

# INSPECTION REPORT

**VAUGHAN NURSERY, FIRST  
AND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

West Harrow

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102223

Headteacher: Mrs S Carnan

Reporting inspector: Dr Mike Williams  
19388

Dates of inspection: 20 – 24 March 2000

Inspection number: 218233

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery, First and Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vaughan Road West Harrow Middlesex
Postcode:	HA1 4EL
Telephone number:	0181 427 7222
Fax number:	0181 427 8272
Appropriate authority:	Vaughan School Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr D Rogers
Date of previous inspection:	29 April – 2 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mike Williams	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements
		Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Barry Wood	Lay inspector	N/A	What sort of school is it? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils or students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			Efficiency
Angela Fraser	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
		Information technology	
Jacqueline Cousins	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils or students taught?
Lily Evans	Team inspector	Geography	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
		History	
		French	
		Special educational needs	

Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	Design and technology	Assessment
		Music	
Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	Under –fives	N/A
		English as an additional language	
Michael Kenton	Team inspector	Art	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education
		Physical education	
		Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7 - 10</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11 - 15</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15 - 17</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17 - 20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20 - 21</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21 - 22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22 - 25</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE</b>	<b>26 - 27</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>28 - 31</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>32 - 49</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Vaughan School is a large first and middle school, incorporating a nursery class, in the London Borough of Harrow. The school currently has 539 pupils on roll and serves a multi-ethnic community. Many of its pupils are from families where English is spoken as an additional language, some being recently arrived refugees from different parts of the world. While the proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals is below the national average, the proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is slightly higher than the national average. Rather more children than at the time of the last inspection begin school with literacy and numeracy skills that are lower than those found in most schools. The majority of pupils come from professional families living in owner-occupied houses.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Vaughan is a good school in which the vast majority of pupils make good progress in all aspects of their education. Effective teaching enables pupils, by age 12, to reach high academic standards in a number of subject areas, including English. The headteacher and school's senior managers work well together and are supported by a highly committed team of staff. A very effective partnership with parents has been established. The school's provision is well matched to the needs of all pupils except for a small number of lower-attaining pupils whose progress is hindered by shortcomings in teachers' planning. The school is particularly good at giving pupils a sense of security and well-being. They are made to feel valued and special within the school community. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- By Year 7, most pupils achieve good standards in English, especially reading, and in science, French, information technology, art and religious education;
- the higher-attaining pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school;
- teaching is very effective in the nursery and reception classes and good in the middle-school;
- the school is well led and efficiently and effectively managed;
- high standards of commitment and concern for the pupils' personal development are provided;
- the partnership between the school and parents is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The school's strategies for ensuring that pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are adequately and consistently provided for in the school's and teachers' plans;
- rates of pupils' attendance at school and levels of punctuality generally;
- the attitudes of a small number of pupils whose behaviour occasionally falls below the standards expected in the school.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in April 1996. Since then, the school has made significant progress. Educational standards have risen year-on-year. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in English are well above those found in most schools. Unlike 1996, when the higher-attaining pupils were found to be under-achieving, they now consistently achieve above nationally expected levels. Substantially improved standards of teaching have helped secure this progress. Subject provision, too, has been strengthened through more rigorous planning and monitoring procedures. Extensive improvements have been made to the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress which are impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation are now strong features in the school's development planning and its assessment of effectiveness. Effective leadership and management in the school continue to underpin the school's successful progress and provide a central element in the school's capacity to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	A	A
Mathematics	D	C	C	D
Science	E	C	C	C

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

In the 1999 national tests, standards in English were well above the national average, both in the proportions of pupils reaching the national standard for 11 year olds, and those exceeding it. In mathematics and science, the school's results were in line with the national average for pupils reaching the national standard and those exceeding it. However, compared with schools of similar background, the results in mathematics were below average. Since 1996, standards overall have risen steadily. In English, they have risen sharply, keeping well ahead of rates of improvement nationally. While the proportions of pupils achieving higher attainment levels have also improved steadily over the same period, the progress made by a minority of pupils who entered the school with low attainment levels has not kept pace with this upward trend. The standards they achieve are not high enough. Since 1998, the school has successfully met its overall achievement targets set in conjunction with the local authority.

Inspection findings generally confirm this picture. The majority of pupils achieve well and make good progress by age 12. Only a small number do not. Standards in English, science, information technology, art, French and religious education are all above nationally expected levels overall. In mathematics, and the remaining subjects, standards match nationally expected levels. The higher-attaining pupils do consistently well. By age 5, most children reach or exceed the recommended learning targets for their age. In recent years, this progress has been maintained in Key Stage 1, as indicated in the school's above average results in the national tests. Standards are not quite so high this year due to the unusually large proportion of pupils with specific learning needs, including language needs. In the middle-school, the majority of pupils again make good progress and reach standards of attainment that match their capabilities. Many achieve high standards for their age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils, including the early years children, enjoy school and respond positively in lessons. A few find it more difficult to concentrate on their work and respond appropriately, especially in the first school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good, though on occasions there are a small number of pupils whose behaviour falls below the standards expected, both in lessons and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils accept responsibility readily. Relationships between pupils are usually good. Occasionally, they are spoilt by a few pupils who do not pay enough attention to other people's values and feelings.
Attendance	Though improving, attendance is unsatisfactory compared to the national average. The lack of punctuality at the start of the school day is excessive.



Most pupils, though high spirited, are courteous and well-behaved. They are well-motivated, work hard and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes and a well-developed sense of responsibility towards the school as a community. There is occasional insensitivity on the part of a small minority of pupils towards the values and feelings of others. Two pupils have been excluded from the school during the last year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-12 years
Lessons seen overall: 81	Very good	Satisfactory	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Thirty per cent of the lessons observed were very good or better; 36 per cent of lessons were good and 33 per cent were sound. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Most teaching is well planned and provides pupils with a wide range of stimulating and challenging opportunities to learn and make good progress. This is particularly evident in the early years classes, and in many middle-school lessons, where the emphasis on ensuring that the pupils acquire good learning skills helps them to achieve to their capabilities. This is less evident in the first school where there is insufficient focus on teaching pupils to listen carefully and to concentrate. Literacy and numeracy, and basic skills generally, are effectively taught throughout the school. A less effective aspect of the teaching, in a few classes, is the failure to cater adequately for the needs of pupils with specific learning needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The early years' curriculum provides a very good range of learning opportunities. For the rest of the school, it is sound. The curriculum is well supported by visits and other sporting and cultural activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is variable in quality. Much of it is good, especially for the younger children and first school pupils. For a few of the older pupils, the provision is not well enough planned to enable them to make consistent progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is good when pupils are directly supported by additional classroom help and where teachers' planning is good. It is less effective when such support is not available and teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of those pupils with particular language needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good for pupils' cultural development and good for their spiritual, moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection, improving attendance, promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are all very good.

The curriculum offers a high quality range of opportunities and experiences for the under-five children. For first and middle pupils, it is carefully planned and enables pupils to acquire a sound range of knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum. In a number of areas, the provision is good; in reading, science, mathematics and information technology, for example. Effective implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has added to the quality of the curriculum and helped to raise standards in basic skills. The quality of the school's provision is also enriched by a stimulating range of additional activities, events, visits and other opportunities for pupils to extend their interests and learning. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs,

and those with English as an additional language, is appropriate but not consistently so. Much of the time, it is good. The majority of pupils are well supported in lessons by additional or specialist staff and good teaching. When direct support is not available and when the teaching falls short of this standard, the provision for those pupils still needing additional help in their learning is less effective. Pupils are well cared for. The school works very effectively with parents and the community.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership in the school is clear and decisive and based on highly effective teamwork. Subject and other co-ordinators are good at managing and directing their areas of responsibility. Management of the provision for English as an additional language is less effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are becoming increasingly involved in the work of the school and have taken steps to strengthen their monitoring role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good. Achievement of the school's targets, priorities and aims is assiduously monitored and audited in most key areas of provision.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally well used. Occasional inefficiency occurs in the use of the funds for pupils with English as an additional language.

The headteacher is a strong leader with a clear vision of how to raise standards. Most aspects of the school are well led and managed by senior staff and co-ordinators. The provision for English as an additional language is an exception. Lines of responsibility and school policy in this area are not sufficiently clarified. Teamwork, and a commitment to improvement, are strengths of the school. Governors play an increasing part in this endeavour. The school is particularly good at evaluating its own performance and well on the way to making appropriate use of its findings to promote further improvement. Its aims are effectively carried out in practice. The school applies the principles of best value well.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The good quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities and visits and the valuing of different cultures.</li> <li>• The way that the school is led and the value placed on parents by the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work pupils are expected to do at home.</li> <li>• The behaviour of a small minority of children.</li> <li>• The local High School's links with the school.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all the positive points made by parents. On the points for improvement, the school has a homework policy and pupils keep homework folders. Unanimity of view about what constitutes an appropriate amount of homework for pupils is unlikely to be achieved. The school does its best to act in everyone's best interest.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In the 1996 inspection report, standards of attainment overall in the school were judged to be satisfactory. But it was not a consistent picture. While many of the younger pupils reached higher levels of attainment in English, standards in science at Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieved at levels that corresponded to those found in the rest of the school and made good progress. In contrast, pupils' capable of higher attainment, especially amongst the older pupils, generally underachieved. National test results for 1996 endorsed this picture of a school achieving at broadly average standards. The results also strongly confirmed the inspection finding that standards amongst the higher-attaining pupils were not high enough.
2. Considerable progress has been made since then. National test results, and teacher assessments for 1999, show a school achieving:
  - above national average standards of attainment in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 1, and in English at Key Stage 2;
  - average standards in all other test/assessments, apart from in mathematics at Key Stage 2, where standards in 1999 were below those found in similar schools (but in line with standards nationally), and in science at Key Stage 1, where overall attainment was falling below the national average;
  - well above average in the proportion of pupils at Key Stage 1 exceeding the national standard in mathematics, and above average for pupils exceeding this standard in reading, writing and science;
  - well above average in the proportion of pupils at Key Stage 2 exceeding the national standard in English, and above average for pupils exceeding this standard in science.
3. Looked at year-on-year, the school's attainment in the national tests has been firmly upwards with a sharp improvement in standards in English at Key Stage 2 in 1999. At both key stages, the rate of improvement has more than kept pace with the national trend since 1996. Quite the most striking improvement since the last inspection has been the standards achieved by the higher-attaining pupils. The underachievement that existed in 1996 has gone. The school is now a high achiever in this respect.
4. Current inspection findings confirm this general outline. By the time they leave the school in Year 7, standards for the majority of pupils match, or exceed, the standards expected nationally and for schools of similar background. Attainment in English, science, information technology, French, art and religious education is above nationally expected levels by age 12. From the nursery onwards, there is a clear pattern of improved educational performance rooted in good quality teaching and provision. Although many pupils enter the school with below average standards of attainment, most leave the school with average, or above, levels of attainment. They make good, and some very good progress, right across the curriculum.
5. But this is not quite the complete picture. While a significant proportion of the pupils who enter the school with low levels of spoken and written language, and other specific learning needs, make good progress, there are a small number who do not. They include pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, but not exclusively so. This small group of pupils generally make slow progress. By Years 6 and 7 they have fallen a long way behind the nationally expected standards for their age, particularly in their acquisition of basic skills. That they are capable of making sound progress is indicated by the standards they achieve when they receive targeted help from support staff. When this additional support is not available, the quality of their learning is less consistent, especially where the teacher's planning is not sufficiently well-targeted to meet their needs. At present, the school does not have adequate strategies for supporting teachers in this respect. In contrast, the strategies developed since 1996 to ensure that the needs of the higher-attaining pupils are appropriately and consistently met have proved highly effective.

6. The younger children make good progress when they arrive in the school. In most years, the majority of children starting school do so from a lower than average attainment base, many with significant language deficiencies. By age five, most children achieve, and a sizeable minority exceeds, the nationally recommended standards for children of this age. Many read well and are fluent users of language. Others, often those with specific language needs, are well on their way. Most children use their developing language skills to make good progress with number work and with other areas of early learning. Concentration on providing these children with good attitudes to learning, the skills and motivation to listen and the ability to focus on their work and to get on by themselves, contribute significantly to the good progress they make. High quality teaching, based on clear and consistently applied strategies for supporting the full range of the children's needs and prior attainments, are key factors behind this success.
7. At Key Stage 1, inspection findings show that while the majority of pupils achieve in line with national standards in English, mathematics and science, by age 7, the number not reaching this level is larger than found in most schools. This finding does not match the school's results in the 1999 national tests and assessments in reading and writing, but is not vastly different from the school's overall performance in 1997 and 1998 and its performance in science in 1999. Explanation lies in the make-up of the current Year 2 cohort. Nearly half of the pupils have specific learning needs, many of them language needs. Five pupils are recent arrivals in the school, four of whom are on the school's special needs register. Others have had no pre-school education. There is little chance, therefore, that enough of these pupils could reach the national standard by the end Year 2 to provide the school with a repeat of last year's national assessment performance. That the school has managed to match the Key Stage 1 national average in reading for the last three years testifies to the sound progress pupils make in such a key aspect of their learning.
8. In spite of this situation, the majority of pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1. Those entering Year 1 with well-developed language skills soon read fluently and with expression, and write simple sentences with accurate spelling and punctuation. By Year 2, they are good at mental arithmetic and know how to approach and conduct simple scientific experiments, with help from the teacher. In contrast, there are a significant number of pupils in Year 2 who are still struggling to acquire the necessary basic skills to enable them to make appropriate progress. Many of their difficulties stem from their language needs. This is evident in their reading, number work and science. In mathematics, they make better progress where the work is less conceptually demanding and more visual and practical. They know their shapes and can construct a block graph but tend to find the language and vocabulary of explaining the strategies used in mental calculations beyond their linguistic capabilities at this stage. It is a similar story in science where these pupils need more time in using key scientific words. Attention to ensuring that pupils learn how to listen carefully and to focus meaningfully on their work is not as pronounced, or effective, as it is in the early years' classes. This limits the achievements of many of the pupils, especially the boys.
9. At Key Stage 2 and Year 7, inspection findings show standards in literacy and numeracy to have improved considerably since 1996. Standards match those expected nationally in English and exceed them in Year 7. They also match nationally expected levels in mathematics and science in Year 6, with higher achievement in science in Year 7. This is a significant improvement in science at Key Stage 2, where standards in 1996 were judged to be unsatisfactory. High standards in reading are a consistent strength of pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Most pupils have good phonic skills, read a wide range of texts and enjoy reading. They discuss what they read, expressing their own opinions about the ideas contained in the texts. Their writing skills are well developed and used effectively across other areas of the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils continue to develop strong number skills. Most know their tables, giving them a good base for improving their problem-solving skills. They achieve well in all aspects of mathematics and apply their knowledge and skills well. They compile spreadsheets, use graphs for recording information in science and know how to prepare a statistically based study of weather patterns in different parts of the world. In science, most pupils continue to make good progress in most aspects of the subject. Where progress is not quite so marked is in investigative work and problem-solving. These are the areas that most tax the limited language skills of the minority of pupils, with the result that they begin to fall behind.

