Year 5, pupils recognise fractions and percentages as proportions of a whole. This leads to a good understanding of the equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages in Year 6. Pupils develop an accurate knowledge of number facts and multiplication tables and this aids them when carrying out mathematical investigations and in solving a range of mathematical problems. For example, pupils in Year 4 apply their knowledge of addition, multiplication and subtraction when devising a number of different 'spells' for turning their teacher into a frog, given the constraints of being only able to use total of 24 legs from a combination of bats, toads and lizards! Throughout the school, pupils accurately describe the mental strategies they use to arrive at answers to number problems and come to realise that there is more than one way of arriving at the correct answer. They can give reasons for their chosen methods and by the time they get to Year 6 their confidence in their powers of reasoning is evident. They are not afraid to admit when they find some methods difficult and, in the course of mathematical debate with their teacher, discuss their own alternative strategies and why they work best for them. As a result of frequent opportunities to articulate their mathematical thinking, pupils develop a good understanding of a range of mathematical strategies and use their skills and knowledge effectively in their work on written problems, when applying appropriate number operations, and when choosing and setting out their method of solution and checking their answers.

63. Pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measure is good overall. In Year 3, pupils use their knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes correctly in their work on classification. As they move into Year 4, they begin to measure and draw angles, and develop greater accuracy in Years 5 and 6 where they measure angles to the nearest degree, using terms such as reflex, obtuse and acute. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of aspects of transformation, for example, they know that to translate a shape they need to move it to a different set of co-ordinates. They also know how to accurately measure and calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes.
64. Pupils' skills in data handling are good. They interpret graphs and diagrams, including pie charts, and draw conclusions, for example, when gathering evidence about favourite foods. Pupils make satisfactory use of mathematics in the course of learning about ICT. For example, pupils in Year 6 set up an active cell with the correct formula as part of the process of setting up a spreadsheet. In Year 5, pupils enter data onto a table and then produce this in graphical form. There is scope, however, to develop the use of ICT further to support their work in mathematics. Pupils make effective use of their good mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in science they use their knowledge of how to measure capacity in their enquiries on absorbency and in geography they have carried out a traffic survey as part of their work on the local environment.
65. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with EAL, make good progress in mathematics. Appropriately challenging work is provided for higher attainers, particularly in Year 6, where breadth and depth are provided by planning work which requires them to apply their skills in a range of investigations, and also draws on the content of the mathematical curriculum for older pupils.
66. The quality of teaching is good overall, and there is some excellent teaching in Year 6. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum for mathematics and the National Numeracy Strategy guidance, and use this knowledge to inform their work. Planning is good, throughout the school, and

includes clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils so that they have a good understanding of the purpose of the lesson. Marking is good with constructive written comments to help pupils improve their work. The best teaching is marked by very high expectations. Planning is precisely based on a clear understanding of what pupils can already do and what they need to learn next. Explanations and demonstrations are clear and good open questioning techniques encourage pupils to think for themselves and apply their mathematical skills to a range of situations. In these lessons, pupils make good progress in their learning because they are working at the edge of their capabilities, and are interested in work provided. Weaknesses occur in a small minority of lessons when there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils and limited use of skilled questioning to encourage children to think for themselves.

67. The school's assessment procedures are good. Effective use is made of optional national tests to give information about individual progress and achievement and to identify school improvement issues. Opportunities for ongoing assessment are built into short-term planning and are generally used well to inform future work. The organisation of pupils' assessment and progress records is through and systematic to allow pupils' progress to be tracked as they move through the school.
68. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and there are effective procedures for monitoring and evaluation. The co-ordinator has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, led training for staff and observed lessons. He keeps up to date by attending appropriate training and passes on information gained to other members of staff. Resources for mathematics are good.

