

ERRATUM

Page 22, '**What should the school do to improve further**'.

Key issue (1), please delete the additional '**systematically**' on the second line.

INSPECTION REPORT

**WARESIDE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Wareside, Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117412

Headteacher: Mrs S Whales

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods
21079

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 January 2002

Inspection number: 197668

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Reeves Green
Wareside
Ware
Hertfordshire

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Telephone number: 01920 462 354

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Lindsay

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21079	Mrs L Woods	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it?
			Mathematics	How high are standards?
			Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
			Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
			Information and communication technology	
			Music	
1166	Mrs R Hussain	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25925	Mrs E Pacey	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
			Equal opportunities	
			English	
			Science	
			Geography	
			History	
			Physical education	
			Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wareside Church of England Primary School is a valued part of the village of Wareside, to the north-east of the town of Ware. The school has grown since the last inspection and is continuing to grow year by year. There are currently 54 boys and girls on roll, between the ages of four and eleven, including five children who attend school part-time in the *Early Birds* class. Boys outnumber girls by about 20 per cent. The majority of pupils come from the village, and some travel from Ware. They come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, but none come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most live in council housing and the majority are from low socio-economic backgrounds and single parent families. Ten per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average, although the actual percentage is likely to be higher. Thirty-one per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Thirty-five per cent of these pupils are at Stage 3 and above of the old Code of Practice for the identification of such pupils, and one has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils join the school with below average attainment. They receive a flying start to their education in the *Early Birds* class and continue to make steady and often good progress as they move through the school. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, they have received a broad, interesting education and standards in English, mathematics and science are average. The quality of their imaginative writing is impressive. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' personal and social development, and in generating very positive attitudes to school. The school has suffered from considerable difficulties in recruiting a stable teaching staff, but the nursery nurse, classroom assistants and headteacher have provided valuable continuity for the pupils. Current teaching staff are very new to the school, but already share high expectations and a determination to continue providing a high quality of education. Teaching is good overall. The school is led very well by the headteacher, with the full, enthusiastic support of the governing body. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, and the school's aims are reflected very well in practice.
- Pupils achieve outstanding results in their imaginative writing.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school; relationships, their personal development and attitudes are very good.
- The care which the school takes to develop mature, confident and well-rounded individuals is a strength.
- Provision for pupils' personal, moral and social development is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and pupils' personal development are very good.
- The community spirit between partner schools at primary and secondary level is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards of reading in the infants and of spelling throughout the school.
- Resources for the Foundation Stage of education in the infant class.
- The headteacher's workload of responsibility and teaching commitment, which is too heavy.
- The level of accommodation, which is insufficient for the number of pupils on roll.
- Attendance; this is unsatisfactory, largely as a result of term-time holidays.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised by the previous inspection in September 1997. The curriculum is planned in detail using commercial and government schemes to take full account of the mixed ages and abilities of pupils in each class. The derelict schoolhouse has been refurbished, with one room allocated for the use of children under five. Resources for children under five have improved significantly and are good, but the increasing number of these children in the school makes further consideration of provision for their needs a matter of urgency.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	C	C
Mathematics	C	C	B	A
science	D	A	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that performance in the 2001 tests for eleven-year-olds was average in English, above average in mathematics and well below average in science compared to the national picture of all schools. These results, however, are misleading. The very small number of pupils in each year group makes comparisons unrepresentative of pupils' actual achievement. In the science tests, for example, all pupils successfully achieved the nationally expected Level 4. Results in the national tests vary considerably each year, dependent on the number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group taking the tests. This makes judgements on trends over time unreliable, since most year groups have only six or seven pupils. The school analyses pupils' attainment and progress in great detail, and sets challenging and realistic targets for each year group, based on this knowledge.

In the tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national averages and performance in similar schools. As with the tests for eleven-year-olds, however, these results vary considerably each year, and do not truly reflect the particular circumstances of the school, since it has very small year groups and a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics and science are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In English, attainment is average for pupils in Year 6; they achieve impressive standards in imaginative writing, although their spelling is weak. For pupils in Year 2, however, current standards in English are below average, although the recently introduced programme for teaching letter sound recognition (phonics) is already having a positive impact on standards in reading and spelling. Throughout the school, pupils attain expected standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

Children make a very good start to their education in the *Early Birds* class. By the end of the reception year, attainment is in line with the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage curriculum in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children in reception have been a little unsettled by changes in their teachers, and their personal, social and emotional development is below expectations for their age. Lack of appropriate resources for the youngest children in the infant class means that elements of their creative development are also below expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They know what is expected of them and behave accordingly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school breeds confidence in pupils, encouraging them to exercise responsibility and develop good relationships. There is mutual respect between adults and children.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is well below the national average. A few pupils have very poor attendance and holidays taken in term time are a major factor in this. Punctuality is good.

Pupils' attitudes towards school, their relationships and their personal development are significant strengths. The level of care which older pupils demonstrate towards younger ones is very good. It is a pity that attendance levels are well below average, as pupils really enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, which is all credit to the hard work of all staff in the school. Past difficulties in recruiting teaching staff have resulted in many changes. Two of the three current qualified teachers have been in the school for less than two weeks, and they benefit enormously from the support of the talented nursery nurse and dedicated classroom assistants.

Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and frequently share their own enthusiasm effectively with the pupils. Teaching of basic skills in literacy and

numeracy is good overall, and the recently introduced phonics programme is already having a positive impact on younger pupils' spelling and reading skills. English and mathematics lessons are planned very carefully to ensure that pupils of different ages receive work matched to their needs. Group work is matched well to pupils' interests and abilities in the majority of lessons. Planning overall is thorough, and ensures that National Curriculum requirements are met. In a minority of subjects, such as design and technology, however, the school needs to plan more thoroughly for the development of specific subject skills. Teachers plan work carefully to match the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the targets in their individual education plans. All pupils are fully included in lessons, to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to identify those with special educational needs.

Teaching for the youngest children in the *Early Birds* class is very good. The nursery nurse has an instinctive talent for engaging children in thinking and talking about what they are doing, and creates a stimulating, attractive environment for learning. Teaching for reception children in the infant class is satisfactory. When these children join their peers in the *Early Birds* for many activities, they benefit fully from the expertise of the nursery nurse. At other times, when they work alongside other infant pupils, activities are not always appropriate for their age or the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Although the dedicated classroom assistant works hard to encourage children in purposeful play, insufficient resources prevent her efforts from being fully effective.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the school provides a rich range of interesting and relevant activities for its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well and included fully in all activities. Co-ordination by the headteacher is good, and all statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' personal, moral and social development is very good. It is good for their cultural development and satisfactory for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The school places a high priority on ensuring the health and well-being of its pupils.

Partnership with parents is good. The school provides a good level of detailed information for parents, and welcomes and values their help in class and with fund-raising. Teaching and support staff work well together to provide supportive and consistent care. Teachers and staff know pupils well, and they generate an atmosphere in which pupils can develop into mature, confident and well-rounded individuals who feel valued. High expectations of behaviour and particular focus on pupils' personal development produce very good results. Relationships with partner schools at both primary and secondary level are very good, and this makes a significant contribution to the richness of the curriculum and good range of extra-curricular activities. Wareside School plays an important role within the village community and serves the community well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership through her dedication and enthusiasm. Staff changes, however, have resulted in almost all responsibilities falling on her shoulders, which is too much for one person.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities fully, and provide valuable practical support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has a clear picture of strengths and development areas, but has been hampered in making improvements through staff changes.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The budget is managed well and all specific grants spent appropriately. Staff, resources and accommodation are used to maximum effect, and the principles of best value applied consistently.

The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers who are supported very well by the talented nursery nurse and dedicated classroom assistants. Resources are sufficient to teach curricular requirements, and supplemented well by resources shared with other local primary schools. The accommodation, however, is barely adequate for the numbers on roll and, as the school continues to grow, the problem will become acute.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-two questionnaires were returned and five parents attended the meeting before the inspection.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school; they make good progress and behave well. • Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and are very approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some felt that the amount of homework was not right, and they were not kept informed about progress. • Some parents were uncertain about the management of the school. • Many felt there were too few activities outside school.

