

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hoddesdon

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117270

Headteacher: Mr R A Highsted

Reporting inspector: Mrs E Parry
2615

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th June 2001

Inspection number: 213396

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Westfield Road Hoddesdon Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Hertfordshire County Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Charman
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2615	E. Parry	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage (up to five years of age) Science Information and communication technology Art and design	Equal opportunities Special educational needs The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14404	A. Rolfe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3533	A. McGregor	Team inspector	Mathematics and Design technology History Religious education	English as an additional language
4303	S. Reynolds	Team inspector	English Geography Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westfield Community Primary is a smaller than average sized school catering for 182 pupils; 94 boys and 88 girls. The school has no nursery but gives accommodation to a private pre-school group. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below the national average.

Three pupils have statements of educational need and a further 48 of the children are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is similar to the picture in most schools. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds and there are rarely any who speak English as an additional language. This year, children starting full time education have skills and abilities which are typical for four year olds but this can vary substantially from year to year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Westfield Community Primary is a rapidly improving school with many good features. The new headteacher has given the school a clear vision and created a climate in which everyone believes that the school can improve. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the governing body; together they form a very strong team. Teaching overall is good, although there are weaknesses in the Foundation Stage (for children up to 5 years old). The changes and developments put in place throughout the school are beginning to have an effect on the standards that pupils reach; these are clearly rising although they are not yet good enough. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There is very strong and effective leadership from the headteacher and a good supporting team of deputy headteacher, teachers and governing body.
- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good.
- There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities with something to appeal to all children.
- Parents have a strong partnership with the school and are encouraged to contribute to the education of their children.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- Teaching could be further improved for children in the reception class.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are rising but can improve further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1999 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case. In all the areas that the school was asked to improve, there has been progress, which has been most rapid since the appointment of the new headteacher. Since the last inspection, there have been many changes of teachers; teaching has improved greatly partly because of this and partly because of improvements

in support and training. There is now a good curriculum for infants and juniors, including provision for religious education. The quality of reading books is considerably better. The planning of the curriculum and organisation of the classroom has improved in the reception class and both of these aspects are now sound, but there is room for more improvement in the quality of teaching. The deputy headteacher has well-defined and suitable responsibilities and teachers are beginning to develop management skills for subjects for which they have special responsibility. Governors now take on management roles as well as providing general support for the school.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	A	D	E
Mathematics	C	A	E	E
Science	C	A	E	E*

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

There is a changing picture of results for eleven year olds in the national tests from year to year which makes it difficult to describe a trend. Averaged over five years, the school's results remain fairly steady because the high results are balanced by the low ones. However, the rate of improvement has been less than in schools nationally. In 2000, results fell in all three subjects to be below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The school did not reach the targets which had been set in English and was well short of the mark in mathematics. Compared to schools where the take up of free school meals is similar, results were well below average and in the bottom five per cent nationally in science. Results for seven year olds fell from above average in 1999 in reading, writing and mathematics to below average in 2000. They were below those of similar schools in mathematics and well below in reading and writing. At both key stages in the year 2000, the results were affected by the percentage of children with special needs who did not reach the levels expected nationally. The school believes that some unsatisfactory teaching that resulted in changes in staffing was another contributory factor. By contrast, the group of pupils in 1999 included a higher percentage of more able pupils who did well and helped to raise the results to a high level.

Inspection evidence, which includes discussions with pupils and consideration of their work as well as observations in lessons and of teachers' assessments, shows that standards this year in English, mathematics and science have improved and are broadly in line with the national average. They are on course to be much closer to the school's targets for the 2001 tests and assessments than in the last year. Most pupils are now making good progress in lessons but because of earlier weaknesses, the progress they have made over time is satisfactory and leaves room for standards to rise further. In ICT, standards are average by the end of Key Stage 1. They are below average by the end of Key Stage 2 because the pupils have not yet covered parts of the curriculum. In religious education, history, design and technology, geography, art and physical education, standards are in

line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. Too little was seen of music lessons to reach conclusions about standards. In all subjects, the standards that pupils reach are acceptable but because improvements in the curriculum are relatively recent, there is scope for them to be higher.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children enjoy coming to the school and try hard to do their best. They become increasingly mature so that by Year 6, children have a responsible attitude to their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There are clear rules, which children have helped to write and which guide their behaviour. There is a very small number who find it difficult to behave well all of the time.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. The school provides a good range of opportunities for children to take on responsibilities and they do so capably.
Attendance	In line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Unsatisfactory	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.

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 95 percent of lessons, with 19 percent of these being very good. In only five percent, two lessons, was teaching unsatisfactory.

Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good, with particular strengths in Year 6. Teachers manage the introductions to lessons particularly well, encouraging good discussions and thoughtful questions from the pupils. The ends of lessons are sometimes a bit too rushed and do not consistently round off the work. Literacy and numeracy sessions are taught consistently well because there has been a stronger focus on developing teaching in these subjects and because the staff are secure with the structured approaches. Religious education is taught well in both key stages and teaching in history and physical education is satisfactory. Too little was seen to make separate judgements in other subjects but collectively, teaching was at least satisfactory, although more variable than in English and mathematics. Both the unsatisfactory lessons were in the reception class. The classroom for reception children is carefully organised to provide a sound balance of activities. Planning and assessment are sound. The nursery nurse is clear about her responsibilities and provides effective support, especially in small group activities. Whilst there are areas where teaching is successful, for example in showing children how to read expressively in literacy sessions, there are weaknesses, especially in ensuring that children listen with due care and attention. Consequently, children's personal and social development is not as

good as it should be and the judgement on overall teaching in reception is that it is unsatisfactory.

The school makes good provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs with effective support both in class and in special lessons. A wider group of pupils who are struggling, are well supported through the additional literacy strategy and it is planned to make a similar provision for mathematics. The school recognises that it has pupils who are more able and provides special extra activities such as Russian to which more able pupils are invited in order to give them additional challenge.

Generally children have good attitudes to learning, work hard in lessons and are proud to take on responsibilities such as answering the telephone. By Year 6, they are capable of being mature and reflective when asking or answering questions and work equally well by themselves or with others. The youngest children concentrate well when they are working at activities of their own choice but are not as self-controlled as they should be when waiting their turn to answer questions or listening attentively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for infants and juniors. Planned improvements to provision will ensure that gaps in their ICT experience will be filled shortly. There is a satisfactory curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage in the reception class.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Children who have statements of educational need are well supported by special programmes. A wider group of children are helped to improve their reading and writing.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory overall. Good provision for social and moral development and satisfactory for spiritual and cultural.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. There are effective systems for children's welfare and a caring environment which helps them to enjoy their time in school. The school is developing better ways of assessing how well children do in their work and ensuring that they make continual progress.

Parents have very positive views about the school and a good number support the children by helping in the school or through the Friends of Westfield Association.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and governors. Teachers are starting to take more active roles in managing subjects for which they have a particular responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors are taking an active part in running the school and working with the headteacher to make decisions which will move the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Many procedures have been put in place so that the management of the school can be well informed about its strengths and weaknesses. These are having a positive effect on raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Plans for improvement are supported carefully through the budget. There is a good understanding of the principles of securing the best value for decisions and for involving staff, governors, pupils and parents in shaping those decisions.

There are sufficient teachers and support assistants to teach the number of children at the school. Classrooms are of a generous size and there is a range of other teaching areas. The school benefits from interesting grounds with mature trees which are used to enhance learning, and from its own outdoor swimming pool, used in the summer months. Improvements to the building were taking place during the inspection, include an ICT suite and changes to the administration space. The school has enough books and materials to teach all of the subjects.

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 school is now well led and managed. • Their children are helped to become more mature. • Children work hard and behave well. • Parents can approach the school with their problems confidently. • Much of the teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding out how well their children are getting on. • The amount of work their children get at home.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. The school is well led and parents who were spoken to feel confident that they can bring their concerns and be listened to. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. Children are expected to work hard, do behave well and by Year 6, they are generally confident and mature eleven year olds. Teachers are always willing to talk to parents about how their children are doing. Written reports have not been consistent in saying how children can improve but there are plans to develop these next year. There is an appropriate level of homework and the homework clubs that the school provides are well attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Assessment of children when they start in the reception classes shows that standards are similar to other schools in Hertfordshire. By the end of the year, the children are likely to have achieved the national targets set for the Foundation Stage in most areas of learning and will have made satisfactory progress overall. However, there are likely to be some whose personal and social development does not match what they can do in other areas and their achievement in this area could be better.

2. Test results for eleven year olds over the last four years have shown considerable fluctuation. Averaged over five years, the school's results remain fairly steady because the high results are balanced by the low ones. Some of the reasons for the fluctuations relate to differences in year groups. For example, until two years ago the school had a unit for pupils with special educational needs, and some small year groups have a greater percentage of either more able pupils or those with special educational needs. Taken over time, girls have usually done better than boys in English and science but equally well in mathematics. This is similar to the national picture. The fluctuations in the results affect the trend over time as the high results one year are balanced by the low ones in another. Because of this the trend appears to be fairly steady, in line with but below that nationally. The inspection team's analysis of teacher assessments indicate that results should rise this year. This is supported by their view of the standards seen in the current Year 6 pupils' work.

