

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHAW C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117569

Headteacher: Mr R Clarke

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Matthews
19410

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th November 2001

Inspection number: 197866

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 aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Vineyards Road
Northaw
Potters Bar
Hertfordshire

Postcode: EN6 4PB

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Walton

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
A C Matthews 19410	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Modern foreign language Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
H Griffiths 9446	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
M Roussel 22157	Team inspector	English Science Art Geography History Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Northaw Church of England Primary School is situated in the Northaw ward of Potters Bar, with the majority of its pupils coming from surrounding districts. The school is much smaller than most primary schools. There are 57 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven, 31 boys and 26 girls, and this number has declined since the last inspection. The catchment area has a wide socio-economic mix but the majority of the pupils come from socially advantaged families. There is a much lower than average percentage of minority ethnic children in the school, and no pupils with English as an additional language. Four pupils are eligible for free school meals, which at eight per cent is below the national average. There are ten pupils on the special needs register and no pupils with statements; both these figures are below the national average. The pupil mobility rate for last year was above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Northaw C of E Primary School is a good school with some very good features. It is well led by a committed headteacher who is well supported by knowledgeable governors and a dedicated and hardworking staff. Teaching is good overall with a significant proportion of lessons observed during the inspection being very good and excellent. This leads directly to pupils making good progress through the school and the much increased proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels by the end of Year 6. Standards of the present Year 6 pupils are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Effective subject co-ordinators have devised a well-planned curriculum that helps pupils develop relevant skills and knowledge as they move through the school. However, the organisation of the present Reception class is not so well developed. The school receives an above average income but still gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good leadership and is given good support by both governors and staff.
- Pupils are taught well, make good progress through the school and attain above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good and is enhanced by visits and a very good range of extra-curricular clubs.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school, behave well and have very good relationships with each other.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, as a result, the school is a well-ordered and buoyant community.
- The school has very good links with parents who are extremely happy with the education it provides and the improvements made since the last inspection.

What could be improved

- The planning, organisation and resources for the Reception aged children during the morning sessions.

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 improvements since the last inspection in 1997 and has a good capacity and enthusiasm to continue this improvement. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now good and pupils are making consistently good progress in all subjects. Pupils' attitudes to school and their work, their relationships, and their social and moral development have improved considerably, and the school's aims are now very well reflected in its daily life. There are now good quality assessment procedures in place and these are used well by teachers to inform both their termly and daily planning. As a result, the needs of pupils of all abilities are fully met. Good quality training has led to considerable improvements in the effectiveness of the classroom assistants who now play a significant role in pupils' learning. Very good improvements have been made in design and technology through the school and in physical education in Years 1 and 2, with standards in both these subjects now above national expectations. The liaison with parents whose children are on the special educational needs register is good and the individual education plans for these pupils are carefully drawn up with relevant targets for improvement. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection throughout the school, and there is now a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Much of this is due to the very good quality monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work by the headteacher and co-ordinators, and governors for English and mathematics. The needs of all pupils, and particularly the higher

attaining pupils, are generally now being met well because teachers make much improved use of pupils' assessments when planning lessons. The one important area where the school has not made good improvements is in the organisation of the learning for the youngest children. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory, and the school has adopted the National Foundation Stage curriculum for these children. However, the organisation of the children's learning, the lack of a permanent classroom, and discrete outdoor play facilities are resulting in these children not making the progress they are capable of in certain areas of learning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	E*	E*
Mathematics	E	C	D	E
Science	C	D	D	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Since the last inspection, results have been below average overall because of the low proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5. The fluctuations in the above results are due mainly to the small numbers of pupils in each year group and the varying proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The 2001 Year 6 cohort had over 60 per cent of its pupils on the special educational needs register and a very high proportion of pupils with statements. When compared to these pupils' Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results, the pupils made very good progress in mathematics, good progress in science but well below average progress in English. However, the great majority of pupils who had special needs had weaknesses in their literacy development. The school has set very challenging targets for the present Year 6 group of pupils who have above average standards in English and mathematics, and average attainment in science. What is most significant though is the much improved proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level 5 in all these subjects. Year 6 pupils have average attainment in all other subjects, apart from design and technology which is above average. Pupils' attainment in the 2001 Year 2 National Curriculum tests showed a considerable improvement on previous years, with pupils' attainment well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents a considerable improvement in mathematics which had generally been well below average in previous years. A principal reason for this improvement is the school's decision to keep Year 2 in the same class throughout the year and not move the pupils to a new class in January, as had been the previous practice. Inspection evidence for the present small cohort of Year 2 pupils shows that they are making good progress and their attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics. The apparent fall in standards since the previous year is due to the fact that a quarter of the pupils in this year group are on the high stages of the special educational needs register. The Year 2 pupils' standards in all other subjects are average, apart from physical education and design and technology which are above average. Although children make a sound start to their school life in the Reception class, the lack of resources for these children is resulting in the unsatisfactory development of their physical and creative skills which are below expectations for pupils of their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have a great enthusiasm for school and very positive attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and treat each other with respect.
Personal development and	Very good. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and take their

relationships	many responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The great majority of pupils attend school punctually but a very small minority do not attend regularly.

Pupils get on very well with one another and with their teachers and show a very good understanding and consideration for others. These very positive relationships have a noticeable impact on the way that pupils learn when they work together in classes. Pupils respond very well to the good quality teaching, take their responsibilities seriously and play a significant role in the life of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good, with a significant proportion being very good or better. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. The good quality teaching encourages pupils to work hard in lessons, and as a result they make good progress. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 use the results of assessments well to ensure that the work they plan challenges all pupils. The teaching of basic skills in both numeracy and literacy is very good in these years. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and make effective use of their good subject knowledge when questioning the pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress, most importantly in English and mathematics. Teachers make very good use of the well-qualified and hard-working assistants who work very effectively with groups of pupils. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned and consistently good. Older pupils benefit from good quality French teaching and have made a good start in learning a new language. The teaching for the Reception children is satisfactory overall. However, there is not enough support for the hard-working nursery nurse, in particular to help with the assessment of how well new learning has been understood. This means that the daily planning in the Reception class does not always address the areas of weakness from children's previous work. There is also a lack of resources for areas like physical and creative development, and this is resulting in children's unsatisfactory progress in these areas.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, and well supplemented by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. However, the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because it does not always meet the different needs of individual children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with individual education plans make good progress towards their targets because of the good quality support they receive from both teachers and classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils currently designated as having English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this impacts strongly on the atmosphere in the school, and pupils' attitudes to work, each other and their outlook on life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. Pupils' progress and attainment are monitored carefully by the school and used effectively by the teachers in their planning.

The nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum has been implemented for the Reception children. However, the year's work is not broken down into smaller units, such as for each half term, to ensure that all aspects are systematically covered during the school year. The assessment of these children's progress is at present informal, and not used consistently to ensure the planned work meets their individual needs. All teachers have a good understanding of how to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, take a full and active part in all lessons. There are very good links between school and home, with parents receiving good quality information about their children's progress and making a positive contribution to their children's learning. However, more could be done in the Foundation Stage to involve the parents in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and has a very supportive and hardworking staff who are all committed to raising standards further. Subject co-ordinators provide good leadership in their individual subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive of the school, visit regularly, monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, and play an active part in the school's strategic planning and the monitoring of its developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Test results are carefully analysed and challenging targets are set. These targets are shared with parents and regularly reviewed. Co-ordinators for English and mathematics regularly monitor teaching and learning in their subjects, and make recommendations for improvement. The monitoring of teaching is very good overall and makes a positive impact on the quality of learning in the classrooms.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage where more resources are needed.

Leadership and management are strengths of the school and have helped the school to successfully address the great majority of the key issues from the last inspection, and also improve the quality of education in the school. The school's commitment to constant evaluation of its practices is helping it to improve even more, and particularly in the attainment of Year 6 pupils. There is effective delegation to subject leaders who have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school with some working closely with the headteacher in the monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has a good number of staff for years 1 to 3, but there are not enough resources for the nursery nurse when she teaches the Reception children in the morning. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but the hall, although large enough in size, is not a satisfactory learning environment for the youngest children. The school applies the principles of best value well, particularly in consultation with parents and pupils, when buying resources and in the effective monitoring of its standards through the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching is very good and pupils make good progress. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and behave well. The school has very good relationships with parents and works closely with them in the education of their child. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities and provides good opportunities for children to take responsibilities as they move through the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of homework. The setting up of a Nursery.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's leadership is good, and clear improvements have been made since the last inspection.	
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The inspectors fully endorse all the parents' positive comments about the school but do not agree with some parents' concerns about the provision of homework. This they consider to be carefully planned and relevant to the pupils who have a clear understanding of how homework helps their learning. Whilst inspectors do have a concern about the present accommodation for the Reception class, they are not in a position to comment on the viability of separate Nursery provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Northaw Church of England Primary School is much smaller than other primary schools and as such year groups are often smaller than ten pupils. This makes statistical analysis of results for individual year groups far less reliable. However, pupils' attainment over the last four years has been consistently below average by the time pupils leave Year 6. The results for the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils show that the school's challenging targets were missed by a large margin in English but by a much smaller margin in mathematics. However, the targets were set when pupils had just begun in Year 5 and since that date there had been an above average movement of pupils both from and into the class and this did have an adverse effect on the overall standard achieved. The cohort also had a very high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register and a very high proportion of pupils with statements. The great majority of those pupils were on the special educational needs register because of weaknesses in literacy, and this is reflected in the school's results in English. When compared to all schools, pupils' attainment was below average in mathematics and science and in the bottom five per cent of all schools in English. The main reason for this very low score in English was that no pupils scored the nationally expected level 4 in writing. As a result of this, writing is rightly one of the school's main priorities in its present improvement plan. When compared to schools that draw their pupils from a similar background, pupils' performance was well below average in mathematics and science and again in the bottom five per cent in English. However, when pupils' attainment in Year 6 was compared to their attainment in the Year 2 National Curriculum results, a different picture emerges. Statistics show that pupils in fact made well above average progress in mathematics, above average progress in science but well below average progress in literacy.
2. Inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 6 group of pupils has made good progress since entering the school and has above average attainment in English and mathematics and average attainment in science. This represents an improvement in English and mathematics and the maintaining of standards in science since the previous inspection. The targets for this group of pupils are higher than the previous year and inspection evidence confirms that they are on course to meet these targets. Over the last three years there has been a difference between the performance of boys and girls. Girls have attained higher standards in English whilst boys have achieved higher standards in science. The school was aware of these differences and monitored the school's provision carefully to ensure all pupils were achieving their potential. During the inspection no significant differences were seen in the standards achieved by pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background.
3. Over the last four years, standards at the end of Year 2 have generally been well above average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics where the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has not had time to impact on standards. The National Curriculum results for 2001 show that pupils achieved well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results were above average in these three subjects. Higher attaining pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics through Key Stage 1, with a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in these subjects. However, in writing the proportion achieving level 3 was below average. Inspection evidence shows that the present Year 2 group of eight pupils has made good progress since it entered the school and that the attainment of these pupils is average in reading, writing and mathematics. The principal reason for an apparent decline in standards since the previous year is that a quarter of the present very small year group are on the high stages of the special educational needs register and are unlikely to achieve the nationally expected level 2.