Parents responded positively to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting about most aspects of the school. Concerns raised through the questionnaire about homework and the range of extra-curricular activities are not supported; indeed provision for the latter is good. The concerns about teacher shortages have been addressed with the recruitment of another permanent teacher. Some parents asked to be better informed about their children's progress. More information about National Curriculum targets throughout the school could help raise parents' awareness of national expectations and how well their children are faring in comparison to others of their age.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment is below average when they join the school, as measured by the local education authority's baseline assessment. They make good progress in the *Early Birds* class, where they spend two terms part-time, and their progress is satisfactory in the infant class. Their attainment is in line with expectations in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children in the reception class have been a little unsettled by the changes in their teachers, and their personal, social and emotional development is below expectations at present. Additionally, important elements of their creative development are restricted, particularly for imaginative play, through the lack of appropriate resources in the infant class, and standards are below expectations in these areas.
2. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was judged well below average compared with the national picture and with results from similar schools, based on free school meals statistics. In the 2001 tests in Year 6, attainment in English was average compared both with the national average and with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was above the national average and well above performance in similar schools, but performance in science was judged to be well below average. The results from national tests expressed as points scores, however, are unrepresentative of the true level of achievement of the pupils. In 2001, every pupil in Year 6 attained the expected Level 4 in science, which placed the school in the top five per cent nationally, based on percentages. However, when point scores are calculated, their attainment is judged to be well below the national average, because no pupils attained the higher Level 5. Similarly, with year groups of around six or seven pupils, and sometimes fewer, and a third of the school's pupils identified as having special educational needs, trends over time cannot be reliably established. Results each year in all subjects vary considerably.
3. The school maintains detailed information on the attainment of each individual pupil, and can establish clearly the progress they are making and the value added by the school. This information is used consistently to analyse the school's performance by gender and by ability, to establish areas where improvement could be made. Mathematics, for example, was a focus last year, and spelling is a current focus for development. The information is also used regularly to set individual targets for pupils, and to set realistic targets for attainment in the national tests.
4. Inspection findings show that standards in English for pupils in Year 2 are currently below average, although these are improving with the focus on developing pupils' phonic (letter sound recognition) skills and spelling. Standards in mathematics and science are average. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average for pupils in Year 6. Pupils achieve outstanding standards in imaginative writing, but are let down by unsatisfactory spelling. Throughout the school, standards are in line with those expected for pupils' ages in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

5. Pupils with special educational needs in both the infant and junior class are well supported in class lessons and small group sessions. Teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils' individual needs very well, and ensure that pupils understand what they need to do. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. The positive encouragement and support given ensures that these pupils attain standards in line with their abilities and make steady progress both in lessons and over time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Most pupils very much look forward to coming to school and are happy, polite and eager to talk to visitors. Standards of behaviour are good and pupils show very good attitudes to their learning. In lessons most pupils are enthusiastic learners who listen and respond well and are keen to participate. This is true even of the youngest children in the nursery, who showed great enthusiasm, for example, in a physical education lesson, listening carefully to instructions, waiting their turn and taking care not to get in each other's way. In a junior class mathematics lesson, pupils' eagerness was demonstrated by cheers for 'chocolate maths', which the teacher used very effectively to reinforce the intricacies of fractions. Most pupils settle to work quickly at the beginning of lessons and concentrate well on their individual or group tasks without direct supervision. They co-operate and collaborate well in group work, focusing on their tasks. Good examples of this were seen in junior class history and mathematics lessons spanning four age groups. In some lessons a few pupils with challenging behaviour can become restless and distracted, particularly in whole-class discussions, but their impact is minimal where the teacher is alert to signs of inattention and they have a good level of support.
7. Pupils' behaviour around the school and at lunchtimes is good. They behave very well in the dining hall; each has his or her own place to sit at mixed-age tables and they converse readily with visitors and each other. They make excellent hosts, looking after visitors and making them feel at home. Older pupils are very attentive to younger ones. Two good examples of this were seen during lunch; on one table an older pupil sensitively encouraged a younger diner to eat more, and another showed great concern when knocking a younger one accidentally. Most play happily together in the playground and respect each other's space. They are courteous, and readily hold open doors not just for visitors but for each other too. There are few instances of bullying, and parents and pupils do not see this as a problem. There have been no exclusions for many years.
8. Most teachers have a good rapport with pupils, who respond well and with respect. They enjoy good relationships with their peers. Pupils appreciate the importance of good relationships, as shown in comments about the residential school trip; 'We all got on well, I would not have survived without my friend'; and expressions of thanks and appreciation for the teachers. Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities, and carry these out earnestly, for example, by helping in the dining hall. The School Council Action Group gives pupils the opportunity to make decisions about issues affecting their life in school. The group has its own budget so that pupils can initiate action on their decisions. Responsibilities increase as pupils progress through the school. Older pupils readily help the younger ones, as was seen in an English lesson where the 'study buddy' system was put into practice, to help younger pupils with their reading.
9. Attendance is well below the national average, which makes it unsatisfactory. There are extenuating circumstances as a result of the small school population, because one or two pupils who have very poor levels of attendance significantly skew the overall

attendance figures. However, figures are also adversely affected by the number of holidays taken in term time, despite the school's efforts to discourage this. In some cases, second holidays are taken which cannot be authorised by the school, and these are registered as unauthorised absences. Punctuality at the start of the school day is good; pupils know the classroom routines well and quickly settle to work on arrival. Registration is carried out quickly and efficiently and lessons start on time.

10. The school has maintained the high standards of attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection. Both make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. The levels of attendance have declined particularly due to the increase in term time holidays, as was predicted in the previous inspection report.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching is good overall. This maintains the position found by the previous inspection, and is all credit to the hard work of all staff in the school. Two of the three qualified teachers have been in the school for less than two weeks, and they benefit enormously from the support of dedicated classroom assistants and the talented nursery nurse. Teaching was very good in three of the sixteen sessions seen, good in a further five and satisfactory in the other eight.
12. Teaching for the youngest children in the *Early Birds* class is very good. The nursery nurse has a secure understanding of the needs of young children and provides a well-planned, interesting and relevant range of activities for them throughout each session. She has an instinctive talent for engaging children in thinking and talking about what they are doing. For example, when a child showed her Pooh bear, she was asked 'Is it bigger or smaller than mine?', effectively encouraging mathematical vocabulary and understanding.
13. Teaching for reception children in the infant class is satisfactory. These children join their peers in the *Early Birds* for many activities, and so benefit from the expertise of the nursery nurse. At other times they work alongside other infant pupils, but lessons are not always appropriate for their age, or the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum, with too little opportunity for children to initiate their own activities. The dedicated classroom assistant works hard to encourage children in purposeful play, but insufficient resources prevent her work from being fully effective.
14. Teachers in the infants and juniors have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Teaching is good and very good when the teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject is shared effectively with pupils, so that they are enthused by the topic and eager to learn. In a junior class literacy lesson, for example, the teacher's love of words was shared very effectively with pupils, and they developed an impressive collection of interesting adjectives during the session. Teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good overall, and the recently introduced phonics programme is already having a positive impact on younger pupils' spelling and reading skills.
15. In English and mathematics lessons, teachers plan very carefully to ensure that pupils of different ages receive work matched to their needs. In the infant class, where the teacher has only been with the pupils for a very short time, this planning is satisfactory. She is fully aware of the need to increase the level of challenge, particularly in mathematics, as she gets to know the pupils well. Planning overall is thorough, and ensures the National Curriculum requirements are met. In a minority of subjects, such as design and technology, the school is aware of the need to plan more thoroughly for the development of specific subject skills.