3. In contrast to the good scores reported in 1999, which the school attributes to the greater percentage of more able pupils, the results for eleven year olds in 2000 were below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. Results were well below those found in similar schools in all three subjects with science being in the bottom five per cent. These results were well below the school's over-ambitious targets, reflecting the fact that these were set without sufficient account being taken of the characteristics of the year group which had more pupils with special educational needs than usual. However, the numbers of pupils with special educational needs does not account fully for the fall. The school believes that some poor teaching contributed to the lower standards but this cannot be checked because of the changes in staffing.

4. Results at Key Stage 1 did not fall so far but were still below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were below those of similar schools in mathematics and well below in reading and writing. The teacher assessments in science also showed low results.

5. Inspection evidence finds that standards in English are now rising and are around average in all aspects by the end of both key stages. However, achievement in reading,

speaking and listening is a little better than in writing, but successful work in most classes in the last few months has already begun to raise writing standards. In several classes there is a particularly wide span of attainment and more pupils than is usual do not achieve the expected national level. The achievement of all groups of pupils including the more able and those who have difficulties is satisfactory, although too many seven year olds continue to make a slow start in reading and writing. Most pupils talk confidently and have a good range of vocabulary which shows as they use technical terms in other subjects such as mathematics and science. Reading and writing skills are competent for the large majority of pupils who use them in all subjects but there are a few whose skills in these areas limit their achievement in other subjects such as science.

6. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages in numeracy and mathematics. Most of the current seven year olds have a sound knowledge of number. They can name and identify some features of flat and solid shapes at an appropriate level. Although some pupils measure using an increasing range of different standard units, are beginning to use an appropriate range of mathematical language and can tackle problem solving capably, others are less competent and confident. By the age of eleven, most of the current pupils are able to use mental recall effectively and some, but not all, use a range of appropriate strategies to estimate and work out their answers. They have a sound grasp of place value and an appropriate understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Some pupils use arrays of data, relevant diagrams and different graphs with good understanding, others are less secure in their accuracy and interpretations. Most pupils now use mathematical language appropriately and are becoming more competent in working out real life problems in the subject; however, others are much less precise and effective in these aspects.

7. All of the pupils in Year 6 have sound factual knowledge in science with the main differences in attainment relating to their literacy skills rather than scientific knowledge. The highest attainers, for example, give extended answers to questions whilst the lower attainers concentrate on giving the simplest answer, often a word or a phrase. At the end of Year 2, the pupils have achieved satisfactory levels given what they could do when they entered the class. However, none of the pupils are assessed at the higher level and clearly there are some who are capable of doing so and whose achievement, therefore, is not good enough.

8. Pupils are reaching satisfactory standards in what they are currently doing in ICT but because they have some substantial gaps in their experiences, standards are below where they should be overall by Year 6. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations. Because the school has its own swimming pool and every class is given time to swim in the summer months, pupils do well in swimming. There was too little evidence in music to reach any firm conclusions about standards but there is good provision for interested pupils in extra-curricular activities and they reach a good standard before they leave the school. In most subjects, the standards that pupils reach are satisfactory, although they could be better in some aspects of ICT and geography at Key Stage 2.

9. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and ensures that they make good progress against their special targets. A wider group of pupils is helped, through additional support in literacy, and there is good provision to extend talented youngsters by giving them additional challenges in extra-curricular activities such as Russian and French as well as music and sport.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are all good. All these factors have a positive impact on pupils' learning and the positive ethos of the school. This maintains the high standards of behaviour and good attitudes noted at the time of the last inspection.

11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school, they are able to identify favourite subjects and a significant number take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. The large majority of the pupils are interested in what they are doing and take an active part in their learning. They co-operate well with teachers, listen attentively and follow instructions in lessons carefully. Pupils become increasingly able to take part in discussions, so that by Year 6 they have a mature and reflective attitude to asking and answering questions.

12. In the majority of lessons seen, pupils' behaviour was good and sometimes very good. Pupils help to draw up classroom rules, giving them a good understanding of what is and is not acceptable behaviour. They are well aware of the school's system of rewards and sanctions. However, mainly in reception and Years 4 and 5, there is a small number of pupils who lose concentration in lessons easily and will misbehave if they have the opportunity. Outside of lessons, pupils chat and play happily together. They treat school equipment with care and respect.

13. Bullying is rare, and the school has an anti-bullying policy designed to enable staff to react quickly and positively when they need to. There have been no exclusions in the last academic year. Parents have indicated that they are pleased with pupils' behaviour.

14. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in their personal development. The personal and social development of children in reception is unsatisfactory because they are not given tight enough guidance on what is acceptable. Relationships between teachers and pupils in all classes are good. Pupils usually co-operate well together in pairs and small groups, and are willing and able to listen to and consider the views of others. These relationships have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

15. Pupils are developing their understanding of other people's cultures and beliefs, and are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their actions on others, mainly through their studies in religious education. All pupils show a willingness to take additional responsibilities such as being classroom monitors. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 elect representatives to the School Council, which meets on a regular basis and makes recommendations to the headteacher on matters of interest to the pupils. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 become prefects and are involved in a number of initiatives including paired reading with younger pupils, supervision in the infant playground, and answering the telephone in the school office at lunchtimes; pupils take these duties seriously and undertake them responsibly. The majority of the parents have indicated that they consider the school is helping their children to be more mature.

16. Overall attendance is satisfactory and is slightly better than at the last inspection. Registration is undertaken morning and afternoon and meets statutory requirements. A significant minority of pupils do not arrive at school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Ninety-five per cent of teaching was judged satisfactory or better, with roughly one in three lessons being good or better. This is a much better picture than at the previous inspection and is a result of changes in staffing as well as the development and monitoring of teaching that has taken place.

18. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall. In the best lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn and check at the ends of lessons to make sure that this happened. The introductory parts of lessons are particularly effective, demonstrating pace and good questioning that keep pupils of all abilities involved, as in a Year 6 lesson in art when previous work and earlier preparation were skilfully used to prepare pupils for the next stage of their work. Whilst the beginnings of lessons are consistently strong, time sometimes ran out so that group activities are curtailed and the ends of lessons too rushed. Much good learning comes from the use of first-hand experience and good resources as in history and science lessons. Whilst pupils' work is marked regularly and in accordance with the school policy, it only occasionally gives clear guidance on how pupils could improve.

19. Teaching in English is good overall. Teachers use specialist vocabulary well so that pupils start to use similar words in their own work. The introductory parts of the lessons are particularly successful because they succeed in interesting the pupils and setting the scene for group activities. Whilst generally successful, the ends of lessons are sometimes too hurried and it is at this time that less confident pupils need more encouragement to participate fully. Literacy skills are taught well within English lessons as in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher constantly insisted that pupils use grammar and punctuation accurately. They are also developed soundly in other subjects. Speaking and listening skills, for example, were promoted effectively in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils listened with considerable interest and then asked intelligent questions of the teacher. Writing is sometimes promoted well within other subjects but could also be better if there were less emphasis on the routine, such as worksheets in history that are not challenging enough or copying up work in science.

20. Mathematics is well taught in Key Stage 1 and is very good in Key Stage 2. High quality direct teaching is a feature of many lessons, with good knowledge of the subject shown in the way teachers use mathematical language and help pupils to use it more precisely, as in a Year 1 lesson on shape. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and progress by pupils. Lessons are conducted briskly, especially the mental and oral work such as that in a Year 3 lesson which resulted in pupils making rapid progress in the session. On rare occasions, teaching and learning are less challenging and less well matched to pupils' abilities, as a result of which pupils do not learn as much.

21. During the inspection, a science day, supported very well by parents, gave pupils excellent opportunities to learn through experimenting with the high quality resources provided. Everyone's interest, including that of the adults, was aroused by the range of activities. Pupils were fascinated with the experiments and all were able to benefit from the experience. Little direct teaching of science was seen because most classes concentrated on the science day and several classes were observed at work on these special activities. Evidence from work, the two lessons seen and the sound knowledge that pupils in Year 6 revealed during an interview, suggest that science is well taught in Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, similar evidence suggests a sound picture of teaching in science with more needing to be done to raise the achievement of the higher attaining pupils.

22. Religious education is taught well in both key stages. In the best of these lessons, issues were handled sensitively and a wide range of effective strategies employed to

stimulate interest and close involvement by each of the pupils in the class, as in a Year 2 lesson when children were encouraged to consider the meaning of life and the place of God. Teaching in history and physical education was satisfactory. Too little was seen to make separate judgements in other subjects but collectively, teaching was at least satisfactory, although more variable than in English and mathematics.

23. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses that was judged overall to be unsatisfactory, because the weaknesses are ones that affect the children's learning too much. Planning is sound and shared, so that both adults know their key roles. There is some good observational assessment of what children know and can do which is used in planning the next stages of learning. The classroom is organised soundly to provide a balance of direct teaching and free choice. The teacher reads aloud to the children well so that they learn good habits of expression. Teaching in the small groups is largely effective, although more could be done informally to develop children's vocabulary by using the correct word when a child provides one that is close but not accurate. In whole-class sessions, the teacher is not rigorous enough in ensuring that pupils are ready to listen and that they continue to listen throughout; the nursery nurse is not always well positioned to help by intervening when a particular child needs an extra reminder. In group and free choice activities, adults do not intervene soon enough to redirect play and sort out small disagreements. As a result, the children are not as settled as they should be and are not being effectively prepared for the next stages of their learning when expectations of their concentration will be greater. The teacher often wanders from the point in whole-class activities such as literacy, and introduces material that does not add to children's learning and sometimes detracts from it.

