

INSPECTION REPORT

BERNARD'S HEATH INFANT SCHOOL

St. Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117135

Headteacher: Mrs K Scruton

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Waters
13827

Dates of inspection: 27th - 30th March 2000

Inspection number: 197224
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandridge Road St. Albans Herts
Postcode:	AL1 4AP
Telephone number:	01727 852106
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Sharp
Date of previous inspection:	18/11/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anne Waters	Registered inspector	Science, Information technology, History, Geography, Special educational needs	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further
Eric Langford	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Iain Johnston	Team inspector	Mathematics, Religious education, Design and technology, Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
Cicely Deloughry	Team inspector	English, Art, Music, Under fives, English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Lynrose Marketing Limited

Bungalow Farmhouse
Six Mile Bottom
Newmarket
Suffolk
CB8 0TU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bernard's Heath Infant School is broadly average in size and provides full time education for boys and girls aged from four to seven and part time education for Nursery age pupils. There are currently 161 pupils on roll, 85 boys and 76 girls with a further 26 children attending the Nursery part-time.

Eight per cent of the pupils are from families belonging to ethnic minority groups. Thirteen pupils come from homes where English is an additional language. At present 27 pupils are included on the school's register of special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average. Seven of these pupils are between stages three and five with needs ranging from moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties to more specific requirements. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. Fifteen per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals which is broadly average. The average class size is 27. The attainment level of pupils on entry to the Nursery is very wide but overall is generally in line with that expected for their age. Many have good levels of language but their mathematical skills are lower. By the time they join the Reception class their attainment is more even and in line with the national average but below that of the county. At the time of the inspection, 55 pupils were under the age of five.

The school serves a mixed population with families from all walks of life. The school's population is very mobile. During the past year 37 pupils left and 21 pupils joined the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The quality of teaching is generally good. The school makes good provision for its pupils enabling them to achieve good standards in English with especially high standards in reading. It is particularly effective in enabling pupils of lower and average ability to achieve their full potential, but the more able pupils could do better in mathematics and science. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The headteacher, staff and governors work together successfully to promote pupils' academic and wider development. The school's income is about average and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve good standards in English, particularly in reading.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good. It is never less than satisfactory.
- The school is highly successful in promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, and their behaviour and personal development are of a very good standard. They enjoy coming to school.
- Excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs results in these pupils making very good progress.
- The school provides a high level of care and support for its pupils that effectively promotes their personal development.
- The school has established a very close partnership with parents and fully involves them in the education of their children.
- The leadership of the school by the headteacher supported by the staff and governing body ensures that the aims of the school are put into practice.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics and science.
- The progress of more able pupils particularly in mathematics and science.
- Curriculum planning to support the consistent development of knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects other than English, information technology and physical education.
- Curriculum planning for the children under the age of five.
- The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress.
- The management structure of the school.
- The strategies for monitoring and evaluating the school's work to determine what works well and what could be improved.
- The impact of the curriculum co-ordinators on the educational development of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues identified in the last inspection in November 1996, although further action is required in some areas. Some of the concerns raised in the last report have been satisfactorily resolved or are currently being addressed. Improvements have been made to the school development planning process. Appraisal is now in place and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have targets, which are regularly reviewed. Some improvements have been made to planning in order to provide a greater degree of consistency for pupils in different classes especially those in Year 1. However, teaching plans and schemes of work to ensure progression in pupils' learning are still not securely in place for all subjects. There have also been changes in areas other than those identified as key issues. Standards in science are lower than they were reported to be at the last inspection. Most of the strengths, which were highlighted in the last report, have been maintained and developed.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	B	A	A	A
Writing	B	B	C	C
Mathematics	C	C	C	C

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

This table shows in the 1999 end of key stage tests, pupils' performance in reading was well above both the national average and that of similar schools. In writing and mathematics pupils' performance was broadly in line with the national average and with similar schools.

National test results for the past three years show that attainment in reading has been consistently above average. It recovered from a dip in 1997 and has continued to rise in excess of the national trend. Attainment in writing has been consistently above average rising in a similar proportion to the national trend until last year when there was no noticeable

improvement. It is now close to the national average. Attainment in mathematics has not shown any improvement and pupils' performance in relation to national trends has shown a steady decline. It has fallen from being above average in 1996 to being in line by 1999. The school is setting realistic targets for the improvement of standards in writing, mathematics and science and is making satisfactory progress towards achieving them.

Inspection findings are consistent with the test results for reading and show that writing has improved and is now above average. Particular strengths are in pupils' speaking and listening skills, the very good level of reading and accurate spelling and use of punctuation. There are early indications that pupils' attainment in the number aspect of mathematics is also improving. The main area for development in mathematics is in aspects concerned with space, shape and measure and in the provision of practical activities to consolidate number concepts. In science almost all pupils attain standards in line with national expectations but very few pupils reach the higher levels. Pupils' competence in the use of information technology is above the level expected for their age and, in religious education, their attainment meets the expectations of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Standards in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education are at expected levels and pupils attain good standards in music. Children under the age of five make satisfactory progress during the early years and achieve the targets set for them in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes. They are eager to come to school, are well motivated from an early age and enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are helpful and polite and respond very well to opportunities to take on responsibilities. Those pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
42 lessons seen overall	Good	Good	

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory. It was very good in 16 per cent of lessons and good in 48 per cent of lessons seen. The teaching of literacy skills is good and as a result, standards in English when pupils leave the school at seven are high and better than those of similar schools. Numeracy skills are well taught and the teaching of mental mathematics is good. The particular strengths are to be found in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good in all other subjects, and teachers and support staff work effectively together to meet the needs of pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory for the under fives and good for Key Stage 1. The school provides a broad and stimulating curriculum which is enriched by extra curricular activities, visits and visitors. The development of literacy skills is strongly emphasised but there is insufficient emphasis on the development of mathematical skills. There is no coherent overview of the curriculum, and planning does not support the consistent development of knowledge, understanding and skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Support from teachers, classroom and care assistants ensures that pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Effective support from specialist teachers and class teachers ensures that very good progress is made, especially for those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school develops pupils' confidence, reliability, effort and self-esteem and very successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very good level of care and concern for pupils' well being and safety. However, there are some weaknesses in the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress, and in the use made of assessment information to guide curricular planning. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and there are excellent procedures in place for promoting attendance.
Partnership with parents	The school has very good links with parents and involves them well in the life of the school. Many parents help out in school regularly and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Parents support their children very well in their reading at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and has a clear and determined vision for the future development of the school. She has created a good ethos, a strong team spirit and a very good partnership with parents. Pupils, staff and parents are valued and respected. The deputy headteacher and subject coordinators work hard to support other teachers but their leadership and management roles are not sufficiently well defined to enable them to lead developments in their areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very interested and involved in the work of the school. Through close involvement with the school they informally monitor its work. However, arrangements to monitor the quality of

	education and standards achieved have yet to be formalised.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching and learning are monitored by the headteacher on an informal basis. There are no effective systems in place for monitoring and evaluating curriculum development or the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' attainment. Subject co-ordinators have few opportunities to monitor pupils' work and evaluating teaching is not part of their job description. There are systems in place to monitor the school's work and overall effectiveness. However, they are insufficiently rigorous and do not ensure that what the school does well is built upon and that areas for development are highlighted.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of all resources. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. Educational priorities are well supported through good financial planning.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There are enough appropriately qualified teachers and a generous number of support staff for the number of pupils on roll. The accommodation is attractive and well maintained. There is a good level of learning resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are generally satisfied with the wide range of learning opportunities. • They think that learning is made fun and that their children are well challenged. • The school teaches good social skills and a respect for all cultures. • The children are well cared for and looked after in a very happy environment. • They appreciate the good opportunities to learn about their children's progress through the consultation evenings. • The school listens well to parents' concerns or suggestions and acts promptly on any matters raised by parents. • The school works well with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of children in Reception and Year 1 would like to have a reading record similar to that provided for pupils in Year 2. • Some parents are concerned that the ratio of adults to children under the age of five is not as favourable in the Reception class as it is in the Nursery.