SCIENCE

69. On entry to the school, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are broadly average. The results of the statutory assessment tests in science in Year 6 in 2000, were above the national average and were in line with the average results of similar schools. At the time of the inspection, there were no national averages to compare with the school's 2001 results in Year 6. However, they are an improvement on the 2000 results, and show that nearly all pupils reached the level expected nationally and about half exceeded this level.
70. Inspection findings show that pupils generally achieve well in science and their standards are mainly above average in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points in Year 3, while the more able pupils make mainly sound progress in their learning. However, in a minority of science lessons, more able pupils could do better. The last inspection also found that overall standards were above average in Year 6.
71. In Year 3, pupils make good progress when learning about the importance of a balanced diet. They demonstrate sound standards when making predictions and conducting simple investigations, for example to discover whether the tallest pupil, in a class group, has the largest hands. Year 4 pupils achieve well when sorting materials into groups, according to their properties, and know why some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. They demonstrate good standards when conducting experiments to find which solids will dissolve in water to produce solutions, and discover that the heat of water can affect the speed in which solutions are created. In Year 5, pupils understand that sounds are produced when

objects vibrate, and most make satisfactory progress when conducting experiments to discover some of the factors which influence the pitch of the sound created by plucking a string. In Year 6, pupils make good progress when learning that some materials conduct heat more effectively than others, and create well organised tables to show their results. They have a good understanding of scientific vocabulary and use appropriate terms to describe the differences between liquids, solids and gases. They make good progress when learning about conditions which cause evaporation and condensation, and most understand the main functions of the most important human and plant organs.

72. The quality of teaching in science ranges from satisfactory to very good but is good, overall. As a consequence, pupils generally make good progress in the subject. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and most are particularly well informed. They explain scientific ideas clearly and introduce and reinforce scientific vocabulary well. For example, Year 4 pupils benefit from good explanations about the nature of liquids and solids and, in Year 6, pupils are taught to refer to the viscosity of liquids when conducting their investigations. The teaching motivates pupils well and they demonstrate very positive attitudes to the subject. They listen attentively to their teachers and concentrate in their tasks. Behaviour is very good in science lessons.
73. Teachers ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to develop their scientific investigation skills as well as their knowledge and understanding about the subject; and their planning is generally good. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted effectively through the science curriculum but limited use is currently made of ICT to support their scientific learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers use their very good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils to judge when to provide direct instructions, when to probe pupils' understanding and spark their learning through well-judged questions, and when to leave pupils alone to grapple with scientific problems. In a minority of lessons observed, more able pupils would have benefited from more challenging work, and there is scope for some teachers to plan more specifically to meet the needs of these pupils. In particular, more able pupils sometimes require more opportunities to devise and conduct their own simple experiments to test their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in science lessons and this is reflected in the good progress they make. When the school was last inspected these pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, so current findings represent an improvement.
74. The science co-ordinator makes a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning across the school. She has formulated a comprehensive scheme of work which usefully incorporates guidance both from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and from the local education authority; and she carefully checks that teachers' planning reflects this programme. The co-ordinator has very good teaching skills in science and has taught exemplar lessons to guide the work of her colleagues in all year groups. In addition, she studies examples of pupils' work in science and analyses pupils' SATs results, including pupils' responses to individual questions in the tests, to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Arrangements for assessing pupils' standards and progress in science are good and include the tracking of pupils with EAL and pupils with special educational needs. Resources for the subject are good, overall, and are well organised.