24. The school makes good provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs. There is effective support both in class and in special lessons such as the one helping a pupil to develop better knowledge of the alphabet and to improve her confidence in spelling. A wider group of pupils who are struggling, are well supported through the additional literacy support. The activities are carefully planned from that guidance and are effectively delivered, helping the pupils to make good progress. It is planned to make a similar provision for mathematics. Classroom assistants support pupils well in these activities. They also give effective support to other pupils in lessons, although there are times in whole-class sessions when assistants are not as effectively used as is possible. The school recognises that it has pupils who are more able and provides special extra activities, such as Russian, to give them additional challenge.

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

25. A number of significant weaknesses in the curriculum were reported in the previous inspection. These have largely been addressed and the school now provides a broad and relevant curriculum for all pupils. Statutory requirements are met. Whilst further work remains to be done, reception age children receive a more appropriate curriculum, satisfactorily based on national guidance. The reception team introduces children to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies at a sensible pace, and sound provision is made for young children to learn through structured play, including outdoor activities.

26. The school day is now longer for junior pupils and the time allocated to different subjects is satisfactory. Because subjects other than English and mathematics are allocated to the afternoons, it can be difficult to cover all the necessary skills and knowledge in sufficient depth, for example in design and technology and in geography.

However, provision is complemented by special occasions such as a 'science day' that involve parents as well as pupils and by the inclusion of visits and visitors that contribute well to pupils' experience. During the inspection, for instance, a relative of a staff member, who is a Muslim, came in to tell the younger pupils about her faith. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is followed throughout the school, improving the provision reported last time in Key Stage 1.

27. Curriculum planning is carried out and monitored in three stages. A sound long-term plan allocates units of work in a balanced way across the year groups, although work on the Foundation Stage for reception children is yet to be completed. Medium-term plans, securely based on national and local guidance are appropriately detailed. Weekly planning for literacy and numeracy is precise and effective, but in other subjects is too brief to translate the schemes of work into specific lessons, fully matched to the needs of the class.

28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics is good because policy and organisation identifies and meets their needs well. The school is extremely successful in ensuring equal access, for example planning additional support for English so that pupils do not miss other lessons. Sensitive arrangements are in place to support pupils who might miss out on some activities for financial reasons. A small number of pupils are held back in their work in subjects such as science and geography because of weaker literacy skills. However, overall, the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively.

29. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is supported by a commercial scheme of work and, in the case of sex and drugs education, by trained personnel from the medical and police services. Teachers include 'circle times' when pupils can explore issues that affect their lives at school and at home, and the School Council involves pupils well in decision making. Whilst provision for PSHE is satisfactory, the headteacher plans to improve it further, in line with recent national guidance and base it more firmly on the school's aims and values.

30. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent and a strength of the school. An imaginative and broad range of activities is available at lunchtimes and after school, run voluntarily by staff and friends of the school and through some clubs charging a fee. The value placed by the school on the out-of-school programme is illustrated by the way parents are kept well informed about what is on offer. A register is completed for each club to record attendance. The registers provide the school with a strong basis for monitoring how different groups of pupils respond to the programme. The provision includes a popular homework club, helping pupils of all ages to improve their independent study habits. Some activities are designed to promote specific talents such as music, sport or languages.

31. At the age of eleven, pupils transfer to a number of secondary schools. This makes curriculum continuity more difficult, although good arrangements exist to ease the transfer for pupils at a pastoral level, including those who have special educational needs. Plans exist for one specialist secondary school to provide modern foreign language tuition. The school is developing a close and valuable link with a similarly sized school in the locality and the local primary group meets at headteacher level and for some subject managers. Sound curriculum links are made with the community, including the fire and police services and the local church. The headteacher is proposing to establish a closer relationship with local business interests, including the adjacent pharmaceutical firm.

32. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Provision for their

moral and social development is stronger than that for spiritual and cultural aspects of pupils' experience.

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Whilst events such as the science day create real excitement and wonder in learning, the main focus for spiritual development is through assemblies and religious education and involves pupils considering important questions of meaning, such as the existence of God. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils were discussing what Christians believe about God, and what their perception of God is. Pupils made good contributions to these discussions, with comments such as, "God is always there when you need him", and provided a wide range of opinions about what God is like. Whilst some assemblies give pupils a spiritual experience, others do not and contain only very brief acts of collective worship.

34. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school's discipline policy is based on an overall philosophy of 'respect yourself and respect others', and contains a clear code of conduct to encourage pupils to be responsible for their own actions and consider the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are involved in drawing up classroom rules, which are displayed in each classroom, and this helps them to develop an awareness of the differences between right and wrong. Praise is well used throughout the school, and good use is made of the Friday celebration assembly to promote good attitudes and behaviour. Relationships are very good and staff provide good role models and value pupils' opinions. Moral development is promoted within the curriculum, mostly through religious education; this gives pupil's opportunities to discuss moral issues and to develop moral values.

35. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are taught to share, help one another and show consideration for others. They are given many opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Pupils in all year groups are encouraged to be fully involved in the life of the school. Younger pupils take responsibility for returning class registers to the office and tidy up after lessons. Older pupils are given posts of responsibility as prefects, and undertake a wide range of responsibilities, such as taking care of younger pupils in the playground and dining room, paired reading with Year 2 pupils and helping in the school office at lunchtime. The School Council effectively promotes pupils' social development; for example during a School Council Meeting pupils were considering a number of suggestions from each class on how to spend a £100 budget that the headteacher had allocated to the Council for improvements. After some discussions about the various class submissions, the Council decided to split the money available between the infant and junior playgrounds to ensure that all pupils in the school benefited from their decisions. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits, including a residential course for Year 6 pupils, make a positive contribution to pupils' social development.

36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In religious education, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism are studied along with Christianity, effectively promoting the pupils' cultural development through a greater awareness of the beliefs and traditions of other major world faiths. Pupils learn about their own culture; for example, in history they have looked at Tudor and Victorian cultures, and at their local area. However, their understanding of Britain as a multicultural society is less well developed. Extra-curricular activities including drama, Russian and French make a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. This is a caring school which provides a safe and secure environment where pupils can learn and develop. Pupils and staff are well known to each other and enjoy good relationships inside and outside the classroom. Pupils say they would ask teachers for help should they have any problems either about their school work or personal difficulties, and are confident that appropriate advice and guidance would be given.

38. The school is committed to providing a safe working environment for staff and pupils. The health and safety policy meets statutory requirements and good attention is given to health and safety in lessons. However, whilst some risk assessments have been carried out, these are not undertaken on a regular basis and they are not sufficiently focused at identifying potential risks; fire risk assessments have still to be undertaken.

39. There is a comprehensive child protection policy and sound procedures. There are two designated teachers, one of whom has received appropriate training and the second teacher is due to receive training in the near future. Whilst the staff have received informal training on child protection issues, there is a need to do this more formally to ensure good understanding.

40. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy and effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Staff apply these procedures consistently. The anti-bullying policy makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable. At present there are no written procedures for the use of force to restrain pupils if this should ever be necessary.

41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Parents are continually advised of the need for regular and punctual attendance, and are asked to inform the school of the reason for any absence. However, attendance totals are not always completed in accordance with the school's attendance policy. The school is developing procedures to look at long-term monitoring of absence to establish any patterns.

42. Careful attention has been given to all the issues raised in the last inspection report related to assessment and considerable improvements have been made recently which are beginning to have a major impact on the quality of teaching, learning and standards. Common approaches are now firmly in place for assessment throughout the school. Staff development has been provided to enhance teachers' expertise and understanding, not least in relation to the implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, with good use of outside guidance and support. Strong leadership and management is being provided by the assessment co-ordinator, with valuable support from the headteacher. There is a clear direction for assessment with a good quality action plan encompassing assessment, target setting and data analysis, scheduled for completion by the end of this school year. Good procedures are in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and to assess and review their progress. Sound arrangements are being made for the assessment of children in the Foundation Stage. Overall, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound. There are good arrangements to assess literacy and numeracy but assessment in many of the other subjects is less systematically collected and used. A detailed and useful assessment diary has recently been developed to guide teachers in making their arrangements.

43. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is also sound, overall. However, whilst pupils' work is regularly marked, there is often insufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve. Teachers know their pupils well. From their detailed knowledge of pupils, teachers often set them personal targets, for example, in literacy and numeracy to support them in their learning and achievement. This is a valuable process

which now needs to be refined further, to make the targets more precise, to use them consistently across the school and to involve the pupils themselves in the review process. A useful system for tracking the progress of pupils has been set up and the school carefully analyses national test results and other assessments to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has developed a strong partnership with parents, which represents a major improvement since the last inspection when the school's partnership with parents was found to be unsatisfactory.

45. Overall, parents have very positive views of the school. In particular, they are pleased with the quality of teaching, the standards of behaviour, the expectation that their children will work hard and the way in which the school is helping children to become more responsible and mature. Parents feel welcome in the school and believe that their children enjoy coming to school. They feel the school is well led and managed. They are pleased with the progress their children make in their learning and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Evidence from the inspection confirms these positive views. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the homework their children receive and that they did not receive sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspectors consider that the school's use of homework is satisfactory, as generally is the information about pupils' progress, although there are some inconsistencies in the information contained in pupils' annual reports.

46. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. A significant number of parents help in the school, listening to pupils read, assisting in classrooms and running extra-curricular activities such as the gardening club. During the inspection the school held a science day at which a good number of parents came to lead a wide range of activities on the theme of electricity. This was a well-planned day that enabled parents to make a significant contribution to their children's learning and proved to be a rewarding experience for everyone. There is an active Friends of Westfield Association that organises social and fund-raising events; significant amounts of money have been raised to finance additional learning resources, which have had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

47. Overall, the quality of information given to parents is good. The school brochure and annual governors' report provide a wide range of information about the school and its activities and meet statutory requirements. The Westfield Weekly newsletter is sent to parents each Friday and ensures that they are kept up to date on current school activities and innovations, for example developments relating to the new ICT suite, Year 6 pupils' access to the Internet and extra-curricular activities. Parents also receive good quality information about the topics to be covered by pupils in all year groups on a termly basis, supported by class timetables enabling parents to assist their children's learning. The school actively seeks the views of parents when making major decisions; for example parents have been invited to a consultation meeting to discuss proposals to meet the effects of a reduction of pupil numbers in the next academic year, including possible reduction in staffing levels. Parents are invited to one formal meeting in the autumn term to discuss their children's progress; attendance at these meetings is good. Throughout the spring term, parents have the opportunity to book a further meeting with class teachers during the last 30 minutes of each school day. Overall, pupils' reports are satisfactory. However, there are some inconsistencies; for example, most give good information about a pupil's strengths, though not all identify weaknesses and make it clear what pupils need to

do to improve. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the development and review of their children's individual educational plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. There have been some major changes in staffing and management since the last inspection with six of the nine teachers, including the headteacher, being recent appointments. The deputy headteacher is also a recent internal appointment. The school is now very effectively led by the headteacher who is well supported by the deputy and by the staff of the school. In the short time since his appointment, the school has become a vibrant place which is promoting higher standards in all aspects of its life. The change in the confidence of the parents, for example, is one of the strong indicators of the success of the measures.

49. Governors have also changed since the last inspection and their role has developed into one which actively supports the management of the school. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. Governors meet regularly to monitor the progress of the school improvement plan and the buddy system of pairing with one of the teachers and visiting their classrooms helps to keep them informed of what is happening at the 'chalk face'.

50. There have been rapid developments in monitoring the work of the school and arrangements are now good. For example, there is a clear timetable proposed which covers the work of governors during the next two years. Teaching has been monitored formally and the information from these sessions is discussed with individuals. All subject co-ordinators have been given enhanced responsibilities, for example their own budgets, and they are involved in checking planning and resources to identify improvements. Provision for special educational needs is well managed and much improved since the previous inspection. The division of the work between the part-time co-ordinator and the deputy headteacher is proving to be an efficient sharing of responsibilities. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have had time to see what is happening in classrooms and this practice is to be extended as other subjects have a stronger focus in the improvement plan. Systems are in place to check pupils' progress and to identify those who might need extra support such as booster classes. Data from the national tests and assessments is being analysed to see what changes and improvements might take place.

51. The school finances are managed effectively. Any special funding is used appropriately for its declared purposes such as that for special educational needs and that for improving the building. The school applies the principle of 'best value' effectively through consultation with all relevant parties and to all significant purchases. Money to improve provision in subjects is clearly linked to the priorities outlined in the school improvement plan; for example, science is the focus for the coming year and the science co-ordinator's budget is larger than most others.

52. There are sufficient teachers and support staff for the numbers of pupils on roll. Classroom assistants are usually effectively deployed, although there are occasions such as at the beginnings of lesson when the whole class is working together when they have little to do. Classrooms are of a generous size and the school benefits from the mature trees and grassed areas which surround it. The reception class has no defined outside play area but plans are well in hand to provide this using support from a local industry. An outdoor swimming pool enhances physical education provision during the summer months and leads to better standards in swimming. All subjects have sufficient resources. The

limited facilities for ICT which have affected standards at Key Stage 2 are currently being improved with the creation of an ICT suite.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. All of the issues which need improvement are clearly identified in the school's current improvement plans and should continue to have a strong focus to sustain developments. The school should continue to raise standards:-

- (1) In teaching in the Foundation Stage by:-
- developing more effective ways of encouraging children to listen more carefully and to settle down to their work quickly and quietly;
 - teaching what has been planned and not introducing content which is not carefully enough considered;
 - ensuring that both adults are equally well employed at all times.
- (Paragraphs 54-66)

- (2) In English by:-
- improving the marking of work in all classes to give clearer feedback about what pupils are doing well and what they need to improve, particularly in regard to their personal literacy targets;
 - further supporting the teaching of reading and writing in Key Stage 1, to meet the needs of the higher and lower attaining pupils better;
 - improving the teaching of handwriting throughout the school for those who find it difficult;
 - planning consistently for the use of literacy skills in different subjects.
- (Paragraphs 67-79)

In mathematics by:-

- improving the quality and consistency of marking, especially related to the quality of written guidance to pupils how to improve;
 - providing further staff development to enhance pupils' continuity and progression in key areas such as problem solving and investigations;
 - further improving the precision in the use of mathematical language and accuracy in mathematical work;
 - continuing to develop strategies to identify strengths and weaknesses from assessment results and use them.
- (Paragraphs 80-87)

In science by:-

- ensuring that pupils throughout the school use a range of forms of recording their work and do not waste time on copying;
 - ensuring that higher attainers at Key Stage 1 are challenged throughout the key stage so that they can fully reach the levels that they are capable of achieving;
 - marking with guidance for improvement as well as for effort.
- (Paragraphs 88-95)

In information and communication technology by:-

- implementing the planned improvement plan and monitoring teaching and learning to ensure that all strands of the curriculum are covered.
- (Paragraphs 111-115)

Other minor issues which the governors should address in their action plan can be found in paragraphs: 36; 38; 40; 42-43; 47.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	38	38	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	15	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	9
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	18	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (96)	73 (89)	85 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	8
	Girls	11	13	12
	Total	18	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (89)	85 (89)	77 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	11	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	9
	Girls	9	7	9
	Total	18	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (91)	56 (83)	67 (91)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	10	8	9
	Total	19	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (83)	63 (78)	70 (96)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	391308
Total expenditure	384733
Expenditure per pupil	2107
Balance brought forward from previous year	36410
Balance carried forward to next year	42985

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

179

Number of questionnaires returned

125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	40	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	54	3	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	57	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	60	11	1	1
The teaching is good.	54	42	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	47	14	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	41	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	54	7	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	61	35	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	48	0	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	43	6	1	3

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

54. Children are admitted to the reception class twice in each year and at the time of the inspection, five of the 26 children were still under five. Weaknesses in planning and classroom organisation, that were pointed out at the last inspection, have been addressed and both these areas are now satisfactory with further improvements being planned. Baseline assessments are carried out in line with the Hertfordshire scheme and further on-going records kept conscientiously. The nursery nurse makes observational assessments of what children can or cannot do which feeds back into planning through discussions. There are strengths in the caring relationships that exist between adults and children. Teaching which is satisfactory is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. However, the lack of successful strategies to control children's behaviour and response in whole-class and group sessions is the main factor in lessons which were judged unsatisfactory and in the judgement that teaching overall is unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. The adults provide a sound balance of opportunities for children to choose their own activities as well as to be taught directly. Children are taught right from wrong. Visitors to the school, such as one of the Readers from the local church, help them to learn about aspects of the Christian faith and the school planning makes sure that other faiths and beliefs are introduced to the children. Both of the adults are warm and welcoming and create caring relationships for the children. Children sometimes concentrate well, for example in assemblies where there are clear expectations for everyone to do this, and when they choose their own activities. However, teaching in this area is unsatisfactory because strategies for managing children's behaviour and responses are not consistently effective. Whole-class sessions, for example, are not as calm as they should be. Because the teacher does not insist on quiet listening before starting to teach, there are frequent interruptions from some children and lack of concentration from others. Sometimes the nursery nurse is not in the best place to give discreet reminders to those who need it. Small disagreements between children are not dealt with soon enough when they are choosing their own activities and this leads to increased levels of noise.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Provision in this area is satisfactory. There are opportunities for children to enjoy imaginary play, for example in the rainforest, to choose books, to write at a writing table and to listen to tapes. These are balanced by more formal activities based on the literacy approach. Generally, children talk confidently to each other and to adults, and their vocabulary is of a good quality. Both adults talk to the children throughout activities, although at times they did not use children's responses as effectively as possible to develop accuracy. For example, when one child referred to the 'anthills' on a millipede, the correct word was not given so he continued to call them 'anthills' instead of antennae. Children show good listening skills when they know that they are expected to do so, for example in school assemblies. They listen reasonably well in some whole-class sessions but not in all. Sometimes they call out too much or show that they are not listening by talking to each other. This lack of attention is not corrected soon enough.

57. Some children can read familiar words, for example from the big book that they are reading together and a few can spot the words that rhyme. All of the children know their

own names, choosing them correctly from a collection to indicate which activity they are going to work at. All children can write at least their own first name and recognise the initial letter and sound. Almost all can repeat the alphabet song correctly. A small number can spell simple words accurately and all can make attempts to represent their own ideas on paper. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall but would be better and enable children to make better progress if it was more sharply focused. The teacher reads very expressively so that children enjoy the story and learn how text should be read. She uses praise constantly to give children the confidence to answer questions. However, at times, she brought in too many additional teaching points to the main teaching focus which slowed down the pace and led to some children losing interest. Examples of these were commas, question marks, and synonyms for the word 'big' when the focus was on capital letters, and the difficult sound 'oi' when homework words did not include it. Sometimes the teacher and the nursery nurse share the whole-class literacy teaching which has the advantage of making the groups smaller and better focused on what the children need to learn next. It can also be a disadvantage in the same room as it is difficult to generate a quiet working response with two sets of voices.