10. Compared with the findings of the last inspection, improved standards are also to be found in a number of other subject areas. Information technology, in particular, has benefited from a concerted drive to improve provision and resources. In Key Stage 1, pupils employ their computing skills to help them with an art programme. The lower-attaining pupils gain confidence in their spelling using the computer to correct spellings with the help of adults. By Year 7, pupils are adept at word-processing their work and able to design a format for a survey. Standards in information technology are above nationally expected levels at Key Stage 2 and Year 7.
11. Improvements in the quality of pupils' art are extensively visible around the school, adding significantly to the creative quality of the environment. Pupils throughout the school achieve above average standards in art and by Year 7 make good progress. Standards in religious education, in Year 7, have also improved. The school makes very good use of its own cultural diversity to promote high standards in pupils' knowledge of other faiths and religious practices. The effect on pupils' growing appreciation, and articulation, of complex moral issues is well demonstrated in class discussions organised for this purpose.
12. In all other subjects, pupils in each key stage, make satisfactory progress overall, including many of the pupils with specific learning needs. Since 1996, the time available for teaching many of these subjects has been reduced to make way for the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. This has not detracted from the standards achieved. Indeed, as a result of much skilful teaching and creative planning, many pupils achieve good standards in these subjects. For example, the standard of work in the Year 7 studies of the Napoleonic Wars is rich in historical learning, supported and enhanced by high quality literacy skills. Work in geography and music both display similar characteristics. Pupils have acquired the necessary skills to research information for themselves and to apply it effectively. Suitably motivated and keen to learn, they achieve standards that prepare most of them very well for the next stage in their education.
13. A central factor in the school's improved educational performance since the inspection of 1996 has been the improved quality of teaching and learning. All but a small minority of pupils achieve well, within a school community and environment that is committed to high achievement. Good action planning since the inspection findings of 1996 has enabled the school to identify its goals and to pursue these with persistent rigour and purpose. The key standards and achievement issues on that occasion, in respect of science at Key Stage 2 and higher-attainers generally, have been successfully tackled.
14. The school sets overall achievement targets in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in relation to national test performance. These targets have been comfortably achieved in the two years since 1998. The school considers its targets carefully in the light of existing information about pupils' progress, and the average of the school's results since 1996. In view of the school's performance in 1998 and 1999, this provides quite generous targets to be achieved. Maintaining, rather than improving, current performance will be sufficient to achieve the longer-term targets. This is not in keeping with the school's commitment to raise standards even further.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. In the 1996 inspection report, pupils' attitudes overall were judged to be sound and their behaviour and personal development to be good. Attitudes were outstanding in the nursery and Year 7 but pupils' attitudes and behaviour were less good in lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory. Instances of challenging behaviour by a minority of pupils, usually boys, were reported. The picture is still much the same. Improved teaching has removed the cause of some of this variability but not all of it. Instances of unsettled behaviour and inadequate levels of concentration are still evident in a few classes.
16. The school continues to teach significant numbers of pupils with special needs and pupils who arrive in the school with little spoken or written English, some with emotional problems. Frustration can, and does, lead to some disruptive behaviour but this is not the norm. Effective teaching in lessons, and staff vigilance around the school, ensure that most pupils' attitudes and behaviour continue to be positive features of their personal development. The

vast majority of parents (86 per cent), in their questionnaire responses, indicate that pupils' behaviour is good.

17. Children in the nursery and reception classes display very good attitudes towards their work. They are interested and enjoy all activities, concentrate and persevere with tasks, and respond positively within a language-rich environment. There are few instances of poor behaviour. Children are co-operative, well-behaved and aware of the need to respect the routines and environment of the classroom. Their personal development is very good as they become increasingly confident and independent.
18. The picture is not quite as good in the first school. The teaching does not give quite as much emphasis to high expectations of pupil behaviour as in other parts of the school. As a result, pupils are easily distracted by the overspill of noise and movement in this part of the building. Attitudes, as well as behaviour, are occasionally unsatisfactory. At the start of the afternoon, it frequently takes many of the pupils, mainly boys, several minutes to settle down and pay attention. This is an unsatisfactory aspect of what is otherwise sound teaching. The above average ability groups of pupils are capable of some independent work, but the below average pupils need fairly constant supervision if they are to get on with their work.
19. As pupils progress through the middle-school, their attitudes and behaviour show real improvement, so that by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 7, the attitudes of the majority of pupils are good. They develop improved motivation and they listen and concentrate effectively. They can focus on tasks for long periods of time as a whole class, or when they are required to work by themselves.
20. Many pupils are lively and full of energy and this comes to the fore in the playground where the level of activity is usually intense. In the reception to Year 3 playground, pupils are generally well behaved but can occasionally let things get out of hand. In the middle-school playground pupils are preoccupied with sport and activities. There is some inappropriate language from a minority of pupils which the school tries to eliminate. Since the last inspection, the school has occasionally needed to use exclusions as a deterrent to poor behaviour (two in the last year).
21. Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. Most pupils develop confidence and good self-esteem. Pupils are generally helpful and responsible. They take the tasks they are given in class and around the school seriously. They help the school to be a clean and tidy community, free from litter and graffiti. The school council has representatives for each year group and discusses real issues, amongst which bullying and swearing have been debated and recommendations for action made. Many of the older pupils become increasingly involved in the school's outside activities, particularly sport, where the school enjoys considerable success. Pupils are proud to share their successes within the whole-school community in assembly.
22. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and there is much trust and empathy. Pupils are polite and usually well-mannered. In general, they respect each other's values and beliefs and there are no racist tensions. However, the everyday relationships between pupils could be improved. Boys and girls do not always play naturally together and there is some lack of respect for each other. The school is very vigilant towards all aspects of inter-personal conflict and is mindful that a minority of pupils can occasionally have difficulty in controlling their tempers and behaviour. Individual incidences are effectively corrected but the school needs to consider how it could be more pro-active in developing a slightly calmer and more reflective environment around the school.
23. Despite a marked improvement this year, the attendance levels at the school have declined since the last inspection and are unsatisfactory when compared with the national average. During the present year, the nursery, and five other classes, have shown higher than average levels of attendance and approximately one in ten pupils have exemplary levels of attendance. Although the school provides clear and persistent guidance for parents relating to their responsibilities regarding attendance, the incidence of holidays taken during the school term is a significant aspect of authorised absence. Unauthorised absence has increased to a high level. There are no indications of any truancy. Many pupils find it difficult to come to school on time. As a result, there is an irregular start to the school day. Punctuality throughout the rest of the day is good. The standards of education achieved by pupils are adversely affected in those classes where there is a coincidence of poor attendance, high unauthorised absence, poor

punctuality and erratic behaviour. The school is now receiving an increasing level of very good support from the educational social worker in order to deal with this issue.

24. Registers are completed in a statutory manner following clear guidelines. The registration period is carried out courteously and efficiently and provides a calm start to morning and afternoon sessions. The school office analyses its registers weekly to produce meaningful and systematic information about attendance and punctuality.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

25. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in the nursery and reception, good in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 and sound in Key Stage 1.
26. Of the lessons observed during the inspection:
  - ninety-nine per cent were sound or better, with only one lesson being unsatisfactory;
  - about one third were satisfactory;
  - just over one-third were good and just under one third were very good or better; three were excellent;
  - the very good and excellent teaching was primarily located in the early years and middle school classes.
27. Taken overall, teaching is very good in French; good in English, mathematics, science, art, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education, and sound in geography and physical education. With few exceptions, this matches the quality of pupils' learning across these subjects. In science in Key Stage 1 and in information technology and music in Year 7, there is a slight variation. Teaching in science at Key Stage 1 is good whereas pupils' learning is sound. In Year 7, teaching in information technology and music is very good whereas learning overall is good.
28. This represents a significant improvement in the overall standards of teaching since the last inspection. Although teaching was judged to be satisfactory on that occasion, 20 per cent of lessons were deemed unsatisfactory and only one third of the lessons seen were good or better, compared to two-thirds now. Good procedures, based on clear guidance provided through a teaching and learning policy, have been implemented for monitoring the quality of teaching. These are effectively used to improve performance through well-targeted professional development opportunities.
29. Teaching is consistently very good for children in the nursery and reception classes. The management of pupils is very good and is a strength of the provision. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of young children's learning is very effective, as is their teaching of basic skills. They have high expectations of the children. The large proportions of good and very good teaching are primarily responsible for the good progress made by the nursery and reception pupils.
30. In the first and middle-schools, teachers' subject knowledge is generally sound and sometimes good. For example, in information technology, teachers apply their knowledge well to develop good levels of understanding on the use of desktop publishing and the production of web-sites for the Internet. Occasionally, in Year 7, teachers are put under pressure by the challenge of some of the subjects they teach; for example, in their teaching of algebra. When this happens rates of pupils' progress are slowed and their achievement is more limited, especially amongst the lower-attaining pupils. On the whole, however, such shortcomings are effectively overcome by good use and deployment of staff specialisms.
31. Basic skills are taught well in most literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers have thoughtfully developed skills in capturing pupils' attention and creating well-structured lessons that constantly reinforce the learning objectives through a range of activities. A strength is the sharing of learning objectives with pupils and the discussion of reasons for them. As a result, pupils make good progress. In the main, literacy skills are well taught across different subjects. For example, a Year 5 teacher included plans for developing pupils' listening, speaking and writing skills in the learning intentions for a geography lesson on weather

research. Good links are made with mathematics; for instance, in science and design technology lessons where pupils use tools and equipment to measure accurately. In some classes, however, the teaching of basic skills is more patchy and opportunities to develop these are missed.

32. Overall, teachers plan soundly. This was an area of weakness in the 1996 inspection. Practice has improved and planning is now more consistently effective. However, there is evidence that it is still not consistent enough. Where teaching is excellent or very good, short-term planning is a real strength. Learning objectives, including those identified in the individual learning plans for pupils with special educational needs, are meticulously prepared and matched to the needs of the different groups of pupils. Good achievement and progress result. Well-developed practices for assessing pupils' achievements are used to help plan future lessons.
33. Greater consistency in planning has been helped by the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers have begun to use the format of the literacy and numeracy hours to devise well-structured lessons across the curriculum. At the start of lessons, teachers make their objectives clear to the pupils and, where the quality of teaching is good, these objectives are referred to throughout the lesson, ensuring that pupils remain focused on the purpose of their work and make good progress. This is particularly evident in information and control technology lessons, where clear and focused planning, alongside well-structured activities, ensures that pupils extend their skills successfully. A few lessons are less well structured and the pupils' independent work is insufficiently related to the introduction and plenary sessions to ensure pupils reinforce their learning effectively. Occasionally, too, the work is not well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 1, the provision of two activities in the main part of the lesson did not provide for lower-attaining pupils. As a result, they did not develop strategies that would enable them to become independent learners. A similar weakness was observed in the teaching of a mathematics lesson with older pupils. Though well planned for the majority of pupils, for the lower-attaining group, which contained a significant number of pupils for whom English is an additional language, the lesson was not well enough prepared to ensure these few pupils made appropriate progress.
34. Teachers successfully use a range of teaching methods including individual, group and whole-class teaching. These are generally used appropriately and independent and group activities often reinforce the teaching points made in the introductory part of the lesson. For example, in a successful lesson for a group of under-five children, the teacher assessed their existing knowledge and understanding of the world by an effective question and answer session, incorporating a good level of scientific vocabulary. This ensured that the children developed their knowledge and this was consolidated successfully in the plenary session. Sometimes teachers model activities well, for instance, when a teacher carefully modelled writing on the board so that pupils knew how they were expected to express a Greek myth in the past tense. Opportunities are sometimes missed within lessons to encourage pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills by reporting back on the results of their work.
35. In the first school, in particular, quite a number of pupils have difficulty in concentrating during the whole-class introductions, and in group work, unless adults supervise them. Insufficient regard is paid to this in teachers' planning. Pupils are not sufficiently taught how to listen and to focus their attention on the task in hand. The unsettled behaviour that results is adversely affecting the rate of learning for the average and lower-attaining, many of whom are pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language.
36. Teachers' use of time and resources is good. In a numeracy lesson resources were used well when pupils worked with number fans to develop their number skills. Teaching assistants are deployed well and work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive sound support.
37. Most teachers question well in order to assess pupils' understanding. More experienced teachers adjust their lessons appropriately where they recognise topics have been insufficiently understood. The quality of marking is variable and does not consistently enable pupils to understand their strengths and weaknesses. It is often an acknowledgement of work done and does not sufficiently explain to pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils are informed



about their own learning through effective use of personal targets. The academic and personal targets set in the school's reports to parents support parents' understanding of their children's strengths and weaknesses. The provision of homework is satisfactory and supports the work pupils do in lessons. The home school reading records in Key Stage 1 are taken home regularly and encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning. However, some parents do not regularly assist pupils with their reading.