Inspection judgements confirmed the good opinions that parents have of the school. The additional classroom support for the younger Reception class is restricted mainly to the afternoons. The school has agreed to re-evaluate the provision for the home/ school reading record for Reception and Year 1 pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On admission to the Nursery, the level of attainment is very wide and although many children have good levels of language and confident social skills, their mathematical skills are relatively under-developed. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning and most are well equipped to cope with transfer to the Reception class. The baseline assessment shows, that on entry to the Reception class, whilst the attainment level covers a wide range, attainment is more even. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and by the time they are five years old the majority of pupils have achieved the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in all six key areas of their learning, with many exceeding these standards in language and literacy and physical development. They move smoothly into the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum programmes of study.
2. The school's 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results show that pupils' attainment in reading is well above the national average and their attainment in writing and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools pupils' performance is well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. The end of key stage test results for the past three years show that attainment in reading has been consistently above average. It recovered from a dip in 1997 and has risen in excess of the national trend. Attainment in writing was above average and rising in a similar proportion to the national trend although in 1999 there was no noticeable improvement and attainment is now close to the national average. Attainment in mathematics has not shown any improvement over the last three years and in relation to the national trend has steadily declined.
3. There are no tests in science but on the basis of teacher assessment in 1999, almost all pupils attained the nationally expected standard (Level 2) and this was well above the national average. However, the proportion reaching the higher level was below average.
4. The inspection findings confirm the results of the National Curriculum tests in reading and indicate that standards in writing are improving, particularly in terms of spelling and the use of punctuation. Pupils' literacy skills are of a high standard. They are promoted very effectively in literacy lessons and consistently supported and effectively developed as part of the work in other subjects. Standards of reading are very well promoted by the skilled teaching of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and by the very good level of support given by parents at home. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed through the consistent insistence of teachers throughout the school on careful listening. Pupils speak clearly to the rest of the class and some pupils are very articulate. Pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences, using an appropriate variety of forms, including letters and poems. Most write correctly with good levels of punctuation and spelling. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in English as they move through the school although some of the more able pupils do not attain the standards of which they are capable in writing. More attention to the guided writing element of the literacy strategy would give pupils more practice in restructuring and improving their work.
5. Inspection findings indicate that in mathematics, attainment is now better than suggested by last year's test results but is still only average. At the end of the key stage, standards are good in number but only average in the other elements of the mathematics curriculum. More could be done to raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils have more practical opportunities to enable them to consolidate their learning. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in the practical application of

their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum and in situations which reflect real life situations.

6. Inspection findings indicate that, in science, the attainment level of almost all pupils is in line with national expectation and most pupils have a secure basis of factual knowledge and understanding. However, pupils' attainment is relatively weaker in the experimental and investigative element of science. More able pupils have little opportunity to undertake further investigations of discovery and as a result few pupils reach the higher levels.
7. By the end of the key stage, most pupils achieve standards in information technology that are above those expected for their age. Pupils have good keyboard skills, and open and close programmes with little adult intervention. Most pupils are familiar with the skills of entering text and simple editing procedures. Many are able to store, retrieve and print information without help. Pupils' attainment in religious education at the end of the key stage is in line with the expectations of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus.
8. Most pupils reach the standards expected for their age in art, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. Standards in music are good.
9. Pupils of all levels of attainment make satisfactory and often good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans and in the development of their confidence and self esteem. This is a direct consequence of the good quality teaching they receive and the suitability of the targets that are set for them. In most lessons group activities are planned for at least three different levels so that there is suitable work for the full ability range. Lower ability pupils benefit significantly from the amount of group work they do and from the good quality support they sometimes receive. However, although the more able pupils make satisfactory progress in most aspects of their learning, they are not always enabled to move on as quickly as they could because some of the tasks set for them do not provide enough challenge. Currently a small group of more able pupils is being given extra support in mathematics during the lunchtime and this is proving beneficial.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school and display very good attitudes. Most show an eagerness to learn, listen well and demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work. The majority of pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic learners who sustain good levels of concentration during lessons. They show a very good degree of confidence and self-discipline in undertaking their work and they collaborate well with others in group and paired activities.
11. The standard of pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good and serves to enhance the developing relationships between staff and pupils. The well structured behaviour management systems and rewards for good effort are clearly understood by pupils, applied in a consistent manner by staff and are proving to be very effective in supporting the ongoing personal development of the pupils.
12. There have been no instances of exclusions since the last inspection and there was no evidence of bullying during the inspection. Pupils are aware of the need to inform adults of any oppressive behaviour and incidents are quickly identified and swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.
13. Pupils are very friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors and

demonstrate by their actions that they know right from wrong. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others and good examples were seen in the school of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils, in particular to those pupils who had physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

14. Of worthy note are the very good relationships that exist between pupils and adults in the school with, for example friendly greetings being regularly exchanged and doors being held open for others to pass through. Pupils happily take turns without question, and willingly share. They treat property and learning resources with care. A welcoming and warm family atmosphere of consideration, care and tolerance of others permeates the whole school.
15. Pupils willingly accept and undertake responsibilities during their time in the school, many of which are personalised by the teachers in each classroom. These make a significant contribution to the promotion of their personal development and social skills during their time in school. Of note are the weekly paired reading sessions between the older pupils and the children in the Nursery and the manner in which the older pupils help the younger pupils during the lunchtime and at playtime, Year 2 pupils fully accept their responsibility for presenting good role models to the younger pupils in the way they act and behave in school. This greatly benefits pupils and enhances their collective personal development and learning opportunities.
16. The very good attitudes, relationships and behaviour demonstrated by the pupils are a strong feature of the school and contribute significantly to the pupils' social and academic progress and development. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection.
17. Attendance is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school, arrive punctually and settle quickly into their classrooms.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. Sixty four per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better and 16 per cent of these were very good. The remaining thirty six per-cent of lessons were satisfactory. As a result, standards in English when pupils leave the school at seven, are better than those of similar schools and pupils achieve standards that are at least appropriate and in some cases above the expected level for their age in all other subjects. The particular strengths are to be found in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language.
19. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. This is mainly because of the extra training that teachers have taken part in during the last two years. The positive impact of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy is very apparent, and teachers have incorporated some of the methods of organisation into their teaching of other subjects. The biggest improvement has been in the teaching of children who are under the age of five.
20. There are no particular weaknesses in the teaching of any one subject. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy. Teachers have a secure understanding of the literacy skills which should be taught. Reading is taught very well. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the teaching of phonics and strategies for deciphering new and unfamiliar words. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented into the curriculum and teachers use appropriate planning linked to the strategy, but not all the classes are following the structure every day. The application of the strategy is instrumental in the maintenance of high standards in literacy, particularly in reading and

the improvement in spelling and the use of punctuation in written work. However, guided writing is not securely included within the literacy hour.

21. Teachers have begun to implement the Numeracy Strategy but it is not yet secure throughout the school. Not all classes have a daily lesson for mathematics and not all teachers are making the most of the guidance in the numeracy framework. Planning does not always focus teachers' attention on what it is that pupils are expected to learn. The school is particularly effective in the approach to teaching number. Teachers and pupils use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their own strategies for solving simple computation. However, not enough attention is given to providing opportunities for pupils to perform independent mathematical investigations or to engage in more practical activities in situations which are as near as possible to everyday life experiences. Furthermore the balance across the various aspects of mathematics is not yet established in long term planning.
22. In science, the teaching is satisfactory overall and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. There is a wide range of work and a suitable emphasis is placed on practical work. The most effective learning takes place when lessons are planned to build on what pupils already know and teachers ask open ended questions which skilfully challenge pupils to think things out for themselves. On occasions, relative weaknesses occur when learning objectives are not clear enough and the practical activity is merely an illustration to support previous learning. On these occasions pupils make little progress.
23. The teaching of information technology is mainly good. Teachers use good strategies for teaching the basic skills. This promotes pupils' learning and enables them to improve their competence. They make good use of information technology to support work in all subjects and they develop pupils' capabilities in the use of information and communication technology through cross curricular work. The teaching of religious education is good. The work is based appropriately on the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus and teachers make good use of religious artefacts and other resources.
24. The teaching of the children under the age of five in the Nursery and the Reception class is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to pupils' needs. Teaching is particularly good in language and literacy, physical development and in promoting pupils' personal and social development. Adults and support staff praise pupils' efforts and explain why they have done well. Skilful questioning increases children's knowledge and vocabulary. Effective teaching of personal development leads to very good behaviour and increased self esteem. Day to day assessment is good and teachers make careful observations of their pupils and try to ensure that they match the next stage of learning to their needs. However, teachers' planning sometimes lacks focus and it is not clear exactly what the learning objectives are. On other occasions the activities are over directed and this restricts the capacity of children to express themselves imaginatively and to take responsibility for their learning.
25. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers take good account of the targets for these pupils when planning and preparing their lessons. The targets in the individual education plans are clear and achievable. In literacy and numeracy sessions pupils are grouped according to their levels of attainment and in most cases this ensures that tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils receive high quality support from either skilled teachers or non-teaching staff. There is very good liaison between all support and teaching staff.

26. Pupils with English as an additional language are taught well, both by the teachers in school and from the outside support. The learning is good and the pupils make very good progress in acquiring both written and spoken language.
27. There are some common strengths in teaching across the school. In all classes teachers manage pupils with a minimum of fuss and have appropriately high expectations of behaviour. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong and most lessons are characterised by a purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils co-operate well. Teachers prepare lessons well and give clear instructions and link new learning to previous knowledge. In these good lessons teachers expect full concentration at all times and pupils know this. Sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum give teachers confidence and is reflected in their good use of questioning to lead pupils' learning.
28. Although there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection, it could be improved further. There are several reasons why the more ordinary teaching does not promote maximum progress for some groups of pupils. Learning is less effective when the teacher does not sufficiently match activities to pupils' needs' and there is not enough challenge for the more able pupils. Sometimes, especially in some mathematics lessons, the teaching is too directed and the teacher retains more control than necessary. There is insufficient provision for pupils to make choices for themselves. This hampers the development of pupils' independence. On occasions there is too great a reliance on the use of worksheets and paper recording at the expense of practical activities and investigation. These aspects of teaching limit pupils' learning and the standards they attain. Furthermore, time is not always used to the best advantage and lessons sometimes start late and valuable teaching time is lost while pupils have their milk or come in late from playtime. On other occasions the sessions are too long and pupils' attention and concentration span is stretched to the limit. Marking provides encouragement and praise but sometimes does not show pupils how well they are getting on or what they need to do to improve. In most classes, there are examples of work which is not produced to the pupils' best standards but which has been acknowledged as satisfactory by the teacher. This does not serve to develop a sufficient sense of pride in their work for a good number of pupils.