4. Children under five enter the Reception class with attainment that is in line with that expected of children of a similar age in all the areas of learning. At the time of the inspection, nine children were attending part-time in the morning and two attending full-time. The children are taught in the morning by a nursery nurse who has to set up the classroom in the school hall. During the morning she has no help to support her work with these children. By the end of Reception, children make overall satisfactory progress and achieve the Early Learning Goals set for this age in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy, their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their mathematical development. They achieve below the expected level in their physical and creative development because of the lack of regular opportunities and resources to enable pupils to develop their skills in these two areas.
5. Inspection findings show that standards in English are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6, where standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills because teachers provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to extend these skills and encourage pupils to use a wide and varied vocabulary. Standards in writing are improving and are now satisfactory overall. Opportunities for pupils to write for many different purposes and for different audiences have enabled pupils to successfully develop their skills in other subjects, such as when they write about their visit to a Victorian school. Pupils make good progress in their reading and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6 because of the strong emphasis that teachers place on reading in literacy lessons. Throughout the school pupils read with good fluency and understanding. Older pupils make good use of their higher order reading skills of skimming and scanning for accessing information. Younger pupils benefit from carefully sequenced teaching and the development of early phonic skills. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the encouragement of a love of reading and constantly reinforce the notion that reading is enjoyable. Pupils' obvious enthusiasm for reading is further stimulated by the good range of reading books.
6. Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection and are average for pupils aged seven, and above average for eleven year olds, where a small minority are working at very high levels. Improvements in Key Stage 2 are due to the school's very good use of assessment to constantly monitor pupils' progress and to ensure that the work set is consistently challenging to pupils. Year 6 pupils have good skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and use these skills well in their mental mathematics work. However, a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils do not have instant recall of their multiplication facts, and this is restricting their mental mathematics development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in their number work and are developing good strategies for manipulating numbers because they are constantly challenged to develop their own ways of solving number problems. One Year 2 pupil when asked to add 27 and 25 in his head, responded, "20 and 20 make 40, seven and five are 12 and so the answer is 52". Good strategies seen in the lower school are now feeding through into the Key Stage 2 classes, and are having a marked impact on the progress pupils are making in their knowledge and confidence in working with numbers.
7. Standards in science are average at the end of both key stages, as at the time of the last inspection. Because the curriculum is carefully planned, there is a good emphasis on investigative work. Younger pupils have a sound understanding of life processes and living things and use conventional measurements to compare the similarities and differences between themselves and other members of the class. Pupils use diagrams and illustrations well to show the results of their work. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the importance of the skeleton and are able to name the main bones attached to it. Good use is made of the Internet by the top two classes to develop their understanding of how sound travels and how sound can be insulated. However, the oldest pupils do not have a clear understanding of the importance of a fair test and the higher achieving pupils do not have enough responsibility to plan and carry out their own investigations to test out their hypotheses.

8. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection, but pupils now have improved skills in using computers to handle data. Pupils have satisfactory communication skills through the school and there are good links with literacy when older pupils do paired creative writing on a computer. Good links with other subjects give pupils a good understanding of how ICT can help in their learning, such as when older pupils find information about rainforests to use in their persuasive writing, and younger pupils use computers to design a chair, as part of their design and technology project. Pupils have a good understanding of control that has been well developed by teachers through the use of robotics. The enthusiasm and subject knowledge of the oldest pupils will be further developed during a combined technology and adventure activity residential week planned for later in the year.
9. Standards have improved greatly in design and technology throughout the school because of the improved curriculum, good teacher subject knowledge and well-planned projects which not only develop pupils' making skills but also raise their awareness of the importance of design and evaluation in each of their projects. Very good improvement has also been made in Key Stage 1 physical education, where Year 2 pupils benefit greatly from working with the older pupils in the class and achieve above average standards. In all other subjects, standards have remained the same since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in developing their observational drawing work, and satisfactory progress in developing their skills working with mouldable materials, such as clay. The school makes good use of the local area to develop pupils' geographical and historical skills, such as when pupils visit Cuffley Camp to undertake a river study. However, the development of pupils' map skills through the school is not consistent. Good use is made of the Internet in both these subjects; for example, Year 4 pupils find aerial photographs of the locality and compare them to other areas of England. Pupils' enthusiasm for history is enhanced by visitors to the school, such as when a member of the local community talks about his experiences as an ARP Warden in World War II. Pupils make good progress in developing their swimming skills because the school places a strong emphasis on regular swimming for all full-time pupils. As a result, Year 6 pupils have above average standards, with higher achieving pupils showing good style in breaststroke, backstroke and front crawl. Pupils benefit from a very good range of sports activities which are supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils enjoy singing and have access to a good range of musical instruments. Pupils who choose to have violin lessons make very good progress and achieve high standards because of the very good quality teaching.
10. Pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are well developed through the careful planning of the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in many other subjects, such as science, geography, history and design and technology. Similarly, good opportunities exist for the development of pupils' numeracy skills in science, design and technology, history and physical education and when this happens it creates good opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their mathematical skills in different contexts.
11. Pupils on the special educational needs register achieve well and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because their teachers and classroom assistants plan carefully and give well-focused support in lessons. The needs of the gifted and talented pupils in the school are appropriately met and are resulting in some very high achievement in mathematics and some very good progress for pupils learning the violin. The school has no pupils with English as an additional language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Throughout the school, attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour is good and personal development and relationships are very good. Parents felt very strongly that attitudes and behaviour were now good and that the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. These findings are a considerable improvement on those of the last inspection.
13. Attitudes to learning are very good, and pupils are very eager to take part in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy coming to school and punctuality is good.

Pupils concentrate very well and are well motivated. They are confident and eager to make contributions. For example, in a Years 2/3/4 English lesson, pupils' excellent concentration kept them very well involved in group discussions. In a Year 6 design and technology lesson, pupils helped one another to solve problems. Occasionally, children in the Foundation Stage find it difficult to concentrate when there is not enough adult support to help them get the most out of their activities.

14. Behaviour is good throughout the school, in lessons and at playtimes. Older pupils play well with younger ones and boys and girls mix well together. Praise from adults is highly valued. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion. Their behaviour in assemblies is excellent. For example, in an achievement assembly, pupils listened very well to a short recital by groups of recorder players and violinists. Pupils are open, friendly and polite to visitors. They know the school rules well and feel they are treated fairly. They appreciate the rewards system. They know the difference between right and wrong very clearly. If bullying occurs, parents and pupils are confident it will be dealt with effectively. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils are kind to one another and listen well to others' opinions. They enjoy taking responsibility and particularly value the school council, which enables them to make their opinions heard.
15. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages and unauthorised absence is slightly above. This is due to a very small number of families that have problems with attendance. There were three temporary exclusions and one permanent exclusion last year. The pupil concerned was given appropriate support by the school who carefully followed local authority guidance on all occasions. The pupil has since left the school. Registration takes place very efficiently and ensures a prompt start to the day. Pupils with special educational needs have a good attitude to their learning, are generally well behaved and get on well with their peers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning in the school based on the inspection evidence was good overall, with a significant proportion being very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed and the quality of teaching has risen significantly since the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 to 6. Improvements have been made in the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and it is now satisfactory overall, although there are some shortages in resources in some areas.
17. Teaching at the time of the last inspection was unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage. There are still some weaknesses in the teaching for these children despite the hard work of the nursery nurse. The school hall, which is their classroom, is an unsatisfactory learning environment at present because all resources have to be put out before school begins, and packed away at the end of the morning session. There are no discrete areas in the hall, such as a book corner or creative play area, and children do not have ready access to a discrete play area to develop their gross motor and social skills. As such, the development of the children's creative and physical skills is unsatisfactory. The nursery nurse plans closely with the Year 1 teacher to ensure the children's learning is appropriate. However, children sometimes have too wide a choice of activities to ensure that the planned learning objective is achieved. The nursery nurse carries out many informal assessments but these are not formally recorded to ensure that recognised weaknesses are addressed in future planning. The present organisation of the class does not allow enough one-to-one support for the consolidation of the children's learning or for the questioning of children to ensure they have fully understood a new concept. Despite these difficulties, the nursery nurse rightly places high priority on the development of children's communication skills and on having good quality practical experiences to develop their learning. The planned support of the nursery nurse by the headteacher has not been carried out due to long-term staff absence that has necessitated the headteacher taking a far greater teaching role with the older pupils.
18. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. All teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a

positive impact on the progress pupils are making through the years and the above average standards at the end of Year 6. Teachers have high expectations and the ability to inspire and enthuse pupils in their learning. Reading is taught well through the school and the strategies teachers use are successful in stimulating and encouraging a love of reading in the pupils. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average because pupils feel valued and are confident to ask questions and contribute to the well-organised class discussions. The standard of writing is improving through the school and is a main focus in this year's school improvement plan. Teachers are successfully encouraging pupils to write for a variety of purposes, such as play scripts, poems, and news stories. They also carefully plan the development of pupils' writing skills across other subjects, such as science, history, geography and design and technology. Pupils' writing is also improving because of the very good quality marking that clearly points out what pupils need to do to improve their work.