ART AND DESIGN

75. When the school was last inspected, pupils' standards in art and design were above the expected level in Year 6, and pupils were making good progress in the subject, across the school. The current situation is not as favourable. Inspection findings show that pupils' achievements and progress in the subject are just adequate, overall. Pupils generally demonstrate standards which are broadly satisfactory for their ages, across the school. However, there are relatively few examples of art work which are above average, and evidence suggests that pupils' skills are underdeveloped in some elements of the subject.
76. In Year 3, pupils benefit from discussions about sculpture but their own three-dimensional sculptures, made from recycled materials, reflect limited development of their artistic understanding and skills. However, their self portraits and drawings of their friends are broadly average. In Year 4, pupils make satisfactory progress when developing their colour mixing skills by adding different quantities of white to primary colours, in a formal exercise, but need more opportunities to mix colours to interpret the natural and made world around them. They demonstrate sound standards when creating simple repeating patterns but their shields, showing drawings of family crests, demonstrate limited artistic achievement. In Year 5, pupils are aware of the landscape pictures of a range of artists, and their own sketches of the local area are satisfactory. In Year 6, pupils have made sound progress in developing their awareness of the art of different cultures by studying a range of masks. Their own masks, made from papier mâché, are carefully constructed and demonstrate satisfactory achievement. However, pupils' painting skills are a little underdeveloped, and discussions with pupils suggest a significant proportion lack confidence in their abilities in painting. A good feature of the work of Year 6 pupils is their use of ICT to create designs which reflect elements of the work of William Morris, although limited use is generally made of ICT in art and design lessons. Other examples of good achievement are the collage pictures created by Year 4 pupils, in the last academic year, after visiting the National Gallery to look at animals in art. Their interpretations of Rousseau's 'Tropical storm with a tiger' are vibrant and above average.
77. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. In the two brief observations which were made, Year 3 pupils needed more informed guidance to develop their skills, while the teaching enabled pupils to make satisfactory progress in creating three-dimensional masks in Year 6. All teachers allocate sufficient time for the subject and evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows the teaching, across the school, enables pupils to make mainly satisfactory progress. However, there are weaknesses in the implementation of the recently introduced scheme of work which mean that pupils' skills are not developed progressively, and good standards are not consistently promoted.
78. The subject co-ordinator is conscientious, audits and organises resources for art and design effectively, and has good subject knowledge. Through her own monitoring of pupils' standards, and discussions with teachers, she is already aware that there is scope to raise standards further in the subject. She appropriately recognises that some teachers would benefit from in-service training if they are to make better use of the tasks included in the current scheme of work, and has sensible plans for a review in order to identify and target areas for improvement. Resources for art and design are sound.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. Overall, pupils achieve well in design and technology, and their standards in Year 6 are above those expected nationally. In the last inspection, standards were also above average and pupils made good progress in the subject.
80. In Year 3, pupils make good progress when designing and making their own pizzas, having evaluated a range of commercially produced products. They understand the need for hygiene when preparing food and combine their ingredients thoughtfully when creating their pizzas. They also achieve well when evaluating the packaging of different pizzas, and demonstrate standards which are a little above average when making their own pizza boxes which are embellished with their own advertising. In Year 4, pupils have created their own printed designs on calico before using the material to make simple money containers; and make good progress when designing and making model vehicles which are powered by pneumatics. In Year 5, pupils have made detailed designs for 'moon buggies' which incorporate electrical circuits, and learn to create models which can move through the use of cams. In Year 6, pupils have constructed well-made model buildings which include electrical circuits which operate lights and buzzers. Year 6 pupils also achieve well in food technology. For example, last term the Year 6 class carefully evaluated the qualities of a range of commercially made breads. They created their own recipes for specialist breads, learned the skill of kneading and created a range of interesting products. This term, Year 6 pupils are designing and making biscuits for special occasions, and demonstrate good skills in creating their products. Across the school, limited use is made of ICT to support work in design and technology, and opportunities are sometimes missed, for example, to create advertisements and well presented recipes for the foods they design and make.
81. Due to timetabling arrangements insufficient lessons were observed in design and technology to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of teaching in the subject. However, the two lessons which were seen, in Years 3 and 6, were well taught. In addition, an analysis of pupils' completed work, from across the school, shows the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the subject in all year groups. Key strengths in the lessons observed were the teachers' good knowledge about food technology, the effective use of expertise provided by volunteer parents helpers and support staff; and the good class management skills of the teachers. In both lessons, pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes and their behaviour was very good. In Year 6, the pupils are making effective use of their skills in making biscuits by marketing them in the school, and using the profits to provide funds for a school in Africa.
82. The design and technology co-ordinator is well informed and conscientious. She has created a useful scheme of work, which uses guidance from the QCA and promotes continuity in pupils' learning. The co-ordinator provides valuable advice to her colleagues, checks their planning and has a good overview of the standards achieved across the school. There are sufficient resources for the subject and they are well organised.

GEOGRAPHY

83. Evidence from lessons observed, teachers' planning, discussions with staff, displays and the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress in geography. Their skills, knowledge and understanding develop incrementally as they move up through the school. By the age of 11, most pupils

attain standards which are above average for their age. All year groups undertake fieldwork, and the geography curriculum is designed in such a way that pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding through well-planned investigations and problem-solving approaches.