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

29. The school fully meets statutory requirements in respect of the curriculum it provides and ensures that all pupils are treated equally and fairly. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school are good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory for children under the age of five. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of English, sometimes at the expense of other subjects such as mathematics, and this results in a slight imbalance. However, teachers' imaginative use of the full National Curriculum gives pupils a range of good quality learning experiences. The curriculum is stimulating and is further enriched by extra-curricular activities including visits to neighbouring places of interest, visits by people such as parents and friends who bring a further dimension to pupils' learning. The school has arranged visits by a dentist and a nurse to talk to pupils. This has had a positive impact upon pupils' knowledge and understanding. During the inspection there was a very stimulating visit by a member of the Jewish community to talk to parents and pupils about the feast of the Passover and the significance of artefacts and traditions. Currently members of Watford Football Club are coaching Year 2 pupils in football skills. This good provision is financially supported by the school's Parents' Association.

30. However, there are some weaknesses in the way the curriculum is planned. Policies are in place for all subjects but there is not a clear and coherent overview of the whole curriculum to identify how continuous and increasing challenge will be ensured. In response to the last inspection, the school has made some progress towards addressing the issues raised, but much work still remains to be done. At that time there were no detailed schemes of work in place. The school has begun to use some of the curriculum suggestions made by recognised national bodies and the LEA but has yet to devise schemes of work which are specific to the school and reflect more accurately the needs of the pupils. Although all subjects are taught in all classes, there is no effective whole school approach to the subject matter to be covered or when and how different aspects are to be taught. The teaching of subjects through a topic based approach in Reception and Year 1 classes, increases the need for a clear indication of what the school needs to teach, and how and when the development of skills should be tackled.
31. The curriculum for the children under the age of five is planned suitably to take account of the recommended six key areas of learning and is satisfactory. There is a weakness, however, in the both Nursery and Reception classes in that, as yet, there is no agreed scheme of work to enable teachers and children to work consistently towards the attainment of the Desirable Learning Objectives for children of that age. The newly appointed Nursery and Reception class teachers have worked together to devise their own programme of work. They have made some appropriate changes to the way the curriculum for children under the age of five is planned and taught but this is still in the early stages of development. There is still too little provision for learning through discovery and experimentation, and for children to show initiative and make choices about what they will do.
32. There are no mixed age group classes in the school at present and although attempts have been made to ensure that pupils in the same year group in parallel classes receive similar opportunities, the arrangements are not yet secure and in practice there are some differences. Despite teachers planning together for long term aims, these are not supported by a whole school approach and programmes of work which cater for pupils throughout the key stage. Long term planning is not fully effective and short term planning does not follow an agreed approach. This results in some variation in experiences for pupils of the same age in different classes and therefore some disparity in outcome across the year group. Currently, there is insufficient guidance to inform teachers' planning. The current arrangements do not ensure a consistent approach to the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge in subjects such as science, design and technology, history and geography.
33. The school has effective strategies for teaching basic skills in both English and mathematics. The National Literacy Strategy has been appropriately implemented and, with the good provision for the teaching of reading and other aspects of language development, this has had a significant impact upon the standards which pupils attain. The school has begun to implement the National Numeracy Strategy but this is not yet fully secure. The present arrangements do not effectively ensure that the structure is firmly in place in all classes and that all pupils are enabled to fully develop their knowledge, understanding and numeracy skills as they move through the school. There is no overall curriculum plan for mathematics which clearly identify the stages of development and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in practical and investigative mathematical activities.
34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. All who work with the pupils are involved in the preparation and review of individual education plans. The work is very closely matched to the needs of individual pupils and they receive high quality support throughout the school. Well considered arrangements mean that pupils receive

most of their support in their own classrooms and withdrawal from classroom activities is kept to an absolute minimum. The school provides well for pupils whose mother tongue is not English, and there is good support for pupils from minority ethnic groups. These excellent arrangements markedly improve these pupils' access to all learning opportunities and enable them to participate in all school activities.

35. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Appropriate attention is paid to the provision of sex education and pupils' awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs is raised effectively as part of a science topic on healthy eating and the proper use of medicines.
36. The good quality curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Daily school assemblies are an important and valued part of school life and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
37. Spiritual development is very well promoted in assemblies and through the religious education programme. They very effectively encourage pupils to develop a growing insight and appreciation of life and the world around them. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in quiet reflection, to grow in self-knowledge and to gain confidence in sharing feelings. Pupils are taught the values and beliefs of the Christian faith and there are good opportunities to learn about other faiths, including those of pupils attending the school. The school successfully provides opportunities to develop pupils' sense of awe and wonder. For example, pupils were fascinated and filled with awe when some newly hatched chickens were brought into school and when they looked closely at the developing tadpoles.
38. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The pupils are helped in many ways particularly through stories and by the manner in which all the adults in school provide good role models, to understand the principles which distinguish right from wrong. They are provided with many opportunities which enable them to tolerate each other's point of view and to respect opinions which are different from their own.
39. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development which is effectively enhanced through everyday interactions between pupils and adults. The promotion of values such as friendship and caring for others forms an important aspect of school life. Pupils are encouraged to work well together in class and to play amicably in the playground. The school provides many extra-curricular activities such as singing groups and ocarina groups. These are well supported and greatly enhance pupils' social development.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Visits are made to places of interest and visitors are invited into school to work with pupils. Music is an important part of the daily assembly and this helps to promote pupils' cultural awareness as they become familiar with works of composers such as Vivaldi and Tchaikovsky. Pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of other cultures in many curriculum areas including religious education, art and music. Pupils in Year 2 performed a traditional Hindu dance in praise of the coming of Spring. Such opportunities effectively help pupils to become aware of the rich diversity of cultures within the wider community.
41. Very good links and close working arrangements have been established with the local pre-school groups which provide for the smooth induction of new pupils into Nursery and mainstream education. The school has very good and constructive links with other schools in the area. There is a good relationship with the neighbouring junior school and teachers regularly visit to observe lessons and discuss curriculum provision.
42. The school promotes a caring and positive learning environment within which staff provide equality of opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and

social background. Staff are alert to the differing needs and capabilities of their pupils and teachers plan and deliver a standard of education that fully embraces the equality of opportunity to all. Very good use is made of language translations to ensure school related information and signs around the school can be easily read and understood by pupils and adults who do not have English as their first language. Effective systems are in place to monitor and review the practice of equality of opportunity in the school and to ensure that the full range of learning opportunities is made available to all.

43. Overall the contribution of the community to the pupils' learning is good. A wide range of educational, cultural and environmental visits are well planned and organised to support the pupils' learning and personal development. The staff make very good use of professionals in the community and invite them to the school to talk with the pupils on aspects of their personal health and safety. The school regularly accepts students on work placements and students from teacher training colleges and their involvement in the school has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Of worthy note are the school's links with the local elderly community at Christmas and Harvest time and the considerable benefits both the pupils and residents gain through this interaction.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school's provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of the pupils is very good and is a strength of the school. The good features reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and further improved. However, there are some weaknesses in relation to assessment procedures and the use made of information gathered to inform curriculum planning.
45. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. Staff are well trained and alert to the need for regularly monitoring the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care. All staff respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal queries raised with them by pupils.
46. Very effective strategies have been established to identify and support those pupils who have special educational needs and for the ongoing review of their targets and progress in consultation with their parents.
47. The school has established very good health and safety procedures. Very good arrangements are in place for the effective management and reporting of pupils' injuries occurring during the school day. Pupils and adults are fully aware of the need to work safely and all demonstrate very good health and safety practice.
48. Regular fire evacuation drills and health and safety inspections are undertaken with all reported recommendations being considered and acted upon by the governors. The school premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness. The whole school site is well maintained and provides a very safe and secure environment for both pupils and adults alike.
49. An excellent range of systems are in place for recording pupils' attendance and absences. These incorporate whole school recording and monitoring procedures to report on and manage incidents of lateness and ease of access to individual pupil's absence data and past trends.
50. The very good and established behaviour management routines help to enhance and promote the self image of pupils and contribute greatly to their very good attitudes to learning. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school has effective systems in place to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour. The comprehensive behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each

classroom to provide each pupil with a meaningful focus of the school's expectations and rewards for good behaviour. The clear, simple and well displayed behaviour rules are understood by pupils and parents, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and successfully used to promote the very good behaviour to be seen in and around the school. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or harassment of pupils. Pupils know of the need to inform staff of any inappropriate behaviour by others and incidents in the past are judged by pupils and parents to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.