Mathematical development

58. The majority of children have satisfactory skills and knowledge in mathematics and are on course to reach the targets for their age group. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory and combines short, group sessions with more informal work. Children have a sound knowledge of numbers. The four year olds count numbers up to 10 confidently and the older pupils in the class know about larger numbers and can put them in order. The youngest ones can do simple addition sums set in practical contexts and recognise that $1+1 =$ is a sum. The older ones answer correctly simple written sums. The children have a satisfactory knowledge of the language of mathematics using words such as 'full', 'empty', 'heavy', 'light', 'longer' and 'taller' correctly. Most know the names of the four basic shapes, although some of the younger ones still make mistakes between rectangles and triangles.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. During the inspection, good use of the school environment was made when groups of children spent time with the nursery nurse looking for mini-beasts. This gave the children an enjoyable experience and helped them to learn about the creatures that can be found around the school and about where they live. They were quite excited at finding mini-beasts beneath rocks, wood and leaves. Some good questioning about the creatures' responses to being touched, led the children to be aware that they needed to be careful and that they could cause the fear that led to insects scuttling away or curling up.

60. Children use the computer quite happily and are familiar with terms such as screen, program, and mouse. They have a range of construction materials to work with but also undertake more formal activities such as thinking about what could be in their new playground and putting their designs onto paper. Children understand that weather changes and that this can be represented by pictures.

61. A lesson on special places used a good range of photographs of local buildings. The teacher's questions showed some surprising gaps in the children's knowledge such as what they might buy in a post office. They were much better at describing what a church might be used for. A weakness in the teaching of this session was that the children were restless when they came in from afternoon play and were not settled down sufficiently before the class discussion began. Therefore, whilst some took part calmly, others were continuously restless and this slowed down the pace of the lesson.

62. Overall the provision and teaching in this area are satisfactory and lead to the children being on course to reach expected standards.

Physical development

63. Teaching in this area is satisfactory and, overall, standards are in line with expected levels. Although there is no enclosed space, good arrangements are made for children to have outdoor activities, using the area outside the classroom whenever possible. This is balanced by time for more formal games in the infant playground. In one of these sessions, the children showed skills which were better than average in running, using bats and balls and in skipping. Firmness at the outset of the lesson ensured that the children knew what they had to do and that they improved their work.

64. In the classroom, the range of opportunities for children to develop hand and eye co-ordination is sound. They are able to use tools such as pencils and paintbrushes capably and build with the various blocks and construction kits.

65. Resources are satisfactory. There are plans to improve the provision by enclosing a space immediately outside the classroom and buying equipment such as wheeled toys to extend the children's play.

Creative development

66. Children's creative development is promoted satisfactorily and their skills are typical for their ages. Imaginative play areas are created for children and changed frequently. The current 'rainforest' area, which was new, attracted considerable interest but since none of the adults had had time to work with the children in it, children used their imaginations and changed it into a place for Peter Pan and Wendy. Singing is a regular feature of the week and sometimes children accompany their singing using instruments. During the inspection, the children were painting the initial letter of their names which they had made of salt dough. Work on the walls showed that they have painted in other ways and worked using different materials.

ENGLISH

67. Test results for seven and eleven year olds over the last four years have shown considerable fluctuation. Consequently it is difficult to reach a reliable conclusion about how far results have improved since the previous inspection. In contrast to the good scores reported in 1999, the most recently ratified results for 2000 were below average and well below those found in similar schools at the end of both key stages. Results for eleven year olds in 2000 were well below the school's over-ambitious target set by the local education authority, reflecting the fact that it was set without sufficient account being taken of pupils' attainment or the reported shortcomings in some teaching at the time. The 2001 target for 80 per cent of eleven year old pupils to reach the expected level may not be achieved. However, because of good teaching in the last twelve months, the shortfall is likely to be very much narrower, with a good proportion of pupils exceeding the average level. However, the school accepts that standards in the past have not risen fast or far enough and has now established a clear framework for improvement.

68. The inspection indicates that standards are now rising because pupils make good progress in almost all lessons. Standards are around average for all aspects of the English curriculum. Achievement in reading, speaking and listening is somewhat better than in

writing, but successful work in most classes in the last few months has already begun to raise writing standards. In several classes there is a particularly wide span of attainment and more pupils than is usual do not achieve the nationally expected level. Since the previous inspection, however, brighter pupils are achieving better because of more focused teaching and higher expectations. Consequently, the results for eleven year olds are set to be a marked improvement on the previous year. Equally, recent work to improve the provision for pupils facing difficulties in the subject, including a relatively large proportion of boys, is beginning to have an impact, although too many seven year olds continue to make a slow start in reading and writing.

69. Achievement in speaking and listening is satisfactory in both key stages. By the age of seven almost all pupils can listen carefully and talk about things that interest them. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher invited pupils to ask each other questions about their work resulting in many pupils showing good skills in framing and answering questions and in listening to each other's responses.

70. By eleven, pupils speak appropriately in different contexts, for instance through discussion as well as the retelling of events. Classes were preparing for a School Council discussion about spending their allocation of money. They spoke thoughtfully and maturely as they developed and modified their ideas. The school has rightly recognised the need to plan for speaking and listening in the literacy hour. This has improved provision, although most plans still lack sufficient detail of what teachers expect to be learned and how the needs of particular groups will be met in speaking and listening. Consequently there are times when the least confident and, more rarely, the most confident pupils do not achieve as well as they might. For example, while most teachers are careful to draw everyone into class discussions, there are occasions when some pupils dominate the discussion. A feature in speaking throughout the school is the way most pupils will use the technical terms associated with different subjects – this is because staff use such vocabulary well.

71. Standards in reading are generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1, although a few pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Almost all pupils, other than some with special educational needs, learn to use letter sounds to identify unfamiliar words and all know the main features of books, such as the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how to find information in a simple reference book. Some of the better readers need more opportunity to enjoy a broader range of texts. The school is making determined efforts to identify and meet the needs of young readers who are not reaching average levels. Additional teaching strategies are being used as pupils move into Key Stage 2 and it is planned to introduce early intervention in Year 1 for those who are beginning to fall behind. However, the work has not reached throughout the school and there are times when reading difficulties are holding some pupils back in other subjects, such as science.

72. Reading standards by Year 6 are broadly average, with a good proportion reaching the higher levels. Most pupils enjoy reading and many have their favourite authors. They know how to locate information in the library and almost all, including many lower attaining pupils, read aloud with expression and meaning. Higher attaining pupils can talk about the characters and events in their books, acquiring an interest in the language, for instance the meaning and derivation of old words such as 'beauteous'.

73. Standards in writing are generally satisfactory, in good measure because of recent work in increasing the frequency and range of writing experiences. By the age of seven pupils are particularly adept in narrative writing, but this is not always sufficiently balanced with other forms of writing such as instructions, letters and lists, and too many pupils appear afraid to use adventurous vocabulary to add excitement to their writing.

74. Pupils make good progress in most aspects of writing through Key Stage 2. Most write with vigour and confidence for a range of purposes and audiences, spelling and punctuating their work accurately. They can use language for effect, for instance in Year 4 'Captain Hook, who had brown eyes and yellow teeth, was hungry for adventure....'. By Year 6, pupils can use imagery well in writing poetry and can write persuasively; higher attaining pupils showing an impressive grasp of vocabulary such as 'miniscule'. Whilst most develop a personal, flowing handwriting style, some who find handwriting difficult make slower progress through the school. This is because the teaching approaches that work for the majority do not always meet the needs of pupils who need help in holding a pencil or pen properly or forming their letters correctly.

75. Pupils' attitudes to English are predominantly positive. They listen attentively, joining in with the whole-class teaching at the start of the literacy hour. Most concentrate well when working independently, although a minority in some classes can work with notably less enthusiasm than their classmates. In the Year 2 class this was reflected in a relatively undemanding task where pupils were asked to cut out and stick sentences according to whether they were fact or fiction. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from precise and detailed individual education plans and supported effectively by teaching assistants.

76. Teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The literacy strategy has been developed successfully, bringing clear and challenging objectives and a good range of teaching methods. Whole-class teaching at the start of literacy lessons is particularly effective, demonstrating pace and good questioning that keep pupils involved. Shared texts are chosen well and teachers' good subject knowledge is used consistently to demonstrate the appropriate grammatical vocabulary such as 'nouns', 'adjectives' and 'conjunctions'. As a result, pupils are familiar with the terms and some will use them confidently when talking about their own work. Whilst generally successful, the plenary sessions are sometimes too hurried and it is at this time that less confident pupils need more encouragement to participate fully.

77. The teaching in most classes is sensitively balanced to include the learning of new skills and the application of those skills through interesting activities. This is most apparent in Key Stage 2 where literacy skills are promoted soundly in other subjects. There is scope for this to be developed further in all classes.