84. In Year 3, pupils learn about their own locality. They use maps of the area around the school to consider changes in the environment and in land use since 1960, noting, for example, the disappearance of woodland areas and open spaces in those parts where their own school and the music centre now stand. They predict how Watford might look in the future. They consider the kinds of buildings found in towns, and they construct street maps with pictorial keys to represent human and physical features such as wasteland, public buildings, shops, houses, footpaths, factories and places of worship. They use simple grids and co-ordinates to locate features on their plans.
85. Pupils in Year 4 study an aerial photograph. They draw on their previous knowledge of the nature of settlements and on evidence from the photograph to describe and define what they see. Little by little, they identify buildings and other facilities, farmland, road-systems and footpaths, until they have a very good understanding of the kind of settlement pictured in the photograph. Very soon, they are able to look at a map of the same area and point confidently to the various features shown in the photograph. They soon realise that, whereas some villages develop along river valleys or on hill-tops, the village in the photograph has developed mainly along the two sides of a main road, and they give plausible reasons as to why this might be the case. On a fieldwork visit to the village of Sarratt, they consider the purposes for which buildings in the village are used. They realise, for example, that there must be farmers, teachers, publicans and doctors working in the village, but they conclude that, given the scarcity of commercial and industrial buildings, many of the residents must work elsewhere. Evidence from pupils' written work shows that pupils in this year group are able to use Ordnance survey maps, to use four-figure co-ordinates and to create realistic maps of villages of their own design.
86. Written work by pupils in Year 5 shows convincing evidence of their knowledge and understanding of rivers. They know, and use, technical terms such as confluence, tributary, meander and erosion, and they demonstrate good knowledge of the names of major rivers in the British Isles and in Europe. In the current Year 5 class, pupils undertake independent research to find out about several major rivers and about river areas. They also carry out investigations into local environmental issues and propose their own solutions. For example, they investigate traffic problems in the area near the school. They devise and circulate questionnaires to solicit views, interview a number of the adults directly affected by the problems, collate and present their findings, then put forward sensible proposals for change.
87. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the difference between 'climate' and 'weather'. They can explain that we live in a 'temperate' zone, and they know that 'equatorial' areas are hot and wet. They use photographic evidence satisfactorily to find out about a desert location, but are sometimes puzzled by apparently conflicting information to do with weather, and are at first unable to reconcile the idea of fast flowing water with a desert climate. As the lesson proceeds, however, they learn a great deal more about physical processes in a desert landscape, and by the time the lesson ends, their knowledge and understanding are very secure. In the parallel class, pupils investigate a topical issue related to the town of Bushey, where there

has been a proposal to set up a park and ride scheme. They prove themselves adept at understanding different needs and viewpoints. For example, they appreciate that shoppers would welcome the scheme, as would local shopkeepers and other commercial concerns. At the same time, they understand the views of local residents whose neighbourhood might well be spoiled by a huge parking lot. Almost all pupils are able to explain the issue succinctly in writing, and higher attaining pupils begin to see the implications for employment in the area as well as to appreciate aesthetic reasons for opposing the development. All pupils use geographical terms confidently and with understanding, whether talking about 'green belt', 'congestion' or 'pollution'. It is clear that their understanding of human activity upon environment is well developed, and their proposals for minimising the impact of the scheme on the environment show that they also have a growing understanding of sustainable development.