51. Teachers know their pupils very well and are sensitive to the pupils' individual needs and make good provision to support them in their learning and personal development. The school has a friendly atmosphere and pupils are very willing to talk to teachers and to visitors. All staff display a high level of care and concern for the pupils and this is reflected in the very good rapport and respect that exists between pupils and staff. A good example of this caring attitude is the way jugs of fresh water and beakers are placed in each of the classrooms to provide the pupils with easy access to suitable drinking water. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and have the confidence and independence to raise any queries and concerns they may have with staff.
52. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are insufficiently developed. The children are formally assessed when they are admitted to the Nursery, again when joining the Reception class, and at the end of Key Stage 1. The informal methods of assessment that teachers employ are good and teachers use this knowledge to group and regroup the classes and to effectively match the work to the pupils' needs. The school is to be commended on the procedures for setting individual targets for pupils in their mathematics and English work. The retention of samples of pupils' work, together with detailed reports of the parent and teacher consultations in an individual portfolio, gives a good summary picture of pupils' achievements. However, the school does not have a range of formal assessment procedures to measure attainment and to track pupils' progress or a means of providing a clear, coherent picture of pupils' development as they move up through the school.
53. Teachers are very aware of the needs and problems of all the pupils in their care especially those with special needs. The school fully complies with the Code of Practice and liaises well with external agencies. Pupils' individual education plans are well written and contain precise details with realistic and achievable targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has established a very good partnership with parents and successfully promotes parental involvement in the work of the school. The very positive features highlighted in the previous report have been successfully built upon and further developed. The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a good quality of care and education.
55. The very good level of parental involvement in the working of the school has a positive impact on improving the quality of the pupils' learning environment. The school welcomes and actively encourages all parents to develop a partnership approach in the furtherance of their children's learning. Of worthy note is the use of voluntary helpers in the school. Teachers greatly appreciate the contribution of parents and helpers who provide good quality support and input to pupils' learning, both within the school and on out-of-school activities. The active Parents' Association provides valuable support for the school and its organised fund raising events are well attended and facilitate informal exchanges between teachers and parents about pupils' progress and achievements.

56. The quality and range of information provided to parents is very good and shows improvement since the last inspection report. Parents are kept well informed on a regular basis on all aspects of school life, from school events and pupils' activities to curricular details and pupils' achievements. Good use is made of the classroom windows to display "reminder notes" and playground blackboard notices provide parents with daily update information. Staff are available to speak with parents as appropriate at the end of the school day and are willing to meet with parents by appointment to discuss in more detail any concerns they may have regarding their child's education. The formal consultation meetings are well organised and provide good opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress, targets and achievements. Parents are also invited to view the children's books and see their work on display. Annual progress reports provide detailed and meaningful information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and are highly valued by parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The leadership and management are good and make a significant contribution to the pupils' achievements and their well being. The school's aims are very well reflected in its work. The headteacher provides very strong and purposeful leadership and has clear and determined views about the educational direction of the school. She is well supported by staff and governors and has successfully developed an effective team which has a shared sense of purpose. The headteacher places great importance on the involvement of all staff in a shared dialogue about the work of the school and future developments, and they greatly appreciate this. This collegiate approach and the other strong features were highlighted in the previous report and have been well maintained. However, whilst this management approach is successful in creating a caring and happy ethos, it does have some weaknesses and is not fully effective in identifying areas for development and in bringing about improvements. There is not an effective management structure in place with a clear picture of the roles and responsibilities. The extent of delegation to staff with management responsibilities is unsatisfactory and there is no clear picture of how specific responsibilities are to be carried out. Governors are not yet sufficiently involved in the monitoring process and this results in a lack of sharp focus on the cause and effects of trends over time and the impact of new initiatives on pupils' progress. Although there are some systems in place to monitor the school's work and its overall effectiveness, they are insufficiently rigorous.
58. The governing body came into existence at the end of the previous term following the separation of the former joint governing body for the infant and junior schools. Some members were formerly on the joint governing body and have served both the infant and junior schools for several years. Led by a capable chair, rapid progress has been made in a relatively short period of time in establishing new committee structures and defining clearly the governors' terms of reference. Many governors are particularly generous with their time and work hard and effectively in the interests of the pupils. There is a high level of commitment from all governors including the chair. The special educational needs governor takes an active interest and meets regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator to be updated on the school's provision. The governing body has already had presentations from members of staff about areas of curriculum. A very good working relationship has been established and the governing body works closely with the head teacher and staff to fulfil its legal responsibilities. It meets government requirements for supporting initiatives such as special needs and the implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.
59. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching, learning and the curriculum, although broadly satisfactory, lack rigour. Teaching, in the main, is observed informally

but there is no formal arrangement for evaluating and feeding back information to teachers about their teaching. Recently there has been some planned observation of teaching, with a main focus on literacy and numeracy with feedback to individual teachers but there has been only limited whole staff consideration of the monitoring findings. Those teachers with specific curriculum responsibilities do not have an effective role in monitoring teaching or in monitoring the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning, although support and guidance is offered if colleagues request it. With a few notable exceptions such as information technology, religious education and physical education, co-ordinators have not been empowered to directly lead the development of their subject. There is not a strong culture of analysing performance within the school and consequently the areas on which the school needs to concentrate are not always identified. The headteacher, when not involved in a regular teaching commitment, visits classes and this provides her with an overview of teaching and the curriculum. In addition, the governing body has introduced a system of allocating designated governors to subject areas. They liaise with relevant subject co-ordinators and visit classrooms. This is a very recent initiative but when it is fully established should provide them with a valuable insight into curriculum matters and a good awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school's strategy for appraisal is satisfactory and both teaching and non-teaching staff have personal targets which are regularly reviewed. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when it was identified as an area of weakness.

60. The school development planning process is effective and there is good involvement of all staff in the identification of priorities and the action needed for improvement. The educational priorities and targets in the School Development Plan are costed and provide a clear focus for the review and evaluation of past spending decisions. The newly formed governing body has established good procedures for monitoring expenditure against educational priorities and for its involvement in strategic decision making for the future.
61. Financial planning is effective in supporting the school's educational priorities. However the precise and considered planning in the allocation and use of resources is compromised by the admission arrangement known as "continuing interest" which is in operation locally, and the impact this has with ever changing number of pupils on roll. The school has rightly exercised financial prudence over recent years and planned for a larger than normal contingency budget in order to maintain expenditure commitments within the estimated income limits.
62. Specific grants, for example those for raising the attainment of pupils from ethnic minorities and traveller families (EMTAG) are well used to support and promote the learning and development of pupils in school. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs is well managed and used to maximise the extent of quality support and education provided to these children.
63. Good reporting and control systems are in place, which ensure the effective monitoring and management of the school's expenditure. Electronic accounting procedures are efficiently used by the head teacher and the school secretary to manage the financial expenditure and to provide the head teacher and governors with up to date budget information reports.
64. The governing body is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of education and academic standards. The school has embraced the principles of best value and makes good use of these in its evaluation and assessment of the use of school resources in relation to agreed educational priorities. Competitive tendering is actively practised in respect of all school purchases and the governors have set strict criteria for the evaluation and selection of chosen suppliers.

65. There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers who bring a good blend of experience and interests to the school. They are deployed in a flexible and effective manner to make best use of their skills. All full time teachers have at least one additional responsibility over and above their classroom teaching duties. Teachers have job descriptions which are agreed, but which are very general and do not properly define their duties, especially with regard to curriculum development. The provision of support staff and classroom assistants is good. They are well qualified for the duties they have to perform and work well with the teachers to ensure effective support. They contribute significantly to the quality of pupils' learning experiences. However there is only limited additional support available each morning for the children under the age of five in the Reception class. Of worthy note is the effective use of part time staff to help raise the attainment levels of pupils for whom English is a second language and those pupils identified as having special educational needs. The school secretary, caretaker, catering staff and mid-day supervisors all play an important role in ensuring the effective day to day running of the school.
66. The accommodation is good and is effectively managed. It provides an interesting and stimulating learning environment with spacious and well decorated classrooms. The internal decoration of the school is aesthetically pleasing and good use is made of carpets and bright colours to give a warm and welcoming feel to the school. The accommodation is greatly enhanced by the quality of the display. The library is well decorated and provided with comfortable furniture which encourages pupils to browse.
67. The external fabric of the school is in good order with no signs of vandalism, graffiti or litter. The playground provides well for the imaginative play activities of the pupils. There are floor marked games, Wendy houses and fixed play adventure apparatus. There is a good provision of seats and areas for pupils to talk and enjoy quiet moments of relaxation.
68. The range and quality of educational resources are good. All areas of the curriculum are well supplied with books, artefacts, videos, and equipment necessary for the effective learning and development of the pupils. A particular strength is the excellent range of resources to support the development of language and literacy. All resources are appropriately stored and are easily accessible to teachers and pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to build on the existing good practice, rectify the weaknesses and improve the quality of education, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

1) raise standards in mathematics and science particularly those of the more able by:

- securely implementing all elements of the National Numeracy Strategy in all classes,
- providing more opportunities for practical and investigative work in all classes,
- ensuring that there are daily mathematics sessions in all classes,
(paragraphs 33, 94, 97, 103, 105)