78. Relevant targets are set for individuals and groups in writing and these are helping to draw pupils more actively into their learning. The school recognises the need to extend the approach into reading. Staff need to agree how they will remind pupils of their targets. One way will be to improve the marking of pupils' work which is currently too variable between teachers and unsatisfactory overall. There are very good examples in Year 6, but in most classes marking is imprecise and does not communicate what pupils have done well and what they need to improve.

79. English is well managed. The subject manager is benefiting from continuing training and very good support from the headteacher and deputy. Monitoring is now very good. Increasingly effective use is made of the good range of assessment information to set targets, to differentiate the work and to identify development priorities. Consequently, current initiatives are appropriate and there is a common commitment to continued improvement. Resources have been significantly upgraded and are now good, apart from the Foundation Stage where more up-to-date texts are needed. The literacy governor is

well informed about the school's work and priorities, providing a valuable link between staff and the governing body.

MATHEMATICS

80. Standards of attainment are currently broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages in numeracy and mathematics. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds were below average and showed a drop from the average standards in the preceding two years. Results for eleven year olds were well below average in relation to national statistics and those for similar schools. They showed a marked drop from the 1999 results, which were well above average, and mirrored a similar radical swing in 1997 and 1998. From the range of evidence available, it would appear that the main factors involved in these variations related to considerable differences between year groups in the numbers of pupils with specific learning needs, coupled with the effects of changes in staff and the quality of teaching and learning.

81. The inspection found that the school has recently focused attention strongly, and to good effect, on improving the quality of teaching and learning, in order to raise standards in mathematics. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced into the curriculum of the school. Effective use is being made of a range of national strategies and approaches throughout the school to improve mental and oral work and other important aspects, such as using and applying mathematics and the use of appropriate vocabulary. However, the school appreciates that much more remains to be done, over a longer period of time, before pupils' attainment is consistently good enough. Nevertheless, an analysis of the teachers' assessments of the current Year 2 and Year 6 shows most pupils on course to achieve the average level and some to reach the higher one. Whilst results fell well short of the somewhat optimistic targets set for last year's Year 6 pupils, early indications are that, even though the target is higher, this year's results will be closer to predictions. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are well supported, make good progress and achieve appropriate levels. Whilst there are variations in the attainment of boys and girls, they broadly reflect national trends, where girls do better than boys. There are clear indications that the recent improvements in the nature and quality of direct teaching throughout the school are having a positive effect on the learning and attainment of all pupils, not least the boys.

82. Most of the current seven year olds can count on and backwards in twos and tens, can recognise sequences of numbers including odd and even numbers and are able to complete missing numbers in a simple sequence. Many show an understanding of two-digit numbers when they add these together and have a sound grasp of number facts to 20. Some pupils are able to work with larger numbers. Most can name and identify some features of flat and solid shapes at an appropriate level. Some pupils are able to measure using an increasing range of different standard units, although others are less confident and accurate. Many pupils are also beginning to use an appropriate range of mathematical language and vocabulary, and to tackle problem solving, but other pupils are less competent and confident.

83. By the age of eleven, most of the current pupils are able to use mental recall effectively and some, but not all, use a range of appropriate strategies to estimate and work out their answers. Many pupils have a sound grasp of place value in relation to their age and have an appropriate understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Many can use arrays of data, relevant diagrams and different graphs, often but not always linked to work in other subjects; some pupils do so with good understanding, although others are

less secure in their accuracy and interpretations. Most pupils now use mathematical language appropriately and are becoming more competent in working out real-life problems in the subject; however, others are much less precise and effective in these aspects.

84. The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to mathematics; on some occasions they are very good. Pupils frequently work hard, listen carefully and take real pride in their achievements and the presentation of their work. They behave well and often relish the varied and challenging mental work and practical tasks which are frequently provided for them. In many lessons, particularly but not exclusively such as those seen in Years 2, 3 and 6, many of the activities, especially mental and oral work, are seen by the pupils as fun. Pupils in a number of classes, particularly those just mentioned, actively see mistakes including those made inadvertently or otherwise by the teacher, as sources of new learning; they often attack problems with vigour, employing all their rapidly increasing skills, responding very well to time constraints and effectively working with each other to solve more complex problems. On rare occasions in other classes, a few pupils lose concentration when the tasks are insufficiently well matched to their age and ability or when teachers do not control them effectively enough.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in Key Stage 1 and very good, overall, in Key Stage 2. This represents a marked improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection and reflects the very considerable commitment and hard work, particularly recently, by the whole school and by individual teachers in improving mathematical provision and standards. It is no accident that many pupils are making rapid progress are often fascinated by the subject and get a real 'buzz' from many of the tasks provided! This stems from the collective determination and example by the whole school, coupled with the individual flair and rigorous challenges provided by individual teachers for their pupils. That said, the school also fully recognises that there is still much to be done to improve progression and continuity over time and to ensure that standards are good enough.

86. Lessons are frequently well planned and structured with close attention to the effective use of national strategies. In the best lessons, pupils are told clearly what they are going to learn, these objectives are used by pupils during the lesson, for example as a heading for their work in their books, and teachers use them at the end of the lesson as a basis for consolidating pupils' learning and tackling misconceptions. High quality direct teaching is a feature of many lessons, with good, sometimes very good, knowledge of the subject and expectations of behaviour and progress by pupils, rapid pace, good match of work to pupils' age and ability and much being learnt and achieved by pupils during a single lesson. On rare occasions, aspects of teaching and learning are less challenging and well matched to pupils' abilities, as a result of which progress is much slower. Good, and some very good, use is made of the mental and oral session at the beginning of each lesson although, on occasions, small practical refinements, for example extending further the use of wipe boards, number fans and counting sticks, would help the teachers to know more easily how well individual pupils are doing.

87. Considerable improvements have been made in the quality and the arrangements for assessment, overall, drawing well on national strategies and approaches. In the best practice, marking is used very effectively to help pupils to improve, but elsewhere it is less well used. Results from a number of sources are analysed and often used well to target underachievement and the differing needs of pupils, although it is appreciated by the school that further refinements can still usefully be made. Assessment is used appropriately to set targets for pupils but while personal targets for pupils in some classes are of good or better quality and are effectively used, elsewhere they are inconsistently

developed and employed to enhance pupils' learning and attainment. The co-ordinator is providing a very strong lead, both by personal example and through good management approaches in which she is actively and ably supported by the headteacher and the whole staff. Arrangements for staff development are effective and strategies for monitoring and evaluation are contributing well to improvements in provision and standards; further refinements are being made all the time as a direct result of the school's own feedback systems. The school is generally well resourced for the subject, although further items will be needed from time to time to replace worn or outdated equipment and to keep pace with developments which are taking place.

SCIENCE

88. Test results for eleven year olds over the last four years have shown considerable fluctuation and in 2000 they were well below the national average and in the bottom five per cent compared to similar schools. The picture in science is at least equal to that at the previous inspection and is a rapidly improving one. This improvement is in part due to good teaching and to the use of information gained from on-going assessments and analysing information from tests. The teacher's assessments show that more pupils are expected to reach the higher levels than last year and the fact that there are none with special educational needs, that will prevent them from reaching level 3, will help to raise the school's results. Thorough preparation for the tests has made sure that pupils in Year 6 have a good recall of factual information in each of the attainment targets.

89. Pupils understand that the sun creates a shadow when its light cannot pass through an object and that the shape of the shadow is the same as the object because light travels in straight lines. When talking about the parts of the human body, pupils can describe what arteries and veins do, although they were not sure which was which. They knew that the organs of the body, such as the heart and the lungs, serve different purposes and were able to give satisfactory details of what each does. They can name different forces and have a sound understanding of gravity and friction. Pupils have covered work on plants and growth and the most able gave a clear account of photosynthesis. The main difference between high and low attainment of a group of three pupils from Year 6 discussing their work in science, was in the complexity of their answers rather than the facts. The more able pupil gave full accounts and developed his answers well whilst the low attainer gave the simplest answer, often a single word or short phrase.

90. Results of the assessments of seven year olds in 2000 were well below the national average, although several children achieved the higher level. This year, the teacher's assessments show that none of the children have fully achieved the higher level and therefore results are not likely to rise much. Records show that most of the class were either at the early stages of the expected level 2 or just at level 1 when they started in September and that all have made at least an average rate of progress. Their work records a satisfactory level of understanding of topics such as medicines and drugs, how humans grow and change, types of food, and sorting and grouping. As the work is mostly completed on worksheets, differences between high and low attainment are minimal and mainly in the neatness of recording; this does not provide enough challenge for those who could achieve the higher level.

91. All of the pupils in the school have conducted some work on electricity and the science day during the inspection took this as its theme. A range of different resources gave pupils the opportunity to learn through experimentation and observation. The younger pupils enjoyed seeing a reaction from the experiments and the oldest ones were able to

apply what they knew to what they could see and to attempt an explanation. Generally they did this successfully, although the experiment with the electro-magnet caused most difficulty, as the majority of pupils saw how the magnet picked up metals but did not see the connection with the electric source. All of the classes worked with great enthusiasm and interest and their learning was enhanced by the number of adults, often parents, who encouraged them to explain as well as to observe.

92. Only two lessons were seen because of the focus on the science day. In Year 1, the pupils went outside to collect ideas about how and why things move. They were given time to collect information and the plenary was successfully used to find out what pupils had learned. All of them recorded by themselves what they had seen. The highest attainer produced a comprehensive list which showed competent spelling. Others produced readable lists or drew pictures. Pupils in Year 5 listened very attentively as the teacher told them about the workings of parts of the body, especially those connected with circulation. The introduction was very clear and the quiet enthusiasm of the teacher was passed on to the pupils. They contributed well to the discussions and also asked sensible and pertinent questions of the teacher when they were given the opportunity.