19. The quality of mathematics teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection because of good quality in-service training and the regular monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom by the co-ordinator. Pupils' progress is sustained through the school because of teachers' high expectations and very good quality planning which ensures that pupils of all abilities are set appropriately challenging work. Teachers make very good use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and also to modify their planning to ensure that weaknesses are addressed. Teachers make effective use of discussions at the end of lessons as an opportunity for pupils to consolidate their learning and also to reflect on the ideas of their peers. As a result, younger pupils in the class are often introduced to new concepts informally when the older pupils in the class talk about their work.
20. The quality of teaching in science is good and is successfully helping pupils to make progress because of teachers' ongoing assessment which helps them accurately match the learning to the pupils' abilities. Pupils have positive attitudes towards science because they enjoy the practical element and are stimulated by good quality questioning from teachers. As a result of this, pupils' learning is consolidated and new concepts are carefully developed. However, sometimes the tasks set are not challenging enough for the higher achieving pupils, and opportunities are missed to extend their learning and develop their ability to plan their own investigations to test out their hypotheses.
21. Teaching is now good in ICT and has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the way that computers are used through the school as an integral tool to support pupils' learning. As a result pupils are confident in using a range of programs and the Internet as part of their day-to-day activities. Teachers are benefiting from the government-funded training and, with this increase in teachers' subject knowledge have come higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is leading to above average skills in pupils' control work, some of which has been carefully integrated in pupils' design and technology projects.
22. Teaching is good in design and technology through the school and in physical education at the end of Year 2. In both these subjects, considerable improvement in teachers' subject knowledge and confidence is leading to much improved standards since the last inspection. The quality of teachers' planning is good overall and made more effective because the learning objectives are always shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. This means that pupils have a clear idea of what they are to learn and what is expected of them as regards work output. As a direct result, pupils produce large quantities of very careful work. Teachers make very good use of questioning to revise previous work and to assess pupils' learning at the end of lessons. The results of these informal assessments feed back into future planning and are a principal reason for the good progress that pupils make. Teachers have very good knowledge of strategies to ensure that pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds are suitably challenged, well supported and achieve well. In consequence, all pupils, including the higher achievers, make good overall progress as they move through the school. Teachers know their pupils well and employ different approaches that create an enthusiasm for learning and desire for pupils to do well. This was seen in the very challenging squared number work in Year 6 where pupils were able to see patterns in numbers that enabled them to work out the

answer to 111111111². Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and this gives pupils confidence to take a full and active part in discussions and also to ask for help when they are experiencing difficulties. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and to listen carefully. As a result, lessons have good pace and little time is wasted on the disciplining of pupils. Occasionally the work set does not challenge the higher achievers and, as a result, these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of, such as observed in a science lesson for the oldest pupils.

23. The quality of marking is very good and pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. This leads to noticeable improvements. There are very good relationships between teachers and the classroom assistant and nursery nurse. Planning is carefully discussed and evaluations from teachers and support staff are used appropriately to ensure that future work is well targeted to individual pupil's needs. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are improving their literacy skills because of the good quality Early Literacy Support given by one of the trained classroom assistants. Homework is carefully set and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning, whilst creating a valuable opportunity for parents to support and take an interest in their children's learning.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. These pupils are confident in lessons because teachers ensure that they are fully included in discussions at the beginning and end of lessons. Individual pupils' needs are carefully met through good quality teacher planning and the well-focused use of the classroom assistants to support pupils when appropriate. Specialist support is given by a teacher from the local educational support team for one hour per week and by the educational psychologist who visits on a termly basis.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are good overall. The curriculum for the school is broad and balanced, based upon national guidance and meets statutory requirements. There has been an improvement in the curriculum for the youngest children by the school's adoption of the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the planning for the Foundation Stage is still unsatisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. This is because the school has not broken down the curriculum into smaller areas to give structure to the planning and to help ensure that all areas will be appropriately covered by the end of the Reception year. The curriculum for the development of the children's physical and creative skills is unsatisfactory because of the inadequate resourcing of these two areas.
26. Policies for drug education and sex education are in place with the drugs awareness policy just having been updated in response to advice from the local education authority. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are well supported. A new policy for special educational needs has recently been drawn up, and all the issues of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The equal opportunities policy is in place and ensures that all pupils are able to take a full part in the curriculum and all activities that the school offers. For example, in a small school, making up football and netball teams is not always easy, but boys and girls are keen to support these activities and play together in mixed teams. However, an issue has been identified with regards to reading books, and the school is now purchasing more books that will appeal to boys to further encourage wider reading. The school has a school council and pupils take part in circle time that offers them the opportunities to discuss matters of interest and give opinions on what happens in the school.
27. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced into the school well. There is a good system of analysis of pupil progress and a tracking system that monitors

individual pupils' progress over time, including the setting of targets highlighted from assessments. Early Literacy Support and Additional Literacy Support are in place for pupils who need extra support and are taught by the classroom assistants. The school's present curriculum has adopted national guidance for schemes of work and these are in place for science and the non-core subjects in the school curriculum. In addition, a published science scheme further supports the teaching and learning in the subject.

28. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for the pupils, including lessons and clubs for violin, recorders, gymnastics, athletics, football, netball, art, computers and French, and a homework/revision club. There is a series of planned trips for each year group to visit sites of historical, geographical or scientific interest, including visits to St Albans Abbey, museums, local businesses, a craft workshop, river studies and a residential trip to an activity centre for the oldest pupils. A theatre group gave a performance to reinforce the pupils' work on health and nutrition and a day of drama was held that focused on old photographs. In both these activities the days were shared with another school. The school has very good links with the local community and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning because it enhances their learning opportunities. Regular visitors to the school include the vicar, the fire and police service, authors and illustrators, and a local historian. As a voluntary aided school, it rightly sees itself as part of the heart of the community and shares fêtes with the church, takes part in the Potters Bar carnival and has close links with playgroups and a nursery school who visit the school regularly. A new venture this term is the mothers and toddlers group that has been set up by the governors.
29. The school also has very good links with its partner institutions including local secondary schools and the family partnership of local primary schools that work very closely together. There are very good links with local schools. Pupils benefit from the expertise of a specialist French teacher from a local secondary school who works with the oldest pupils on a weekly basis, and shared theatre and residential visits with the local cluster of primary schools. There are good links with another local girls' secondary school whose pupils support teachers in their classrooms as part of their community service.
30. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. An action plan was drawn up to improve provision in these two areas, and has been very effectively implemented by the school. As a result, the school's provision in these two areas is good, with some very good aspects of pupils' social development.
31. Provision for spiritual development is good. There is a daily act of worship, which follows planned themes and complies with statutory requirements. It includes a short time of prayer and reflection. At an assembly during the inspection, pupils showed a real sense of wonder at the playing of a very young violinist. Pupils visit the parish church regularly for services and the rector takes services in school. The diocese provides helpful guidance. Visitors of other faiths have given talks to pupils and older pupils have visited a Hindu temple, a synagogue and a Buddhist monastery.
32. The school provides well for pupils' moral and social development. The behaviour policy and its practice clearly reflect the school aims. Circle time and personal, social and health education sessions make a good contribution. There are many good opportunities in lessons for pupils to learn to work co-operatively to overcome problems, such as in a Year 6 design and technology lesson involving the use of cams. Pupils are encouraged to take on many responsibilities. For example, all pupils have class responsibilities; older pupils play with younger ones at lunch times, help with assemblies and show visitors around the school. All pupils take seriously their roles in the school council. The school regularly raises good sums for charity, which encourages pupils to think of others less fortunate than themselves.
33. Provision for cultural development continues to be good. Pupils have good opportunities to perform and listen to music. Musical instruments include many from other cultures. The

French club helps to broaden pupils' horizons. The religious education syllabus successfully introduces pupils to a wide variety of customs and cultures from other parts of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school is a caring community, which has effective procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. This is a considerable improvement on the last report, when provision in many areas was unsatisfactory.
35. Local authority guidelines on child protection have been adopted. The headteacher, who is the designated person, has been trained, as have both the deputies for his absence. New staff are trained as part of their induction. Links with outside agencies are good. There is good input to pupils' personal, social and health education programme from the school nurse, police and the fire service. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are good. All staff have received first aid training. Accident procedures are well understood. Risk assessments and fire drills are carried out regularly. The level of supervision at playtimes is good, as is the school's level of security.
36. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good overall. Assessment procedures are reviewed regularly and all subjects now have guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting. The monitoring of pupils' progress over time in the core subjects is in place, with a very effective tracking system understood and used by all staff. This ensures that from the baseline assessment to the time a pupil leaves to enter the secondary phase, their progress is monitored regularly. The pupil progress tracking charts are filled in regularly, and targets that are set in October with parents are reviewed with them in February and July. The system works well because it is easy to see at a glance any exceptional achievement over time or areas where progress is not consistent, thus enabling the school to target the problem promptly. The school's procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. Thorough procedures are in place for the drawing up of the good quality individual education plans that are used well by teachers in the planning process. As a result, these pupils make good progress because of the good level of well-targeted support they receive from their teachers and classroom assistants. In subject areas such as English, writing targets are set for ability groups with current levels and target levels indicated for the raising of standards. The need to achieve the higher levels in the standard assessment tests has been recognised, and plans are in place to raise the achievement of more pupils to the higher levels.
37. Planning is good overall, and is made more effective by the good use of the results of assessments to ensure areas of weakness are addressed. The school uses a good range of assessments besides the National Curriculum tests and the non-statutory assessments. These combine together to give the school a clear idea of individual pupil progress, and highlight areas that the school needs to address in future improvement plans.
38. The monitoring of pupils' personal development, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the last report, is now very good. Each pupil's development is closely monitored through a graduated scheme. This is shared with parents at consultation meetings. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are carefully organised progressively through the school. Teachers know their pupils well. Annual reports include good monitoring of personal development.
39. Behaviour management is now good and consistent. The positive behaviour strategy has been very successful. All pupils have a reward card, which constitutes part of their personal development monitoring. Stickers on the card mark the achievement of targets as well as stars for effort, helpfulness and good manners. They can be given by support staff as well as teachers and are really valued by pupils. The tuck shop and the snacks provided by the very good cook make break times very enjoyable social occasions. Behaviour has been extensively discussed in circle time and assemblies. There is a minimal number of rules, all positive, which have been agreed with pupils.

40. Procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting punctuality are good overall. Registers are completed correctly and monitored on a regular basis by the headteacher and the Educational Welfare Officer for patterns of lateness and absence. However, there is a very small minority of families who have unsatisfactory attendance records.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents' responses at the parents' meeting and to the questionnaire show that they are strongly supportive of the school. They feel that the school has made considerable improvements since the last inspection. They are very comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. They are very satisfied with the progress their children make and all who responded to the questionnaire felt well informed about their children's progress. Nearly all parents feel that behaviour is good and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views.
42. The school has very effective links with parents. The information it provides for them is good. The prospectus is attractively presented and easy to use. It complies with legal requirements, as does the governors' annual report to parents. Nearly all parents have signed the home/school agreement. Good information on the curriculum is provided each term to enable parents to help in their children's learning. Newsletters are frequent, well presented and friendly in tone. Reports are very helpful and include opportunities for parents to comment, as well as for pupils to make assessments of their own progress. Parents find the reports' 'targets for improvement' most useful, particularly as these are revisited and discussed at subsequent October and February parent/ teacher meetings. In the Foundation Stage, although there are good opportunities for parents and children to visit the school before starting, there are few links with home: for example, books or activities are not sent home to help the consolidation of the children's language and literacy work. A good welcome pack is provided for new parents. The home/school reading log is used well in other classes as a means of dialogue. There is a good range of consultation meetings and parents feel free to talk to teachers informally at any time about their children's progress.
43. A very good number of parents help in school on a regular basis with reading, in the library, and with sports activities. Attendance at services and performances is good. The parent-teacher association runs an extensive range of social and fund-raising activities. Substantial sums have been raised to buy equipment to enhance pupils' learning. Parents joined in a community fair which raised funds for the church as well as for the school. Parents are always encouraged to attend meetings, especially when outside agencies are called in, and are involved in the target setting process in English and mathematics.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The headteacher's quality of leadership has improved since the last inspection, and he now provides good leadership to the school. His hard-working teaching colleagues give him good support. He has a very clear idea of the school's educational direction and has rightly concentrated on improving the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. The improvement has been helped by carefully planned and good quality in-service training that all staff, including the classroom assistants and the nursery nurse, have undertaken. The improvement is also due to the careful building and development of the very close and effective team that now works in the school. The school staff have a strong shared commitment to improve the school and a good capacity to continue these improvements. The school's Christian mission statement and the aims are very well reflected in the life of the school, where the very good relationships, in and across years, make this a secure and happy learning environment. Teachers use the very good relationships to promote an effective learning environment in which pupils' educational, social and moral skills are developed to high

levels. The headteacher delegates well to staff, and the subject co-ordinators play a positive role in the development of their subjects. Numeracy, literacy, science and special educational needs are well led and have made marked improvements since the last inspection. The co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is, however, unsatisfactory: because of long-term staff absence, the headteacher has not yet had time to monitor the teaching and learning for these children as described in the school improvement plan.

45. The role of the governing body has improved since the last inspection and it has successfully addressed the minor issues that were reported at the time of the last inspection. One of its main improvements is the way in which governors now evaluate the quality of education which the school provides. This is done through the sharing of the year group targets for numeracy and literacy but also by the associated governors, in these two subjects, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom with the headteacher. The governors now rightfully have confidence that the quality of education in the school is good because they have first hand evidence that is shared with the full governing body. The governors also have a very good understanding of the school's performance in relation to schools both nationally and locally. Governors are closely involved in the drawing up of the school improvement plan, which is closely linked with the budget to ensure that all planned developments are appropriately financed. Governors are keen to improve their effectiveness even further. Many have been on relevant training courses, and an internal audit has been carried out to show where further training is needed to improve the effectiveness of the governing body even more.
46. Teachers in the school constantly reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching practice. Daily evaluations of their lesson plans successfully inform planning for follow-up lessons. This process is enhanced through regular monitoring visits by the headteacher as part of the performance management programme. Staff share observation and monitoring reports at staff meetings. This openness and discussion is a powerful process that ensures that strengths are shared and weaknesses are addressed. As a result of this, the teaching is now good overall and is a principal reason for the good progress that pupils make through the school.
47. There are good processes for drawing up the school improvement plan, whose developments are clearly linked to the aims of the school. Priorities are decided as a result of work sampling, visits to other schools, governor visits, lesson observations, and ideas from the school council and from the Year 6 leavers' questionnaires. The plan is carefully costed in terms of financial expense, courses and time for staff meetings. Much of the evaluation of developments is done by the school, but it is also supported through the work of its governor curriculum committee who regularly observe lessons in school. However, the school could make more use of the expertise of its governors to help in the first hand evaluation of its developments and plan evidence collecting systems from the pupils themselves. Success criteria are clear and timescales appropriate.
48. The management of special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very experienced and qualified in the area and has recently taken over the post after being co-ordinator in another school for an extended time. The special educational needs co-ordinator has ensured that the issues from the last inspection have been addressed, and provision now meets the special educational needs code of practice. There are no pupils at present with statements of special educational needs, but the framework is in place for annual reviews. There is a newly appointed governor for special educational needs who has already had two meetings with the special educational needs co-ordinator. The governor has a strong personal interest in special educational needs and is keen to develop an effective, supportive role for the implementation of special educational needs within the school. Resources are satisfactory overall and a greater emphasis is being placed on the use of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs.
49. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection in 1997 and has a good capacity and enthusiasm to continue these improvements. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now good and pupils are making consistently good progress in all areas of their learning.

Pupils' attitudes to school and their work, their relationships and their social and moral development have improved considerably, and the school's aims are now very well reflected in its daily life. There are now good quality assessment procedures in place and these are used well by teachers to inform both their termly and daily planning. As a result the needs of pupils of all abilities are generally well met. Good quality training has led to considerable improvements in the effectiveness of the classroom assistants who now play a significant role in pupils' learning. Very good improvements have been made in design and technology through the school and in physical education in Years 1 and 2, with standards in both these subjects now above national expectations. The liaison with parents whose children are on the special educational needs register is good and the individual education plans for these pupils are carefully drawn up with relevant targets for improvement. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection throughout the school and there is now a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Much of this is due to the very good quality monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work by the headteacher, co-ordinators and governors for English and mathematics. This information feeds effectively into the school's performance management system. All pupils, and particularly higher attaining pupils, are now generally well challenged because teachers make much improved use of pupils' assessments when planning lessons. The one important area where the school has not made good improvements is in the organisation of the learning for the youngest children. The school has adopted the National Foundation Stage curriculum for these children. However, the organisation of the curriculum is hampered by the lack of a permanent classroom, the absence of discrete outdoor and creative play facilities, and extra assistance to support the nursery nurse. As a result, these children are not making the progress they are capable of, particularly in the development of their creative and physical skills.

50. The school's finances are in good order. Much of the large carryover from last year has been spent in the erection of the new staff and storage rooms. There are secure financial systems and effective control in place. The headteacher and governors have a clear picture of how the school's finances can be used to their maximum effect. The school secretary is responsible for the day-to-day management of the budget and gives very good support to the school in its everyday life. She keeps clear records of curriculum spending as well as records of other funds, such as school trips and photographs. The general school administration is very efficient, with very well established routines. The recommendations of the last audit report have all been dealt with effectively, in liaison with the headteacher and chair of the finance committee. Funding for subjects is agreed by the headteacher, taking into account both the subject co-ordinators' needs and the identified school priorities. The specific grants which the school receives for special educational needs, for staff training and for the improvement of ICT resources are well targeted, and are having a positive impact on standards.
51. The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value through the work of the headteacher and the finance committee. Comparisons with local schools are carefully considered and it receives very good support from parents, particularly in the way that the school is organised, its openness with them, the standards of pupils' behaviour, and the expectations of pupils. The school shows a good regard for competition by ensuring that it gets the best possible deal when buying resources and making improvements to the school's accommodation. This was clearly seen when the school saved a great deal of money in the erection of its new staff room and storage area.
52. The school is staffed with a sufficient number of very experienced teachers who are well qualified to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum. Due to long-term staff absence, two well-qualified part-time teachers are sharing the workload of the Years 5/6 class with the headteacher. This system is working well and the quality of teaching, as judged from the work in pupils' books, is consistently good. Keen string players benefit from high-quality tuition from a peripatetic music teacher, whilst older pupils benefit from good quality French teaching from a specialist teacher. The school makes good use of local authority courses and of courses organised by the local family of schools. These courses are closely linked to the school improvement plan. The further development of classroom expertise in the Foundation Stage

has also been identified as a priority area for this year's improvement plan, and is being addressed through carefully chosen external and in-house training. The lack of additional support for the nursery nurse in the morning is resulting in limited time for focused adult interaction with the youngest children. The caretaker and lunchtime supervisors give very good support to the school and ensure its effective day-to-day running. The recently appointed school cook also plays an integral part in the life of the school. Her popular mid-morning snacks and excellent school meals are eagerly looked forward to by staff and pupils alike.