16. Teachers use a good range of methods to capture and hold pupils' interest. Lesson objectives are shared fully with pupils, so that they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Whole-class discussions are lively, particularly in the junior class, where pupils are eager to share their ideas and opinions on the topic under discussion. Group work is matched well to pupils' interests and abilities in the majority of lessons, and the level of co-operation between pupils as they work is a strength of the school. In the junior class, for example, the 'study buddy' system enables older pupils to help younger ones with their reading very effectively.
17. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and hard work. This is amply reflected and rewarded in pupils' very positive attitudes towards their lessons, and the majority of sessions hum with an atmosphere of purposeful activity. Classroom assistants share the same high expectations, and provide invaluable support in lessons, working closely with individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, all boys and girls are fully included in all activities, and make steady and often good progress.
18. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met well overall. Teachers plan work carefully to match their needs and the targets set for them in their individual education plans. All pupils are fully included in the school, to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to identify those with special educational needs. A positive feature of the support staff's work is their encouragement for pupils with special educational needs to maintain concentration on their work. There is good liaison between class teachers and support staff. This has helped to provide important continuity for these pupils during the recent period of staff recruitment problems experienced by the school.
19. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, although this is not consistent. Whilst some is only ticks, other marking frequently provides useful comments to help pupils improve. Pupils as a result take great pride in their work and are keen to make progress. Ongoing assessment is good, and teachers take careful note of the success or otherwise of each lesson to plan further activities in the topic.

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

20. The school has maintained the broad and balanced curriculum reported by the previous inspection, and has made good progress in addressing the issue related to the curriculum for the youngest children.
21. The curriculum for children in the *Early Birds* is broad and stimulating and meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage of learning for young children. They enjoy a wide range of interesting activities which help them to make a good start to their education. However, because of the limited accommodation, the younger children in the infant class do not always have access to the resources and curriculum appropriate to their age, and this restricts their progress, particularly in creative development.
22. The curriculum for both infants and juniors is broad and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, including sex education, education about drugs misuse and religious education. Personal, social and health education is a strength of the school. It is very well planned to percolate throughout the curriculum and life of the school, and has a very positive impact on pupils' social development; for example, when older pupils provide encouragement for younger ones when swimming.

23. The curriculum is well planned and organised to ensure that the whole of the National Curriculum is covered. The two-year cycle of topics for the infants, and four-year cycle for the juniors, ensure that no topics are repeated during a pupil's time in school and that each year group in the mixed-age classes receives an appropriate curriculum. Topic and subject plans are used carefully by teachers to plan work in more detail for each half term. Many of the topics involve several curriculum areas, such as geography, science and English in a water topic. This enables teachers to make the most of the opportunities to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, it sometimes hinders the development of skills specific to a subject. For example, when combining art and design and design and technology, the differing design skills of each subject are not always emphasised sufficiently.
24. The school takes good steps to ensure that the curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils, and that all are fully included. All subjects are planned and taught in a way that is relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. The register of special educational needs is reviewed regularly to ensure that it reflects pupils' current needs and that they have an effective range of learning opportunities. Staff are quick to recognise the needs and talents of pupils, and provide appropriate support for higher-attaining pupils as necessary, for example, in after-school booster lessons. The school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, which is having a positive impact on standards. A conscious decision has been made not to adopt the National Literacy Strategy in its original form. The style of English teaching produces outstanding imaginative writing. However, spelling, and sometimes reading, are weak, as pupils do not have sufficient knowledge of phonics to enable them to build words correctly and independently.
25. The school provides good opportunities for extra-curricular activities. A lively science club has recently started, and there is a well-attended homework club. Seasonal clubs, such as football, hockey and dancing, are provided, some of which depend on valued volunteers to help the limited teaching staff provide activities. In addition, the school works closely with secondary schools in the area, which invite pupils to activities such as drama, trampolining and netball. The concerns of some parents about the provision for extra-curricular activities are not supported by the inspection findings.
26. Visits and visitors are used well to support the curriculum. For example, the local Bee Keepers' Association recently visited the school to support work in science; younger pupils visited the Museum of Childhood for history and pupils visited a pizza company to learn how to make a pizza. A local artist who is an illustrator of children's books opened the new nursery unit and talked about his work, and dancers visited the school followed by a performance by the pupils for their parents. Wareside School plays an important role within the village community and serves the community well. Links with the local church are strong, and the church is used regularly by pupils, for both worship and study. A residential visit organised for junior pupils, undertaken every two years, provides good opportunities for promoting their personal and social education as well as being memorable and enjoyable for them. Homework is encouraged to support the current work in class and prepare older pupils for the next stage of their education. Links with the local primary and secondary schools are very good; teachers liaise closely and pupils are encouraged to share facilities in after school clubs. This provides very good opportunities for pupils and teachers to get to know one another and makes the transition to secondary school very efficient.
27. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and this maintains the position found by the previous inspection. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies are pleasant occasions that successfully

create a family atmosphere and promote caring attitudes. Stories to illustrate themes such as 'vocation' are told well and in such a way as to hold the attention of all pupils. However, some opportunities to promote spiritual development are missed, such as when a new song is played but pupils do not have sufficient time to listen and reflect upon it. Few opportunities are planned to develop an awareness of the spiritual side of life in lessons other than in religious education. This is a pity, as some very good lessons, such as writing metaphors inspired by paintings of Van Gogh, lend themselves to the appreciation of talents and the beauty of the natural world.

28. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. All the adults working in the school provide very good role models, and treat all with equal fairness, which develops self-esteem and respect for others very effectively, as when, for example, teachers thank pupils for a lovely day. Very good relationships exist between all the members of the school community; all help and care for one another. Older pupils automatically look after younger ones and they show concern for one another if hurt. Pupils know and understand the school rules although they seldom have to be referred to. They have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils work well with one another and share equipment and resources well. Older pupils are encouraged to show initiative, for example at lunchtime, and they are polite and well mannered to visitors. Junior pupils learn about citizenship effectively when they participate in a local Junior Citizenship day each year.
29. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils study Christianity and other religions in religious education, and study other cultures regularly, for example, when they learn about Africa. However, they do not have enough opportunities to meet and speak to people from other cultural or religious backgrounds. They study the work of artists such as Van Gogh in English and art and design, and have had the opportunity to meet and talk to an artist and illustrator of children's books. Visits to museums such as Hitchin Museum help them to understand their own cultural heritage and pupils take part in the music festival each year. Visiting dance groups provide an opportunity to learn and perform dances. Resources for cultural development are satisfactory. However, within the good book provision, there are too few multi-cultural books or posters to reflect the nature of modern multi-cultural Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The care and guidance afforded to pupils are very good. Teachers and staff know pupils well, and they work hard to encourage an atmosphere in which pupils can develop into mature, confident and well-rounded individuals who feel valued. Group sessions, known as circle time, give pupils a good opportunity to raise any concerns and enhance the sense of community.
31. Child protection procedures follow the local authority guidelines and there is good communication between staff on these issues. The welfare of pupils who become ill while at school is very good, and staff have been trained to deal with specific medical needs for a few pupils. This is reinforced by close liaison with health professionals and parents of pupils with health concerns. Supervision at lunchtimes is good and supervisors enjoy a friendly rapport with pupils.
32. The high expectations of good behaviour produce good results, and the behaviour policy gives a clear understanding of these expectations. The school ethos effectively fosters a love of learning and an enthusiasm to learn. Pupils and parents value the reward systems. Pupils took great pride in explaining to inspectors the importance of the roll of honour displayed in the hall. Pupils have discussed and established their own codes of

conduct named 'Wareside Wishes', which are on display. They have a good understanding of how these contribute to the happiness and well being of the whole school community.