93. The work seen in pupils' books in Key Stage 2 illustrates that when pupils write about their work in their own words, they can do so well. A pupil in Year 4, for example, describing air resistance, wrote that 'a scrunched paper dropped to the floor because the surface is really small'. There are, however, some differences between classes. Some books have a wider range of forms of recording than others, including branching diagrams, graphs, lists and accounts. In some cases, pupils are rewriting information unnecessarily. In Year 3, some pupils find it difficult to write independently and as a result much of their written work is incomplete. They would benefit from alternative ways of being able to show what they have done.

94. Pupils' books are marked regularly but the comments are often brief and provide little guidance for future work. Computers are being used to support learning in science through the construction of charts and graphs as well as the use of information programs.

95. The co-ordinator is a newly-qualified teacher and has just taken on responsibility for the subject. She works with great enthusiasm and is well supported by the headteacher. There has been a detailed audit of the resources that are stored centrally and the intention is to review the appropriateness of teaching materials as new activities are introduced. The co-ordinator has not yet taken on the monitoring part of her role, but that is planned for the coming year when science becomes a major school priority.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Only two lessons were seen because of timetabling arrangements and this is not enough to make reliable judgements of teaching. Some work was seen in classroom displays and pupils' sketchbooks. Long-term planning is now based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance which should make sure that pupils have a balanced experience. The limited evidence available suggests that standards are typical for pupils' ages by the end of both key stages; this is an improvement on the previous inspection's judgement.

97. In both lessons seen, pupils worked quietly at their tasks. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' effort and concentration but also allowed quiet working talk to make the classrooms relaxed but purposeful.

98. Pupils in Year 6 had used their sketchbooks to prepare for painting a water colour of a local building. Good discussions at the start of the lesson reminded them of some simple techniques for painting in water colour such as filling in the background or using lighter washes first. All of the pupils had enlarged their sketches successfully using grids and were working with colour. Samples in folders showed some successful work of a good standard where pupils had used pastels to make their own portraits in the style of Picasso's 'Blue Period'. Year 5 pupils have also worked with water colour in reproducing some of the designs of birds and flowers on a silk shawl. Their tips on how to work successfully in this medium created an additional layer of interest on the display. Work from Year 3 on expanding and continuing sections of design and repeat patterns was completed with care and good effect.

99. Observational drawings of natural objects by Year 2 pupils have been used effectively to create paper patterns for a collage. The display links pupils' work with similar techniques used by people such as Rennie Macintosh and Laura Ashley so that pupils learn that collecting ideas from nature is useful for many purposes. Both Year 1 and Year 4 pupils had undertaken tasks of a similar nature using materials such as leaves, grasses and odd pieces of paper found in the playground. The way they used the materials showed progression. Year 1 arranged them simply to make a collage; Year 4 had to use the materials combined with symbols to create an abstract representation of their journey in collecting the materials. Some of them found the task very challenging and produced simple organisations, whilst others managed it more successfully, linking materials with symbols effectively.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. During the inspection no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and only one lesson in Key Stage 2, therefore no overall judgements are made about teaching. A range of other evidence was available from each key stage including teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils about their work, records, reports, work on display and other evidence. From the evidence available, appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to make sound and sometimes better progress in design and technology, and attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in both key stages.

101. Younger pupils have successfully been involved in designing and making simple wheeled vehicles and have used construction kits to make a range of models. Through these and other experiences, by the age of seven, pupils are beginning to compare and use different materials in designing and making tasks. They are developing appropriate skills in cutting, joining, making and finishing, and beginning to consider the way things work, materials used and purposes. Older pupils work with an increasing range of tools and materials and have appropriate opportunities to design and make different things. Work carried out by Year 6 pupils on designing and making slippers gave ample opportunity for all pupils to produce annotated designs with very clear action plans. They went on to make the slippers, some of good or even better quality, which involved measuring and cutting out accurately before sewing them together with very good guidance clearly given by the teacher, for example related to sewing and other skills. Evaluations were often detailed and astute with clear lessons learnt by the pupils, much of which was based on the successful completion of the task. In the lesson seen in Year 5, pupils carried out an investigation of bread products, taking account of a range of different characteristics. Very good attention was given to important health and safety issues, including prior consultations with parents about possible allergies and, immediately before

the tasks, rigorous attention to washing hands and other related issues. Pupils showed a good knowledge about different types of bread and brand names. They worked hard on the task of carrying out a product analysis with six different types of bread and successfully identified and made their own observations and judgements about textures, flavours, and appearances, and carefully recorded their findings in tabular form.

102. Through talking to pupils it is evident that they often enjoy design and technology activities, take pride in their achievements, show persistence in solving problems and have good attitudes towards the subject. Much of the evidence related to teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 showed them to be of good quality, with well organised and planned lessons, high expectations of pupils' progress in design and making skills, and challenging tasks being provided for their pupils. Good use is being made of national guidelines for design and technology and all the staff have taken part in detailed training related to the subject and show a positive interest and commitment. The co-ordinator is providing a strong, informed and sensitive lead. Resources are generally quite good, although more resources are needed in a few areas, for example to enhance learning in control aspects of the subject. Monitoring and evaluation, such as that of work samples and design diaries, is beginning to provide useful information to guide planning and provision for the subject, but it is appreciated that more remains to be done, especially related to the monitoring of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Standards in geography in both key stages are around average, maintaining the position reported in the previous inspection. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to understand features of their own locality and to identify the countries on a map of the United Kingdom. They are able to compare London and the small island of Struay and higher attaining pupils can distinguish human and physical features in a geographical environment.

104. By the age of eleven, pupils have learned to read maps, for instance using a key to identify features on a village map or using the points of the compass. Most pupils in Year 5 have a secure understanding of the water cycle, including rivers. They can design and carry out a survey into local traffic, adding well to their understanding of human impact on the local environment. In the oldest class they can use a range of sources such as reference books and compact discs to gather and communicate information, for instance about mountain ranges. The strength of this work includes the imaginative ways groups of pupils compile their topic books. Because different groups were studying different mountain ranges, they were able to learn from each other, taking genuine interest in their classmates' attractively written books. Throughout the school, progress in acquiring geographical skills, such as fieldwork and mapping skills, is uneven and unsatisfactory overall.

105. Too few geography lessons were seen during the inspection to make conclusive judgements about teaching. However, discussions with pupils and an examination of the work completed over the year indicate that teaching is satisfactory in both key stages, reflecting the position in the previous inspection. In spite of the increased length of the junior teaching day, time is still quite limited to cover the programme of study in sufficient depth. Consequently, there can be a long gap between studying units and the teaching does not always build effectively on previously learned geographical skills. A residential visit to Norfolk in Year 6 provides a rich social experience as well as opportunity to look at a contrasting environment, comparing a seaside tourist community with that in Hoddesdon.

Because planning for geography is quite brief, the needs of different pupils are not always recognised when all pupils are expected to complete the same work.

106. The subject has not been a priority for development since the previous inspection, although the introduction of an up-to-date scheme of work has improved the provision of local studies for the younger pupils. The national guidance has not yet been adapted to match the school's own situation and priorities. Assessment and monitoring remain relatively weak, although the co-ordinator provides informal support for planning which is monitored by the headteacher to ensure the appropriate areas are being covered. A useful start has been made in collecting samples of work.

HISTORY

107. In contrast to the last inspection, a good range of lessons was seen in this inspection from across the school and much other evidence was also available including pupils' work, teachers' planning, assessments, records and discussions with pupils about their work. On the basis of this evidence, appropriate opportunities are being provided to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject and attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of each key stage.

108. By the age of seven, pupils are able to talk about changes in their lives and those of their family and are beginning to show an awareness of how their lives are different from their parents and grandparents when they were young. Many can describe some differences in everyday life and objects from more distant times beyond their own, including past events, famous people and changes such as technology. Younger pupils in Year 1 used a painting of a seaside scene by Stanley Spencer as historical evidence and were able to identify what holidays and life was like then and now, and how things had changed. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson looking at famous people past and present, knew about Samuel Pepys' diaries, written at the time of the Great Fire of London, and most had an appropriate knowledge and understanding of some features of early Victorian life, such as conditions in hospitals. In their work on Florence Nightingale some were also able to compare the life of women then and now, and other important historical issues.

109. By the age of eleven, pupils know facts about people and events from the history of Britain. In a Year 4 lesson which focused on the Tudors, many pupils are aware, for example, of the differences between the rich and the poor, including the treatment of children, diet, clothing, education and other important aspects. Many pupils are also beginning to develop a concept of the distant past and can describe important features of past societies and periods such as the ancient Greeks, including their ways of life and beliefs, and as seen in a Year 5 lesson, aspects of their letters, language and writing. Increasingly, throughout the school pupils are using a range of sources of evidence to make deductions, such as artefacts, articles, photographs, eye-witness accounts and records. In a high quality Year 6 lesson, particularly effective use was made of census information from 1841 related to Hoddesdon and very good links made with the 2001 census just being carried out. Many pupils were able to offer relevant historical suggestions about differences between then and now, for example, related to family size, occupations and other issues, showing a good level of historical enquiry as pupils identified patterns and considered implications.