38. Overall, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but could be better. All pupils with special needs are socially integrated into the school, with some pupils having short periods of withdrawal from lessons in order to support their particular needs. Most of the planning for pupils with special educational needs is effective but not all of it. In a few lessons seen the work is not sufficiently well matched to their needs. A number of pupils in the middle school have learning targets that are not being achieved because the targets set represent unmanageable steps for pupils. Although recently introduced, monitoring records are not yet used consistently enough by all teachers. When learning assistants are providing support, the records are kept up-to-date, and they look for, and record, evidence of progress towards the learning targets within lessons. The high numbers of pupils on the school's special educational needs register leads to additional pressures on teachers. In the main, they respond to these pressures well.
39. It is a similar picture with the teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Overall, the teaching is of satisfactory standard. However, there are significant variations in the quality of teaching across the different classes. In the most successful lessons, teachers are effective in enhancing the progress of these pupils through good lesson planning and effective organisation of their learning. When additional support is also available, this includes group activities focusing on the extra help on hand. On the other hand, when there is no such help on hand, not all teachers possess the skills or strategies to plan and implement lessons of high enough quality to ensure the appropriate progress of these pupils.

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

40. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, currently under review. Overall, the school's curriculum offers sound opportunities for learning for the wide range of pupils it serves. In certain areas, it offers very good opportunities:
- under-fives and art.
41. In others, it offers good opportunities:
- in reading, science, music and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and Year 7;
  - in geography, information and communication technology and history at all three key stages;
  - in physical education at Key Stage 2;
  - in religious education and French in Year 7.
42. Making the curriculum relevant for the full range of cultural diversity, and pupils' personal needs, within the school is an enormous challenge to which the school responds with considerable success. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have taken place. The under-fives provision is now very good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. There is improved provision for art, information technology, English, mathematics, science and design technology, all of which are yielding better standards. The quality of curriculum display is high in many areas of the school, conveying meaningful links between subjects. Art contributes very effectively to the standards pupils reach in other subjects.
43. The previous inspection report found the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, to be a strength of the school. This is not the finding of the recent inspection. While the provision overall for these pupils is satisfactory, it is not good enough to secure their adequate progress consistently through the

school. For the majority of pupils, however, the provision is appropriate and often good. In Year 7, it is consistently good.

44. The school has been successful in its aim to maintain a broad curriculum through the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The implementation of the literacy strategy is effective in raising standards, particularly in reading. The provision for developing language in the under-fives curriculum is impressive in its richness. The implementation of the numeracy strategy is sound and at an earlier stage of development. The use of information technology is beginning to make an effective impact on the standards pupils reach in literacy and numeracy and is good in all three key stages. Mathematical skills improve through the use of spreadsheets and LOGO. Language skills are extending through the production of journalistic articles for the school web-site and writing for a range of purposes. In Key Stage 1, the preparation for language work on computers does not always meet the range of needs within the class.
45. The school's programme for personal and social education is comprehensive, contributing significantly to the well-being of pupils. Careful planning offers a number of opportunities to consider important aspects of health, family life and the environment, including effective sex and drugs' education. Parents welcomed their involvement in drugs' education before the policy was written. The school's further plans to link personal, health and social education to the curriculum for religious education promise further coherence in provision.
46. The length of the school day now meets recommended guidelines for Key Stage 2. The school is aware that the time is slightly less than the recommended minimum for Key Stage 3 and has a number of recommendations for change in the coming year. The balance of time allocated to subjects reflects the changes required for implementing the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The provision for those subjects allocated reductions in time, notably history and geography, continues to be effective as a result of careful cross-subject planning. Indeed, some of the work observed in these areas has benefited significantly from the greater range of cross-curricular skills and knowledge that pupils now bring to their studies.
47. The school conveys a strong commitment to equality of access and opportunity through its policy for social inclusion. A strength is the work by the humanities team to build issues of equality into the curriculum. For example, in Key Stage 3, pupils have rich opportunities for debating issues of social equality by examining French society throughout history. Boys and girls are encouraged equally in lessons and in more formal class discussions to consider the effects of their behaviour and attitudes on others, building positive relationships. However, difficulties sometimes arise for individuals taking part in activities where they are withdrawn from lessons. These are invariably pupils with special education needs, or pupils needing language support. They are not always successfully reintegrated into lessons.
48. The extension of the nursery curriculum into reception has had a rapid effect on the good standards young children reach. The school's plans for training in the summer term are designed to transfer the successes of this curriculum development into the planning for pupils in Key Stage 1.
49. The emphasis on short-term planning has been largely successful in ensuring greater consistency in planning throughout the whole school, giving most pupils a clear sense of purpose to lessons. There is room for still further improvement in a few classes where the planning and provision are not sufficiently refined to meet fully the wide range of complex needs of some pupils with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language. This has an impact on the attainment of pupils by the end of the key stages, particularly Key Stage 1. Although strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are generally effective, the range is limited for meeting the needs of those pupils with particular language needs. There is no school policy or scheme of work to ensure specific and targeted linguistic support for these pupils.
50. Medium-term plans have improved, giving much more detailed guidance to teachers about how to convey important issues by developing skills as well as curriculum content. For example, the humanities plans give clear guidance on the skills of personal enquiry through research. Science plans incorporate investigation into most units of work. As the school reviews its long-term planning to absorb changes in the National Curriculum due to be

implemented in September 2000, it is now in a very good position to incorporate skills into its overall planning framework.

51. The school enriches pupils' learning by providing a good range of extra-curricular activities at different times outside the school day. A wide range of sporting activities fosters pupils' skills and abilities in areas such as athletics, netball and football. Individuals reach high levels of performance. Music, art and drama make significant contributions to the life of the school, extending pupils' opportunities for participation in out-of-school events. Parents mentioned the planting of daffodils in the school grounds as an activity that gave pupils a sense of belonging to the school. They noted the good quality of the school orchestra, and photographs convey the enjoyment of pupils in school productions. Visits to museums are very well linked into the curriculum with excellent examples of the learning that ensues from these opportunities in science and history on display in classrooms. For example, Year 4 have written on the computer about their trip to Hampton Court and Year 5 have made parachutes and reported on their visit to the science museum. The residential trip to Wales for pupils in Year 7 is a rich and stimulating experience, extending their preparation for the next stage of education.
52. Links with the community are good and contribute positively to pupils' learning. The police and social services visit the school to talk with pupils in lessons. Authors work with pupils to extend their horizons in writing. Music, drama events and religious festivals involve parents and other members of the community. The school has good links with the local churches and leaders contribute to assemblies.
53. The school has constructive relationships with partner institutions. Very good links exist with pre-school groups to ensure smooth transition of very young children into nursery and reception. The curriculum for Year 7 is planned with other local schools to ensure that pupils transfer smoothly to high school. Good links with the high school enrich the curriculum in information technology in the area of control technology. Parents would value closer links still with the high school for the oldest pupils in the school.
54. The school has maintained the good level of provision for pupil's moral and social development as reported at the time of the previous inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved and is now good, as has pupils' cultural development which is now very good. A good spiritual dimension is evident in many areas of the school. Assemblies offer an opportunity to reflect through silent thought, prayer and uplifting singing. The school is good at finding opportunities to make pupils feel special and to reflect on their own feelings and values. In lessons, opportunities are provided for pupils to explore the wonders of nature and their own place within it. This was a strong feature of some of the science provision at Key Stage 2. Displayed writing and poems explore expressions of happiness and joy. Work in religious education consider feelings of being lost, linked to the Parable of the Lost Sheep.
55. The school has a code of conduct, the Golden Rules, exhibited in each classroom and in strategic places around the building. Class discussions provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues and resolve them. The school council extends this to a whole-school level. Golden time stars, and merit points are used to reward good work and behaviour. Moral issues are also raised in assemblies and religious education lessons. Moral issues are also discussed when they arise incidentally in the work being covered; for example, in respect of the moral implications of the voyage of Columbus to new lands.
56. The school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils' social development. Pupils are given responsibilities in class and within the school community. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils across the school to think about their responsibilities as well as their rights within a community. They are introduced to the concept of democracy and citizenship in a very practical way.
57. The cultural provision for pupils' personal development is now especially good. Art displays explore a variety of traditions such as Aboriginal, Eastern, Asian and European art. Religious art is very much in evidence and use is made of the artist in residence scheme. Parents and other members of the community come into the school and offer their own skills and experiences to enrich the appreciation of the diverse cultural background from which the pupils come. For example, one parent worked with a group of pupils to produce a painting of Vishnu and Lakshmi riding Garuda. In lessons, classic texts such as the works of William Shakespeare, are studied. Visits are made to museums. The residential visit to Wales enables

the older pupils to experience first hand a cultural environment different to their own. In a similar way, the Year 4 visit to Hampton Court as part of pupils' work in history enables them to consider differences in culture from the past and contrast these with their own world.

58. The school's own cultural diversity remains a highly prized asset in extending pupils' understanding of, and attitudes towards, a multi-cultural society.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

59. The school has strengthened many aspects of its support, guidance and welfare provision since the last inspection. It is gaining a high reputation across the community for giving good support and care to disadvantaged children. The school has very good range of policies and procedures that are well implemented. Its aims are well defined and relevant to pupils and parents from a multi-cultural background. The school is aware of the community that it serves and parents, in turn, show a high approval of its values and attitudes and regard it as sensitive and caring.
60. The staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and diligent in their pastoral care role and this extends to assisting parents in the wider community. All staff try to give pupils an essential stability in their lives, which some may not have experienced previously. This strong commitment starts in the nursery with home visits and ensures that children have a happy and positive experience of their early years in school. Teachers have a very detailed knowledge of the pupils in their care and this individual knowledge allows them to monitor the progress and welfare of pupils effectively, with the help of support staff within the school and outside professional services. Most individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory and enable them to make satisfactory or better progress. A few, in Key Stage 2 classes, are not so effective. In contrast, the provision for pupils with higher attainment is more consistently and effectively targeted.
61. The school has a very good development of support, guidance and welfare policies and procedures, which underpin its aims and actions. Outside agencies, such as the school nurse, educational social worker and the access and development team, play essential and effective roles in the school and are welcomed unreservedly. Child protection procedures are very good, with appropriate levels of management and briefing of staff to guarantee vigilance. There has been training for all staff in child protection during the last two years and newly qualified teachers are provided with adequate knowledge in their first term in the school. Additional awareness is promoted through a display in the staff room. The school's curriculum for personal, health and social education is rich and relevant to the pupils who, in many cases, have a limited experience of the challenges of growing up.
62. The headteacher is in the forefront of the school's focus on behaviour. From the nursery onwards the underlying culture within the school is to raise the self-esteem and independence of the individual pupil. This is achieved through the many high quality displays of work, allowing pupils to explore and state their ideas and have a good appreciation of their multi-cultural heritage. The pupils understand well the framework of golden rules, which are displayed in all parts of the school. These are simple but effective. The school has appropriate rewards and sanctions and at a lower level the withdrawal of golden time is usually sufficient to rectify emerging problems. The behaviour code is not overbearing and all staff have a good understanding of its operating principles. The school is alert towards bullying, inter-personal conflict, or racial incidents between pupils. It encourages all staff to report any incidents through a bullying log and behaviour file. These are all followed up and frequently used as focus for class discussions. Often, the headteacher collects pupils together to plan action to ensure the well-being of the school community. The school council plays an essential role in the school's drive towards establishing a community in which oppressive behaviour is eliminated.
63. Attendance procedures are very good and have produced a significant improvement in attendance levels during the last year. Even so, the school's attendance performance still remains below the national average. The school takes this very seriously and through the deputy headteacher and the education social worker, individual cases are pursued with vigour. The school has utilised more conventional measures to stimulate attendance, such as

certificates, but as yet has not generated ideas through the school council or produced group peer pressure.

64. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, despite there being a well-above average level of minor accidents incurred by pupils. This is partly due to the intensity of activity in the playground and added congestion when poor weather does not allow the use of the grassy areas. However, it is also due to the enjoyment some pupils gain from the experience of visiting the welfare room with its welcoming staff. The school has a very good complement of first aiders and emergency procedures are effective. There is a good knowledge of pupils with special health problems and medicines are well controlled. Health and safety procedures are good and well underpinned by policies. No governor has been allocated this area as part of their responsibilities. A number of minor health and safety points have been fed back to the school.
65. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are good overall. The school has made good progress in tackling the weaknesses in assessment identified at the time of the last inspection. There is now a systematic programme of assessment in English, mathematics and science, which is effectively used to monitor the progress of individuals and groups through the school. At Key Stage 2, senior staff analyse formal test papers in detail, identifying weaker areas of learning and beginning to use this information to guide curriculum planning. This analytical approach has yet to be extended into Key Stage 1.
66. There are good assessment procedures to identify and monitor pupils with special educational needs and those who need support in learning English as an additional language. Progress sheets are kept which identify when pupils are deviating from the normal expectations of progress for their age. However, some teachers do not make sufficient use of this assessment information to cater for these pupils in class lessons, nor to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall curriculum provision for these pupils in relation to the personal targets set for them. As a result, some pupils make less progress than they might. The exception is in the nursery and reception classes where practice is very good. Here procedures are based on frequent and thorough observations of pupils' work, which provide the basis for planning so that individual activities, and the curriculum as a whole, are accurately matched to the needs of all pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

67. Since the last inspection report, the school has developed further its already good partnership with parents. This partnership is an undoubted strength of the school and enables it to keep in step with the community and with the families it serves. It is a partnership based on mutual trust and confidence. The conversion of a craft room into a parents' room within the school highlights the importance of parents to the school as an educational community. Parents express a consistently high level of approval for the school and this has been the case over many years. They clearly recognise and value the efforts of the headteacher, governors and staff in developing all aspects of the school and especially the efforts they make to support pupils with particular learning needs. Parents and families, whatever their background, are made to feel welcome and embraced into the school community. Indications of a small increase in levels of parental dissatisfaction exist since the last inspection but only the issue of homework has risen to significant levels. The school has produced a comprehensive homework policy, which satisfies the majority of parents. However, there are indications of variability in its implementation in some classes, which does not sit comfortably with parents who have very high expectations in this regard.
68. The school has a positive policy for the involvement of parents and it wants as many parents as possible to play a role. It asks parents to help every term, in a standard letter, and many parents feel increasingly confident in supporting children within the school environment. They play a regular and direct role in the school, either as volunteers or as employees, following a thorough briefing by the headteacher. A group of parents are regular helpers in running the home-reading scheme. Prior to nursery admission, prospective parents are visited at home by the staff and are encouraged to help, so that good habits are cultivated from an early association with the school. The parent governors are effectively involved in the life of the school and are energetic and decisive in their duties. The school has a parents' association which raises impressive amounts of funds and reflects a community working well together.