33. Monitoring of attendance is rigorous and absences are quickly followed up. Parents and pupils are made aware that the school places a high priority on good attendance. This message is reinforced in the school brochure. The school is considering further ways of getting this message across, by introducing rewards for high attendance, but this can only be effective with more co-operation from parents in planning family holidays out of school time.
34. The school successfully places a very high focus on pupils' personal development. The personal, social and health education programme is very good, promoting the importance of good health and responsible citizenship to help pupils come to terms with the issues of growing up. The emphasis on personal responsibility and respect and care for others in this small community ensures that pupils become confident and mature. This is evident in the ease with which pupils make the transition to much larger secondary schools. Likewise, the recently opened *Fledglings* pre-school and the *Early Birds* nursery enable children to become familiar with the school environment, helping them to settle in to the main school very quickly. Personal development is also enhanced through opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, the range of extra-curricular activities offered and the residential trip for older pupils. A good example of this enhancement was seen in the after-school science club, where pupils were able to take initiative in experiments and the older pupils helped the younger ones sensibly and sympathetically.
35. Health and safety provision is good. Procedures follow the local authority guidelines and the school is proactive in monitoring possible risks. The recent risk assessment has highlighted some areas for concern, particularly the fire alarm system, which is deemed to be inadequate, and the irregular surface of the playground. No areas of concern were noted during the inspection except those already identified for improvement by the school.
36. The school has continued to maintain its high standards of pupil care since the last inspection and has improved the promotion of pupils' personal development.
37. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good. The nursery nurse completes the local education authority's baseline assessment early in the term, and repeats this sensibly at the end of the year to establish the progress children have made. However, as this is not linked to the early learning goals, it is of limited use in assessing children's attainment in relation to them. She has developed an additional comprehensive and effective system for measuring and recording children's attainment in relation to the early learning goals in all areas of development, which also covers the first levels of the National Curriculum, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is used very well to give a clear picture of each individual's attainment and progress. Continuous, ongoing assessment is undertaken as children work, and is recorded conscientiously.
38. The school has good procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science from the time they enter the school. Pupils' attainment is assessed carefully when they enter full-time education, and this is used effectively to help identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. Regular, systematic testing is undertaken as pupils progress through the school. The results of national tests are analysed carefully to set targets, to identify any differences

in attainment between boys and girls and to analyse where there are areas for development in the curriculum, for example, raising the number of higher level scores in science and improving scores in mental mathematics. These good systems build a bank of useful information on how year groups and individual pupils are achieving as they progress through the school. Teachers regularly meet their colleagues in other local schools to evaluate pieces of work and ensure that they are graded accurately.

39. Targets are set for individual pupils in English. These help pupils to identify what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve and reach their predicted levels. However, there are no such specific targets for other subjects. Annual reports to parents frequently include areas for improvement. They are followed later in the year by shorter reports on how pupils have progressed, and include further clear targets for improvement. Throughout, all targets are shared with pupils in order to let them know what they have to do to improve, but there is no opportunity for them to make their own contributions.
40. Teachers know their pupils very well and continuously monitor, assess and guide pupils in their tasks. They record their assessments clearly on planning sheets, and use the information well to inform the next stage of learning. This is then used to inform planning and to enable teachers to discuss their work with pupils so that they know what they have to do to improve. Teachers keep yearly records of pupils' achievements to follow pupils' progress through the school and to ensure that it is appropriate.
41. Assessment and recording procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. These pupils have clear, specific targets in their individual education plans. These are shared with parents and pupils and are regularly reviewed and updated. Pupils receive good support from the classroom assistants. Good liaison exists between the school and external agencies such as speech therapists, and their advice is used well. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in the infant class, accelerating to good progress in the junior class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Wareside School has a committed and responsive parent body, some of whom offer a very high level of support. More direct involvement by the majority, however, would significantly benefit pupils. The school's links with parents are good, which maintains the position found at the time of the previous inspection.
43. Parents appreciate the open door policy and the opportunities to meet their children's class teachers before and after school each day if they wish. They find the headteacher and the staff very approachable. Parents receive good quality information through the school brochure, the governors' annual report, regular newsletters and information booklets. In particular the 'Welcome booklet' and guidance on helping children with reading at home are well thought out and very useful. Pupils' annual reports, sent out in January, are comprehensive with comments personal to the pupils. A separate list of targets for progress is sent to parents in July. Parents have opportunities to discuss both of these. Parents' consultation evenings each term are well attended, as are all events when the pupils are directly involved. However, few parents attend events such as the governors' annual general meeting. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully involved and informed about their children.
44. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good considering their small number. Parents contribute substantial sums to the school through events organised by the Friends' Association and those parents who serve on the governing body and Friends' Association committees are highly motivated and committed. They offer a varied and useful range of expertise to benefit the school. A couple of parents help in school regularly, but the majority have only limited direct involvement, which is borne out by the very small number who have signed the home-school agreement. This is disappointing for the school, which relies on small numbers of staff who very much value help from outside to add breadth to the pupils' experience of different role models. Parents' support for pupils' work at home is mostly very good. There was clear evidence, for example, in an infant class English lesson of parental, and even grandparent's, help in finding facts about China. One pupil produced a stone from the Yangtze loaned by a grandparent, and others eagerly gave a variety of facts gleaned from research at home. Overall, when parents become involved they have a significant beneficial effect on the pupils' achievement and progress but this could be substantially increased with the active involvement of more parents. Support for the school, by their ensuring that holidays are not taken in term time, is another thing that would benefit pupils directly.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher's dedication and enthusiasm provides very good leadership. She has a very clear vision for the development of the school and has maintained successfully the warm, family ethos which was noted in the previous inspection. The school's aims and values are reflected fully in practice, and all staff work as a close-knit team with a shared sense of purpose.
46. The school, has however, experienced considerable difficulties over teacher recruitment. Apart from the headteacher, current teachers have only been in post for a matter of days, following a period of uncertainty, with two complete changes in staff over the past two years. The headteacher values enormously the support of the nursery nurse, teaching assistants and other support staff in maintaining stability for pupils

during this time, and their success is evident in the very good relationships which permeate the school.

47. As a result of these problems, the headteacher has been unable to delegate management roles to key staff. The nursery nurse manages provision for the early years extremely well, with a clear knowledge of the needs of young children and a firm understanding of their curricular requirements. All other areas of responsibility are, of necessity, in the headteacher's hands. Although she manages the school well, together with a two-fifths teaching commitment, this is too heavy a burden for one person.
48. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher makes full use of the local education authority advisers to support her in this, and through her own teaching commitment and regular classroom visits has a clear picture of the quality of education provided. Curriculum planning is monitored closely by the headteacher, who is responsible for much of this herself. Regular staff meetings are planned to evaluate and monitor the standards achieved in pupils' work as a joint activity, but, at present, only the headteacher is responsible for this.
49. Co-ordination of special educational needs by the headteacher is good. Classroom assistants are trained to support pupils with specific learning or behavioural problems. As a result, these pupils are well integrated into the work of the class and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to promote and monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Good communication, both within the school and with external agencies such as educational psychologists, benefits these pupils significantly.
50. Governors are very supportive of the school. Many are parents, and all take a keen interest in its work, visiting regularly to see this at first hand. The chair of governors provides particularly valuable assistance, by sharing his expertise in information and communication technology regularly with the pupils. Good relationships exist between governors and the headteacher. Governors bring a high degree of expertise to their roles, and keep up-to-date with educational developments through training and regular reports from the headteacher. They take an active role in monitoring standards and developments, through their committees and at full governing body meetings. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities fully, although they are aware that some required elements within their annual report to parents are not completely in place.
51. The headteacher prepares the comprehensive school development plan, taking into account the views of parents, staff, pupils and governors. This detailed document provides a clear and realistic vision for development, although progress towards some targets is inevitably behind schedule as a result of the school's difficulties in establishing a stable teaching staff.
52. The school manages its budget well. As a small school, income per pupil is high, but all specific grants are used well and decisions on spending are considered carefully, taking full account of the principles of best value. The very high carry-forward figure of 15 per cent is fully explained and earmarked for specific purposes, including improvements to the playground and development of an information and communication technology area. Day-to-day administration is efficient and the governors' finance committee has a clear overview of budget planning and spending. The recent auditor's report contained a number of recommendations to improve financial control, and these are being implemented appropriately.