53. The school's accommodation is generally sufficient for the pupils in Years 1 to 6 but is unsatisfactory for the youngest children who have to use the hall as their temporary classroom and do not benefit from having a discrete outside area for the development of gross motor skills. Colourful displays of pupils' work and pictures through the school create a stimulating learning environment. The library provides additional teaching space for small withdrawal groups. Accommodation has been improved since the last inspection by the erection of a staff room and increased storage space. The school benefits from a large playing field and a good quality adventure playground. Resources to support pupils' learning are satisfactory overall and good in English, mathematics, design and technology and music.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve the quality of education and standards of attainment, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the planning, organisation, and resources for the morning sessions for the youngest children by:
 - breaking down the planning into smaller units to ensure the ongoing development of all the six areas of learning through the year;
 - developing an assessment and recording system that accurately charts the children's progress and informs the teachers' short-term planning;
 - ensuring the level of support is sufficient in the morning sessions;
 - ensuring there is adequate provision for the successful development of children's physical and creative skills;
 - setting up a book corner with a collection of appropriate story and picture books;
 - developing the role of parents as joint educators, particularly in the area of language and literacy;
 - ensuring children have regular access to appropriate computer programs;
 - beginning the planned programme of monitoring of teaching and learning backed up by targeted in-service training and opportunities for staff to visit Reception classes in other schools.
(Paragraphs 4, 17, 25, 44, 49, 55-70)

In addition to the key issue above, the following minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

More opportunities for older, higher achieving pupils to plan their own scientific investigations.
(Paragraphs 7, 20, 91)

Make greater use of governors' expertise to help the school monitor its developments.
(Paragraph 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

23

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	1	5	12	5	0	0	0
Percentage	4	22	52	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y7

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	53
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y7

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

No results are published for Key Stage 1 because fewer than 10 pupils took the assessments.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	8	6	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	4	10	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	29 (77)	71 (66)	93 (100)
	National	74 (75)	71(71)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	6	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (78)	64 (67)	85 (67)
	National	72 (71)	73 (71)	82 (79)

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

*The number of boys and girls achieving level 4 is not given because there were fewer than 10 in each gender group.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	42
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	3	1
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6
Average class size	17.7

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

Financial information

Financial year	2000//01
	£
Total income	227772
Total expenditure	227298
Expenditure per pupil	3497
Balance brought forward from previous year	38518
Balance carried forward to next year	38992

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	57
Number of questionnaires returned	25

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	20	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	52	4	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	36	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	20	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	20	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	72	24	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	36	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	32	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	52	4	0	4

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

55. Children start full time in the Reception class at the beginning of the autumn term, if their fifth birthday falls before the 23rd February. Children whose fifth birthday falls after this date attend school in the mornings for the autumn term and full-time from the spring term. At the time of the inspection there were two full-time and nine part-time children, the majority of whom will not be five until the summer term. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Most children make sound overall progress, and by the end of the Reception year children achieve in line with the Early Learning Goals set for this age in all areas, except for physical and creative development where children's attainment is lower than national expectations.
56. Children are taught in the morning by a hard-working nursery nurse. Activities take place in the hall as there is not a dedicated classroom for the children. As a result of this, there are limitations in the activities that can be provided. The hall does not have a creative play area, a book corner or a computer. There is no immediate access to the playground and no dedicated area, as at the time of the last inspection, for children to use large toys and play equipment. As a direct result, the development of the children's physical and creative skills is not as good as it should be. The planning for the early years is still unsatisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum for the children has improved since the last inspection as a result of the school's adoption of the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum. However, this curriculum has not been broken down into smaller areas by the school to give structure to the planning and to help ensure that all areas will be appropriately covered by the end of the Reception year. The systems for weekly planning are satisfactory, with the nursery nurse planning together with the Year 1 teacher for the morning's activities. In the afternoons, the full-time Reception children work together with the Year 1 pupils in activities that are appropriate to their developing needs. The morning planning for the Reception children clearly outlines the learning objectives for each day but does not always clearly specify the activities that the children are going to undertake to ensure they have appropriate opportunities to meet the objectives.
57. The quality of teaching for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. The nursery nurse works extremely hard to ensure children fully engage with the range of activities, but individual children receive insufficient individual support as they are working, and as a result, it is difficult to ensure that the educational and emotional needs of all the children are fully met. The quality of teaching in the afternoon is satisfactory, with the Year 1 teacher planning appropriate activities for the two pupils. Assessment strategies are unsatisfactory and do not at present lead to consistent record keeping of children's progress to ensure that future activities meet their needs.
58. The headteacher, who is co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, had planned to spend a significant amount of time supporting and working alongside the nursery nurse to ensure that the newly introduced Foundation Stage curriculum was being successfully implemented and children's needs being appropriately met. However, due to prolonged staff illness, the headteacher has taken on, for this term, a much increased class-teacher role that has left little time for working in the Reception class. A new teacher has been appointed for the class of the oldest pupils next term, and this will create time for the co-ordinator to monitor and develop both the teaching and learning for the Reception children. The school's development plan for the Foundation Stage has been carefully thought through and shows clearly how the school intends to further improve provision for these children.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are appropriately developed by the nursery nurse who builds up the confidence of the children, so that they begin to benefit from the range of learning experiences. Most children are well motivated because of the enthusiastic approach of the nursery nurse, who works very hard to promote positive attitudes to learning in all children. Sometimes, however, the nursery nurse cannot meet the emotional and social needs of individual children because of the lack of a classroom helper. For example, when pupils were involved in an activity on the playing field with the nursery nurse, there was no one to help a child who became distressed and needed to come back into school.
60. Through the wide variety of activities, pupils are learning to take turns and share fairly, such as when using a selection of shapers and cutters on the play dough table. Good collaborative work was seen when three children were taking turns to construct a jigsaw. Pupils have good opportunities to select and use activities and resources independently but sometimes there is not enough adult supervision to ensure that the best learning opportunities are derived from these free-choice sessions.
61. The teaching of this aspect is satisfactory, with children making overall satisfactory progress. The nursery nurse provides a good role model for the children, showing respect, tolerance and courtesy when dealing with the children. This example encourages the children to show increasing politeness, helpfulness and consideration of the needs of others.

Communication, language and literacy

62. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. The promotion of spoken language skills is helping the great majority of children to become more confident communicators but more time is needed for the small number of less confident pupils who need more one-to-one teacher intervention to improve their confidence in this area. The nursery nurse provides some good opportunities for children to take part in discussions, such as when they watched and commented as they placed paper that they had waterproofed with a wax crayon, into a bowl of water. Most children had good confidence to articulate what they were seeing but some of the quieter children were overshadowed by the more dominant ones and did not always have the opportunity to speak to the group.
63. Children are beginning to recognise the sound of certain letters and this was particularly successful when children had to look for the hidden letters in the sand tray and draw the shape on the table that was covered in shaving foam. Pupils enjoy singing songs, such as *The Farmer in his Den*, and listen to a range of stories at the end of the morning session when they join with the Year 1 pupils whilst the hall is being prepared for lunch. There are not enough opportunities for children to look at or talk about books during their free-choice activity time. As a result, valuable opportunities are being missed to develop their understanding of the basic conventions of print, such as reading from the top to the bottom of a page and from left to right. Children do not regularly take home books or pieces of their work, such as the weekly letter they are learning to share with their parents, and as a result, some of the good work that has been initiated by the nursery nurse and Year 1 teacher is not being consolidated and built on.

Mathematical development

64. By the end of the Reception year most children will be working at the expected level in this area of learning. Children are making satisfactory progress in the wide range of free and structured play activities. However, the limited access to a role-play area is denying the children an opportunity to develop their skills further. Children recognise numbers 1 to 5. This was well reinforced by some innovative teaching that involved the children rolling numbered tyres down a hill on the school playing field. The nursery nurse successfully developed

children's learning further by introducing language such as furthest and nearest. Songs such as *Five Little Flying Saucers* make the learning of numbers enjoyable and successfully reinforce children's understanding. Teaching in this aspect is satisfactory but has some good elements that make effective use of ordinary daily occurrences to develop the children's understanding of numbers. For example, the two milk monitors have good opportunities with the nursery nurse to count out milk and to ensure that there are an appropriate number of beakers for all children. Good questioning by the nursery nurse introduces the notion of one more or one less. The future plan to introduce this counting for all children is a good initiative and will enable all children to gain from this regular experience. Because there is no computer in the hall, opportunities for pupils to reinforce their understanding of number, whilst simultaneously gaining confidence on a computer, are missed. Mathematical resources for the Foundation Stage need to be developed, but what resources the nursery nurse does have, she uses well to support children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. By the end of the Reception year children have made satisfactory progress in this area because the nursery nurse plans sound activities that promote the skills of enquiry and observation and encourage children to find out things for themselves. This was clearly evident when pupils sorted materials into waterproof and non-waterproof piles and then used a watering can to test their hypotheses. Pupils have opportunities to use a selection of tools and joining materials, such as when they make their own books. They are beginning to understand about past events in their own lives and those of their families when they discuss photographs they have brought in.
66. During free play activities, the nursery nurse does not have enough time to assess the children or to move in at critical learning moments, such as when two children could not understand why a toy car they were playing with would not run in a straight line. Children are developing a satisfactory understanding of other people's beliefs when they join together with the pupils in Year 1 to learn about stories from the Bible.

Physical development

67. The two children who are in school full-time join together with Year 1 pupils for the physical education lessons in the afternoon and are making satisfactory progress in developing their co-ordination skills. However, the great majority of children have very limited opportunities for regular physical activities unless they go outside. The hall is used as their classroom and as such is unsuitable for such activities. The lack of a suitable outside play area and large play equipment is resulting in pupils not having enough opportunities to develop their physical skills.
68. Children are beginning to develop finer skills when they fit construction materials together and use scissors to shape pieces of paper. However, overall, the provision for physical development is unsatisfactory because of the lack of emphasis that is given to this aspect, and because the lack of appropriate resources restricts the range of activities that the children can follow.

Creative development

69. Children are reaching satisfactory levels in their creative skills and learning through a variety of experiences. Children sing simple songs from memory with the higher achieving children showing a good sense of rhythm when they march in time to the *Grand Old Duke of York* as they sing the words. They are beginning to use their imagination in their artwork, such as when making potato prints. Opportunities for imaginative role-play are not well developed. There is no role-play area in the hall, and children are missing out on valuable collaborative experiences to explore different situations together.

70. Children have too few opportunities for designing and making because of the absence of an area for this work and lack of extra support to work alongside the children to help to develop their skills.