69. The communications with parents are good overall. However, there are a small number of minor shortcomings. For example, the school does not translate essential materials for ethnic minority parents who feel more confident when using their own language. Formal documents, such as the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents, although of good quality, do not fully observe statutory requirements. Policies and procedures are well written but not readily available to parents; for example, through display in the parents' room. The school has a wealth of leaflets and brochures on many aspects of teaching and learning and self-help for parents. Other written communications are precise and timely and give parents sufficient time to react. The school listens well to its parents, through teachers meeting parents at either end of the day in the school playground or in classrooms. More severe parental problems are dealt with through easy-access appointments to members of the senior management team. All formal open evenings are well attended including the annual governors' meeting for parents. The school has redesigned its annual reports, so as to be more appropriate to each key stage of education and these have gained approval from parents. The result is an excellent progress report that gives good judgements of pupils' performance, including grades for effort and attainment, sets clear future targets and seeks the comprehensive views of the parent and pupil.
70. The development of an educational partnership with parents is an increasingly good feature of the school. The English and mathematics coordinators meet with reception parents to explain how parents might help with reading and mathematics teaching and with homework. Parents have had information evenings on specific subjects such as drugs education and the national literacy strategy. The views of parents are sought when new initiatives are considered. The special educational needs coordinator runs a weekly drop-in session for parents who have pupils with special educational needs. Reading diaries are also well used to sustain a dialogue between parent and teacher. This all helps to raise standards and enables pupils to make better progress. The school is currently developing a home-school contract, in addition to its statutory home-school agreement, in a further attempt to enlist the help of parents in improving attendance and behaviour.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

71. At the last inspection, the headteacher was judged to provide the school with clear and decisive leadership. This remains the case. That all the key issues raised in the 1996 inspection report have been successfully tackled reflects her determination to make Vaughan an outstanding school. She has the strong backing of the deputy headteacher, the senior managers of the school, the governing body and parents. Not least, she has the full support of a highly professional and committed team of staff. Parents value the strength of the school's management and are quick to highlight its significance. The school's claim to have created a "culture of teamwork" is well founded and has been a guiding feature in the school's good progress since 1996.
72. Raising standards has consistently underpinned the school's policy-making, planning and decision taking. The school's development plan is a high quality tool for raising standards. Priorities, action plans and audits are all clearly formulated and meticulously implemented, enabling the school to take swift action in response to the key issues raised in 1996. Planning and assessment procedures have undergone effective reconstruction, helping to support the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The action plan for establishing a numeracy strategy for the school is a model of effective educational planning.
73. However, there are times when the school could take more notice of its evaluation findings when setting its educational priorities. Despite evidence from the school's own monitoring procedures of serious levels of under-achievement amongst the lower-attaining pupils, this is not identified as a priority concern in the school development plan. No school policy exists for pupils with English as an additional language and there is no scheme of work to guide teachers' planning.
74. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed the need to develop more precise roles for the subject and other co-ordinators. These are now mostly clear and effective. They are particularly well articulated and prioritised in English, science, mathematics

and information and communication technology, where their impact on raising standards is readily evident. Progress in addressing assessment weaknesses since the last inspection has also benefited from the development of clear co-ordinating responsibilities. The school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language is less effectively managed and co-ordinated. Its central place in the school's work is not reflected in its status and visibility within the management structure. It is not, for example, represented in the senior management team, as is special educational needs. There is a co-ordinator who is a specialist teacher who takes her responsibilities very seriously but whose management roles are not sufficiently clarified. These are shortcomings which the school is aware of and has plans to rectify once the new funding arrangements are in place.

75. There is evidence of similar shortcomings in the management of the school's three phases; early years, first and middle. Where management roles are very clearly defined, as in early years, there is an evident cohesion and clarity of purpose within that area of provision. Where these are more generally defined, as in the first and middle-schools, there is less cohesion and clarity about the management and development of these areas as distinctive phases within the school's provision.
76. Monitoring and evaluation are now key processes in the school's development. A "targets culture" has been effectively implemented, both in classrooms and at a whole-school level. Target setting involves all teachers, thereby ensuring a shared commitment to improvement. Procedures for data gathering are well advanced, particularly in the middle school. National test results are analysed; monitoring records are meticulously kept; pupils have individual targets and full analyses of pupils' attainment and progress are undertaken by gender and ethnicity. Making greater use of this information to plan further strategies for improvement is what the school is seeking to do next. This represents a good example of the school's capacity to improve. The headteacher and staff have a clear picture of where they are now and what needs to be done to raise standards further.
77. The quality of teaching is monitored on a regular basis and the findings closely linked into the school's development plan, as well as providing the basis for teachers' annual professional development interviews with the headteacher. The effectiveness of this process is significantly strengthened by a teaching and learning policy that identifies models of good practice for teachers. Standards of teaching have improved as a result, as has the teaching in specifically targetted areas of provision; for example, information technology and the literacy and numeracy hours.
78. The governing body has improved its contribution to the school's management since 1996. Governors, with the support of the headteacher, have carried out a thorough reappraisal and reconstruction of their role and functioning. A good start has been made on implementing these developments. Governors assist annually in the review of the school development plan and help in establishing the new priorities. This extends to close co-operation between governors and the school in all key aspects of their responsibilities; for example, target setting. At the last inspection, governors were not fulfilling all of their statutory duties. This remains the case. The latest governors' annual report to parents, though impressively presented, is deficient in terms of a small number of statutory items. The school prospectus also fails to meet fully the legal requirements. Corrective action is in hand.
79. The link between financial and educational planning is good. The school's budgets are developed in conjunction with the school development plan and are well linked. Key issues identified in the last inspection report have been worked into the subsequent plans since 1997 and have allowed the school constantly to review and make good progress against its objectives. The finance committee and governors are appropriately involved in all financial planning and all budget allocations to co-ordinators are well thought through and are a good expression of the educational priorities of the school. Budgets are well monitored by the finance committee on a regular basis and they give good support to the headteacher. Though the concept of best value is new to governing bodies, the school has made a satisfactory start in using and evaluating value for money in many of its purchasing and financial decisions. Although the school uses an approved borough financial regulations manual, there is a need to have a greater definition of financial procedures tailored to its specific needs and agreed by the governors. The recent school audit has assured the school that adequate financial controls are in place but has identified some control weaknesses. The school fund has not been audited historically and future procedures should now take account of this area. The school office is

effective in controlling the complex administration of a large school and allows the headteacher to maximise her input into the educational aspects of the school. It makes very good and productive use of information control technology in the office environment.

80. When compared with other schools, the school has an income and expenditure per pupil that is broadly average. It has an extremely high expenditure per pupil on education support staff, which is appropriate to the high percentage of special educational needs and English as an additional language pupils. The funding for the ethnic minority assistance group, along with some funding for special educational needs pupils, provides a formidable amount of resource to support its welfare and educational agendas. However, the school does not always maximise the effectiveness of this resource. It is sometimes not sufficiently well targeted to meet the needs of the specified groups of pupils. The grant from the national grid for learning has been very effectively used to equip a specialist information control technology suite and this has produced a very substantial improvement in focus and standards in this subject across the school. The funding from parents has been well used to build the resources of the school. The school's surplus is within recommended limits.
81. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. Newly qualified teachers are well supported when they come to teach at this school. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the classroom assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum and pupils. Providing valuable support for teachers and pupils, they are a committed team who are given good support and encouragement to acquire extra training and qualifications.
82. The environment of the school is superbly managed, both inside and outside the school. A key feature for the visitor to the school is the high quality of wall displays and their stimulating effect on the school environment. The school site is beautifully kept and cared for by a very conscientious caretaker. Since the last inspection, the overall improvement in accommodation is good. The addition of a parents' room is much valued by parents and is also used as a venue for parent helpers, small group teaching, and meetings. The science room is too small for teaching whole classes and therefore can only be used to teach half-class groups. The design of the first school accommodation presents considerable challenges for teachers. Interference from noise and the frequent traffic of pupils going from one part of the accommodation to another adds significantly to the distractions these pupils suffer. The two rooms in this area that have had their ceilings lowered has had a beneficial effect. The middle school library area is inadequate in size. This was an area identified as needing improvement at the last inspection.
83. Resources are very good and very well used in the under fives area. Resourcing of information technology is good in terms of access, quality and use. This represents a significant step forward since the last inspection. In English, music, and design and technology, resources are satisfactory and well used. In all other subjects they are good, having been judged satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, with some good features, notably the new computer suite. The school makes the best use of the space and facilities available to it. Since the last inspection, the quality of resourcing and the quality of teaching and learning have all improved as a result of good strategic management of the school's resources.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

84. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection in 1996. In order to build further on its achievements and to ensure greater consistency in the school's educational performance, especially for first-school pupils, the school should now:
  - improve the rates of progress of pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and other pupils making slow progress, by:
    - developing whole-school strategies, to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and provision for these pupils, based on the good models of practice that already exist in the school;
    - clarifying, within these strategies, the respective roles and responsibilities of the class teacher, the specialist support teacher and learning support assistants in implementing



the school's provision for these pupils, especially when support teachers are not available to help in lessons;

- providing effective arrangements for the leadership and co-ordination of pupils for whom English is an additional language, to ensure that this area of the school's work is clearly identified and articulated within all aspects of the school's management aims, structures and processes, including the school development plan.

Paragraphs: 5; 9; 33; 38; 39; 43; 47; 49; 60; 66; 73; 87; 88; 90; 91; 92; 107; 111; 115; 127; 129; 130 and 161.

- continue to develop strategies, and seek ways, of improving levels of attendance and punctuality within the school, by strengthening still further this aspect of the school's partnership and agreement with parents; (paragraphs 23 and 63)
- improve further the overall quality of pupils' attitudes and relationships within the school in order to achieve more consistently the school's aims in this aspect of pupils' personal development. (paragraphs 15; 22 and 183)

### **OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- improving the effectiveness of teaching in Key Stage 1 to bring it into line with the good standards found elsewhere in the school; (paragraphs 8; 14; 18; 35; 118; 131; 174, 194)
- ensuring that legal requirements are fully met in respect of the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus; (paragraphs 69 and 78)
- ensuring that the school's marking policy is consistently adopted by teachers; (paragraphs 37 and 119)
- clarifying and strengthening the school's structures and processes for managing, co-ordinating and ensuring the distinctiveness and cohesion of each of the three phases within the school; early years, first and middle; (paragraphs 75 and 88)
- ensuring that the school's achievement targets are appropriate and realistic in the light of recent national test results and that they are based on strategies for improving the school's educational performance. (paragraph 14)

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

85. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds including those who speak English as an additional language are found in each class within the school, being 47 per cent of the school population. The majority of these pupils come from families originating in the Asian sub-continent, along with those from the Caribbean, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Africa. There are a growing number of refugees and asylum seekers from Somalia, Afghanistan and Kosovo. These pupils are often suffering from trauma, disorientation and with little or no English, they and their families are suffering great stress.
86. Ethnic minority pupils are represented in all the levels of ability across the school. The school's standards of attainment as recorded in statutory assessment tasks and tests also includes those achieved by ethnic minorities. The 1996 inspection report indicated that these pupils made good progress and achieved standards in line with the rest of the pupils in the school. The school kept careful records which identified the specific learning targets for each pupil and noted their progress. The school continues to have a part time teacher from the local authority Ethnic Minority service funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.
87. The school monitors the attainment and progress of the 180 ethnic minority pupils across the school and gives specific and focused support to the 70 in most need. The 36 refugee pupils receive clearly targeted support from the ethnic minority teacher, wherever possible. When this is not possible, because of the constraints of resources and timetabling, these pupils sometimes work with the special educational needs staff. This is not appropriate as these pupils need specific language skills' development at this stage in their learning. Most are capable of acquiring English rapidly with appropriately planned and supported work. Many receive such support and make good progress. They quickly catch up with the average and higher-attaining pupils and become part of that majority of pupils in the school who do well. The school also works hard to raise the attainment of 13 pupils of Caribbean origin who are regarded as underachieving, encouraging them by raising their self esteem and presenting positive images to enhance their learning.
88. The school does not at present have a member of the senior management team to co-ordinate the work with ethnic minority pupils. Neither does the school have a policy and scheme of work to ensure specific and targeted linguistic support to such pupils. This detracts from the quality and consistency of the teaching they receive in lessons. The school development plan designed to take the school forward does not refer to these pupils or the administration of the achievement grant available to support their learning.
89. The changing profile of pupils, especially the expanding range of languages and backgrounds within the school, is closely monitored by the school. The school seeks and maintains effective links with parents, arranging translators as necessary and undertaking initial assessments of the skills these pupils bring into the school. As in 1996, careful records are kept of such pupils' progress and the information is shared with class teachers.
90. In the most successful lessons, teachers are effective in supporting those ethnic minority pupils within their classes who still require additional help. They arrange for them to work in groups that also include pupils who can support their language development, giving them good linguistic role models. Alternatively, they plan group activities for them which are the focus for a supporting adult within the lesson. In these situations, the ethnic minority pupils enjoy school and are motivated to learn because of the good quality teaching they receive in school. Unfortunately, not all teachers have the necessary skills to support these pupils so effectively. Instead, they sometimes rely upon putting them together with the pupils with special educational needs. This is not appropriate for either group of pupils and they make slow progress as a result. Without a scheme of work, or school policy, to guide teachers' planning, the overall quality of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is patchy and inconsistent. This is a weakness and impacts significantly on the capacity of the lower-attaining pupils amongst this group to make appropriate progress.
91. The school carefully analyses national test results by ethnicity and gender and uses this information in planning sessions to raise achievement. This information is also used by the support service in completing forms for the local authority and national government, overseeing the spending of the achievement grant. This helps to enhance the quality of

provision offered by the specialist teacher and support staff but is not developed into specific teaching and learning strategies for class teachers. The monitoring arrangements, for example, are very good. Under and over-achieving pupils are all carefully kept track of. However, once deficiencies are identified, not all teachers are clear how to take the necessary steps to eliminate these difficulties. Although different classes are targeted for “focus” support by the ethnic minority teacher on a rota basis, there is little evidence to indicate that opportunities to train the teachers in the skills of teaching such pupils is taken.