2) improve curriculum planning to support the consistent development of knowledge skills and understanding and enable all pupils to make enough progress and attain the standards of which they are capable by:

- providing a programme of work for the under fives which takes full account of the national guidance and provides opportunities for children to initiate activities and to learn through exploration,
- providing a coherent long term overview of how the National Curriculum is to be taught across the school,
- establishing and implementing programmes of work in all areas of the curriculum in order to form a secure foundation from which to plan so that pupils systematically acquire skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school,
(paragraphs 4,5,6,9,30,31,71)

3) ensure that there are effective whole school procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and monitoring of their progress and make better use of this information to inform curriculum planning,

(paragraphs 52)

4) strengthen the leadership and management of the school by:

- clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of all staff with leadership and management roles, especially curriculum co-ordinators,
- making job descriptions more specific,
- ensuring that the necessary support and guidance is given for staff with management roles to effectively lead and manage their areas,
(paragraphs 57,59,65,91,99,106)

5) implement a thorough system of school evaluation which:

- involves governors, headteacher and staff in frequent and well informed analysis of school performance,
- leads to the identification of priorities for improvement,
- ensures the continuous raising of standards,
(paragraphs 57,59)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	16	48	36			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13.5	161
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.9

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	28	27	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	23	24
	Girls	27	25	23
	Total	51	48	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93(85)	87(89)	85(89)
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	28
	Girls	26	25	26
	Total	50	51	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91(91)	93(81)	98(81)
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	0
White	150
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
--------------------------------	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	338571
Total expenditure	347940
Expenditure per pupil	1803
Balance brought forward from previous year	30558
Balance carried forward to next year	21189

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	86

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	50	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	35	8	1	3
The teaching is good.	72	26	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	38	4	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	17	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	34	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	77	21	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	30	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	29	20	2	17

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. Children under the age of five are taught for five mornings a week in the Nursery or full time in the Reception classes. At the time of the inspection there were 27 children in the Nursery and 28 out of the 48 children in the Reception classes were under statutory school age. In accordance with the school's admission policy children enter the Nursery at the age of three and transfer to the Reception classes in the September or January before their fifth birthday.
71. The Nursery class is housed in a demountable classroom in the playground and the Reception classes are in the main building. The Nursery class is staffed by one teacher and two nursery nurses. One Reception class has a full time teacher and the other class is usually taught by a part time teacher and the headteacher, but during the period of the inspection the headteacher was relieved of her class responsibility. The nursery nurses work in the Nursery in the mornings and with the Reception classes and support throughout the school in the afternoons. The teachers in the Nursery and the younger Reception class have only been in post since January. Together they have worked hard to devise a satisfactory curriculum for children under five, based on the desirable learning outcomes. A similar curriculum is organised for the children in the older Reception class but the teacher plans the work in English and mathematics from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In both the Nursery and the Reception classes the activities and tasks are usually well matched to the needs of the children but too few opportunities are provided for the children to learn through exploration or initiate activities themselves. A comprehensive curriculum for the foundation stage is to be developed in the near future.
72. The attainment level of children when they enter the Nursery covers a very wide range, but overall it is about average for their age. Many children have well developed language and social skills but relatively under developed mathematical skills. They make satisfactory progress towards achieving the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes and on transfer to the Reception class their attainment is more even. In the Reception class the children continue to make satisfactory progress and by the time they are five years old the majority of pupils have achieved the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in all six key areas of their learning with many exceeding these standards in Language and Literacy. They move smoothly into Key Stage 1 National Curriculum programmes of study.

Personal and social development

73. The children have settled well into school and basic routines and high expectations are fostered within a secure and caring environment. Children make good progress in developing personal and social skills and confidently take part in a range of school activities. In the Nursery they play well together, taking turns to choose and helping each other with their games. They share the toys and equipment amicably and are interested in the efforts of others, for example, when making shapes in the play dough. They listen well to their teachers and they are eager to join in the discussions although some of the youngest ones are shy with visitors. The great majority of children in the Reception classes are maturing well. They sustain good levels of concentration and will continue working at a single task for extended periods of time. They display a good level of independence when tidying the classroom, dressing themselves and in their personal hygiene. Children form good relationships with their teachers and each other.

74. Teaching is mainly good in both the Nursery and the Reception class. The nursery staff identify personal and social development as a key focus for their work. They give children opportunities to become confident by establishing daily routines and giving them choices over some activities. Teaching in the Reception classes follows an effective and systematic programme. Teachers and support staff successfully promote the children's personal and social development by providing plenty of encouragement and expecting the children to take responsibility and make decisions for themselves.

Language and literacy

75. The development of language and literacy is given high priority. Children make good progress in this area, especially those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. In the Nursery, many children are confident when speaking to adults but some only respond with one or two word answers when asked a direct question. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other when exchanging news and ideas. They display a very keen interest in books and stories. A significant number of children in the Reception class can identify familiar words around them and recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound. By the time they are five most have made a good start in reading the books in the school reading scheme. Children soon begin to make marks on paper and the majority learn how to write their letters, their own names and other words independently.
76. The teaching is good. The teachers place a due emphasis on providing opportunities for the children to speak and listen and widen their vocabulary, through a range of activities. The direct teaching of language and literacy in the Reception classes is good. The teachers work hard to involve all the children in the activities and give effective support to groups as they practise basic skills. They very successfully stimulate the children's enthusiasm for reading by providing an excellent range of attractive books for the children to handle and by reading them stories which capture their imagination and interest.

Mathematics

77. Mathematical understanding is developed through a range of activities and the children make satisfactory progress. By the time they are five years old their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. In the Nursery they are familiar with counting games and number rhymes which are taught to them and are developing an understanding of the numbers they say and count. They know their colours and can name basic two dimensional shapes. They make patterns and sort objects into sets. In the Reception classes most children are able to recognise and write numbers to ten and beyond. They demonstrate an ability to count and add numbers to ten when playing on a 'bus' and are beginning to understand basic coins and money transactions in the classroom shop.
78. Teaching is satisfactory. The teachers provide a variety of practical experiences such as sand and water play, which enable the pupils to develop mathematical language and skills and they make regular use of number games and rhymes, which the children enjoy. Good use is made of mathematical language on shape and size when children bake and play with dough or clay.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. The children are given an appropriate range of tasks and experiences to stimulate their interest and enable them to gain knowledge and understanding of the world. By the age of five their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. The children have recently shown much interest in planting sunflower seeds and are able to describe the

need for plants to have light and water in order to grow. They use magnifiers to examine the development of tadpoles from frog spawn and discuss their observations with pleasure and interest. The classroom resources include a good range of construction toys to help the children develop knowledge and understanding of the way things are structured and the mechanisms which make them move. The children's computer skills are developing well. They control the mouse confidently to make "paint" patterns of different colours and textures, and play mathematical games using the concept keyboard. Children can operate a tape in the listening corner. They learn about people who help in the community and the school. Children understand that they change as they get older. They know that the school has been there for many years and that mummy and daddy even came to this school. When cutting and gluing they learn to manipulate scissors accurately and to use glue efficiently.

80. The teaching in this area is satisfactory and promotes satisfactory progress. Teachers and support staff plan an interesting range of activities which help the children gain scientific and historical understanding of the world. The good use of questioning supports and develops children's knowledge and good opportunities are provided for linking language work to their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

81. Physical development is promoted through a well planned programme of physical activities. Children make good progress and many exceed the targets of the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five. They are encouraged to move confidently and imaginatively. They are able to move forward, backwards and sideways at different speeds with very good body control. They work on small mats, performing a series of different jumps, displaying a high degree of balance. The Reception children move around the apparatus showing inventiveness and agility in their actions. In class the children use paint brushes, pencils and scissors with good control and skill in their writing and creative work.
82. The teaching is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults interact well with the children in challenging their abilities. They display a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and skilfully challenge and encourage the pupils to improve their performance. They are enthusiastic and make the lessons enjoyable but at the same time place a high priority on safety. The Nursery class now has the opportunity to play outside each day, but this time is not planned in sufficient detail to be of maximum benefit to all the children.

Creative development

83. Children make satisfactory progress in their creative development. They listen to music, join in the singing of songs and play percussion instruments. They draw and paint carefully and well, for example when making Mothers' Day Cards. They use a variety of materials sensibly and creatively to make "Grassheads". They respond well to role play, using the home corner or the classroom shop imaginatively.
84. The teaching is satisfactory. In the main however, there are too few opportunities provided for children to experiment independently with music and art activities. The teacher makes good use of the nursery assistants to support, encourage and challenge.