ENGLISH

71. The standards of pupils' current attainment are in line with the national average by the age of seven and above the national average by the age of eleven. This constitutes an improvement in English since the last inspection. However, in reference to the result of the 2001 National Curriculum tests where Year 2 pupils achieved well above the national average in reading and writing, inspection evidence shows that the present Year 2 pupils are achieving average standards. This apparent fall in standards is because of a much increased proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register in this very small cohort. In the 2001 national tests, Year 6 pupils' standards were very low, and in the bottom five per cent of all schools and also of similar schools. The differences in attainment between last year's Year 6 cohort and this year's is because last year's group contained a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs compared to the much lower proportion in the present Year 6.
72. Pupils attain high standards in speaking and listening, and above average standards in reading, but there has been an issue with writing. In response to this issue, targets are set to raise the standards in writing and are beginning to have good results throughout the school. Teachers provide a wide range of learning opportunities to extend pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Throughout the school the teachers use a wide range of vocabulary and explain new words carefully. Consequently pupils use a wide and often rich vocabulary when writing. For example, in one class pupils had been investigating the meaning of some more advanced descriptive words used in their class story-book. Following on from discussion, a group of pupils was drafting some historical writing on the computers and had decided to use some of these words, thus consolidating what they had been learning into their own writing. Pupils are increasingly developing a broad vocabulary alongside their good progress in reading through the new words they meet in their reading books and discussions about the stories they have read. These improvements in standards of attainment are largely due to the teamwork and consistently good quality teaching seen throughout the school, combined with the very effective support given by the classroom support assistants.
73. The standard of writing is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and audiences have enabled pupils to engage in a variety of forms and subjects across the curriculum. Good examples of the variety of writing were seen in pupils' past work, and the displays throughout the school. For example, pupils write short and extended stories, some of which are word-processed, play-scripts, instructions, poems and news stories, give points of view, and do cross-curricular writing such as geographical and historical accounts. For example, Year 6 pupils had been studying the Victorians and a range of writing was on display, including the description of a visit to a Victorian school where pupils dressed up in Victorian clothes and experienced a school day. This experience was further extended to a school assembly when two pupils gave a Victorian school object lesson to the other pupils. Some writing is accompanied by well-presented illustrations and captions to enhance their story writing or to accompany instructional writing. This was clearly evident in pupils' writing on how to construct moving toys as part of their design and technology work, and the good quality 'Wanted' posters that contained pupils' police reports on the murderer Crippen. The standard of presentation in both these examples was very high, demonstrating the good attitudes and pride pupils take in their work. However, despite the carefully planned work to extend pupils' writing skills, their comprehension skills are less well developed. Although there were some examples of comprehension work seen in the pupils' exercise books, the development of pupils' skills in this area lacked consistency.
74. Spelling and handwriting are taught well, enabling pupils to make good progress. Pupils have spelling journals where they record spellings to build up a bank of words they can use and refer to. As a result, spelling accuracy improves as pupils move through the school.

Workbooks show legible, well-formed, and carefully presented handwriting and by the end of Year 6, pupils have developed good quality joined, individual styles. Pupils of all abilities are supported well in the classes. For example, where pupils find difficulty in getting their ideas written down, the teacher will act as a scribe, thus giving pupils the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions clearly, and this enhances their self-confidence and self-esteem.

75. Pupils make good progress in their reading because of the high focus reading has in literacy lessons, when essential skills are carefully planned, well taught and consolidated through good quality discussion. As a result, reading is a strength in the school, with pupils reading with good levels of fluency and understanding. In the younger age range, teachers ensure that pupils are provided with carefully sequenced teaching of reading that has a clear focus on the recognition of simple, frequently used words, and on the development of early phonic skills. Effective strategies are used to stimulate and encourage a love of reading, as was observed in a whole-class reading activity when pupils followed the example given by the teacher of putting expression into her reading. This was obviously a successful strategy because all children were trying hard to read with expression and were thoroughly enjoying the story. In group reading, pupils take turns to read and follow the text. Teachers challenge the pupils through well-chosen questions to check their understanding of the story and unfolding plot. Older pupils read fluently, accurately and expressively. Higher attaining pupils recognise many complex words and show a very good understanding of character development and story structure. Pupils know how to use the higher order skills of skimming and scanning for accessing information. A notable feature is the effective way pupils make use of indexes, contents lists and glossaries in non-fiction books to support their learning in other subjects.
76. There is a good range of books to support reading, and pupils benefit from the good match of reading scheme books to their levels of competence. As they grow in confidence, pupils tackle more challenging texts. Pupils have good library skills and use technical vocabulary accurately when talking about both fiction and non-fiction books. Teachers challenge and inspire pupils not only to answer questions but also to pose them. As a result, older pupils demonstrate a good level of maturity by asking sensible questions when searching for information and using the information gained to make correct deductions. Pupils confidently use their dictionary and thesaurus skills to assist them in both reading and writing. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and are given help and encouragement by their parents; this has a significant and valuable influence on their children's attitudes to reading.
77. The teaching of speaking and listening skills is very good and pupils make very good progress in attaining high levels of proficiency. The key to this success is the secure and trusting learning environment created by all staff, and the very good relationships that have been established between the adults and pupils. This results in pupils feeling valued and confident in asking and answering questions, and contributing effectively to discussions. However, due to the wide age range of pupils in some classes, such as in the Years 2/3/4 class, activities such as drama become very demanding for some of the younger pupils who do not benefit as much from mixed-year groups.
78. Teaching overall is good and helps all pupils, including the higher achieving pupils and those with special educational needs, to make good progress as they move through the school. Some examples of very good and outstanding teaching were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. Teachers have good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy, make good use of day-to-day assessments in their careful planning, and have high expectations of pupils and the ability to inspire and enthuse them in their learning. As a result, standards are rising through the school. The management of the subject is good and is enhanced by the support of the literacy governor who has joined the subject co-ordinator in monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom. This has contributed to the implementation of effective strategies to improve practice and raise standards. Assessments are carefully monitored and used effectively to set targets for

individual pupils. Resources are good overall and there is a good supply of reading materials, dictionaries and thesauruses.

MATHEMATICS

79. Year 6 pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests for 2001 was below average and well below average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5 was well below average. However, this cohort had a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. When pupils' performance at the end of Year 6 is compared to their National Curriculum results in Year 2, the pupils did in fact make well above average progress in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have risen since the last inspection and the attainment of the present Year 6 cohort of pupils is above average, with a significant proportion of pupils already achieving the higher level 5.
80. The 2001 National Curriculum results for pupils in Year 2 show that their attainment was well above average when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was also above average. Inspection evidence for the present very small group of Year 2 pupils shows that they are making good progress and their attainment is average. This particular group of pupils does have an above average proportion of pupils who are at the higher stages on the school's register of special educational needs.
81. By the end of Year 6, pupils have above average skills in all areas of mathematics. They use their good skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division skilfully in their mathematical problem-solving work. Pupils have an above average understanding of place value that is clearly shown in their decimal and percentage work. Pupils are particularly good at spotting relationships in numbers and using this knowledge well in their estimation. For example, in their work on squared numbers, pupils were able to estimate that 15×15 would lie somewhere between 10×10 and 20×20 and would end in a 5. In a very challenging plenary, higher achieving pupils, having been given that $11^2 = 121$ and $111^2 = 12321$, were then able to find the relationship and give the answer to 111111111^2 . Pupils have a good knowledge of reflectional symmetry, probability and data handling. They make good use of computers during mathematics lessons to consolidate and extend their skills, such as when working out double-digit squared numbers. Despite their above average mental mathematics ability, a significant proportion of pupils do not have a quick recall of their multiplication facts and this is restricting elements of their mental mathematics development.
82. Pupils make consistently good progress through the school because of the good quality teaching, very good use of assessment, careful planning and high expectations. Pupils in Year 1 are making particularly good progress in their doubling work and use this knowledge well when solving problems. For example, when asked to find the cost of three jellies at 5p each, one pupil said, "Two lots of five are ten and another five makes 15". Year 2 pupils are making good progress, with higher achieving pupils making particularly good progress and showing good understanding of place value and measurement, and using this well in practical activities. Particularly noticeable are the good strategies that pupils have for manipulating numbers. For example, one pupil when asked to add 27 and 25 in his head responded, "20 and 20 make 40, seven and five are 12 and so the answer is 52". Year 3 pupils are making particularly good progress and have well above average attainment in all areas of mathematics. Year 4 pupils are making particularly good progress in their mental work and are developing good strategies for solving problems. For example, one pupil, when adding 39 to 94, added 40 to 94 and then took away one. This was not a strategy he had been taught but one that he had been encouraged to work out for himself through the challenging activity set by the teacher. The very small cohort of Year 5 pupils has above average knowledge in number work and particularly in fractions. However, their recall of multiplication facts is comparatively weak.

83. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well as they move through the school and reach their full potential by the end of Year 6. Much of this is due to the enthusiastic teaching and the challenging work that is devised by the teachers. This helps the pupils enjoy their mathematics and motivates them to do well. Pupils have very positive attitudes and increasing levels of confidence in themselves as mathematicians, and this is having a good impact on the quality of their learning. Pupils work hard in lessons, behave very well and respond particularly well to the mini-challenges that they have come to expect at the end of each lesson.
84. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. During the inspection some very good teaching was seen in the infants and juniors. Good quality in-service training and regular monitoring of pupils' work and the quality of their learning in the classroom have improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teachers know their pupils well, assess their work extremely carefully and modify their planning so that weaknesses are addressed and pupils' strengths extended. The marking in all classes is of very high quality and leads directly to pupils making improvements in elements of their mathematics learning. High expectations result in work that is very carefully laid out and presented. Teachers make good use of the classroom assistants who work regularly with groups of pupils. Because of the comparatively small numbers in class and the good level of support, all children, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved in the lessons and appropriately challenged. The setting of targets for individual pupils has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. The sharing of these targets with parents, both in October and February, ensures that they have a good understanding of the school's expectation of their child. As a result, the great majority take a keen interest in their children's progress and ensure that the regularly set homework is conscientiously completed. Plenaries at the end of lessons are used very well to consolidate pupils' learning and give regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on the ideas of their peers. The discussions that take place make a good contribution to pupils' social development.
85. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very well implemented and good quality monitoring of lessons and pupils' work has led to well focused developments, such as the use of the new mathematics scheme, consistency in methods of marking and the way that work is set out. Teachers carefully plan the use of numeracy across the curriculum. During the inspection, opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematics skills were seen in design and technology, history and physical education.
86. The use of ICT to develop pupils' mathematics skills and understanding is carefully planned, with some good cross-curricular links observed during the inspection, such as when Year 6 pupils used a database as part of their census work in their Victorian project.
87. The new co-ordinator has benefited from extended in-service training courses and has a keen awareness of the strengths and areas that need to be further developed through the school. The school development plan clearly identifies what needs to be done. High quality resources have been acquired since the last inspection and these are used effectively by teachers to develop pupils' mathematical thinking and understanding.