92. While the school is deeply committed to supporting its pupils with English as an additional language, it does not fully achieve this goal for all pupils in the group. For the majority, it does a good job. Individual teachers give these pupils high levels of support and good teaching. They are given a particularly good start in the early years' classes. The majority of pupils in the group owe the school a great deal for the standard of provision received and take full advantage of the opportunities provided for them.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	26%	36%	33%	1%	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	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	52	466
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	130

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	188

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	32	28	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	29
	Girls	24	25	26
	Total	47	53	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (77)	88 (85)	92 (79)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	22
	Girls	23	24	23
	Total	46	48	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (72)	80 (79)	75 (88)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	31	31	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	22	24
	Girls	26	21	24
	Total	50	43	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (82)	69 (64)	77 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	23
	Girls	23	22	21
	Total	42	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68	69	71
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	12
Black – other	4
Indian	87
Pakistani	14
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	199
Any other minority ethnic group	61

*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	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	28.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	377

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
--------------------------------	----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
----------------	------

	£
Total income	964070
Total expenditure	951449
Expenditure per pupil	1992
Balance brought forward from previous year	41234
Balance carried forward to next year	53855

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	505
Number of questionnaires returned	106

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	34	3	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	34	54	8	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	57	8	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	42	22	5	12
The teaching is good.	33	57	4	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	42	11	8	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	34	6	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	42	5	3	7
The school works closely with parents.	45	40	7	8	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	32	4	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	47	3	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	40	13	5	19

## 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**

93. The provision for and teaching of children under five is a strength of the school. Children enter part time into the nursery class in the autumn or spring of the school year in which they are four, or into the reception classes in the school year in which they are five. They bring with them a wide range of skills and abilities. Though this range fluctuates from intake to intake, there are always a sizeable proportion of children with lower than average attainment on entry to the school. The children settle quickly into the school and make consistently good progress in their learning as a result of the high quality of teaching and adult support. By the time they are five most at least reach, and a good minority exceeds, the nationally recommended learning targets for children about to enter Key Stage 1, especially in their language work. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

### ***Personal and social development***

94. Children's personal and social development is good and underpins all their work and progress. The children become increasingly independent from adults as they gain the skills and experiences necessary to become competent learners. They relate with confidence to each other and to adults, selecting the resources they wish to use and contributing with growing fluency to discussions. Bilingual learners, especially, acquire considerable competence when speaking in English. The children share resources readily, concentrate and persevere for some length of time on the activities in which they are engaged and gain an understanding of right and wrong. They learn to show respect for the beliefs of others, are eager to explore and willing to have a go at new activities. The teachers, the nursery nurse and supporting adults provide a good range of activities, especially when developing the children's speaking and listening skills. This helps the children to make a good start with all areas of their learning. Routines are well established. The children know what is expected of them and are learning to respond accordingly. They particularly appreciate the structure within the nursery and enjoy seeing their parents involved with the adults in supporting their learning. A careful eye is kept on the children to ensure that they learn how to focus on the activities provided for them.

### ***Language and literacy***

95. Assessments on entry to the reception class indicate that many children have poorly developed early writing skills. While a significant minority has limited language skills, others have skills that are highly developed. Nevertheless, by the end of reception, many of the children achieve high standards and make good progress in their learning. A few make very good progress. The good progress they make with their language skills helps them significantly in all other areas of the curriculum. They listen well and respond to stories with enthusiasm. In the story of Goldilocks, for example, they quickly grasped the repetition of the chorus. They joined in with enthusiasm and vigour. Overall, the older children practise their reading skills employing phonemes, phonics, initial sounds and number words, as well as using their speaking and listening skills to discuss the pictures seen in the book and comparing them with the written words. The higher attaining readers in reception are almost at the level expected of five year old pupils. Even those reading from picture only books tell the story with fluency and character. The children are given opportunities to work at their own levels on specific tasks in which they practise, consolidate and extend what they have learned through role play and communication with each other. Older children, in particular, are fluent users of language. Teachers are successful in helping them to develop a range of skills to read print and to practise the writing skills necessary to be able to communicate their ideas and understanding. This was highlighted in a literacy lesson where the children considered words beginning with 'i' and 'v'. By the careful planning of tasks one group of children worked outside the classroom making igloos out of blocks in the sizes appropriate to the three bears on display, while some lower-ability children worked inside the classroom with the teacher using sorting rings to identify 'i' and 'v' words. Another group worked with the support assistant on identifying missing initial letters in a story written on the white board, while other children sorted, by means of cutting and sticking, pictures illustrating the initial letters. Younger children also listen to and follow instructions with understanding and speed, enabling them to make good progress in all areas of their learning. The quality of teaching is a key factor in the children's achievements and progress. It is consistently of high quality in both the nursery and reception classes.



### ***Mathematics***

96. The children make good progress. Their increasing language skills enable them to become familiar with the vocabulary needed. They recognise order patterns, for instance, using numbers and chronological order when carrying out activities such as lining up for assembly, physical education or play time. In formal mathematical sessions, the children achieve high standards. Older children rapidly count on and back, identify two- and three-dimensional shapes and adopt the correct vocabulary to identify and match key features. They know that shapes have faces and corners and can be grouped, employing common criteria, into sets such as cuboids, cubes, triangles and spheres. Individual children are carefully challenged by the teacher to achieve to their full potential and make rapid progress. As well as working orally in mathematics, the children are developing the skills to read and record their number work. They write number sentences and stories making sure that numbers are correctly formed and read. Younger children are developing their understanding of number through a range of opportunities to sort, match and order play objects. In their water and sand work they experiment with weight, volume and capacity. The teaching is consistently of good quality and much of it is very good.

### ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

97. On entry to the school, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is variable. Good standards and progress are achieved by the time they leave reception. For example, while in the nursery, the children discuss and explore planting lettuce and tomato seeds. They think about the mystery of how plants and animals grow and how, in the making of porridge, heat affects the ingredients. Children have opportunities to examine frog-spawn and make coleslaw out of cabbage and carrots, then taste it at snack time. In reception, while younger children use the computer to play simple language and mathematical games and draw pictures, the older ones embark on a structured curriculum. They develop skills with the keyboard to write their own names and later stories and reports. They combine programmes, such as word processing and art, to draw pictures and label them appropriately, printing out their work on a colour printer. Children are helped to succeed by the quality of the support they receive. Teachers and other adults in the class consistently use clear and precise vocabulary to aid the children's learning.

### ***Physical development***

98. Most children make good progress in developing their physical abilities; for instance, in putting on and zipping up coats, turning sleeves the correct way round, undressing and dressing before and after physical education. They use scissors, glue and brushes in creative work and pencils and other markers in their written work and in mathematics. The children also make good progress in developing specific physical skills during lessons in the hall. They show good control in moving round the hall and finding different ways of balancing. In these lessons they strive hard to match the demonstrations of the best, using physical equipment sensibly, with due care and attention to health and safety requirements. They listen carefully to instructions and are good at waiting their turn. The youngest children in nursery effectively demonstrated their co-ordination skills when using the school parachute together. They are keen to explore their environment, running, jumping and climbing competently. They demonstrate an understanding of simple technical language. For example, the children make "under" or "over" movements with appropriate body control, according to instructions. They are starting to evaluate their own and other work. The teaching in reception and the nursery is invariably very good, enabling the children to make good progress within a safe environment. Nursery children climb and explore. In their enclosed play area they have the opportunity to use the climbing frames, manipulate tools in the sand area and fill bottles and tubes in the water play area when investigating capacity, weight and measures.

### ***Creative development***

99. The children achieve well and make good progress. Again, the quality of teaching and classroom support are the significant factors in ensuring good achievement. Children can mix paints, being aware, for instance, that red and white make pink. They compose pictures and prints employing a range of resources such as sponges. Children cut and stick a range of papers and fabrics to investigate thick, thin, long, short and fat, as well as different textures. They work in a range of media, including playdough. Children use paint, glue, crayon, paper and materials to make a range of lively pictures, crowns and patterns big and small, adding feathers and shiny objects to enhance their work. Children also have access to a range of musical instruments to develop their creative skills musically and compose tunes and sound effects. Other creative activities include opportunities to dance and to act out stories, as well as use the home corner for role-play. In the nursery, for instance, on one occasion the home corner was turned into a fantasy castle. On another occasion, while in the courtyard, the reception children imagined that the house was the three bears cottage, with all the resources that bears could possibly need to make porridge and sleep, as well as entertain Goldilocks.
100. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good overall, enabling pupils with such a diverse range of initial abilities and skills to make good progress overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be good. Activities are well planned and structured to encourage children's personal and social development, to establish the basic norms of living and working together. The support staff have an appropriate knowledge of the abilities of the children and plan lessons to give confidence and reinforce skills development. They pose questions and provide answers to children's questions that challenge and extend the children's learning. A good focus is maintained on the children's speaking and listening skills. The teachers persistently direct the children to the key vocabulary involved in the tasks they are carrying out. They encourage them to use language with clarity of speech and thinking, requiring them to give more than one-word answers to questions and to compose their responses in sentences. All the adults employ plenty of praise as children tackle and complete tasks, not accepting work that is not of appropriate quality.
101. The teachers plan well together in reception, as do the nursery teacher and the nursery nurse. All the adults that work with the under-five children have an effective understanding of the tasks planned to support the children's learning. At the end of each week the completed work is evaluated in terms of children's learning and plans for the next week work are drawn up on the basis of the findings. The teachers and supporting adults are good role models for the children. They are skilled at refocusing children's attention as concentration lapses. Adults show appropriate concern for the children's welfare and make clear what counts as acceptable standards of behaviour. They carefully select resources for all areas of the curriculum and are especially effective in supporting the learning of higher-attaining children as well as children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. By the end of most lessons, in both the nursery and reception classes, children know where they started and where they have arrived, seeing the progress they have made over the lesson.
102. Leadership and management of the under-fives provision is very good and provides the other major factor in ensuring the good standards achieved. Careful records are kept. Initial assessments on entry to the reception class are effectively used to support the planning of the curriculum. An effective, and well-resourced environment, has been developed. This has had a significant impact on meeting the school's commitment to high achievement for its under five children.

### **ENGLISH**

103. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved considerably, particularly in Key Stage 2. The literacy co-ordinator has successfully led the introduction of the literacy hour, from which pupils have clearly benefited. New arrangements for assessment, better checking of pupils' progress, the production of a Key Stage 2 reading analysis and a folder exemplifying the different levels of writing in the school, have all led to increased understanding by the teachers of what pupils know and can do. Extensive training, on top of the statutory literacy training, has added to their increased knowledge and skill in teaching the subject. The school

has purchased new reading materials, helping to ensure that the higher-attaining pupils now have suitably challenging texts and a sound collection of big books to assist their learning.

104. The school's results in the national tests and assessments for Key Stage 1 in 1999 were:
- in line with the national average for reading;
  - above the national average for writing;
  - in line with similar schools for reading, and above average in comparison with similar schools for writing.
105. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment in the present Year 2 cohort are below the national average. This is out of line with last year's results. The large numbers of pupils in this year group with specific learning needs, many of them language needs, make it difficult for the school to sustain its improved national test performance in recent years. A significant proportion of the pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, albeit that they do not achieve the nationally expected standard by the end of the key stage.
106. Standards in Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests were:
- above average for those pupils reaching the national standard;
  - well above average for those exceeding the national standard;
  - well above average in comparison with similar schools.
107. Inspection findings confirm these results for the majority of pupils by the age of eleven. They indicate that standards in reading are especially good. They also indicate that a small minority of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
108. Standards by the end of Year 7 are:
- above average in reading and writing;
  - average in speaking and listening.
109. Over the last three years attainment overall in English has risen consistently throughout the school. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been particularly significant. In 1996, 65.5 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected standard. By 1999, this figure had risen to 81 per cent. Rates of learning are good for the majority of pupils across the school. This applies particularly to the higher-attaining pupils who make rapid progress and achieve well. Since the introduction of the literacy hour, pupils generally have benefited from a re-structured approach to teaching.
110. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills. During the literacy hour the majority of pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to their peers. Pupils speak clearly with a sound range of vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 listen carefully and draw a character with freckles while the teacher reads the description aloud. In Year 2, they eagerly answer questions about the story, 'The Bear and the Picnic Lunch', because of the teacher's enthusiasm. In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. In Year 5, the pupils read the text from a 'Big Book' about volcanoes, keenly. In Year 6, the pupils enthusiastically answer questions about the extract they have heard from a taped version of the Hobbit, as a result of the teacher's encouragement. In one Year 6 session observed, pupils spoke with great perception and thoughtfulness, exploring and articulating quite complex moral issues with great clarity. In Year 7, the pupils are keen to read their story chapters aloud and engage eagerly in discussion.
111. Standards in reading are above average except in Key Stage 1 where, although the majority of pupils reach the national standard, the proportion doing so is below the national average. Pupils in Year 1 handle books carefully and understand that print conveys meaning. They begin to learn the sound of individual letters and how to build these into words. In Year 2, they begin to read with some expression and start to pay attention to punctuation. They read simple books such as 'The Best Watch Dog in the World', sounding out unknown words thoughtfully. By the end of Key Stage 1, the higher attaining pupils have made good progress with their reading and can read simple and more complex texts confidently. Ensuring that all higher-

attaining pupils are appropriately challenged in their work was a key issue highlighted in the previous report and this has been systematically addressed throughout the school. However, a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language do not made sufficient gains in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of reading skills. Pupils' reading records are sound. Pupils have reading record books or folders which are taken home; teachers keep records of their group reading sessions and record pupils attainment from the activities well. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that their planning is informed by the assessments of pupils' prior reading attainment.

112. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils acquire a good level of reading skills. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 begin to read a wider range of texts on their own. They discuss the plot and their favourite characters and employ the sounds of individual letters and groups of letters to read unfamiliar words. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils can read fluently and accurately. They read confidently with sound levels of expression when they read factual and fiction-texts, in books such as 'Becky Bananas – This is your Life'. There is, however, still a minority of pupils whose reading is well below average. In Year 7, the majority of pupils continues to make good progress. They discuss characters and humour effectively; they recognise inference and speculate how a story might end. Pupils are familiar with contents and index pages; they use dictionaries well to find the meanings of words, but the Year 5 and 6 pupils do not consistently use the word cues at the top of the pages. Many Key Stage 2 and Year 7 pupils borrow books from their local library and bring in books from home to use in their personal research activities. In Key Stage 1, a central lower school library is rarely used and the quality of books is not sufficiently stimulating for pupils.
113. Standards in writing for the current cohort of Year 2 pupils are below the national average, although, as with reading, the majority achieve the national standard. There is considerable variability in the standards achieved. The higher-attaining pupils make good progress in learning how to write. Pupils satisfactorily increase their skills with regard to writing words for themselves; for example, when pupils in Year 1 write stories about a week in the life of a hat. They mostly write in simple sentences but do not use capital letters and full stops consistently. They spell simple words correctly and sound out unfamiliar words effectively. The higher-attaining pupils spell difficult words well, write complex sentences and formulate interesting stories and pieces of writing. Pupils are encouraged to extend their vocabulary but there is no Key Stage 1 scheme of work for drama and opportunities to develop complex vocabulary are not consistently planned. Pupils begin to use different styles of writing for a range of audiences and purposes. Pupils in Year 2, for example, write, brief descriptions of themselves, short stories, poems about driving and lists of instructions. Most are beginning to use computers to draft and improve their work. Handwriting is usually correctly formed, but pupils do not consistently hold their pencils correctly. The higher-attaining pupils effectively learn to join their writing at this stage.
114. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired new knowledge and skills at a good rate and standards for the majority of pupils match, or exceed, those expected nationally. Handwriting is usually neat and legible and most pupils employ joined-up writing regularly. They plan their work carefully before starting to write and sometimes use the computer to improve their draft and produce a final version. Pupils extend their vocabulary of descriptive words, using dictionaries and thesauruses, and occasionally write longer descriptions and interesting stories. Pupils in Year 4, for example, write dragon poems with alternate lines rhyming. They also produce good pieces of extended writing, some of which have five chapters with titles such as 'The Big Move' and 'Damp Camp'. By Year 6, pupils set a dialogue out clearly when writing about an argument between two trolls inspired by reading the Hobbit. They extend their vocabulary when they analyse and use vocabulary to write their own description of what a Hobbit looks like. They also create some beautifully touching pieces of writing about a 'Special Gift'. Two extracts follow:

*"The gift of peace for the world."*

I want to give the gift of peace for the world.  
So that we can enjoy life and treat one another equally.'

*"My special gift for my mum."*

I want to give my mum a gift of love,  
Not wrapped up in a box but from my heart.  
The sort of gift you can't buy.

115. By Year 7, pupils develop their formal-letter writing knowledge when writing newsletters. They demonstrate good creative writing skills when writing the fifth chapter of an extended story in which something of value is stolen. However, by Year 7 there is still a small minority of pupils whose writing skills are significantly limited by their lack of progress in gaining sufficient command of spoken English. They are a decreasing minority. Their specific needs are not consistently enough addressed by teachers as they move through Key Stage 2. It is a similar picture with a small number of pupils with special educational needs. They do not always make sufficient progress in relation to the targets identified in their individual education plans when not supported by additional staff in the classroom. When they are supported, they usually achieve well.
116. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' literacy skills and on their understanding of language structure. This is evident across many subjects of the curriculum. For example, in geography lessons pupils write in detail about the monsoons in India and how they made a parachute in science activities.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Teaching is occasionally very good at both Key Stages 1 and 2. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good. All teachers are confident in the structure of the literacy hour. There is a strong emphasis on direct teaching which helps pupils to understand grammar and punctuation clearly. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good throughout the school.
118. Teacher's planning overall is sound. In some individual cases it is of very high quality. Teachers mostly plan appropriate activities, using guidance from the National Literacy Strategy. Where planning is at its best, in a few Key Stage 2 classes, the impact on pupils' attitudes, progress and achievement is significant. Pupils are highly motivated, can concentrate for long periods and are only satisfied with their best. At both key stages, lessons are well structured to include a plenary session and resources are well used. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and generally have high expectations of their work and behaviour. On the whole, this results in a good response from pupils though there is a small core of pupils in Years 1 to 3 who find it difficult to settle down to their work quickly and effectively. The teaching in these classes does not always pay sufficient attention to developing pupils' personal learning skills. This is least helpful to the lower-attaining pupils when additional help is not on hand. Their levels of achievement drop accordingly.
119. Teachers' use of assessment to assist their planning is sound. Their marking is encouraging but does not lay enough emphasis on informing pupils how they can improve in the future. Day-to-day assessments, compiled as part of the short-term planning, are valuable especially when used to plan individual pupils' learning activities. Teachers work effectively in partnership with parents and volunteers to ensure that pupils receive individual help with reading skills. Homework plays an important role in assisting the majority of pupils to achieve well and make good progress.
120. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively and has a clear vision for its development. Evaluating the quality of the provision is a management priority and is used to raise standards. The national tests results have been analysed in Key Stage 2 but not completed for Key Stage 1. The findings have been employed in Key Stage 2 to set school achievement targets. These have been successfully achieved, especially in 1999. The school is well placed to develop similar arrangements in Key Stage 1.

## MATHEMATICS

121. Standards have improved steadily since the last inspection. This is reflected in the school's national test results since 1996 and confirmed in the recent inspection findings.
122. The school's 1999 test results at the end of Key Stage 1 were:
- above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - well above average in comparison to similar schools.
123. This is a year-on-year improvement since 1996, with the exception of 1998, when standards dipped slightly. A sharp rise in standards followed in 1999. Current inspection findings show another dip this year. This is partly explained by the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language – some two thirds of the entire cohort. The majority is achieving at nationally expected levels, but a significant minority, about one-third, is not. This is a higher proportion of pupils not reaching the national standard than is found in most schools.
124. The school's 1999 test results at the end of Key Stage 2 were:
- in line with the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - just below average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - below average in comparison with similar schools.
125. The school's performance has improved year-on-year since 1996, except for 1997, and has kept pace with national rates of improvement during this period.
126. Three major factors have guided and shaped the school's improved performance since the last inspection. First, better and more consistently good standards of teaching. Second, improved provision as a result of the development of more precise achievement goals for pupils and teachers. Third, more effective use of assessment as a means of monitoring pupils' progress and guiding teachers' planning. Ensuring that these gains are consistently extended across all classes, and across all groups of pupils, is the key to continued improvement. The school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is already beginning to have a beneficial effect in this respect.
127. At Key Stage 1, around two-thirds of the pupils have sound or better number skills. They can add and subtract numbers up to 100 and beyond; they know their two, five and ten times tables. They are good at mental arithmetic, with a few being sufficiently confident to explore and explain different ways of finding solutions to simple number problems. However, there is a significant minority of pupils still struggling to acquire adequate early number skills. Language difficulties do not help. Teachers' assessments show that many pupils make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive but they often start from a low base. These pupils display greater confidence when the tasks are less demanding in terms of language competence and more practical in nature. For example, in two of the lessons observed, the vast majority of pupils had no difficulty in completing a block graph. They understood its purpose and accurately recorded the information they had gathered. Evidence from their completed work shows that they recognise the major two- and three-dimensional shapes. The higher-attaining pupils identify and use simple fractions, recognise right angles, use standard units to measure length and weigh objects. However, these pupils, together with many of the average-attaining pupils, do not consistently achieve the standards of which they are capable. They find sustained concentration difficult, particularly the boys. The design of the building, which encourages distraction, does not help in this respect.
128. At Key Stage 2, and Year 7, the majority of pupils makes considerable progress, and achieve soundly, in both their mathematical knowledge and skills, and in their ability to focus on their work. Pupils of all ability groups, are conscientious, well motivated and seek to do their best. The average and higher-attaining pupils have good number skills. They add, subtract, multiply and divide large numbers; they know their multiplication tables and enjoy the challenge of mental arithmetic. In Year 6, this is particularly evident; most have developed a sound base for their learning across the full range of the curriculum. They work confidently with

percentages and successfully apply this to solving money problems. They know how to plot co-ordinates on a quadrant and convert metric measures into their imperial equivalents using conversion graphs. By Year 7, many pupils understand algebraic equations and employ this understanding to express algebraically the means of determining the size of angles on a 180 degree plane. Pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 are given frequent opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills to support other areas of the curriculum, notably science, information technology and geography.

129. In contrast, while the majority of pupils makes sound, or good, progress, there are a few pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 who do not make sufficient progress despite the efforts they put into their work. In terms of achievement, they are now a considerable way behind the national standard for their age. Most are pupils on the special needs register or pupils with English as an additional language. Although the proportion of these pupils declines in the middle school, which is itself a tribute to the quality of much of the teaching, they nevertheless represent a particular challenge for the school. Most are capable of higher standards with more consistent, and better targeted, provision.
130. Overall, the quality of teaching is good but not consistently good across the school. The highest standards of teaching are in Key Stage 2. The best lessons, seen in Year 6 and Year 4, were based on high-quality planning and assessment linked to very effective practical teaching skills. The result is an environment of confidence, purpose and challenge, with pupils displaying a genuine love and responsibility for their own learning. They are clear about the teachers' expectations through the use of specific learning intentions and achievement in individual lessons and progress over time are both good. Tasks are appropriately planned and effectively supported by support staff, as, for example, in lessons observed on mode, median and average, and on fractions. Where the teaching is satisfactory but could be improved, teachers do not sufficiently ensure that the learning intentions for all pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are adequately planned for when additional support is not available. In one lesson observed, this severely limited the progress of these pupils. Uncertainty about the specific language and terminology being used in relation to the task set added to their difficulties and to their lack of achievement in this lesson.
131. In Key Stage 1, and in Year 7, the teaching is mostly sound. Of the four lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, one was good, two were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Even where the teaching is good, the teacher was constantly having to focus the pupils' attention on the task. Where teachers are less skilled, or experienced, the extent of this shortcoming becomes more pronounced and limits pupils' achievements. In Year 7, in the lessons observed, the good quality of teachers' practical classroom skills was undermined by their lack of specialist subject knowledge.
132. The subject is very effectively led and managed and this has a significant impact on raising standards. Clear priorities have guided and accelerated the subject's development since the last inspection. Achievement targets have been set; the curriculum reviewed; the learning resources strengthened and procedures for assessing and monitoring progress put in place. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is having a positive impact for most pupils. Developing a school numeracy strategy is identified as a top priority in the current school development plan, to which end the senior managers of the school, and governors, have committed, to good effect, significant levels of time and resources. A recent audit carried out by the subject coordinator to check progress in this respect reflects the school's commitment to self-evaluation. It also indicates that effective progress is being made and that teachers are more confident in their planning. It indicates, too, a need to ensure continued attention to achieving consistency in the implementation of new procedures. The priority now is to use the wealth of good practice in the school as a benchmark and model for establishing consistently high standards of planning, teaching and assessment across all classes, especially for the pupils who, on the evidence of the school's own monitoring systems, are significantly underachieving for their age.

## **SCIENCE**

133. Inspection findings show overall attainment at age seven to be below average. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of pupils achieve above the nationally expected standard for pupils of

this age. These findings broadly match the school's most recent national assessment results (1999) which were:

- well below average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - well above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
134. The wide gap between the higher and lower-attaining pupils reflects the number of pupils who have particular needs, including language needs, which makes it difficult for them to reach average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. Standards achieved in the different attainment targets show the number of pupils exceeding the national standard to be well above average for 'Life Processes and Living Things' and 'Physical Processes'; above average for 'Materials' and average for 'Experimental and Investigative Science'.
135. Attainment at age 11, on the basis of inspection evidence, is average. This demonstrates a significant improvement since the last inspection and broadly matches the school's 1999 test results which show standards to have been:
- close to the average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
  - above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
  - average in comparison with similar schools.
136. The reason for the lower number of pupils reaching the national standard is the high proportion pupils with English as an additional language. Analysis of pupils' completed tests show that many of them have difficulty in fully understanding some of the language used in the questions set. Nevertheless, overall, the trend since 1997 has been one of consistent improvement, matching improvements nationally. Boys perform slightly better than girls.
137. Standards in Year 7 are good in all aspects of the curriculum apart from experimental and investigative science where standards are average.
138. By age 12, pupils achievement and progress are good. In Key Stage 1, they are sound. In Key Stage 2, there is a noticeable acceleration in pupils' progress over time. This is partly attributable to the new scheme of work and much more detailed medium-term planning. The inclusion of experimental and investigative science within planning is a central factor in raising standards, incorporating good opportunities for developing mathematical skills. There is still insufficient emphasis on providing pupils with investigative experience in all key stages. The school gives appropriate attention to literacy, but in Key Stage 1 especially, staff do not give enough time to using key words. Pupils' learning and progress do not get enough good quality visual resources to ensure they link vocabulary with scientific ideas. As a result, progress for a significant minority of the pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1 where experimental science is a relatively new experience, is not as good as it should be. Throughout the school, there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to speak clearly and thoughtfully in order to link practical findings to scientific ideas. For example, when such time is given to pupils in Year 6, they improve their understanding of lung capacity through clear and precise use of language.
139. Pupils are developing good skills in Year 7 and make good progress. They achieve well in lessons. Pupils use information and communication technology effectively in producing a very good summary of acids and alkalies in the form of graphs on the computer. Similarly, they are very proud of their research into human body organs and systems which they have produced as homework. The result is good gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Currently, these basic skills are not incorporated into the school's long-term planning to help ensure that pupils build on them year by year.
140. Teaching in all three key stages is good overall. This matches the quality of learning in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 but not in Key Stage 1 where the high proportion of pupils with specific learning needs limits the progress they make, in spite of the good teaching they receive. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, finding lively and interesting ways to put scientific ideas over to pupils. Pupils gain good practical and number skills when dropping water onto different fabrics, in order to decide which will be most suitable for making an umbrella. As a result of good teaching, pupils engage in useful discussion about waterproof materials, developing interesting scientific ideas. Well-chosen sequences of activities on the nature of sound enable pupils to deduce the link between vibration and the sounds made.