88. Criticisms raised in the last OFSTED report have been answered. The local area is now used to good effect to support the study of geography; all teachers take care to develop pupils' use of subject-specific vocabulary; and the Programmes of Study are covered in full. Teachers are following QCA guidance, but are sensibly adapting content, where possible, to reflect the context of the school and the needs of the pupils. The headteacher has co-ordinated the subject until very recently, and she has also reviewed the curriculum in the light of amendments made in the National Curriculum 2000.
89. The teaching of geography is mainly good and is never less than sound. Teachers prepare their lessons well, and the ideas and resources they use engage pupils' interests and match their learning needs. All teachers seen had a good command of subject knowledge and were very clear about what pupils were intended to learn. In the Year 6 lesson about the Chihuahuan desert, pupils benefited greatly from the depth of knowledge, and the detail, that their teacher was able to draw on from his own experience of the area. Geographical enquiry is undoubtedly a strength of provision. A further strength lies in the contribution the subject makes to other key skills which transcend any subject. For example, through their work in geography pupils also learn about citizenship, learn how to work together to present and communicate their ideas, learn to apply their numerical skills to geographical issues, and learn to solve problems. In Years 5 and 6, there is evidence of the use of ICT. For example, pupils have used the internet to track the weather and temperatures world-wide on a particular day, and they have used CD-ROMs to find out about river areas. There remains scope to develop contacts with people in other countries through the use of e-mail, and more use could be made of ICT overall in Years 3 and 4 than is currently the case.
90. The headteacher has provided good leadership and management in geography and has recently transferred responsibility to another member of staff. There has been effective monitoring of teaching and planning; and assessment procedures are sound. Resources are generally good, well organised and accessible.

HISTORY

91. As a consequence of timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe history lessons. However, a substantial amount of pupils' work from the previous and current academic years was submitted for scrutiny, teachers' planning and displays around the school were examined. Discussions took place with the co-ordinator and, less formally, with pupils. This considerable quantity and variety of

evidence shows that pupils make good progress in history. By the time they are 11, most pupils attain standards which are above average for their age. Pupils with special educational needs, those pupils for whom English is an additional language, and also the small number of pupils identified by the school as 'gifted and talented' all make good progress in relation to their starting-points. The work produced by more able pupils in Year 6 is well above average for their age. It clearly demonstrates their secure grasp of historical skills and knowledge, their ability to pursue independent historical investigations, and their talent in organising, communicating and presenting their findings.

92. Through the various periods and topics they study, pupils acquire a good understanding of chronology. Pupils in all years are familiar with time-lines which demonstrate the duration of historical 'periods' and which highlight significant events within a period. For example, pupils in Year 4 learn about events that occurred during the Roman occupation of Britain, while pupils in Year 5 learn about the various Tudor monarchs, and also about events during the lives of particular monarchs such as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Pupils also learn to make comparisons between different historical periods. In Year 3, for example, pupils listen to the story 'No friend of Mine' set in 1937 and draw comparisons between their own lives now and the way children lived then. As pupils mature, so their insights into similarities and differences between distinct periods of history, their knowledge of dates, their command of 'historical language', their awareness of historical viewpoints and their understanding of causes and consequences develop accordingly. In Year 4, pupils learn how the Latin language of the Romans has influenced our language today, for example in the names of the months of the year which came from those of Roman gods such as Janus (January) and emperors such as Julius Caesar (July). They know that Roman road-builders used a tool called a 'groma' to make sure their roads ran in straight lines; that roads were straight so that they were easy for soldiers to march along; and, that the curved surface of a Roman road allowed water to drain away. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the lives of rich and poor in Tudor times. They also answer historical questions well, deciding, for example that the sea was important to trade in Tudor times when Britain sold cloth, tin, pewter and rabbit skins to lands in that part of the world we now know as the Middle East, in return for silk, cotton, spices and currants. They write vivid descriptions of life at sea where sailors suffering from scurvy slept in hammocks above decks infested with rats and cockroaches. Pupils in Year 6 use census information to good effect. They study the various 'ranks' of people living and working on the royal estate at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in Queen Victoria's time, then present their findings in graphs which record the relatively small numbers of royal family members (9), their guests (4), and the far greater number (83) of the servants who worked for them. In a further study involving data handling, the pupils consider population growth in Victorian Britain. They conclude that the largest growth in population took place between 1851 and 1901, a period when health was good, but birth control as yet uncommon. In response to the study of Victorian paintings, pupils clearly demonstrate their awareness of different interpretations of history. They understand, and can explain that, while William Collins presents an idyllic view of rural life in his painting 'Rustic Civility', the painting is, in fact, a 'fantasy': it masks the very real hardships endured by those who work the land, but it encourages landowners to feel comfortable about the lives of those who work for them.
93. In all years, pupils benefit from well chosen and well-planned educational visits to places of historical interest. In Year 3, pupils study the area immediately around the