110. Most pupils have good attitudes towards history, enjoy many of the activities, behave well and work conscientiously. Many pupils talk readily about their work and co-operate effectively together on joint tasks when the opportunities arise. The quality of

teaching and learning is sound, overall, and on occasions it is good or better. In the best lessons, planning is detailed with clear learning objectives for the lesson, expectations are high, good quality direct teaching is evident, the teacher has a good knowledge of the subject, and imaginative use is made of a range of stimulating artefacts and historical materials. On a few occasions, the responses of pupils and the quality of their learning is more limited, where there is an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets which occupy rather than challenge pupils in their learning. Effective use is being made of national guidelines for the subject to support teachers' planning. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and has made a positive start. Resources are sound, overall, and several aspects are good, with effective use of a number of visitors and visitors, such as those associated with the Viking project in Year 3. As yet, monitoring and evaluation are underdeveloped.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

111. Too little teaching was observed to make overall judgements about its quality, but on the few occasions where pupils were seen working on computers, the programs they were using were appropriate to their age and to the topics they were covering in other subjects. This suggests that teachers are reasonably confident and are planning to give a balanced experience from the resources currently available.

112. By the end of their time in school, pupils are reaching satisfactory standards in what they do, maintaining what was observed at the last inspection. Overall, however, standards are below where they should be because there are gaps in the pupils' experiences. In discussions, some Year 6 pupils showed a good knowledge of the Internet and its possible uses through their use of computers at home, for example to e-mail their friends. Others are beginning to use them at school, although they have had limited time to do this. They know how to create graphs and what different types they can make using the computer, and are beginning to work on spreadsheets. They are able to describe how texts can be changed and enhanced. An area that pupils have not covered and are unable to talk about, is using the computer to control and monitor events.

113. To support their work in science, Year 5 pupils used an Encarta programme to listen to facts about the body. In the Year 4 class, pupils worked in pairs, with interest and application, on putting in the data they had collected from the intranet on weather in Europe and in Hoddesdon onto different graphs. Pupils in Year 3 created their own data bank on mini-beasts and were learning how to search the information using a particular field, for example how many creatures have six legs. In all of these activities, the pupils worked with interest and quiet application, sometimes individually or in pairs, sometimes supported by an adult, sometimes without help.

114. The work seen in Year 2 is of a satisfactory standard. Pupils have used computers to type in text, for art work and for simple graphs. Year 1 pupils have used an art program to make their own patterns and designs. These were successfully completed, some using spray and fill techniques.

115. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the headteacher to plan the development of the new ICT suite. Training is planned to ensure that teachers are confident to deliver the full ICT programme and to use the new facilities to the best advantage.

MUSIC

116. Because of the inspection timetable, too few music lessons were observed to reach a reliable judgement about standards or teaching. Planning indicates that the provision made in classes, for the required elements of the National Curriculum to be covered, is generally satisfactory. As reported in the previous inspection, some class teachers lack expertise and confidence in covering the subject. Good provision is made for interested pupils to learn the recorder or keyboard as an extra-curricular activity, reaching a good standard before they leave the school. For example, when the descant recorder group played in the infant assembly, they produced a rhythmical and melodic sound, including some advanced fingering. The voluntary help of a parent of a former pupil generously supports this provision, which includes opportunities for players to participate in local music festivals. Additional singing opportunities are provided in assembly time, when the quality of singing is usually appropriate for the age group.

117. Two lessons were observed, one at the start of each key stage. In both cases, although there were gaps, standards were around those expected for the year group and pupils made satisfactory progress during the lessons. Year 1 pupils clap and copy a simple four or six note rhythm. They sing a well-known song such as 'If You're Happy and You Know It', joining in enthusiastically with the stamping of feet. Some find it difficult to finish at the same time as the music and a few are reluctant to join in. By Year 3 they listen well to taped music, answering open-ended questions such as "What did you notice about the music?", perceptively. They sing in unison and are beginning to cope with a simple two-part round. Experience in using tuned percussion instruments is variable; for example, some pupils do not know where to find lower or higher notes.

118. Teaching is supported by a nationally produced scheme of work. Planning is generally quite brief, although teachers can approach the subject manager for informal advice. However, the subject has not been a recent focus for development and aspects such as assessment or increasing teachers' confidence have not significantly improved since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress they should.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Almost all pupils reach satisfactory standards for seven and eleven year olds in the aspects of the subject seen during the inspection. In some areas of physical education, including swimming and sporting activities, achievement is good because a significant number of pupils exceed expectations. Good achievement is markedly influenced by the very good provision of extra-curricular activities in sport and the use of the school's own swimming pool during the summer months. This broadly maintains the position reported in the previous inspection and pupils continue to make at least sound progress in both key stages.

120. By the age of seven most pupils have learned to control a ball with their hands or feet. For example, most can dribble in a straight line and round a corner, with some higher attaining pupils able to do this consistently and at a faster speed. They are beginning to learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the need to warm up before vigorous activity.

121. By the age of nine, pupils throw and catch a ball with satisfactory care, although a minority can get over-excited and their skills suffer. They are, however, increasingly able to work in a team. In athletics activities, pupils learn a good range of running, jumping and throwing skills, supported by very clear teaching. A very popular after-school athletics club, run voluntarily by staff, prepares pupils well for a local tournament. By the age of eleven

virtually all pupils can swim at least 25 metres, with many able to demonstrate good personal survival skills. A residential visit provides the oldest pupils with good opportunity for adventurous outdoor activities, where teamwork is promoted further.

122. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic about physical education, as demonstrated by the attendance for voluntary clubs. Boys and girls work well together, for example when learning football skills after school. Pupils work with commitment and energy in lessons, although occasionally the pace of the lesson is too slow and some pupils lose concentration.

123. Teaching is satisfactory, as it was in the previous inspection. Teachers have a sharp focus on the specific skills they are going to cover and activities are usually chosen very well to support the lesson objectives. Staff place good emphasis on safety, for example checking that pupils are appropriately dressed, that jewellery has been removed and ensuring an appropriate warm-up at the start of the lesson. Quite frequently, the lesson is too slow when the children await their turn for too long or minor misbehaviour has to be settled, and valuable time is lost. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate to each other what they can do, although these do not always include opportunity for them to evaluate and talk about the qualities shown by others and so improve their own performance.

124. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by extra-curricular activities, including competitive sports. Outside agencies such as Tottenham Hotspur football club are involved, leading pupils to gain some insight into a good range of sporting activities. Teachers' planning is monitored by the headteacher, but there has been insufficient time for the subject manager to monitor teaching. Assessment is underdeveloped, although class teaching benefits from the use of national guidance in planning lessons and covering the required elements of the National Curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards which are in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and this represents an improvement since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 1. Substantial attention has been given to improving religious education and all the issues raised in the previous report have been fully addressed. As a direct result of the many improvements in provision, pupils across the school are now making good progress in the subject.

126. By the age of seven, most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of festivals and celebrations. They have listened and studied events in the life of Jesus. Many are beginning to develop an understanding of story telling, and exploring appropriately different ways in which stories are told and the meanings they convey, such as those told by Jesus. By the age of eleven, pupils have studied aspects of each of the main world religions and have a sound knowledge and understanding of, for example, Islam and Sikhism, including teachings, beliefs, festivals and sacred books. During the inspection, pupils in a Year 3 class, having looked at rules affecting their own lives, studied carefully the five pillars of wisdom in Islam and details relating to Ramadan and the fourth pillar of fasting. Elsewhere in several classes and at different levels, pupils considered carefully and thoughtfully what Christians and they themselves believe and thought about God. From their discussions and writing, it is evident that many pupils are gaining valuable insights into a range of customs, practices and beliefs. Their writing, presentations, and contributions showed empathy and understanding and a real interest in a culture and set of

beliefs different from their own. Pupils also explored very effectively and in some detail their own ideas about God, showing a clear development by pupils of different ages in classes throughout the school. In Year 6 they went on to consider effectively other aspects of the significance of Christian, Buddhist and Hindu beliefs, for members of their respective communities.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is now good in both key stages, overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some teaching and learning seen in both key stages was of very good quality. In the best lessons, expectations are high, the teacher has a good knowledge of the subject, the pace is brisk and much is achieved in a single lesson. Such lessons are well thought through, issues are handled with skill and understanding by the teacher and a wide range of effective strategies are employed to stimulate interest and close involvement by each of the pupils in the class. Pupils frequently work hard, have at least good attitudes and behaviour towards the subject, and show a real interest in many of the activities, including some thought-provoking discussions. They evidently enjoy many aspects of the work including visits and the numerous valuable visitors who significantly enrich the curriculum.

128. The quality of provision has improved considerably since the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 1. All classes now have regular weekly lessons in the subject and the quality of planning has been improved at all levels, and links very closely with the locally agreed syllabus and schemes. The new co-ordinator for the subject has a detailed knowledge and background in the subject and is already providing a strong and clear lead in developments, actively supported by the headteacher and all the staff. Action plans are informed and well thought through and a clear direction is being provided. Resources have been reviewed and new items added in relation to curriculum, teaching and learning needs. Good use is often made of artefacts to stimulate and enhance the quality of teaching and learning and more are being added as need and availability arise. Whilst some good practices are being developed in relation to monitoring and evaluation, it is recognised by the school that some aspects require further development.