ENGLISH

85. Inspection findings show that at the end of Key Stage 1, the standard of pupils' work is above the national average in all areas of the subject. Standards in speaking and listening are good and standards in reading are very good. Attainment in writing is generally at least in line with the national average and there are some aspects which are good. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous report. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are very well supported and make good or very good progress.
86. The pupils listen very well to their teachers in story time and when receiving instructions. They listen well to each other and most are very keen to participate in the discussion and question and answer sessions. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently. The younger ones sometimes need encouragement to provide more than one word answers, but by Year 2, a majority are speaking in a series of well sequenced sentences and are expressing themselves with clarity and precision. This is particularly evident when the class is involved in discussions about the text and content of the books during the shared reading periods in the literacy hour.
87. Standards in reading are well above the national average and this aspect is a strength of the school. A high proportion of pupils in Year 2 have completed the reading scheme and now read a wide variety of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. The excellent supply of good quality books, in both the library and the classroom collections, is having a strong impact on pupils' motivation to read beyond the scheme. Pupils read fluently and with good expression. They read many words on sight, but this skill is much enhanced by their readiness to apply their phonic knowledge to decipher unfamiliar words and to use context and picture clues. Throughout the school, levels of comprehension are very good, with the older pupils discussing the characters and the finer details of the plot. The most able pupils confidently talk about their favourite books and authors and are beginning to compare one with another. Most of the parents hear their children read at home, and pupils read regularly at school, in groups and individually. The frequency of reading practice is having a very positive impact on standards.
88. Attainment in writing shows an improvement on the previous year. Most pupils are making good progress in their work and by the end of the key stage, the majority of the pupils are able to write independently. They are taught to write for different purposes, for example, writing postcards in Year 2, or writing instructions for making a cheeseburger, in Year 1. Some of the most able pupils in Year 2 write at length in well sequenced sentences, using interesting vocabulary and extending their ideas imaginatively. There are, for example, some very good, and often humorous stories in a class book called, "Footprints on the Ceiling". A particularly strong feature in the school is the pupils' developing understanding and use of punctuation. A majority use full stops and capital letters correctly. The more able pupils are beginning to include commas and exclamation marks in their writing, and, on occasions, speech marks. The emphasis on teaching phonics in the school is having a positive impact on the standards in spelling, which are often good. However, whilst the lower attaining and average pupils are making good progress, not all of the more able pupils are achieving the standards of which they are capable. Their work is sometimes carelessly presented and they do not pay enough attention to trying to improve the quality of their work. Pupils develop a clear and legible cursive style of handwriting.
89. The pupils' attitudes to their English work are very good. They behave very well in class and listen attentively to their teachers' instructions. Their motivation to read is very high and they become totally absorbed in the books during the shared reading sessions. They are keen to participate in discussions and, when working independently, their

concentration is good. They usually complete their tasks within the set time. They write confidently and fluently and are very willing to attempt to spell words without recourse to the teacher, but they do not all take sufficient care over the quality of their handwriting and the presentation of their work.

90. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is, in some classes, very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when some of the teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted and this is having a positive impact on standards. Not all of the classes, however, are following the structure every day and not all of the teachers take full advantage of the opportunities it provides for guided writing. When teachers' planning follows the guidance of the literacy strategy, the learning objectives are usually clear and teachers and pupils know what is expected of them. On the occasions when the literacy strategy is not in place, the learning objectives are not clearly identified and teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high. In the main, teachers' knowledge and understanding are good and they focus closely on teaching the skills, especially phonics. They make satisfactory use of the pupils' literacy skills in other curriculum areas, but they do not always utilise classroom displays to include pupils' written work. Their management of pupils is very good which is accomplished through good relationships and the provision of stimulating resources, especially for reading. Although assessment strategies are not sufficiently rigorous, the teachers know their pupils well and are able to match the work to their needs and interests. The practice of setting short term individual targets in the pupils' books is to be commended.
91. There has been some monitoring of the teaching of the literacy hour but there is not a regular or systematic plan to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in English. The co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to gain a clear overview of the work throughout the school and consequently the impact she can have on further developing the subject is limited. Occasionally, pupils' books are scrutinised but the analysis of pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently detailed to fully support the direction of future teaching or the setting of long term targets. The curriculum is very well supported by excellent resources. The attractive, user-friendly library is very well stocked with quality fiction and non-fiction books. The classroom collections of fiction books, big books and guided reading sets are equally attractive and are well used to support the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

92. Inspection findings show that the levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the national average for seven year old pupils and a significant number of pupils are on track to attain higher levels particularly in number work. They are developing appropriate skills in working out answers orally and mentally. Over the past three years, the school's achievements in mathematics have not shown any improvement, and in relation to the national trend, there has been a steady decline. The current standard of attainment in the number aspect of mathematics shows a slight improvement on recent years. However, pupils' mathematical awareness is better developed in this aspect than it is the other the areas of shape, space and measures and handling data.
93. By the end of the key stage most pupils are secure in using a range of methods to solve addition and subtraction problems. They can explain their ways of working confidently and accurately using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Pupils are well aware that there are different ways of expressing the same problem although a significant proportion of pupils are not yet able to decide which process to use when reading problems which are written out in words. In mental mathematics pupils work out the answers quickly and are aware of basic number facts and can count in number patterns up to 100. They have

appropriate knowledge of multiplication tables and use halves and doubles to assist their calculations. They have a secure understanding of odd and even numbers.

94. Although there are planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in other aspects of mathematics, there are not enough. Pupils' understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study concerned with shape, space and measures and with data handling is not as well developed. Pupils in Year 2 have formed tallies of their favourite foods and have presented them in pictorial and graphical formats and have used information technology successfully to present the findings. However, over the school year, there have not been enough opportunities for these aspects to be fully developed. Similarly, most pupils by the age of seven, are aware of the names and significant features of simple two dimensional shapes but many are not yet investigating shape in a way which will sufficiently extend their knowledge and understanding.
95. Most pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but the more able pupils generally do not make as much progress as they could because they are not presented with enough opportunities to move ahead at their own pace. Despite some instances when pupils make good progress within a lesson, too often the work does not build on what has gone before. Mathematical skills are not being extended in a sufficiently systematic manner and this is having an adverse impact upon attainment at the end of the key stage.
96. Pupils respond to their work in mathematics in a very positive way. When given the opportunity to engage in investigation of number patterns, they became very excited. In these situations pupils work well together in pairs and small groups. Relationships are very good. Pupils listen to each other and put forward their opinions sensitively and confidently. Behaviour is good at all times.
97. The quality of teaching in most of the lessons observed during the inspection was good and some very good teaching was seen. This represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All teachers create a secure environment in which the pupils are confident and want to learn. However, teachers do not give enough opportunities for pupils to take part in practical experiences which closely relate to everyday life. A significant amount of work is done in commercially produced workbooks or on worksheets, many of which do not extend pupils' learning sufficiently but simply reinforce earlier work. Too often there is a reliance on this method of working instead of providing the pupils with objects which they can handle, "buy and sell", measure and weigh. There are also, however, some very good examples of worksheets produced by the teachers for a specific purpose which have a positive effect of reinforcing the experiences pupils have recently had.
98. The school has begun to implement the Numeracy Strategy but the structure is not yet securely in place throughout the school. Not all classes have a daily lesson for mathematics and the balance across the various aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study is not yet established in long term planning. There is no curriculum overview of mathematics throughout the school, nor is there any scheme of work which reflects the specific needs of the pupils as they move through the school. There is no effective guidance to support teachers in their planning by identifying stages of development in the various aspects of mathematics. Consequently there is not a consistent approach to ensure steadily increasing challenge in all of the programmes of study throughout the key stage. In addition, the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to engage in the practical application of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum and in situations which reflect real life. There is not enough encouragement for pupils at all stages to take part in mathematical investigations.

99. Teachers work well together and all teachers have been observed teaching the numeracy strategy. However, there are no mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning to identify relevant areas for improvement. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to gain a clear overview of what is happening in the school nor has she been enabled to lead curricular developments.
100. Currently the school is adequately resourced for mathematics, and teachers and pupils use these resources well. Teachers use well mounted classroom displays which clearly reflect pupils' recent work.

SCIENCE

101. On the basis of the inspection findings, the attainment of the majority of pupils in science is in line with the national expectation. This shows a decline since the last inspection when attainment was reported to be higher than that expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 1, although almost all pupils attain the nationally expected standard, few pupils reach the higher level. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with a good knowledge of science and understanding of some scientific principles. For example, they know that materials can be changed by heating and cooling and that magnets attract some materials but not others. They continue to build on these strengths and, by the end of the key stage, the majority have a sound basis of factual knowledge and understanding. However, pupils' attainment is relatively weaker in the experimental and investigative element of science.
102. Pupils recognise that living things undergo changes as they develop and grow, for example they talk about the changes in the life cycle of a frog. They have a developing awareness and a caring attitude to living creatures and their habitats and know that plants need light and water in order to grow. Pupils use of their senses to describe different materials and their properties. They are able to explain why some materials are more suitable for building houses than others. Most pupils realise that pushes and pulls are forces which can affect the position, shape and movement of an object. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in the use of appropriate technical language and good progress in the use of pictorial or written records.
103. Pupils of all levels of ability make satisfactory progress in acquiring new facts and their scientific knowledge is broad and secure. However, the development of investigative skills is relatively weaker. Progress in areas such as "fair testing" is slow and pupils' understanding of the process of planning, carrying out a test or observation and then describing or explaining what has happened is under-developed. Pupils have opportunities to carry out practical scientific activities and to record their observations. However, many of these activities are designed by the teacher and demonstrated with only limited opportunity for pupils' own investigation and exploration. Although many pupils can make simple predictions based on their prior knowledge, the lack of opportunity to pose their own questions and plan strategies for investigation results in under developed skills in this aspect of science. More able pupils have little opportunity to undertake further investigations of discovery and there is some underachievement as a result.
104. Pupils' progress is enhanced by their enthusiastic approach to all activities. They enjoy their work and are enthusiastic about the practical aspects of the subject. They show good levels of concentration for their age and listen carefully to their teachers. They follow instructions and use the equipment and materials responsibly. Behaviour is very good and pupils co-operate well with teachers and fellow pupils.
105. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory overall and during the inspection some