school, noting changes of use in land and buildings over time. In Year 4, pupils visit the Roman remains in St Albans. In Year 5, during a visit to Castle Heddingham, pupils are involved in a town trail. They learn about the structure of Tudor buildings, about changes in use of various buildings in the town, about the kinds of work undertaken by the residents in Tudor times, and about the meaning of various Tudor symbols incorporated into houses by Tudor builders. Dressed in Tudor costume, pupils experience, through role play, what it is like to live in Tudor times. Whether using artefacts or visits as starting-points to stimulate historical enquiry, or whether pursuing independent research through books, pupils in all years show themselves adept at finding out about the past, and at asking, as well as answering, historical questions.

94. No lessons were observed. Nevertheless, the quality of the work seen is such that it is safe to conclude that the teaching of history is certainly having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are taught not simply 'what happened', but how and why, and there is very evident progression in their acquisition of key skills, knowledge and understanding. It is equally clear that teachers are well informed, and that they communicate their enthusiasm for history to their classes.
95. The co-ordinator has worked hard to make sure that the introduction of QCA guidance for the teaching of history has been accompanied by appropriate resources. She also monitors teachers' planning for the subject. The use of worksheets, criticised in the last OFSTED inspection report, has been reduced, and most work is suitably matched to pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Independent research, in particular, allows the more able pupils to produce high quality work, especially in Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinator has undertaken some very useful monitoring of standards in history and has collated evidence of attainment in the form of work samples at different National Curriculum levels by pupils throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. In the last inspection, provision and attainment in ICT were satisfactory. Since then the school has made good progress in improving its equipment, including the recent introduction of laptop computers to ensure greater access and opportunities for whole class teaching. This has ensured that the school has kept up to date with developments in technology and that it is better equipped to ensure access the revised national curriculum requirements. Standards in ICT are similar to those found in the last inspection. Standards on entry to the school vary, but overall are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 attainment is broadly in line with national expectations.
97. Pupils in Year 3 consolidate their skills and knowledge of computers through work designed to develop their confidence in the use of word processing. For example, they change images on the screen by placing them in different positions, changing the size, colour and styles of fonts and combining text with graphics. In Year 4, they confidently use the computer to find things out, for example, they have used a CD-ROM and the internet to find out about various kinds of musical instruments. Pupils in Year 5 are able to enter data on screen to create graphs and use these to extract information. They begin to develop the ability to question the plausibility of findings and recognise that poor quality information leads to unreliable results. In Year 6, pupils begin to enter formulae on spreadsheets and note what happens when one of the variables is changed. They access the internet in the course of their

research, for example, into the daily weather conditions in a Mexican Desert. The school makes broadly satisfactory provision for control technology through the use of logolab in conjunction with lego. However, there is scope to develop further its provision for control technology. There is also a need to develop pupils' capacity to develop, organise and present their work by combining different forms of information from a variety of sources, for example through the creation of a multimedia presentation.

98. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgment about the quality of teaching in ICT. However, in the lessons seen, the teaching was at least satisfactory and was sometimes good. The QCA scheme of work is used well to support planning and teachers have grown in confidence as a result of training. Work is appropriately targeted within National Curriculum levels, and the organisation and management of pupils give good opportunities for pupils to plan and collaborate together. They respond well to this and work sensibly together, sharing equipment and discussing ideas. When opportunities are given for pupils to apply their ICT skills as an integral part of their work in subjects across the curriculum, they extend their ICT capabilities and make good progress. However, the school appropriately recognises there is a need for more consistent and systematic use of ICT to support work in other subjects, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science, by capitalising on the school's acquisition of the new laptop computers.
99. The management and leadership of the subject are good, and the work of the co-ordinator has had a significant influence on the improvements that have been made. She has been well supported by the governors, one of whom has a particular interest and expertise in ICT. National guidance is being appropriately adapted to fit the school's needs and there are ongoing reviews to ensure that it is reflected in practice. The co-ordinator is appropriately qualified for the subject and uses her expertise well for the benefit of the school. There are good record keeping systems based on the very good local authority guidance.
100. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. However, the school's current software is not compatible with that of the new laptops and more needs to be done to develop resources for teachers to use in the course of demonstrations and instructions to the whole class.