SCIENCE

88. Standards of attainment in both key stages are in line with national expectations. These standards are similar to the last inspection when they were broadly in line with the national average. In the 2001 teacher assessments, the proportion of Year 2 pupils who achieved the expected level 2 was well above average, but the percentage achieving the higher level 3 was well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 2 pupils are making good progress and are attaining average standards overall, but with a significantly higher proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level. In 2001 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were below the national average when compared to all schools and well below average when compared to similar schools. The main reason for these below average results was the very high proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register.

However, when compared to their previous assessments when these pupils were in Year 2, statistics show that the pupils had in fact made good overall progress during the last four years. Inspection evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' previous work, observations of lessons and talking to pupils, indicates that the present Year 6 pupils are making good progress and are attaining average standards overall, but with a much increased proportion of pupils expected to attain the higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the additional support they receive from teachers and support staff, and the practical nature of the activities organised for them.

89. Pupils in Year 1 are making good progress in their investigative skills because of the teacher's carefully planned investigations. For example, pupils know about sources of light because of their investigations with torches and the darkened environment of boxes. These pupils use their sense of touch to describe different materials, and, by studying the material of their outdoor coats, are beginning to understand how different materials are used for different purposes. Other work has looked at life processes and living things. A well-planned project on growth is helping pupils to understand change over time, and is well reinforced by the visits of two mothers with their different-aged babies, reinforced by a good quality display. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of life processes. For example, they understand the importance of the skeletal system and are able to name the main bones in the body because of carefully planned practical activities. They identify different features of plants and animals, and make good use of their mathematics skills when they measure and record data connected to eye and hair colour, height and measurements of pupils' body parts. Pupils' work shows a good use of illustrations and diagrams, clearly seen in their charts of measurements and comparative data.
90. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of electricity and the range of sources and devices that use it. They understand the principles of a circuit, draw their own circuit designs, and accurately identify the symbols used. They have a satisfactory knowledge of life processes; they know about the male and female reproductive organs, understand the importance of exercise and diet on healthy living, and have undertaken experiments and investigations into micro-organisms when looking at the causes of illness, including the common cold. They make good use of the Internet when finding out further information on the work of famous scientists such as Sir Alexander Fleming. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of how sound travels through their investigations of vibrations, and are using this knowledge appropriately in other investigations. For example, in the lesson observed, where pupils were investigating sound and insulation, they investigated which materials would act as insulation using items such as sponge and polystyrene.
91. However, although pupils could explain the principles of a fair test, some were unable to put this into practice and their tests were not sufficiently structured for them to make effective use of a sound sensor. Pupils made good use of a computer program where they tested materials such as wood, cork and metal to find out what was the best sound insulation for high and low sounds. This was very effective and pupils were clear in what they had found out and able to explain their findings using good scientific language. However, more able pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations to test their hypotheses. For example, in most of the lessons observed across the school, pupils undertook the same task regardless of their ability. This too often resulted in a lack of challenge to inspire and extend the learning of the more able pupils. In discussions, pupils acknowledged that though sometimes more demanding work was set, they would like this to be even more challenging.
92. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good because they are interested in their work. However, there were some instances in practical investigations where a small minority of pupils became over-excited and made it more difficult for their peers to concentrate. Pupils listen well to each other and are keen to join in discussions. These positive attitudes permeate the school, resulting in pupils learning appropriately from each other, and acquiring satisfactory scientific skills overall. Their interest and enthusiasm enable them to develop appropriate strategies for tackling experiments, and they enjoy this type of work.

93. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features, particularly in teachers' planning and ongoing assessment. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this well in their good quality questioning to stimulate pupils' interest and reinforce and develop their understanding. Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils, and this gives pupils confidence to ask questions to clarify their thinking. Teachers make very good use of computers to reinforce pupils' learning, such as when Year 2 pupils use the Internet to find out further information about the skeletal system. Occasionally, teachers plan too much for pupils to cover in a single lesson: when this happens, pupils do not have enough time to complete each task and become confused in what they should be learning.
94. The school's science curriculum is good, is based on practical investigations and has been carefully linked to a good quality published scheme. Assessments are regularly set so that teachers have a good understanding of pupils' progress and a clear understanding of their newly acquired concepts. These assessments inform teachers' day-to-day planning, and help to ensure that weaknesses are addressed in pupils' subsequent work. The quality of marking is good and clearly outlines to pupils what they need to do to improve. Science is well led by a subject co-ordinator, who has given high priority to raising the profile of science through monitoring the teaching and learning across the school. The monitoring highlighted a particular weakness in scientific enquiry for the younger pupils and this has been successfully addressed, with increased opportunities for investigation. Science has been highlighted in the school development plan for development in the spring and summer terms, and is correctly focusing on the raising of standards at the end of Year 6. The school makes good use of visitors to the school such as the visit of a theatre group who performed a play to the pupils based on the theme of nutrition. Pupils' work is shared in 'good work' assemblies, and science presentations have been a popular feature of open evenings. The quality of learning resources is good; they are easily accessible to staff and used effectively to support the pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

95. The standards in art and design across both key stages are in line with national expectations although some areas of the subject are more emphasised than others. No lessons were observed in art and design during the period of the inspection and evidence for judgements on standards are based upon the scrutiny of work, displays around the school and in classrooms, and in discussions with teachers and pupils. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress in developing their skills, and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
96. The curriculum is based on national guidance. The strength of the art is in observational work. For example, skills with painting and drawing in particular are being developed successfully year on year, clearly seen in the range of artwork in pupils' sketchbooks. These include pencil sketches of a friend, still life, and computer art. A satisfactory range of media is used in the sketchbooks including pencil, charcoal, crayon and pastels. The development of pupils' sketching skills is carefully planned in other subjects such as English, science, history, geography and design and technology and enhances the presentation of pupils' work. However, the two-year rolling programme of work does result in some areas of the subject, such as printing, textiles and clay work, not being covered so regularly as others.
97. Pencil sketches and paint are used well in the work the older pupils have produced on 'People in motion' and in the Greek vase designs in Class 2. However, older pupils have little knowledge of the work of famous artists. There was no evidence of the paintings of famous artists around the school to stimulate and interest pupils, nor of work undertaken by pupils using the methods and styles of individual artists. Other areas of art where evidence was limited were in printing and in three-dimensional work. This is because this aspect of the subject was covered in detail during the last school year. Photographic evidence shows that pupils made their own print blocks, designed and made a replica Roman tile and benefited from the visit of an artist who taught printing techniques. However, pupils in the youngest class

visited a craft workshop during the inspection to draw their own designs on a plate which was later glaze-fired.

98. The quality of teaching judged from the evidence gained is satisfactory overall with some good elements. This was confirmed by the pupils' positive attitudes to art that came out in discussions. Resources for teaching the subject are limited, and a wider range of media, including examples of the artwork of a range of artists, would enhance the teaching and learning in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average through the school. The main reason for the improvements is the good quality action plan that has led directly to teachers' improved subject knowledge and the good integration of design and technology into other areas of pupils' learning. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all classes.
100. By the end of Year 6, pupils have very positive attitudes to their design and technology work and work hard because they are motivated by their projects, have a clear understanding of how their skills are improving and enjoy the collaborative work that is a feature of most lessons. Pupils have a very good understanding of design and plan their work carefully, often with the use of ICT, choosing their materials thoughtfully and making good quality evaluations at the end of the project. As a result, pupils learn well from their mistakes and apply new skills effectively in follow-up work. Pupils have a good knowledge of food technology; for example, through a series of trials making different breads, they then designed their own recipe, such as 'apple and blueberry' and 'date and nut' bread. There are good links with ICT control technology when pupils integrate robotics into their work. Pupils have sound cutting and joining skills and have a good understanding of the importance of the quality of the finished product. Pupils work very well together and because of this are able to overcome 'making' problems as they arise. For example, two Year 6 pupils collaborated effectively to overcome the problem of locating a piston so that it rode constantly on a revolving cam. Pupils use technical vocabulary correctly because this is encouraged by the teacher, particularly in questioning. As such, pupils are able to clearly articulate the difficulties they are experiencing.
101. Pupils in Year 2 benefit from working with older pupils in the class and are developing good designing and evaluation skills, clearly seen in their focused tasks using pivots before designing their own moving book. They have a good understanding of the importance of evaluation at the end of a project and this was clearly seen when they made chairs and designed their own sandwich.
102. The teaching of design and technology is consistently good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan activities and to link them with other subjects, whenever possible. This was evident when Year 4 pupils used an art and word processing package to design their chairs. Teachers use questioning particularly well to help pupils overcome making difficulties. For example, two pupils in the Years 5/6 class were having difficulties with locating a piston in their moving vehicle. They were helped to solve their problem by the teacher insisting that they defined the problem clearly to him. Once the problem had been identified, pupils were able to see how the problem could be solved. In this way the pupils made good gains in their learning and set themselves a challenging task to overcome the problem.
103. The school makes good use of the national guidelines for the subject and has ensured that all projects are well resourced. Assessment is informal but pupils' technology books are regularly monitored by teachers and give a clear indication of pupils' attainment and progress.

GEOGRAPHY

104. The standards in geography for pupils in the infants and juniors are in line with national expectations. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection. A judgement on the quality of teaching overall could not be made because it was not possible to observe any lessons. In considering the evidence seen from pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils, there is a satisfactory range of interesting opportunities that successfully develop pupils' interests, skills and knowledge. Pupils are developing a wide knowledge of the subject from their lessons and talk keenly and enthusiastically about what they have learned. For example, pupils in Year 1 look at the changes that have happened in their lifetime, and understand how they have changed personally. They are introduced to the concepts of 'old and new' and also undertake an investigation into the safety of the local environment. In their previous work, pupils have drawn plans of their route to school and studied a map of the local area. Pupils at the end of Year 2 use the theme of 'Looking through the Window' and understand some of the different geographical features they can see. In support of this they complete a chart and make good use of ICT to record their observations.
105. No geography is undertaken by the older pupils in the autumn term, but a scrutiny of previous work reveals that they have learned about the water cycle, and looked at local rivers and rivers further afield, such as the Amazon. They understand how climate affects localities, and how this impacts on human activities and lifestyles, such as when they compare life of a school in Brazil with their own school. They make good use of their numeracy skills when they undertake a survey of the different ways that pupils travel to school, and produce a graph to show their results. Pupils also use maps to plan and plot a route from Liverpool to Spain. They use a plan of the village to understand the different ways that land is used locally, and recognise the different landscapes around the school. Pupils have a sound understanding of the use of keys for features such as roads, fields, woods and ponds, and compare this with an aerial map of the village. Pupils have a sound understanding of contrasting environments as a result of comparing their local environment to that of the Lake District. This work will be further developed during pupils' residential visit to the Isle of Wight where they will carry out comparative studies. However, although evidence of some map work and map skills was seen, pupils do not always build consistently on their previous learning in this work.
106. The school makes good use of its local area and develops pupils' skills through using the locality around the school. There is an interesting range of visits, which widen the pupils' interest in the local area beyond the school. For example, pupils visit Bingham Park Farm and Cuffley Camp to undertake a river study and include a study of the various businesses, such as Asda and Pizza Express. The regular visits undertaken by pupils often link together a variety of subjects and the teachers prepare these activities well.
107. The school has developed a clear scheme of work based on national guidelines and has begun to develop resources to support teaching and learning. There are some world maps and globes and aerial maps, but resources for ICT are limited. However, pupils make effective use of the Internet, such as when they download aerial maps of different areas to make geographical comparisons. Although no judgement on the overall quality of teaching through lesson observation can be made, the scrutiny of work and planning indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory overall. Resources, including books in the library, are sufficient to support the subject.