very good teaching was seen. Teachers know what they want the pupils to learn and give clear explanations. They make effective use of whole-class questioning to draw out ideas and consolidate prior learning. The most effective lessons are planned to build on what pupils already know. Tasks are set up to encourage pupils to predict, to decide how to find out and then to record their findings. Resources and equipment are selected with care to capture pupils' interest. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. When teaching is very good secure subject knowledge enables teachers to ask open ended questions and to skilfully challenge pupils to think things out for themselves. On occasions, relative weaknesses occur when learning objectives are not clear enough and lessons lack sufficient development of skills and knowledge. Although the lessons include some practical activity, the opportunity to learn science through investigation is not taken and the practical exercise is an illustration to support previous learning. Pupils at all levels of attainment usually carry out the same work and opportunities are not always provided to challenge the more able pupils and enable them to move ahead more quickly. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to make good progress and to achieve appropriate standards.

106. There is a policy for science which is supported by the guidance provided nationally and through a commercial scheme. The subject is taught through a topic approach in Reception and Year 1 but is treated as a separate subject in Year 2. However, there is no agreed whole school programme of work to indicate how and when pupils will experience the different aspects of science. Furthermore there is insufficient guidance on the adaptation or extension of activities to provide a suitable challenge for pupils of differing abilities. The curriculum is not sufficiently well structured or planned to ensure that pupils will move through the National Curriculum programmes of study systematically, nor is the planning secure in enabling pupils to build effectively upon prior learning at a pace which suits the individual. Procedures for assessing attainment in a unit of work or at the end of the year are not well established, and there are no effective systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress so that targets can be set. The teaching and learning in science are monitored on an informal basis through staff discussion. However this does not give teachers sufficient knowledge about the progress of pupils to enable them to address the needs of individual pupils, particularly those of the more able. The co-ordinator who is relatively new to the school is enthusiastic and knowledgeable but as yet has had little opportunity to have a positive impact on standards.

ART

107. By the time the pupils are seven the standard of their art work is in line with that expected for their age. There are, however, some examples of good and very good work, especially in one Year 2 class. Attainment in the previous inspection was judged to be above average throughout the school.
108. Much of the art work arises from the topics being studied and stories the pupils have enjoyed. Although a good range of skills are taught, these are not planned in sequential steps, building on what has been taught before.
109. The pupils learn to paint effectively by using different brushes and techniques. They have, for example, produced good paintings in the style of Van Gogh and Kandinski. Mondrian's work is effectively reproduced using coloured paper. They use sponges and blocks to print shapes in connection with their mathematics work and fingerprints to create hyacinths to illustrate their science studies. They use pencils, crayons and pastels to draw pictures for their history time lines and a variety of materials for making puppets. There are some excellent examples of observational drawings of spring flowers

in Year 2, and a group of special educational needs pupils in Year 1 observe and copy small toys very well.

110. The pupils' attitudes to their art lessons are very good. They enjoy all aspects of the subject and talk eagerly about their work. They behave very well in class and have learned to share materials and tools, use them sensibly and safely, and tidy up efficiently. The pupils in Year 2 listen carefully to the teacher's instructions on how to observe the flowers and make effective use of different pencils and pastels for shading. Pupils concentrate intently when drawing.
111. The teaching of art is good. During the inspection in the lessons observed the teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Good and very good teaching occurs when the teacher has secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and confidently conveys this to the pupils. The teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging. They plan their lessons well, and provide clear instructions and good quality resources. As a result the pupils are keen to do their best and take pride in the finished product.
112. The art co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knows her subject well, but she has only been in post for a very short period and has not had sufficient opportunity to fully share her expertise with the whole staff, or to organise a detailed scheme of work. The art work in the school is enhanced by colourful displays and by demonstrations from visiting artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is in line with the national expectations for pupils of that age. Pupils have a clear understanding of the elements of design and technology and regularly engage in designing, planning, making and evaluating their work. Pupils in Year 2 are currently designing playground equipment and the pupils in Year 1 have been considering a design for warm clothing. Through topic work, for example, homes, there are good links with other subjects such as geography and history with models and photographs. There are close links with art, for example in Year 2, where pupils have made puppet heads and are currently sewing the clothes. By the end of the key stage pupils have appropriately developed skills of measuring, cutting and fixing. A particularly fine example of children's work was seen in the quilted wall hanging in the hall which was produced with parents' support and features motifs and emblems using a wide range of media and techniques.
114. Pupils are very keen and interested in their design and technology work. They take pride in their achievements. They work well together in pairs and small groups and they give and accept constructive criticism in a very mature way. They have productive discussions and reach appropriate conclusions. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with their teachers and the quality of behaviour is very good at all times.
115. The quality of teaching is good and there are appropriate lessons planned with effective links with other subjects across the curriculum. Teachers manage and organise lessons well to give pupils the opportunity to experiment and try out different techniques. Teachers are supportive and sensitive to pupils' needs and abilities and through effective questions encourage pupils to work and challenge them to improve.
116. The co-ordinator is well informed and provides appropriate guidance to staff. She has identified the need for a more comprehensive overview of the curriculum and to improve the detail on topic flow charts to identify the skills for development at any particular stage and to ensure the development of these skills as pupils move through the school. In addition this will form the basis of an appropriate assessment of pupils' levels of

attainment. A good feature of the work is the opportunity which all pupils have to cook each week. The school has a well equipped food preparation area and all pupils spend time there in small groups often supported by a parent following recipes and producing good results. The recipes are well presented and pupils are delighted with their work. This facility greatly enhances the quality of education which the pupils receive and supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The other resources for the subject are adequate to meet the requirements. There is an appropriate range of tools and materials from which pupils can make their choices so that they have the opportunity to use recycled materials as well as sticks, canes, straws, card, etc. They are readily accessible to both teachers and pupils and are used well.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

117. Only a small amount of teaching in these subjects was observed during the inspection but sufficient evidence was provided upon which to base these judgements. Pupils work at a level which is appropriate for their age and they make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior ability. Work is planned through topics and based on relevant starting points. Through the topics covered and local studies, pupils have formed a sound foundation for their work in both history and geography.
118. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of history is developing appropriately. Younger pupils are developing a sense of their own identity and can describe changes in their own lives from the time they were babies. They are developing an awareness of the passage of time and are beginning to find out about the past. As they move through the school pupils become more able to distinguish between long ago and present day in terms of clothing, home and schooling. Pupils make distinctions between aspects of their own life and that of children in the past. They are familiar with some historical events such as the Great Fire of London and know about some famous people such as Louis Braille and Faraday and understand that their inventions, especially electricity have changed the way we live. As well as developing a sense of chronology, pupils are acquiring skills of historical enquiry and learning how we gain information about the past. They enjoy looking at photographs, artefacts and old buildings, especially those from their own school.
119. In geography, pupils make observations about the weather and note seasonal changes. They have early mapping experiences and their knowledge and skills are gradually widening. Younger pupils are introduced to maps and plans in their walks around the school and in the grounds. They are able to recognise and make observations about features in the environment. Pupils have been involved in planning the features to be incorporated into their playground. This work is extended as they move through the school and older pupils develop the geographical skills associated with map reading and interpretation. They can make plans and maps of both real and imagined places and understand how to use symbols and the need for a key. They look at aerial photographs of St. Albans and learn to identify features and note changes. Study of their own area contrasted with an island off the coast of Scotland is helping to arouse their awareness of how environment affects the way people live. They compare the weather, scenery and buildings in the place where they live with places in other countries, some of which they have visited. Through tracking the progress of Barnaby Bear as he journeys around the world, they are becoming more aware of the location of other countries.
120. Pupils behave well in lessons and have good attitudes to their work. Attentive to their teachers, they respond well and are confident when asking questions for further information.
121. The teaching of both subjects is satisfactory. Teachers prepare their work thoughtfully

and appropriate activities are planned. They are confident in their knowledge of history and geography and motivate the pupils by their own enthusiasm and commitment to the subjects. They relate their teaching to other areas of the curriculum particularly to the development of speaking and listening skills and by providing opportunities for extended writing.