Some lively and well-paced teaching allows pupils to gain a good understanding of separating solids from liquids.

141. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. In the best lessons, this extends to high expectations for gains in the use of language. For example, the majority of pupils in Year 7 use scientific terminology fluently, distinguishing between related processes of respiration and breathing. In another lesson observed, excellent monitoring of pupils by the teacher and a parent governor was influential in raising standards of writing. Consequently they gain confidence in using appropriate scientific terminology. In general, pupils have good work routines and behave well, especially the older pupils. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 find concentration more difficult and need regular supervision to keep them involved. This detracts from their achievement during lessons.
142. Planning is good in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 and sound in Key Stage 1. The school's common approach to short-term planning ensures learning intentions are made clear to pupils at the start of lessons. Some variation in quality arises from the clarity with which the objectives make clear to pupils what skills as well as knowledge they will acquire. For example, a good lesson in Year 2 helped pupils understand that materials change when heated but the learning intention did not include the importance of key words associated with the idea of chemical change, even though pupils engaged in good discussion of such words. Very good planning in Year 4 ensures that pupils are being analytical, asking questions and considering evidence, resulting in good quality writing.
143. Teachers assess pupils' work and satisfactorily monitor progress over time. They do not always make best use of assessments to plan work for pupils with particular needs, including those with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. For example, assessments made during reception are not sufficiently used to plan work for pupils as they transfer to Year 1. While always ready to provide support for pupils needing extra help, not all teachers use adequate strategies, based on their prior knowledge of pupils' attainment and progress, when planning their lessons to meet these pupils' needs.
144. Teachers manage pupils well. Relationships with pupils are consistently good. Teachers are calm and quietly effective, encouraging pupils to persevere when they find work difficult and praising their achievements. Teachers prepare learning assistants well, working productively with them. When other adults such as parents and governors visit lessons, pupils are well supported. Such help contributes positively to the progress pupils make, especially those needing additional support and encouragement.
145. In general, teachers use learning resources well, enabling pupils to acquire appropriate practical skills. However, in some cases equipment is rather limited in quantity and this has a negative effect on standards reached. Examples of lessons where better resources would have improved standards were the separation of solids from liquids. The number of funnels available was too low. Most classrooms have stimulating displays that support learning and illustrate the value teachers place on the work pupils achieve, as highlighted in a display illustrating how pupils have researched useful facts and painted the planets.
146. Overall, the subject is well led and managed. Raising standards is consistently pursued and is effectively realised for most pupils. It is still not effective enough in ensuring that the lower-attaining pupils are given sufficient opportunities to reach their potential.

## **ART**

147. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 are above nationally expected standards and well above in Year 7. The majority of pupils in all key stages achieve well in lessons. Many of the older pupils make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Overall, this represents a considerable improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 and Year 7 since the last inspection when they were judged to be average.
148. The work seen, both completed and that on display, is of a high standard. Pupils gain experience of using a wide variety of media and techniques, both in two- and three-

dimensional activities. They experiment successfully with pastels, crayons, collage, printing, mosaic and computer generation. In Year 3, for example, they have opportunities to explore the mixing of paint, as in the pictures of moon shadows. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieved good standards of work when studying Aboriginal art with the artist in residence and Year 5 experimented with printing techniques with an artist in residence. Pupils successfully explore the art forms of different cultures and religions such as symmetrical Islamic patterns, intricate traditional Hindu hand patterns and the colourful mural of Vishnu and Lakshmi riding Garuda. Pupils also study the different artistic styles and techniques represented in the work of artists such as Van Gogh, Arvazoffski, Hiroshinge, Monet, Grimshaw and Turner. The pictures in imitation of Turner show an understanding of his attempt at expressing light. By Year 7, pupils have developed a wide range of skills and art as a means of recording findings in a project.

149. Teaching is good in all three key stages. This helps to explain the rise in standards at Key Stage 2 and Year 7 since the last inspection. Improved teaching, especially in respect of short-term planning, has led to improved achievement and better progress over time.
150. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject which enables them to focus on teaching a diverse range of skills. For example, pupils are encouraged to select the most appropriate size of felt tip pen when drawing and colouring. Lessons are generally well planned and the teachers have a clear idea of what they wish the pupils to achieve. However, in a few lessons too much time is spent on explanation and not enough on the task so that pupils become restless. When the teaching is at its best, pupils are keen to share their achievements with the class. Most enjoy the subject and work hard, including the pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Both of these groups respond well to the challenge of practical work. They are creative and apply themselves intently to the tasks and opportunities provided.
151. Pupils work well together in Key Stage 1, sharing crayons and paints happily. Good teaching enables them to learn how to co-operate and to evaluate each other's work as well as to acquire knowledge and skills. In Key Stage 2, there is a good stress on group work, for example, in the project on the Heartstone window. The effect is to enhance pupils' abilities to express opinions and views about the different qualities of the work they produce. Teachers manage classes well and make good use of support staff to assist pupils who need extra help. Pupils' sketchbooks are used to monitor and record progress. Teachers then effectively employ this assessment information to extend pupils' skills. Photographs are taken of pupils' work but these are not adopted as the basis for a portfolio of achievement.
152. The subject is very effectively managed by the co-ordinator. She has a great enthusiasm for art which she successfully transmits to other members of the staff, to the benefit of their teaching and pupils' learning. As a result, the subject has a high profile in the school and this is used to give the classrooms and display areas a rich vitality and colour. Pupils' learning is consistently enhanced, both directly and indirectly, through the emphasis placed on the subject throughout the school. They are always surrounded by examples of their own and other people's creative talents. Art also successfully supports many areas of the curriculum; for example, the death masks in the Year 7 study of the French Revolution. The subject's contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also particularly effective. All in all, the school has been highly successful in creating an environment in which art contributes significantly to the ethos of the school and to the self-esteem, learning and achievement of its pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

153. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection. As a result, no judgement on teaching in this subject is made. Evidence from pupils' completed work indicates that standards are generally satisfactory in all three key stages. This matches the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Following the introduction of the literacy and numeracy periods, the time allocated to the subject has been reduced. This has been appropriately handled to ensure that the subject is properly covered and taught. The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator who has carefully identified activities which provide for the progressive development of technological skills.

154. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected nationally at this age. Planning indicates that pupils are provided with an appropriate range of experiences during the key stage. Pupils, in Year 1, use different techniques with wood and fabric when they stitch felt to make fabric collages of pieces of fruit and, with help, create wooden picture frames. Pupils' drawings in Year 2 demonstrate an emerging understanding of the design process when they plan to make emergency vehicles from recycled materials. They paint and decorate their models with care but their skills in joining materials are weaker. This is a shortcoming that was identified at the time of the previous inspection. Photographs of previous work, for example, with wood and clay, indicate that pupils achieve satisfactory standards. There is no noticeable difference in achievement between different groups of pupils. Completed work indicates good levels of interest and motivation by the vast majority of pupils.
155. At Key Stage 2, standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating are suitably developed. Pupils examine their model spacecraft critically and identify aspects for improvement. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' designing and making skills were found to be under-developed. By the end of the key stage, pupils draw careful designs for a wooden frame and pulley system to raise a weight to a given height. Appropriately-developed design skills are also found in the work of Year 7 pupils where standards continue to be similar those generally found at this stage. The subject is well linked with work in art, history, geography and science. Year 7 design and make model guillotines, while Year 5 design Tudor knot gardens and make wooden frames for scenes depicting different climates. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to experience food technology; Year 1 pupils design pizzas while older pupils learn the conventional way of setting out recipes for baked apples and Christmas cakes. Again, there is no evidence of significant variations in levels of achievement across different groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Pupils show increasing ability to bring all their knowledge and skills to bear on the tasks set them, including their computing skills.
156. There are good curriculum links with the High School. Pupils in Year 7 are provided with an excellent opportunity to experience workshop sessions there during the summer term. This helps both the teachers and pupils to gain the benefits of a greater range of resources and equipment through which to develop their own knowledge and skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

157. Due to the timing of lessons and of topic cycles, no teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 or Year 7. Inspection evidence comes from Key Stage 2 lessons, scrutiny of work, displays, photographs, planning and discussion with pupils. This indicates that standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and Year 7 are in line with nationally expected standards. This matches the standards found at the time of the last inspection. As on that occasion, there is no indication of significant differences in rates of progress and achievement between different groups of pupils. Where pupils have acquired strong basic literacy and numeracy skills, their work tends to be of better quality than where these skills are less well-developed. Virtually all pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately for their age and ability.
158. All classes are well equipped with maps and globes and even in the reception classes children are becoming familiar with places on maps; for example, in saying where everyone in the class comes from. In Year 3, pupils extract information from aerial photographs. Higher-attaining pupils interpret the visual information, showing an awareness of how people use their environment by creating posters advertising a holiday in "Sunny Torquay", selecting key features for advertising. Lower-attaining pupils draw pictures of features that they see on the photographs. In Year 5, pupils research and find information about the weather, presenting this information to the rest of the class. They know the points of the compass and most know about co-ordinates and two-figure map references. At the end of Year 6, they go on a field trip and study the River Thames. They have real opportunities to develop their map-reading skills and experience orienteering.
159. In Year 7, the residential field trip incorporates a mountain, valley and river study with more map work, use of six-figure map references and orienteering. By this stage, a significant number of pupils develop good skills and can apply these in their practical work. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils understand the human contribution to their environment and

the relationship between human and physical geography. They discuss issues, interpret data from maps and contrast their findings with their own environment. They make very good use of the opportunities provided to undertake fieldwork.

160. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In 1996, some lessons in Key Stage 1 and 2 were unsatisfactory. All the teaching observed at Key Stage 2 during this inspection was satisfactory. Its strong points are the good level of organisation; the calm, task-orientated environment; good open questioning; praise for pupils' achievement and planning that takes account of the full ability range in the class. In these situations, pupils are well motivated towards work, challenged to think about what they are doing, have a good sense of achievement through praise, and confidence that they are making appropriate progress. Such teaching ensures that the pupils enjoy the subject and work with good concentration individually, in pairs and in groups. Presentation is approached with care. Pupils enjoy drawing pictures to complement their work; for example, the weather studies in Year 5. Some groups bring information from home. Pupils' use of the computer to gain and present information is increasing in line with the encouragement and skills provided by the teachers. All this reflects pupils' growing independence as learners as well as their interest in, and application towards, their studies.
161. Where teaching, though satisfactory, could be improved is in teachers' planning, which occasionally is not precise enough. Insufficient focus on learning objectives results in a lack of pace and direction with pupils becoming unsettled and unchallenged. This is highlighted with the pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, who sometimes have difficulties working independently because of their insecure grasp of the language and the reading of the text. Where directed support for these pupils is not available, they can lose interest. In classes where there are pupils with autism, their tendency to move around when the teacher is talking to the whole class, distracts pupils' attention.
162. The long-term plan for the subject shows a good structured build-up of skills, attention to continuity and progression throughout, stressing the importance of skills' development. The benefits of this are to be seen in the improved consistency in the quality of teaching and the improved subject knowledge and confidence of teachers. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator in terms of monitoring of teachers' planning. However, the lack of a school-wide assessment scheme for the subject, to provide a basis for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the subject, is a weakness. It is intended to introduce this in the forthcoming curriculum review.