53. The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified teachers and dedicated and experienced classroom assistants. These latter have played a vital role in maintaining stability, and are valued highly by the headteacher and governors. Office staff provide a friendly and helpful front to the school, and manage its day-to-day running cheerfully and efficiently. Staff new to the school feel well supported, and a useful staff handbook gives guidance on day-to-day routines. Appropriate performance management procedures are in place, but implementation of these has been affected by staff turnover.
54. Staff work hard to make the school inviting, and attractive displays of pupils' work enliven corridors and classrooms. The school has extensive grounds, but the current playground is in an unsatisfactory state and has no markings for either formal physical education activities or playground games. All accommodation is clean and well maintained, but is barely adequate for the current numbers of pupils in the school. All available space is used to the maximum, but classrooms are crowded and there is very little storage space or room for large-scale projects, for example, in art and design or design and technology. The school is continuing to grow, and the problem will become acute in the very near future.
55. Sufficient resources are available to support all curriculum areas, and these are good for information and communication technology. The school shares many centrally stored resources with other schools in the cluster group, which effectively increases materials and equipment available to them all. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage have improved since the time of the last inspection, and are used well, but, with the increasing numbers of children joining the school, are already stretched to the limit. Provision for reception children in the infant class is adversely affected by the need to provide appropriate resources for their specific needs within an already over-crowded classroom. They are insufficient to provide appropriate equipment in both the classes with children at this stage of education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) Raise standards in phonics and spelling by ensuring that the structured approach to teaching these aspects of English continues to be systematically implemented;
(Paragraphs 4, 24, 64, 66, 67).
- (2) Further improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:
 - improving resources, to ensure that the youngest children in the mixed-age class have full access to an appropriate range of activities;
 - ensuring that teaching in the infant class takes full account of the recommended curriculum for young children;
 - considering establishing a separate class for children in the Foundation Stage age group, in light of the increasing numbers on roll.
(Paragraphs 1, 13, 21, 55, 56-62).
- (3) Reduce the workload of the headteacher by:
 - reducing the headteacher's dedicated teaching time,
 - establishing a system for delegating areas of responsibility,
 - ensuring that staff have sufficient time to fulfil their responsibilities effectively;

(Paragraphs 47, 48, 49, 51)

- (4) Urgently consider ways to increase the available accommodation, in light of the steadily rising roll;
(Paragraphs 54, 55)
- (5) Continue sterling efforts to reduce the numbers of holidays taken in term-time, in order to improve attendance.
(Paragraphs 9, 33)

In addition to the issues above, the school should consider:

- ensuring that the specific skills in all subjects, such as design and technology, are covered fully;
(Paragraphs 14, 23, 81, 86).
- improving provision for pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society;
(Paragraph 29).
- considering setting individual targets in subjects other than English, and involving pupils in setting their own targets;
(Paragraph 39).
- providing playground markings for physical education activities and playground games;
- improving pupils' research skills;
(Paragraphs 54, 61).
- encouraging more parental support for musical and sporting activities.
(Paragraphs 92, 96)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		3	5	8			
Percentage		19	31	50			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	3	49
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	17

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (100)	71 (100)	71 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (67)	71 (67)	86 (67)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (75)	83 (75)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (100)	50 (75)	76 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	49
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	19
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	173 181
Total expenditure	152 861
Expenditure per pupil	2 885
Balance brought forward from previous year	10 935
Balance carried forward to next year	31 255

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	53
Number of questionnaires returned	22
Percentage returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	45	5	0	5
My child is making good progress in school.	26	64	5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	9	68	9	0	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	59	18	0	9
The teaching is good.	32	54	9	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	36	32	0	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	40	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	36	5	0	18
The school works closely with parents.	18	59	14	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	14	50	22	0	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	18	68	5	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	14	45	5	18

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

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good in the *Early Birds* class. They come happily into school, eager to share their news, and settle quickly to the interesting range of activities provided. The nursery nurse is adept at fostering a good level of independence, and children confidently self-register and choose what they wish to do. They co-operate well, although at this stage children are more often playing alongside, rather than with, each other. They behave very well, respond quickly to adult direction and concentrate for a reasonable period of time. Teaching is very good. The nursery nurse takes every opportunity unobtrusively to promote good attitudes and consideration for others. Children in the reception class have been a little unsettled by changes in their routines, and their personal, social and emotional development is below expectations at present. They do not always behave considerately towards each other or towards adults during and between different activities, and their attention spans are short. The teacher, who has been with the class for less than two weeks, is working hard to create a calm working atmosphere and establish good relationships with the children.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Standards in communication, language and literacy are in line with expectations for children's ages. In the *Early Birds* class, children are confident and chatty. They settle happily on the carpet to share their news. They speak confidently, using a good vocabulary, although several have speech impediments. These are being treated with appropriate support from outside agencies. All children are fully included in discussions and activities through very skilful practice by the nursery nurse, who consistently encourages good speaking and listening skills. They play happily in the home corner, for example 'phoning dad – who is going to be home late', although at present they do not play together developing story lines. Sadly, children in the reception class have fewer opportunities to develop language through play, as a result of lack of resources.
58. All children in the Foundation Stage recognise and say initial letter sounds confidently. Teaching was very good as the nursery nurse led a lively session exploring the letter 's'. Discussing the story, one boy said 'the snake looks moody'; 'I think he looks surprised' is another reply. Children work hard to form their letters correctly, and all make good attempts to write their names. They enjoy mark making in a range of interesting activities. Evidence shows they are making good progress from trace writing to copy writing, and attempting independent writing confidently. They handle books with care; all children recognise individual letters and their sounds, and some children recognise familiar words within the text.

Mathematical development

59. Standards in children's mathematical development are appropriate for their ages. Children count confidently up to ten, and have many opportunities to practise their counting skills in rhymes, games and activities such as registration. They understand mathematical vocabulary, such as the names of shapes, and symmetry of butterflies, and confidently place their teddies in order of size. Work in their books shows consistent practice in matching, counting and understanding of simple addition and

subtraction. No direct teaching was seen for the youngest children. In the reception group session, the classroom assistant worked very hard to motivate the children to join in with counting rhymes, but they remained reluctant, despite her best efforts, showing that their personal, social and emotional development is below expectations for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is in line with expectations for their age. In both the *Early Birds* and the infant class, children are given a wide range of activities to promote this area of learning. Photographs show, for example, children enthusiastically exploring the properties of water and sand, building with construction kits and finding out about the world around them, when taking part in the 'walking bus'. Children use computers competently, and have a good control over the mouse when using a graphics program to draw happy and sad faces. They talk happily about their homes and families and events in their lives such as birthdays and holidays. Reception children in the infant class join in with whole-class activities. In a science lesson, for example, they explored the classroom and playground, looking for different materials. Teaching was satisfactory, as the classroom assistant helped them to describe and sort the materials they found.

Physical development

61. Children's physical development is appropriate for their age. They are well co-ordinated and independent as they move around the classroom and school, and they dress and undress themselves independently. They pedal and push a good range of wheeled toys skilfully, and co-operate well, sharing these sensibly. Teaching is satisfactory in the outdoor sessions, but would be improved if playground markings, such as roadways and zebra crossings, were provided to enable it to be more focused on developing social skills and knowledge and understanding of the world, as well as physical co-ordination. Children enjoy their hall sessions. In a very good lesson, they used space well and moved on and over the apparatus confidently. They responded promptly to the nursery nurse's instructions, waited patiently for their turn, took great care over their movements, and had a clear idea of the value of exercise to their health. Children handle tools and equipment, such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes, sensibly and with an appropriate degree of control.