122. The policy statements indicate how the subjects are to be organised and teachers make use of the guidance available from national sources. In history teachers select their own areas of study and there is no overall established scheme throughout the school for either subject. There are no systems in place for assessing or recording pupils' progress and monitoring of the subjects is very informal. The previous report stated that future in-service training was planned to address and clarify the role of the co-ordinator for geography but as yet this has not been arranged. There is little evidence of further development in these subjects since the last inspection.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above those expected nationally. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to enable them to attain and exceed the expected standards. Pupils make good progress in acquiring the necessary skills in the use of information and communication technology as they move through the school. The previous inspection reported that the pupils' attainment was higher than expected. Standards have been maintained and the school is fully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. The range of work planned covers all aspects of the programmes of study, including controlling and modelling. Pupils have good keyboard skills, and open and close programmes with little adult intervention. Most pupils are familiar with the basic skills of entering text, and simple editing procedures. They know that work can be saved and continued at a later date. Many are able to store, retrieve and print information without help.
124. Younger pupils are learning to identify and correctly name the various component parts of the computer, such as the space bar, the mouse and the keyboard. They understand that they can change the size and position of text on the screen and develop confidence in using the mouse and the keyboard to control events on the screen. Pupils in Year 1 are able to explain the purpose and function of a screen saver. They can suggest how to find previously recorded music. They know how to use the mouse to open a file and search the contents page to find their work. Pupils in Year 1 are able to access the painting program and clearly understand how to use the various functions. As they progress, they begin to use the computer for more specific purposes, such as classifying information. Older pupils in Year 2 know that data can be entered and presented as graphs. They can find and use information on a data base and from CD ROMs. They can access the internet and Year 2 pupils have sent letters by email to their friends in the neighbouring junior school. During the course of the year pupils also extend their skills in the control element of technology by learning how to programme the robotic toy to travel various distances and change directions. In addition the majority of them are confident in using various commercial programs to explore imaginary situations. Pupils use listening centres independently and have a good level of understanding of the use of information technology in everyday life.
125. The pupils are well motivated and enjoy working on the computers. They demonstrate good attitudes to information and communication technology and show increasing confidence and competence as they move through the school. When faced with difficulties they turn to other children for help and together they try to solve the problems themselves. They work well in pairs and more able pupils help the less able. Pupils with

special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress and make effective use of the concept keyboards and special programs. All pupils handle the expensive resources with care.

126. The direct teaching of information technology observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and some was good. Teachers' planning clearly indicates how they intend to develop pupils' skills and understanding during information and communication technology lessons. Teachers always use correct terminology thus encouraging pupils to do the same. They give clear step by step instructions and ensure that pupils understand before increasing the challenge. Lessons proceed at a satisfactory pace. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and use good strategies for teaching the basic skills. This promotes pupils' learning and enables them to improve their competence. However, some teachers still lack confidence in the subject. Although teachers make regular use of the computers in their classrooms and there is evidence of information technology supporting work in other areas of the curriculum, there is little mention of the use of information technology in plans for other subjects. Appropriate time is devoted to the subject enabling pupils to develop their capabilities in information technology.
127. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic, well organised co-ordinator. She provides a good level of support for colleagues, including training to make them more confident in their use of computers. The information technology policy which is supported by the guidance provided nationally indicates the work to be covered in each year group but has only limited detail about how the skills will be developed in a progressive way. At present methods for assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment in information technology as they move through the school are mainly informal.

MUSIC

128. The school has maintained the standards reported in the previous inspection and attainment is higher than that expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move up through the school, and are well prepared for Key Stage 2.
129. The quality of singing is good, both accompanied and unaccompanied. The pupils sing sweetly and tunefully with a good sense of rhythm. They have good voice control and very capably perform a two part question and answer song in assembly. The younger pupils clap and copy rhythms and maintain a beat using a variety of percussion instruments. In Year 2 the pupils play simple accompaniments for the songs on the glockenspiels, and a large proportion are able to read music and play the ocarina with a good sense of time and tune.
130. The pupils listen to a range of music from different cultures, in assembly and in class. A study of some of the themes from Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals has very effectively taught the pupils, in Year 2, to recognise many of the instruments of the orchestra. The pupils make good use of information technology to write, record and print their own "animal" melodies.
131. Pupils' attitudes to their music lessons are good, and they behave well, usually stopping and starting playing and singing with good control and without fuss. Their singing is robust, and enthusiastic, especially in the action songs. They listen very well to their teachers and to the music in assembly. They take pride in their own performances and show appreciation for that of others. Some pupils in Year 2 lessons, sing solos with commendable confidence.

132. The teaching is always at least satisfactory and is often good. Most of the teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and are confident and enthusiastic. In one good lesson observed, the teacher planned and sequenced the activities very well, teaching pitch, rhythm and dynamics, building on the pupils' past experience and gradually increasing the challenge. When the pupils are listening to music they are often given a particular aspect to focus upon, for example, the instrument playing the high or the low notes. This is a good strategy designed to refine their listening skills.
133. The music curriculum is well supported by a good range of resources, percussion instruments, compact discs and the use of information technology. There is a separate music room, which is well used for lessons and storage. There are several parents who play musical instruments and good use is made of their expertise. They are often invited into school to play to the pupils and their support is much appreciated. Pupils who have music lessons outside school, are further encouraged by performing in special assemblies once a term. All the Year 2 pupils are given the option to learn the ocarina or to join the lunch time singing club.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. By the end of the key stage, pupils are attaining standards which meet the national expectation and they make satisfactory progress. The school follows a clearly detailed curriculum which ensures a steady and consistent development of pupils' skills and agility. The scheme ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Pupils use their bodies well to explore different ways of moving. They run and march, take long strides and short steps, hop and skip, turn, roll and jump in a controlled way demonstrating poise and balance. They are able to link these movements together and create short sequences of movements which they can repeat and develop. The attainment of pupils in different year groups clearly shows the steady progress which the pupils make as they move through the school. They respond well to the increasing challenge as they grow and mature. The standards and provision for physical education which were reported in the previous inspection have been successfully maintained.
135. Pupils are keen and interested. They enjoy their physical education lessons and they pursue their ideas energetically but with due regard for safety procedures when using the large apparatus. They listen well to instructions and respond quickly and appropriately in an inventive and imaginative way. Behaviour in lessons is very good.
136. The quality of teaching is always good and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers use the guidance of the scheme of work well and lessons have clear objectives for learning. The sessions are well organised and there is a good balance including warm-up, review of previous work, development of new ideas and techniques and then opportunity to review and evaluate pupils performance. Teachers use an up-beat approach which enthuses the pupils and makes sure that they all involved. They give very clear instructions. They make good use of purposeful intervention making good use of praise and using pupils to demonstrate their work so that other pupils can develop their own ideas. Pupils respond well to this and perform confidently. Teachers know their pupils well and are clear about their abilities and needs. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and gain a great deal from their physical education lessons.
137. The co-ordinator is well-informed and has plans for the development of physical education now that the school has the advantage of a recently improved games field.

The school is now seeking ways to improve outdoor play and activities to augment the country dancing displays and is using the possibility of an improved sports day as an incentive for this. The school is beginning to make good use of the TOPS scheme for developing gymnastics and outdoor activities. The school has a good range of resources which are used well. Pupils get out the equipment in a very orderly manner and put it away at the end of lessons sensibly and safely.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. The standards of attainment in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are very confident in the way they express their feelings and show high levels of understanding of tolerance and respect. Their knowledge of an appropriate range of religions is very secure and pupils talk about festivals in different faiths without confusion and with an awareness of both similarities and differences between festivals such as Hanukkah and Diwali. They are aware of the cultural heritages of other faiths and can make appropriate comparisons with Christianity. During the inspection the pupils in Year 2 were learning about the Hindu festival of Holi and the links with other festivals concerned with spring and new life. This was the religious theme during assemblies and the oldest pupils performed a version of the dance representing the celebration of Holi. This performance not only confirmed their own understanding but provided a good starting point for work in other classes. Younger pupils have good recall of the stories they have been told and some pupils in Year 1 were able to link the story of Jesus in the wilderness with the ideas of special foods used on festival occasions. Pupils make good progress in their learning. They quickly develop an awareness of the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and the impact that these people have had upon the lives of others. The quality of learning evident in the previous report has been successfully maintained and built upon. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They listen well to stories such as Vishnu and Prahlad and show a very mature approach to understanding the beliefs of religions other than their own. Pupils take the opportunities offered for reflection and make sensible and thoughtful contributions about issues such as forgiveness.
139. The quality of teaching is good with some very good features creating an atmosphere where pupils feel secure and confident enough to express feelings and to discuss thoughts and ideas. Teachers listen well to the pupils and value their contributions. Lessons move at an appropriate pace, both stimulating pupils and maintaining their interest. Individual lessons are well planned and give time for reflection. Teachers take opportunities to link the work with other subjects such as Victorian life and there is a clear link with the themes which are chosen for assemblies.
140. The religious education curriculum is soundly based on the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. However the school has yet to develop fully its own long term plan to give teachers guidance about which topics are to be covered and at what stage. Visiting speakers enrich the curriculum provision and there is a close link between the school and the neighbouring parish church. The school invites people of different faith groups into the school to talk and work with pupils. This has a very positive impact upon the quality of learning. During the inspection pupils' knowledge was enhanced by a visitor, a former parent, who very effectively explained to the pupils and a large gathering of parents the significance of the Jewish Passover celebrations with samples of food, artefacts and prayers which are used at that time. The school has an appropriate collection of resources in the form of books, tapes and artefacts which are used well to support the teaching. The religious education in the school plays a vital role in the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