MUSIC

101. The school has maintained the good standards in music which were identified in the last inspection. Pupils generally achieve well in all elements of the subject and make particularly good progress in the development of their singing skills. Pupils sing with very clear diction and very good control of pitch and dynamics. They clearly enjoy singing and their commitment when performing songs and hymns in assemblies enhances the spirituality of the occasions. The singing skills of pupils in the school choir are of a high quality, and the overall standard of singing in the school is very good. Music enjoys a high profile, and a significant proportion of pupils benefit from specialist tuition in either clarinet, piano, recorder or violin.
102. On entry to the school, pupils' overall standards in music are broadly in line with the expected standard. In Year 4, pupils achieve well when creating rhythmic patterns with their voices, and can maintain these patterns even when other groups are performing different patterns simultaneously. They respond quickly to their

teacher's directions and understand the role of the conductor. Year 4 pupils also make good progress when performing their own simple compositions which reflect the mood of a poem, and can create simple graphic scores of their music. In Year 5, pupils have a good understanding of musical vocabulary. They achieve well when composing their own music, for example, to interpret the atmosphere of different planets, and perform their music effectively using percussion instruments. Year 6 pupils have good skills in describing, comparing and judging a range of music. They understand that lyrics can have a social or cultural meaning. For example, pupils learn about the context of songs like 'Where have all the flowers gone', 'Candle in the wind' and 'Mandela day'; and can make informed judgements about the purposes of the songs, referring to their function to protest, remember or celebrate.

103. The quality of teaching is good in music and is reflected in pupils' good progress in the subject. Teachers are making effective use of the scheme of work for the subject, and organise their lessons well. They communicate their enthusiasm for music to the pupils and introduce and reinforce appropriate musical vocabulary. Teachers ensure that all the required elements of the music curriculum are covered, and provide pupils with well-judged instruction, as well as support and encouragement. They use an interesting range of recorded music to develop pupils' listening and appraising skills, and the pieces capture their interest. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes and their behaviour is very good in music lessons. Singing skills are taught particularly well by the music co-ordinator who leads whole-school singing practices as well as the enthusiastic school choir. Pupils benefit from listening to performances from musicians who visit the school and from regular opportunities to hear music at Watford School of Music, which is adjacent to the junior school building.
104. The music co-ordinator started at the school in September this year and has good subject knowledge. She acknowledges the excellent work of her predecessor and is building upon this. She has already provided teachers with good support in their planning, and has introduced a useful scheme of work to support their work. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model for her colleagues, through her effective teaching. She fosters pupils' enjoyment in the subject very well and provides expert guidance to help them to develop and refine their performance skills. Already it is clear she will promote even higher standards in the subject as she becomes more established in the school. There is a wide range of musical instruments, and they are in good condition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Standards in physical education are above average in Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards in gymnastics were found to be unsatisfactory. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points on entry to the school as a result of the school's effective provision and the good teaching they receive
106. The school's provision for physical education provides good opportunities for pupils to be creative, competitive and to face up to different challenges as individuals, in groups and in teams. Overall teaching in the school is good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, particularly in Year 6, and teaching is clearly focused on developing skills, knowledge and understanding. This has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make and the standards they achieve. Pupils thoroughly

enjoy their work and co-operate with each other well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show increasing precision and control when balancing, holding their position and travelling in a variety of ways in gymnastics. Pupils achieve well in games in Year 5 and 6 because they are taught skills and techniques systematically. This was well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson when the teacher's excellent organisation, demonstration and coaching were highly influential factors in improving pupils' skills in striking, trapping and passing a football. Similarly, in a Year 6 dance lesson, the teacher's highly effective planning and careful preparation resulted in pupils acquiring the skills they needed to create and perform an intricate and high quality circular dance routine based on the 'Dreamcatcher'. In this lesson, pupils demonstrated very high levels of concentration and creative energy as they worked at the edge of their capabilities, intellectually and physically. Pupils, throughout the school, are taught to swim in the school's pool and they have achieved standards that allow them to win awards at a local gala. Pupils in all year groups have an opportunity to take part in outdoor adventurous sports in the course of their visit to Cuffley Camp. There is particular emphasis on developing the skills of team-work through problem solving. For example, pupils are challenged to cross an imaginary river to an island using just two planks. This makes a valuable contribution to their personal development and to their social skills as they work together to help each other and discuss options and possibilities.

107. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is well qualified and has good links with the local community including schools, Watford Football Club and the Saracens Rugby Club. She has arranged appropriate training for members of staff and this has helped them develop confidence in the subject. There is good planning so that all pupils have access to a progression of skills in each element of the subject. The school has a reasonably sized hall, which is well used for gymnastics and dance. There is a good-sized field and satisfactory hard surfaced areas. The school has its own pool and this has a major impact on the progress that pupils make and the standards they attain in swimming.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Pupils' achievements are good in religious education and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In Year 6, pupils' standards are above those expected. This is because of a well thought out curriculum, which is embedded in the values of respect and thoughtfulness for others, which permeate the school.
109. Teaching in religious education is good overall. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured with good preparation of books, materials and resources to support pupils' learning. As a consequence, pupils understand that religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian and that other principal religions are also represented in their community. Pupils celebrate the major festivals of the Christian year, such as Christmas and Easter, and are also well aware of festivals in other religions such as Diwali and Eid. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the different ways in which faiths celebrate similar traditions such as harvest. For example, pupils in Year 3, learn about the Sukkot and the symbolism of the Etrog and the Lulav for the Jewish people.
110. As a result of their work on Sikhism, Bhuddism, Judaism and Islam, pupils begin to develop an understanding of the richness and diversity of religion and how believers express their faith in the way that they live their everyday family and community lives. There is particularly good use of the expertise within the school, for example the headteacher has a qualification in comparative religions and one of the teachers has travelled widely and is able to show slides, photographs and artefacts from other faith groups. Pupils of different faiths and cultures also contribute information from their own backgrounds to add to the pool of knowledge, for example, a pupil from Nigeria told the class about the way in which harvest is celebrated in the country of his birth.
111. Good opportunities to observe and handle a range of religious resources result in pupils acquiring an understanding of religious terminology, such the names of holy books, particular traditions, and artefacts within places of worship. They also result in the development of a deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose attached to them. Visits to the local church have helped pupils to grasp ideas such as the symbolism of water in baptism and why Jesus is represented as the light of the world. Close observations of Buddhist temples pictured in slides result in pupils developing an awareness of how followers of The Buddha tried to express their feelings through the beauty and majesty of these places, and how the symbols in building and art represent stages on the way to enlightenment.
112. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in religious education because they are well supported by classroom assistants, and teachers are skilled at asking questions and designing activities which ensure that they can take part. Pupils with EAL are appropriately supported by classroom assistants where necessary, and are fully included in lessons so that they make good progress at levels commensurate with their capabilities. All pupils, whatever, their faith backgrounds are able to take part in lessons. They are able to ask questions and talk openly with their teacher and classmates about their own beliefs because of the very good relationships and the atmosphere of mutual trust that exists throughout the school.
113. A significant feature of the best teaching is the teachers' depth knowledge of the subject matter. This results in excellent explanations and demonstrations, and very good use of open questions to check pupils' understanding, to help pupils reflect on

what they have heard and to encourage them to contribute their own ideas. Teachers have trusting relationships with pupils and this gives pupils the confidence to suggest ideas and raise questions of their own and also to share their own ideas and experiences. These ideas and suggestions are valued and then carefully built on them to extend pupils' understanding further. When considering matters of meaning and purpose in life, teachers often say that they do not have all the answers, and encourage the pupils to continue asking questions of themselves and others.

114. The subject is well managed and there is a clear programme for monitoring teachers' planning and pupils' achievements. There are sufficient good quality resources for the subject and good links with the local community, for example with local churches, are used well to enrich the curriculum. The subject makes a very good contribution to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.