Creative development

62. Children's creative development is in line with expectations for their age in most aspects. However, it is restricted in the infant class in important elements, particularly for imaginative play, and standards are below expectations in this area. Children sing familiar songs enthusiastically and reasonably tunefully. They know the names of a range of instruments, recognise the sounds they make and play these with appropriate skill. They enjoy experimenting with colour and take great pride in the finished results. They understand how to mix colours and have determined views on which colours they wish to use. One boy, for example, painting his soft toy, went in search of a brown paint, which was not provided in the available selection. In the *Early Birds* class, children have frequent opportunities to play imaginatively. They play happily alongside each other, although they do not automatically develop interesting story lines as a group activity. Sadly, these opportunities are not available in the infant class, where space and resources are limited.

ENGLISH

63. Standards in English are currently below average at the end of the infants but are average at the end of the juniors. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, standards were well below average in both reading and writing. Although some pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading, there was a higher proportion in the lower levels. No pupils attained a higher Level 3 in writing. Trends over time show significant variations in results, as a result of the very small number of pupils in each year group. This, combined with the variable number of pupils with special educational needs each year, creates a considerable distortion of the results. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards have risen, and are average, with equal proportions of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in the 2001 national tests. As in the infants, however, there are wide variations in results owing to the small numbers of pupils. This appears to be a fall in standards since the last inspection report, but comparisons are unreliable when the very small size of the school is taken into account.
64. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors. The slightly lower-rate of learning and progress, in the infants, can be explained by the nature of the different year groups, some with a higher proportion of pupils with special education needs than others, and by the very recent arrival of a new teacher, who is working hard to forge positive relationships with the class. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and make sound, and often good progress. The school has chosen not to implement the literacy hour in its entirety but to implement its own English programme. The style of English teaching produces outstanding imaginative writing, particularly in the juniors. However, there is a weakness in the teaching of phonics. The school has recognised this and is beginning to implement a comprehensive phonics programme, which is raising standards in the infants.
65. Throughout the school, standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils express themselves clearly and confidently. In all lessons, they ask sensible questions and pause to think carefully before answering questions. They listen carefully to one another and their teachers, during stories, in assemblies and in circle time. Teachers encourage them effectively to discuss their work and help them to develop and use a wide vocabulary. This is particularly evident in the junior class, where pupils develop an extremely good range of descriptive vocabulary. For example, in a lesson about metaphors, pupils described the pillows in a painting as looking like 'silky smooth cream', and a forest as a 'cabbage-green backdrop'.
66. Standards in reading are slightly below average in the infants and average in the juniors. Much of the difficulty in the infant class is due to the lack, until recently, of a progressive phonics programme. As a result, pupils lack strategies to build words, and wait to be told what they are, for example waiting to be told 'metal' during a science lesson. They are frequently unable to build words using more complex phonic blends and get the letter sounds and names confused. However, the phonics being taught to younger pupils is beginning to raise standards. In Year 6, pupils are all independent readers, and read fluently and with good expression. They discuss their reading confidently, and talk about their favourite authors and characters in stories. However, their research skills are unsatisfactory. Few could discuss how to find non-fiction books, or how to use them. None knew about library classification systems. This is disappointing, as the school library is well stocked and organised, but teachers take too few opportunities to use it for teaching research skills.

67. Standards in writing are below average in the infants, although steady progress is evident in pupils' books. In Year 2, pupils use full stops and capital letters, but very inconsistently. Handwriting is printed and, although legible, tends to be uneven. Written work is too short to develop any fluency, and pupils' spelling is weak. They lack independence in using wordbooks, preferring to ask the teacher how to spell every word. In the junior class, pupils' imaginative writing is outstanding, through the inspirational teaching of the headteacher. Pupils use a very extensive range of descriptive vocabulary and phrases, expressing ideas colourfully and expertly; for example, 'The grassy fronds swayed and the poppies flickered'. Writing is well structured and punctuated. Pupils develop very good skills in a range of styles, such as stories, letters, newspaper articles and factual accounts, all of which are lively and thoughtful. Information and communication technology is used extensively to word-process and edit all forms of writing. Handwriting is neat and well formed, and work is extremely well presented, demonstrating the pride that the pupils show in their work. However, spelling is below average. Many words are spelt incorrectly, and the majority of pupils appear unaware of spelling rules. For example, one pupil thought that they should simply add an 's' for all plurals. It is a pity that this should mar such excellent writing, but the school is aware of the problem. Writing in other subjects such as history and science is also very good, and is appropriate to the demands of the subject.
68. Teaching is at least satisfactory, and much is very good. As a result, pupils clearly enjoy English. They listen attentively and work hard, although some lack independence in the infant class. Pupils in the juniors become totally engrossed in their work and develop a high level of interest in words and how they can be used. Pupils make sound progress except in spelling and phonics, where progress is less satisfactory. Work is planned appropriately for pupils at different levels of attainment and support staff are used well to help individuals and small groups. Good use of assessment enables teachers to highlight pupils who need help or extension work effectively. Much of the marking is good, and helps pupils to know what they need to do in order to improve. A particularly good feature of assessment is the sharing of National Curriculum level descriptors with pupils, so that they know very clearly what they need to do in order to raise their own standards. Resources are satisfactory. The library is well stocked with good quality books in good condition. In addition, each class has a well-stocked library area, although this is mostly fiction. However, there are insufficient multi-cultural books to reflect our modern society.

MATHEMATICS

69. Pupils' standards in mathematics are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This broadly maintains the picture found by the previous inspection. However, the small number of pupils in each year group makes comparisons between years unreliable, as the proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs varies from year to year, and each pupil represents a considerable percentage within the year group. This is also true of comparisons with attainment nationally and with standards reached by pupils in similar schools in the National Curriculum tests at age seven and eleven. In the 2001 tests for Year 2, pupils attained average results compared with all schools at the higher Level 3, but overall results appeared well below the national average, when points' scores are calculated. In the 2001 tests for Year 6, standards were above the national average, and well above performance in similar schools. The school was pleased to exceed its targets for this group of pupils, through a concentrated focus on raising attainment in mathematics throughout the year. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls.

70. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and often good. Topics are introduced in whole-class sessions, but teachers plan very carefully to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities in the class, within the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy. Classroom assistants are used very well to work with different year groups, so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all activities. In the junior class, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the mental 'starter', racing against time to complete number tracks. These were matched well to pupils' ages and abilities, which enabled all to take part in the session at an appropriate level of challenge. Their final answer was written on individual whiteboards and shown to the teacher, so that she had an immediate and effective overview of their performance.
71. In the infant class, pupils have a secure understanding of number bonds and count successfully on and back in tens from a given number. They add and subtract numbers competently in tens and units, with more able pupils using hundreds confidently, and they calculate money sums accurately. They recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes and measure, using centimetres with reasonable accuracy. However, in the work sample, there was little evidence of data handling in the form of graphs and charts, problem solving or work using non-standard measures and time. Teaching was satisfactory in the lesson seen. Each adult worked closely with a particular year group, and involved pupils effectively in thinking and talking about what they were doing. Year 1 pupils played a doubles game and Year 2 pupils investigated function machines to make doubles. All successfully completed the activity, using a variety of strategies to calculate their answers. The teacher has been with the class for less than two weeks, and is still evaluating pupils' abilities. She acknowledges the need for a greater range of activities, as the work was too difficult for some and too easy for others.
72. In the junior class, Year 6 pupils calculate confidently, using the four number rules, with numbers up to one million and in decimals. They recognise geometrical shapes, reflective symmetry and measure angles accurately. They collate data, recording their results in neat, graphical form, for example, when estimating weight. They enjoy mathematical challenges, such as problems involving timetables and generating different geometrical shapes with just two cuts to a square, and complete these competently. Teaching was good in a lesson on fractions. Pupils greeted 'chocolate maths' with a cheer, and were eager to contribute answers to the teacher's challenging questions. The work was matched well to the different year groups, with the youngest tackling halves and quarters and the oldest investigating mixed numbers and improper fractions. Both teacher and assistant had a secure knowledge of the objective of the lesson and the needs and abilities of the individual pupils, and the lesson had an air of concentrated activity as pupils co-operated well to solve their particular challenge.

73. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory. The subject makes a sound contribution to literacy, through developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to reinforce mathematical concepts, but not sufficiently to collate and display information, for example, through the use of spreadsheets. Pupils use their mathematical skills successfully in other subjects, such as co-ordinates in geography and designing apparatus to weigh a pin in connection with science.

SCIENCE

74. Timetabling arrangements meant that only one science lesson was seen in the infant class and no lessons were observed in the juniors. However, based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, and talking to staff and pupils, evidence shows that standards in science are average at the end of the infants and by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully included in all lessons. They make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in line with their abilities.
75. Teacher assessments and National Curriculum tests in 2001 indicate that standards in science are well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The low results for the infants reflect the relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs in a very small year group. In the juniors, whilst all pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4, none achieved the higher Level 5. This is an apparent decline in standards since the last inspection report. However, trends over time in both infant and junior classes show wide variations in results caused by variations in very small year groups, which makes comparisons insecure.
76. Pupils in the infants enjoy exploring different materials in a 'feely' bag to identify properties such as rigidity and flexibility. They begin to develop a good vocabulary but, despite clear teaching, some of the youngest get confused between feeling and seeing materials, insisting on saying that they are opaque even though they cannot see them. Year 2 pupils successfully classify materials on display according to their properties and are confident and correct when identifying and naming materials around the school and classroom. They make sound progress in lessons. Pupils learn about themselves and life processes when they correctly sequence pictures of people of different ages and animal young. Pupils in the juniors are clearly interested in what happens to the shadow of a pole as the day progresses and record their findings carefully. They talk with enthusiasm of experiments with tuning forks to test pitch and remember that long forks give low pitch, short gives high. By the time they leave the school they make sensible predictions and carry out their own experiments and record them using tables and graphs. They develop a good awareness of the importance of fair testing and link this to variables such as the weight of tuning forks as well as the length. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to support science work, but the school has recently acquired data logging equipment to address this issue. Pupils of all age groups are involved in the recently formed science club and thoroughly enjoy making salt volcanoes erupt by using rubber bands.
77. Not enough teaching of science was seen during the inspection to make a firm judgement on its quality. However, that seen was satisfactory. The science curriculum is well planned so that pupils in the same class for succeeding years do not receive the same topics, and appropriate time is allocated to revising scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils cover all aspects of science during their time in the school. Teachers plan work in science well, carefully ensuring that work is appropriate to the different age and ability groups within the classes. Pupils with special educational

needs are well supported by classroom assistants and take full part in all the lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy science, are very interested in scientific phenomena, and make satisfactory progress in both the infant and the junior class. More able pupils present their work well, but the work in many pupils' books is disappointing. Much is untidy and lacking extended explanations. Teachers' comments and marking tend to concentrate on spelling rather than persistently challenging and improving pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. The school is justly pleased to have enabled all pupils to reach the national standard, but teachers are well aware of the need to challenge and raise standards still more.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Standards in art and design and design and technology are in line with expectations for pupils' ages throughout the school, which broadly maintains the position found by the previous inspection, although standards in art were judged to be above expectations in the juniors at that time. Pupils undertake a wide range of interesting projects in both subjects, and these are often linked effectively to work in other curriculum areas, such as history and geography. Work is lively and colourful, such as interesting and carefully executed African masks in the juniors and imaginative 'moon-buggies' in the infants. It is well mounted and displayed, encouraging pupils effectively to take pride in their efforts.
79. In art and design, pupils use a wide range of media, including pencil, pastel, watercolour and collage. They also enjoy using graphics programs on the computer as a valuable additional dimension to their work. They draft their work carefully in sketchbooks and take great care over producing their finished work. They study the work of well-known artists and art from different cultures, such as Native American 'dream-catchers', which makes an important contribution to their cultural development. In the lesson seen in the juniors, good teaching encouraged pupils effectively to consider mosaic tile patterns, and made a valuable contribution to their numeracy skills as they calculated the number of tiles needed to cover a specific area. Pupils were given a wide range of choices, and made good progress in completing their work in their chosen medium. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, were included fully in the activity, supported well by both the teacher and the classroom assistant.
80. No design and technology lessons were seen, but pupils work sensibly to produce initial designs and recall a number of projects, such as designing and making three-dimensional masks and models, with evident pleasure. Younger pupils used information and communication technology effectively when designing and making calendars. They talk enthusiastically about a visit to a pizza company and the fun they had in designing and making their own pizzas and boxes.
81. Evidence shows that pupils have enjoyed completing an extensive range of projects to a good standard, using appropriate resources, although space limitations restrict their ability to work on a large scale. In both subjects, however, whilst projects are interesting and relevant, the specific skills associated with the subject are not taught in a systematic way. Sketchbooks do not show, for example, development of colour mixing or shading techniques, and older pupils' portraits lack sufficient maturity. Design and technology projects do not demonstrate clearly development of understanding of components and mechanisms, or evaluation of finished products. The school is aware of the need to secure the skills, knowledge and understanding of these subjects in their own right.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

82. Timetabling arrangements meant that two lessons in history were seen during the inspection, but none in geography. Judgements about geography are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers planning and talking to pupils and staff. Because of the particular circumstances of the school, especially with regard to the infants, where new books have been started with a new teacher, there is little evidence of work from previous terms. However, there is sufficient evidence to say that standards in both subjects are typical of those seen nationally for infant and junior pupils. The satisfactory attainment and progress reported in the last inspection report have been maintained.
83. The curriculum for both subjects has been thoroughly planned to cover all the statutory requirements, and to ensure that there is no repetition of work for pupils in the mixed-age classes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class. They are fully included in all lessons and make satisfactory progress. No teaching was seen in geography, but the teaching of history is satisfactory and this is a significant factor in the sound standards achieved. The cross-curricular nature of the topic work, however, sometimes masks the direct teaching of geographical skills which, whilst satisfactory, are less well developed than in history. For example, skills in map and atlas work are under-developed.
84. Pupils in the infants have good ideas when identifying the age of a teddy, and quickly grasp that looking well worn does not necessarily mean that a teddy is old! They develop an appropriate sense of time when arranging teddies along a time line. Teaching relates well to their age and needs, and they are interested and listen very well. Pupils have learned about bonfire night and the gunpowder plot but find it difficult to relate the main points of the story. Geography and religious education are linked well when pupils study their local area by looking at some of the main features of the village, especially the church. They are keen to talk about their visit and share the photographs on display.
85. Junior pupils learn about the Romans by studying maps of army deployment, and looking at coins with symbols that signify 'enemy' or 'friend'. Although early in the project, pupils understand why the Romans invaded Britain and how it was accomplished. Interesting activities and the teacher's good knowledge of the subject enthuse pupils, so that they work hard and want to learn more. In geography pupils learn about Australia, its main cities and the oceans that surround it. During a water topic with strong cross-curricular links to religious education and science, pupils learn about some of the large rivers of the world, such as the Ganges and the Amazon, and visit their local river, accompanied by a representative of the water board. However, despite the interesting content, some pupils find it difficult to recall what they have done, as the emphasis on geographical skills is not always firm enough. For example, a newly started topic about Africa has introduced African pottery and masks but not yet succeeded in pupils identifying geographical features or understanding how the environment affects the way people live.
86. Pupils clearly enjoy their work and are interested in the world around them. Skills developed in English are used well to record and present their work. However, delay in establishing the Internet link means that information and communication technology has yet to make any significant contribution to the subject. The school made a deliberate decision to suspend topic work other than through English, mathematics and science in the infants last term, in order to maintain standards following teacher recruitment problems. It is aware that, as a result, some skills in both infant and junior classes are less well developed, but has a positive view of moving forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

87. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with expectations for pupils' ages throughout the school. Whilst this appears to be a decline since the last inspection report, expectations in the subject and its application have changed significantly since that time. The school is working very hard to implement these new requirements, and ICT is used well to support work across the curriculum. In the use of ICT to present information in a variety of forms, standards are above expectations. Text and graphics, including digital images, are combined in interesting ways, for example, to create PowerPoint presentations about the school in the juniors. Pupils throughout the school have word-processed many examples of attractive original stories and poems, supporting their literacy work, using font, style and clip-art imaginatively to create effect.
88. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils throughout the school make good progress in gaining knowledge, skills and understanding. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are included fully in all activities, and thoroughly enjoy using computers. They work carefully and co-operatively, and the good range of resources means that they have plenty of opportunity to do so. In the infants, a classroom assistant works closely with pupils, for example, to support their efforts to word-process in literacy. Her own expertise is shared effectively with pupils, and they respond well to her high expectations. In the juniors, the chair of governors gives generously of his time to share his knowledge and expertise in ICT. He makes a very valuable contribution to the good teaching in the subject, explaining clearly and carefully what he wants pupils to do, and helping them effectively to achieve good results.
89. In the infants, pupils have used a variety of applications, and their work is recorded well to show the good progress they are making. In effective links with design and technology, their designs for calendars are planned and executed carefully, showing great attention to detail. They use graphics programs imaginatively in connection with art and design work, for example, to create happy and sad faces, showing good mouse control and a clear understanding of the different functions of the program. They explore control, investigating and matching pathways, but there is little evidence of ICT being used to support mathematics and data-handling, such as producing graphs and charts.
90. In the juniors, pupils continue to make good progress. They have a very clear understanding of the value of ICT in supporting their schoolwork, and many make sensible use of access to computers at home when doing their homework. The school's connection to the Internet has been delayed, but pupils understand how to obtain information on the web and how to narrow searches effectively to obtain the information they want. Artwork, such as designs in the style of Mondrian, and repeating patterns, are attractive and well executed. However, as in the infants, there is less evidence of the use of ICT to support mathematics or science, although equipment for monitoring and measuring data has recently been acquired.

MUSIC

91. Standards in music are in line with expectations for pupils' ages throughout the school, which maintains the position found by the previous inspection. Pupils really enjoy singing, and this is tuneful, melodic and expressive when singing in assembly. They have many opportunities to sing, for example, during productions and church services, at music festivals and at a local business's Christmas lunch, and these make an important contribution to pupils' social development. Pupils from the school are

regularly chosen to sing solos on these occasions, and they recall the events with evident pleasure. They listen to, evaluate and appreciate music from well-known composers and different cultures in lessons and assemblies, which makes a valuable contribution to their cultural as well as musical development. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all activities. When a choir is needed for a special event, everyone in the school is involved in it.

92. Pupils make steady progress in developing their skills in performing on a variety of percussion instruments. Younger pupils understand how to represent long and short notes, and play loudly or softly. They select their instruments with care, recognising the sounds each makes and whether it is appropriate for the sound required. Older pupils learn correct musical notation and occasionally compose their own music. They recall learning to play the recorder with evident enthusiasm; they and the school regret the temporary suspension of this activity.
93. No music lessons were seen during the inspection, so that it is not possible to make a judgement on its quality. Appropriate time is allocated to the subject, and teaching by non-specialists is supported well by a good scheme of work, detailed planning and a satisfactory range of resources. The school is determined to maintain the breadth of the curriculum, and is actively seeking to appoint a musical specialist to replace a member of staff who left at Christmas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

94. Timetabling arrangements meant that no physical education lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence, from teachers' planning and talking to pupils, shows clearly that pupils have access to the full physical education curriculum, and all are included fully. The skills introduced in planned activities and discussed by pupils demonstrate that they reach a satisfactory level of attainment by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven. This maintains the position in the last inspection report.
95. All pupils enjoy dance. Younger pupils use appropriate taped programmes to support development of their skills, and older pupils really appreciated sessions with a dance group who visited the school and helped them to make their own production of 'Grease'. This also involved an element of drama with make up and costume, making a good contribution to literacy. Pupils' photographs, and writing using ICT, amply demonstrate the success of this dance 'residency'. Pupils discussing the work they are currently doing on ball skills clearly feel that they are making good progress and developing their skills well when playing dodge ball! They recall clearly activities in athletics for sports day such as running and jumping. Although the special circumstances of the school make team games difficult to organise, pupils play rounders, and boys and girls learn football skills from volunteers who visit the school. The school is keen to extend opportunities to use these skills in competitive games, and has been invited by the local secondary school to join a netball tournament in the near future. Close and valuable links between local schools are also evident when pupils are given the opportunity by a secondary school to develop trampolining skills.
96. All pupils swim regularly. Not only do all pupils swim the required 25 metres by the time they leave the school, but many gain badges and awards of a higher standard, for example, in deep water diving. The whole-school swimming session also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social skills. Older pupils discuss the reactions of some of the younger ones with great kindness, and tell how they have helped them to overcome anxieties. Parents' support with swimming is valued highly, and enables this valuable activity to continue. The school would very much like to see similar parental

involvement in other sporting activities. Every two years, pupils in the juniors have the opportunity to stay at a centre for adventurous activities that include abseiling, climbing and rifle shooting. This makes another very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as giving them the opportunity to try different activities.

97. As no lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a judgement about teaching in physical education. However, it is clear that all pupils enjoy their lessons and join in enthusiastically. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, are fully included in physical education activities. Although it is not possible to judge their team spirit during games, they clearly learn the importance of co-operation and develop a good team spirit, in keeping with the positive ethos of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

98. As in the last inspection report, standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of both the infants and the juniors, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
99. No religious education lessons were seen in the infant class during the inspection. Owing to unavoidable difficulties in teacher recruitment, a sensible decision was made to teach topics to pupils in the infants through English, and then to start new books with the newly-appointed teacher. As a result, evidence for religious education in the infant class is sparse. However, it is possible to say that they have a sound understanding of the story of Christmas, retelling it well in their own words. Through visits to the local church, pupils learn the names of parts of the church, such as the nave and the font. They recall the visit clearly, and talk about it enthusiastically. Pupils in the junior class successfully learn about the life of Jesus, the early church and the work of the Apostles, and Christian symbols. They think carefully about what God means to them and how He helps both them and other people. They retell the story of The Buddha and the lotus flowers in clear simple terms that demonstrate their understanding well. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen, when junior pupils examined paintings of Jesus thoughtfully, and discussed sensitively how he is portrayed as sad, lonely and anxious. Older pupils recall their work on baptism, initiation ceremonies into other religions and Hindu gods, but they tend to be vague, their memories not reflecting the careful work on the same subjects in their books.

100. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and interested in their work. As a result they make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Assemblies make a good contribution to religious education, when stories about famous people such as Gladys Aylward are told in an interesting manner which holds pupils' attention and helps them to understand the difficulties she faced in her work. Close links are maintained with the local church. The rector visits regularly to talk to the pupils in assemblies, which helps to bring learning about Christianity alive. However, there are few visitors from other faith groups to help extend pupils' understanding of religious beliefs and what they mean to believers.
101. Curriculum planning is sound. Teachers plan their lessons well and encourage pupils effectively to look at artefacts such as paintings and to talk about their work. Teachers are knowledgeable and make lessons interesting when they initiate discussions. As a result pupils listen well and think carefully about their work. Although planning for religious education does not specifically include spiritual development, opportunities are taken to listen to music while working because 'music can bring out the spirituality in us' and to help pupils 'feel good about themselves and things around us'. This creates a quiet, reflective atmosphere whilst pupils work, to which they respond very well. There is a satisfactory range of resources. These include a satisfactory number of books in the library, but there are too few books about other cultures and faiths.