## HISTORY

163. During the time of the inspection, it was not possible to see lessons at Key Stage 1 and Year 7. Judgements are made from Key Stage 2 lessons, from photographic evidence, work scrutiny, wall displays, and discussion with pupils and teachers. These indicate that standards by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 match those expected nationally and in Year 7, that standards are above those found in most schools for pupils of this age. These findings are in line with those reported at the last inspection. For the majority of pupils, achievement and learning are sound in Key Stages 1 and good in Key Stage 2 and Year 7. A significant minority of higher-attaining pupils makes good progress in each key stage.
164. Evidence for pupils' progress and learning is highlighted in the quality of display around the classrooms and the school generally. That pupils enjoy the subject is highlighted in the high quality of many of these displays; for example, the display on the French Revolution in the Year 7 classes. The extent to which this incorporates a wide range of skills from other subjects also highlights the degree to which pupils are expected to use and apply skills and knowledge from one subject area to another. In history, this is particularly impressive. With the reduction in time allocated to the subject as a result of the introduction of the literacy and numeracy "hours", the school has been highly creative in ensuring that the knowledge, skills and understandings embodied in learning history are preserved and enhanced.
165. The effectiveness of this development is well illustrated in the literacy work on 'shipwrecks', the art work centred on the Tudor Rose, newspaper articles on the French Revolution produced on computer Publisher Program and the projects about features of life in medieval times comparing the serfs' lifestyle with that of the baron. Some projects include glossaries and bibliographies. Pupils use the internet and CD-ROMs to access information. Implicit in these studies are the abilities of pupils to understand the nature of evidence, its limitations and how to interpret it. They know how to compare and contrast different sources of evidence and separate fact from fiction. Good use is made of a wide variety of visits which are carefully linked into pupils' studies; for example, to Mountfitchet Castle, Hampton Court and the British Museum.
166. Evidence from teachers' plans indicates that teaching at Key Stage 1 is at least sound. At Key Stages 2 and Year 7, teaching is good. There is some variability in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 which is likewise reflected in the progress pupils make. Some high-class lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. The teachers' own knowledge and commitment are at once evident in such lessons. Skilful presentation captures the essence of historical situations. Pupils are always actively involved in their own learning, constantly challenged and made to think. An excellent balance is achieved between pupils acquiring factual knowledge and the learning and applying of skills. Questioning is astute and penetrating: "What if?", "How does this evidence tell us that ....?".
167. Having decided that different texts present conflicting facts, the best teaching requires pupils to create their own questions to test out on a range of sources; for example, "Other people discovered America before Christopher Columbus", or "Christopher Columbus benefited from the trips". Teachers also use time-restricted tasks which keep the pace moving and encourage pupils to have a sharp focus on their work. The short plenary draws together successfully the pupils' achievements and asks pupils to evaluate these in terms of the lessons' learning objectives. Teaching and learning are powerfully bonded and the resulting achievement is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
168. When the teaching is less effective, albeit sound, teachers' knowledge and understanding are not as strong or convincing. The result is a less rich and stimulating experience for pupils. The focus is more on information than questions. Pupils' learning is somewhat over directed and too little room is made for pupils to "imagine" and to try to work things out for themselves. Instead, the tasks tend to ask pupils to recycle information that they have already learned in ways that do not extend their thinking and learning. In these situations while most pupils make sound progress, those capable of higher-attainment do not consistently make the progress they should.
169. The subject is well managed with good monitoring of planning supported by development points for teachers. There is a good emphasis in the planned curriculum on developing skills.

However, the range in the quality of teaching indicates that there is still work to be done in ensuring that greater consistency is achieved in matching the central plans to the teaching in individual classrooms.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

170. Attainment is in line with nationally expected standards for pupils age 7 years. For pupils, age 11 years, standards are above those expected nationally and continue to be so for pupils in Year 7. This broadly matches the standards found at the time of the last inspection.
171. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils successfully produce a series of sentences to develop their familiarity with the keyboard. Good links with the literacy hour ensure they correct any mistakes and that the final writing is error free. Higher-attaining pupils construct a number of good sentences, using interesting adjectives as they gain more confidence. The majority of pupils has good keyboard skills. Below average pupils are slower in the use of the keyboard but show good perseverance in correcting errors in spelling with good support from adults.
172. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know how to design a spreadsheet from given information and use a formula to total a series of numbers. They show good dexterity in operating the program. Pupils with English as an additional language reach similar standards to others in the class. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in dexterity with good adult support.
173. Overall, pupils make good progress. Pupils are gaining good levels of skill during their time in school. Effective curriculum planning is giving pupils regular access to the computer suite. This impacts positively on the quality of provision across the curriculum. Very good display shows how pupils increase their skills in using an art programme from reception to Year 2. Pupils handle operations competently, showing that they know how to use capital letters and full stops. In Year 3, pupils develop ideas in 'symmetry' through a drawing programme. In Year 4, employing 'LOGO' they predict what a screen turtle will do when given a series of instructions. Year 5 increase their abilities in LOGO, conveying good skills from a display of 'house' drawings. Year 7 show an increasing capability designing a format for analysing a school survey by means of a spreadsheet.
174. In the lessons observed, teaching was good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good in Key Stage 3. A strength of the teaching lies in the extent to which the new computer suite is used to develop skills and to ensure that pupils apply them to a good range of subjects in the curriculum. A good feature of the teaching is the way that the learning intentions for each year group, and the school, are now planned in order to ensure that the work continues to be well matched to pupils' needs and abilities as they become more competent. In practice, however, this goal is not fully realised. For example, the planning for the youngest pupils in Year 1 does not always sufficiently cater for their needs.
175. Teachers and supporting adults have improved their own skills since the last inspection and, collectively, have good subject knowledge and use it well to enable pupils make good progress. For example, for Year 1 pupils, information and communication technology are linked into their literacy lessons when they are shown how to use correct operations for capital letters. Teachers use the 'Big Book' well to show how authors change the case of words, particularly for titles on the front page. Good review of learning helps Year 4 pupils to assess their own level of confidence in 'LOGO' when deciding how to proceed in the next lesson. Teachers in Year 5 have good strategies for helping pupils review their own progress when working with the screen turtle to produce a sequence of letters, helping them to plan their own objectives for the next lesson.
176. On the whole, teachers have high expectations of pupils and this raises pupils' own aspirations to achieve well. Teachers manage pupils very well, fostering good relationships in all year groups and motivating them to work productively. In consequence, pupils are eager to use computers. They all move sensibly and safely to the computer area, not wasting any time. They are generally well motivated and in most cases their determination to succeed is impressive. Attitudes of older pupils are very good. Many use the computers in additional time. Pupils in Year 7 are proud of their production of pages for the school web site.

177. Improvements in the subject are the result of good management allied to a determination to give the subject a higher profile in the curriculum. The development of the computer-suite reflects this determination and makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements in a number of subjects. However, there is room for further improvement in this respect. Older pupils in the school do not make their own decisions about when and how to use the computer to enhance their work in subjects such as the application of data handling to mathematics, science and geography. The school is aware that the "next step" is to ensure that the monitoring of planning is supported by appropriate processes for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the subject. Currently, there is no systematic whole-school assessment scheme.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

178. Standards in French in Year 7 are above nationally expected levels. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with those expected nationally. The pupils experience a thorough grounding in the language with a good balance of learning across listening and speaking, reading and writing. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and her enthusiasm and organisation for teaching the subject has impacted well on pupils' learning. This is underlined by the display incorporating pupils' written accounts of substantial length about their families, illustrated with photographs. Well-presented folders of topic work and well-produced leaflets about Harrow, for the French visitor to the area, highlight similar qualities of pupil achievement.
179. In class, pupils speak French with appropriate fluency and authentic accents, using colloquial phrases to converse on topics that they have covered so far. They also have opportunities in lesson time and free time to work independently in groups to rehearse simple scenarios and record their own voices. Tapes and a recorder are left out for their use. Pupils have acquired, and are systematically building up, a useful vocabulary, making good use of French dictionaries. They have homework tasks each week and those few who are unable to complete them at home work in their free time to do so. The standard of homework produced is very good.
180. The teaching overall is very good. Lessons have very good pace, moving on through a series of short tasks which keep the pupils interested and active in their learning. There are good opportunities for revisiting already acquired knowledge and using it through the lesson, with an added incentive of earning points for contributions. Teachers' planning shows that the pace of acquiring new language is fast but at the same time effective planning ensures that pupils of lower ability achieve success and gain confidence through playing games and having opportunities for practice. As a result, pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress over time. Most pupils enjoy lessons, participate fully and find it fun to learn through games, role-play and other activities. Pupils work well collaboratively and help each other when working in groups. They expect to work independently and do so without prompting.

## **MUSIC**

181. Few class music lessons took place during the inspection. Available evidence indicates that standards of achievement at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have been sustained since the last inspection. They remain up to the standard expected nationally of pupils aged seven and eleven. On the evidence of the lesson observed in Year 7, pupils achieve above average standards. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection.
182. Pupils in Key Stage 1 benefit from sound teaching, as indicated in the first-school song practice. The teachers join in and their enthusiasm is transmitted to the pupils. Evidence from a brief class lesson, shows pupils to be eager to take part and making satisfactory progress in developing an understanding of rhythm.
183. At Key Stage 2, pupils gain appropriate experience in composing and performing and achieve satisfactorily. By the end of the key stage, pupils sing two part songs confidently and use percussion instruments appropriately as an accompaniment. Most pupils work sensibly and, where taught by a music specialist, make good progress. A few boys lack self-discipline and find it difficult to work in small groups without close supervision. As a result, their progress is

slower than it might be. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, have full access to the curriculum and in some lessons these pupils receive good support from the classroom assistants. Both groups of pupils make satisfactory progress.

184. In Year 7, pupils achieve well and make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Most pupils sustain concentration very well and show considerable enthusiasm as they learn to use keyboards. They begin to understand formal notation and enjoy playing familiar tunes. They make good progress in learning different chords and work well together to improve their work.
185. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is sound; good in Key Stage 2 and very good in Year 7. Teachers, generally, have high expectations and good management skills. The best lessons move at a brisk pace and rates of learning are good. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. A significant minority of pupils has good instrumental skills, preparing a group performance, incorporating flutes, keyboard and voices. The teacher uses a video camera to record performances, valuing the achievement of all groups while providing a useful assessment record. Planning is more effective in the middle-school. By Year 7, a very good variety of teaching methods is used which enables pupils to improve their own knowledge of, and skills in, the subject. The result is a greater motivation and interest in the subject amongst the older pupils.
186. The school has traditionally provided pupils with a good range of opportunities, both within lessons and after school, to extend their musical skills. This continues to be the case. An enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator ensures that music effectively supports the school's aims and values across the full range of its provision. Music is now a valued part of assemblies. A school choir and orchestra provide pupils, and the school, with a focus for links with the community. They also provide pupils with a valuable outlet for their creative talents. The subject makes a strong and vital contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. It is well managed in terms of seeking to realise the school's goal of promoting high educational standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

187. The standards achieved at the end of all three key stages match those expected nationally. This is a similar picture to the one reported at the time of the last inspection. The whole-school plan ensures that all areas of the curriculum: gymnastics, dance, games, outdoor adventure and swimming, receive appropriate coverage.
188. The physical activity observed throughout the school is of a sound standard. Pupils learn many physical skills and put them together in sequences of movements. For example, in Key Stage 2 pupils link travelling on different parts of the body with forward rolls. In Key Stage 1, pupils successfully link the muscular activity associated with squeezing or stretching a balloon to form a dance. The standard of performance is sound overall. The majority of pupils are competent swimmers by the time they leave the school. Of this year's cohort of Year 6 pupils, just over three-quarters have achieved the nationally expected standard of being able to swim 25 metres unassisted. A sizeable number are very competent swimmers. These include pupils with water survival awards.
189. Teaching is sound in all three key stages. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned with appropriate warm up/cool down periods. The learning intentions are explained clearly at the start of lessons so that pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Most pupils behave well and do their best. A few misbehave and appropriate action is taken. The majority achieve appropriately in lessons and work safely. They make satisfactory progress. However, not enough scope is given to the higher-attaining pupils to extend their skills. The ability to evaluate and improve their own performance is not sufficiently emphasised.
190. Monitoring of skills and pupils' progress takes place at a class level. Apart from swimming and athletics, the school has no secure and consistent means of evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The school's commitment to using physical education as a way of providing pupils with opportunities to develop socially and morally is well planned and



managed. There are after-school sessions for pupils in the middle-school in netball, football, athletics and for both the first and middle school gymnastics. Links with community are fostered through participation in local leagues and events. The manner in which the school sets its standards through whole-school recognition of pupils' achievements was impressively demonstrated in the assembly that acknowledged the success of the girls' Year 6 netball in a local event during the inspection.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

191. Standards meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Year 7. Pupils achieve well in all three key stages and make good progress by the time they leave the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory in all three key stages.
192. Pupils have a good understanding of the religious practices and beliefs of the major faiths and are encouraged to look for similarities, rather than differences, in their studies of them. They treat each other's beliefs with respect. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. In Key Stage 1, most lessons are oral, involving talk and reflection about events relevant to the pupils' own experiences. The story of Joseph's multicoloured coat was transposed to be about a pair of trainers, with pupils able to relate to the messages contained in the story. Feelings of jealousy and anger are recorded as speech bubbles. Another class has explored the parable of the lost sheep, with pupils successfully able to explore feelings of loneliness.
193. In Key Stage 2 and Year 7, pupils are encouraged to consider different religions through approaches to common themes such as holy books and customs. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 know that the Bible is made up of different books and of the Old and New Testaments. They understand, too, that symbolism plays an important part in all religions; for example, pupils know that the candle represents the light to show us the way. Sessions for the older pupils in which they explore their ideas and feelings towards moral and social issues effectively support pupils' learning in lessons. They successfully relate principles of right and wrong to examples from their own school community. In expressing their ideas and opinions about these, they reveal a growing sense of moral responsibility, personal maturity and spirituality.
194. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was sound in Key Stage 1, good in Key Stage 2 and very good in Year 7. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is the responsibility of the class teacher but in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 is undertaken by two part-time teachers. The latter have a strong knowledge of the subject. A few of the class teachers are less confident in their own knowledge but benefit from having specialists in their midst. Most have a sound subject knowledge. In the best lessons, the material is well planned and the learning intentions are clear. Teachers successfully gain the confidence of pupils, a mark of which is the way that pupils feel able to share their beliefs and feelings without inhibition. Respecting and valuing each other's contributions is a strong attribute of the best teaching. So, in Year 6, a pupil with special needs is given an important role by his peers in a group playlet about the joy of giving and receiving. Pupils are encouraged to work together. In Year 7, this continues after school into collaborative research at home. Evidence from teachers' planning in Key Stage 1 displays less variety in the approaches used to link the subject to pupils' own experiences.
195. The subject is well led. Pupils' progress and achievements are monitored. In Year 7 this includes a record of achievement by video. On the other hand, the lack of an assessment scheme for the subject limits the extent to which teaching and learning can be effectively evaluated across the school as a whole.