HISTORY

108. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven they achieve standards that are similar to those expected for their age. This is a similar judgement to the previous inspection, with

progress and learning that are satisfactory. Teachers make use of the good range of learning resources that are available both in the school and locally and this enhances the pupils' learning opportunities. Visits to places such as the Hertford museum and the Hitchin British School, and the visitors to the school, such as an ARP Warden for the World War II study, all have a positive impact on pupils' motivation, interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

109. By the age of seven pupils have a good understanding of the passing of time and how things change. The younger pupils study the local area and walk around the village to look at the houses and how the land is used. Pupils in Year 2 study the ancient Greeks. The classroom display includes a time line, photographs, maps and Greek vase designs. Pupils' own writing shows clearly that they understand the differences between Athens and Sparta. In an observed lesson, pupils were finding out about the history of the Olympic Games and how they started. Good use by the teacher of a video interested and enthused the pupils. They understood the importance of evidence and established that the games were a religious festival, and knew about the significance of the Temple of Zeus to the games. Pupils in Year 2 designed a poster showing their good knowledge of venue, times and prizes and had a good knowledge of the different events, such as the javelin, wrestling, running and chariot races, which they compared to present athletic events.
110. By the age of eleven pupils have studied certain periods of time, such as World War II and have a clear understanding of how things have changed in the locality. Their present study is about children living in Victorian Britain. The way in which pupils communicate their findings varies in range and quality. At best it involves personal study and research, such as work related to comparisons of the rich and poor in Victorian times. For example, in an observed lesson, pupils studied the 1891 census of the village and were required to identify questions whose answers could be found in the census itself. These questions included researching how many children there were in a household and what were the occupations of the villagers. From this evidence, pupils started to make deductions as to how the village had changed since those times. However, at other times work can focus on a worksheet, such as 'Victorian Children in School' and when this occurs there is not always enough challenge for the higher achieving pupils.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall although during the inspection some good and very good teaching was seen. Teachers have expertise in the subject, but expectations of the range and amount of personal writing, particularly for average and above average pupils in the junior classes, are sometimes not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make similar rates of progress to other pupils in the class. Behaviour is generally good because lessons are well paced and hold the pupils' interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

112. Pupils are making good progress in ICT and by the age of seven and eleven are achieving standards that are in line with national expectations overall, but above expectations in some areas of the subject. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers in both key stages. Overall standards have been maintained since the last inspection but improvements have been made in pupils' ability to handle data.
113. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed above average communication skills, clearly shown in their writing about the Marie Celeste. Pupils also used a word- processing package for paired writing which they felt led to improvements in their stories. Pupils have good confidence in using spreadsheets, such as in their mathematical work on squared numbers and when collating comparative food prices of Victorian times and the present. This information was then used to produce an illustrative graph to go alongside their writing. Pupils regularly use the Internet to support their learning in other subjects. For example, they found information and data about rainforests which they then used in their persuasive writing about

sustaining the environment. Pupils' control skills are above average, and have been well developed through the use of robotics. The school does not at present have a multi-media package for the pupils to use but this area will be covered when all the pupils attend a residential week.

114. Pupils in Year 2 are developing satisfactory word-processing skills, clearly shown when writing the procedure for designing their robots. Pupils have an above average understanding of data handling and use this to collate information they have collected, such as about jobs in the local area. There are good links with design and technology when pupils use an art program to design the chairs they are going to make. Pupils have above average control skills, clearly shown when programming the roamer and using light sensors to control a vehicle they have constructed in a design and technology project. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in all areas of ICT and are becoming particularly confident in their use of the Internet. For example, pupils download aerial photographs of different areas so that they can make comparisons of the geographical features.
115. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards computers because they can see their relevance in supporting their classroom work. Year 6 pupils spoke excitedly about how they had used the Internet to find an experiment in connection with their work on sound insulation in science. Very good relationships enable pupils to benefit from their collaborative work on the computers. Sensitive support of peers was regularly seen taking place in lessons and teachers make very effective use of this method to develop both pupils' computer and social skills.
116. No whole-class lesson was seen during the inspection but evidence from pupils' work in their books and on the walls indicates that the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan the effective use of computers across the curriculum and to ensure that pupils' skills are not developed in isolation from their other learning. Teachers are benefiting from the New Opportunities Fund training and this is leading directly to improvements in the teaching of skills and the high expectations of pupils. The school is well equipped with computers and has a good range of programs to develop pupils' skills. The school development plan clearly identifies how the subject is to be developed and further integrated into pupils' learning. Assessment of pupils' progress is at present informal but has been correctly identified as a priority in this year's improvement plan. The new co-ordinator is building well on the good work of the previous co-ordinator and has a clear strategy to raise standards further.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

117. A local secondary school, to which some pupils transfer at the end of Year 6, has been designated a specialist school for the teaching of modern foreign languages. As part of this initiative, interested schools in the catchment area receive specialist French teaching for their older pupils. Years 5 and 6 pupils at the school receive 30 minutes of French teaching each week from a language teacher from the secondary school. Teaching is effective. The teacher speaks French fluently and lessons are conducted with energy and enthusiasm. Lessons are delivered almost entirely in French, with very occasional use of English to ensure that pupils have understood a particular point. A good variety of strategies is used, including role-play, music and flash cards. Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy their lessons. Their understanding of numbers is good and they confidently use a variety of phrases and sentences. Their accents are good because the teacher continually reinforces accurate pronunciation. They are making good progress overall, and their knowledge of French is greater than in most schools. Younger pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is kindled by a popular after-school French club that meets weekly.

MUSIC

118. Although no lessons were observed, the judgement on standards in music is supported by observations of singing in assemblies and some instrumental tuition for small groups of string players, the analysis of planning, photographic evidence, and discussions with staff and pupils. Based on this evidence, standards in music by the age of seven and eleven are in line with national expectations, and remain similar to the judgements of the last inspection.
119. Planning for music is supported by national guidance and the use of musical broadcasts. This has ensured a full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils are keen to talk about the music work they have covered and say how much they enjoy music, particularly the themes of music programmes, such as 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Fantastic Toy Shop'. They learn about the elements of music and understand the differences between high and low, loud and soft sounds and understand the musical terms of 'pitch' and 'dynamics'. They participate in group singing, including rounds and part-singing. Pupils know and can name a range of musical instruments, and play 'pitched' and 'unpitched' instruments for accompaniment and when composing their own music. The school has a range of musical recordings, including multi-cultural music. For example, the music played as pupils entered for assembly featured 'Clannad.'
120. Pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments from a visiting peripatetic music teacher or play in a recorder group. Observation of a violin lesson revealed high standards in teaching which impact directly upon the pupils' learning. The standard of playing was impressive, especially when taking into account the age of the pupils and the comparatively short time they had been learning the instrument. Violin pupils play very well together in an ensemble and maintain good intonation by listening carefully to each other while playing. Their lesson was a rehearsal for a morning assembly that was well received by the whole school. In addition to the violins playing as an ensemble, a small recorder group also played music they had rehearsed. Each year, musicians from the music service give a concert for the pupils to develop their interest in instrumental playing.
121. The resources are good and sufficient to teach music throughout the school. In addition to the tuned and untuned percussion there are some electronic keyboard computer programs to enable pupils to compose and play their own music. The school has very close musical links with the local community and benefits from the keyboard skills of the local policeman who regularly accompanies the pupils for concerts and special occasions. The local residents are invited to its musical productions, and the school harvest festival and carol concert are held each year in the parish church.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards in physical education are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. This shows a considerable improvement in Year 2 since the last inspection, when attainment was below average. Good quality teaching, careful planning and opportunities to work with older pupils are the principal reasons for the marked improvements in Year 2.
123. By the end of Year 6, pupils collaborate well in lessons and work hard. They show good control in their movements and have a good knowledge of presentation at the end of a sequence. They have a good understanding of mirroring and contrasting roles and use these appropriately in sequence work. Higher achieving pupils show above average skills in partner work and, because of their enthusiasm to improve their performance, make good gains in their skills during lessons. Pupils benefit from watching each other's exemplars but do not always have the opportunity to comment on the work of their peers or to copy it. Pupils have above average swimming skills, with half the Year 6 pupils being able to swim 150 metres, showing good style in breaststroke, backstroke and front crawl. Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities and from competitive fixtures with other schools.

124. Pupils in Year 2 achieve good standards in their movement work because of the good quality teaching and high expectations, and because their work is evaluated by their peers, who offer sensible suggestions for improvement. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject has improved since the last inspection and they now work hard to improve their personal performance. Pupils benefit from having regular swimming lessons every year and are making good progress in developing their confidence and water skills.
125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but good in the Years 2/3/4 class where the teacher has high expectations and uses good quality exemplars to raise pupils' personal performance. Teachers make good use of the apparatus in the hall to develop pupils' skills when working at different levels. The assessment of pupils' progress is informal, but good quality annual reports clearly identify pupils' standards and the progress they have made during the year. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and used appropriately by the staff to develop pupils' skills.