

INSPECTION REPORT

VICTORIA C of E FIRST SCHOOL

Berkhamsted

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117423

Headteacher: Mrs J Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Catlin
(OFSTED No: 21685)

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 November 2000

Inspection number: 224209

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Prince Edward Street Berkhamsted Herts
Postcode:	HP4 3HA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend M Bonney
Date of previous inspection:	February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jenny Catlin (OFSTED No: 21685)	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Information and communication technology	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Art	How well are pupils taught?
		Children aged under five	How well is the school managed?
			Equal opportunities
			English as an additional language
Candy Kalms (OFSTED No: 9275)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Collier (OFSTED No: 7593)	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical education	
Loretta Watson (OFSTED No: 23010)	Team inspector	English	
		Special Educational Needs	
		Design and technology	
		Music	

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Victoria Church of England First school has 216 pupils on roll and is about the average size for schools of this type. The proportion of pupils currently claiming entitlement to free school meals is just over 2 per cent, this is well below the national average. Five pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a higher proportion than in most schools. There are 44 part-time children in the nursery and their overall attainment on entry is average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, just over 20 per cent, is about average. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need, this figure is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Victoria First school is an effective and improving school. Standards in reading and writing are above national averages and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Teaching is good overall and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Good leadership and management by the headteacher give a clear direction to the work of the school. The value for money provided by the school, taking account of the good improvement since the previous inspection and its overall effectiveness, is good.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above average at the end of KS1
- Good standards in art and design
- Attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good
- Provision for pupils' social development is very good
- Nursery provision is very good
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are good
- The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well

What could be improved

- Monitoring and evaluation of standards by subject co-ordinators requires further development
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 so that pupils achieve good rather than satisfactory progress
- Challenge for more able pupils across the school
- Progress made by Foundation Stage children in the reception class
- Information passed on to new class teachers at the beginning of each academic year about what pupils know, can do and understand

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The areas for improvement are outweighed by the many things that the school is doing well. The previous inspection, in February 1996, found Victoria First School to have purposeful leadership with well-behaved pupils. The majority of the key issues for action identified at the time of the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. The thorough planning of the curriculum ensures that the full range of the National Curriculum is covered; there is improved use of assessment to influence planning; standards in information and communication technology, design and technology and aspects of both writing and mathematics in both key stages have improved; there are more opportunities for experimental and investigative science and there are effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. Therefore, the overall improvement in the school since the last inspection is good and the school's capacity for further improvement is also good.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The above chart shows that standards in reading and writing in the school were well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999. In mathematics standards were above the national average. When compared with similar schools, i.e. those schools that have the same proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in reading are above the average for these schools, in writing standards are well above average and in mathematics standards are average.

When the school's end of Key Stage 1 results in earlier years are taken into account they show a consistent pattern of results that are well above national averages in reading and writing and above in mathematics. The school has been very successful in addressing the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The inspection findings judge that current achievement in reading, writing and mathematics and science is above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory. While standards overall are good, there are a number of higher achieving pupils who could achieve even higher standards, particularly in mathematics, if their progress was more effectively monitored and tracked through the school. Targets set for English and mathematics are appropriately challenging and include an increase in the proportion of pupils expected to achieve both the expected level 2 and the higher level 3. The school is very likely to achieve these targets. Pupils have maintained these above average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4 although their rate of progress is not so good. Pupils attain average standards in science at the end of Year 4.

Overall, standards in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, music, and physical education are satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very enthusiastic and want to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of classrooms, is very good and makes a positive contribution to their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are kind and helpful to each other and listen politely. The teachers' and other adults' respectful manner to pupils provides a very good model, enabling pupils to explore possibilities for learning and living together in a caring environment.
Attendance	Attendance rates are broadly in line with the national average. A few pupils take holidays during term time and this has an effect on the overall attendance figures. Pupils arrive punctually for school.

The school successfully achieves its aim for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils are

courteous to each other and friendly to staff. They relate very positively to each other and work very well together in lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Satisfactory

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.

Across the school, the quality of teaching is good, with some very good and excellent features. It is excellent in 3 per cent of lessons, very good in 16 per cent, good in 43 per cent and satisfactory in 32 per cent. There were two unsatisfactory lessons out of a total of 37. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when one third of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is at its best in the nursery class and in one of the Years 1 and 2 classes. The skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively planned for and are taught well and enable pupils to make overall good progress in Key Stage 1. Particular strengths in excellent and very good teaching include high expectations of pupils and the sharing of learning objectives with pupils, so that they are very clear about what they are to learn and how successful they have been. These strengths in teaching enable pupils to make good and often very good progress. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers' lesson planning effectively addresses individual needs and therefore enables these pupils to make good progress. The main weaknesses in teaching are that, in some classes, the learning needs of the most able pupils are not always effectively addressed, the pace in a few lessons lacks sufficient rigour and teachers' expectations about what pupils are able to know, understand and do are not high enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has developed satisfactory breadth and balance in the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is efficient and committed. Teachers and classroom assistants work hard to meet the needs of these pupils and to promote their self-esteem.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Overall, these pupils make good progress. There are suitable systems in place to monitor their attainment.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Social development is very good and moral development is good. Pupils clearly understand what is right and wrong. They are helped to work together harmoniously and effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school with fair and consistent management of pupils' behaviour. Procedures for assessment and tracking progress are not yet sufficiently rigorous.

Overall, the school works well with parents. Particular strengths of the curriculum are English, mathematics, science and art. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. All statutory requirements, including collective worship, are fully met.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher is good and the school's aims and values are well promoted.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. Governors have developed an effective, strategic role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have started to analyse and evaluate standards in their subjects in order to identify strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The school's spending decisions relate well to the school's priorities for improvement and the benefit of the pupils. The principles of best value are applied to major spending decisions.

There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll and all are qualified to teach pupils of primary age. The school's accommodation provides a pleasant and cheerful environment and the number and range of resources is good. The headteacher and governors formally evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the spending decisions against standards of work produced by the pupils to ensure good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school • Their child is making good progress • Behaviour in the school is good • The school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best • The school is helping their child become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their child is getting on • The school to work more closely with parents • A more interesting range of activities outside lessons

The inspection team supports the positive view parents have of the school. There was, however, a minority of parents who did not feel the school works closely with parents, did not feel they received sufficient information about progress and felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum. Inspection evidence supports some of the issues expressed by parents but not all their concerns are justified. For example, the information provided to parents about their child's progress is very similar to that offered by most schools although some of the concerns expressed about the computerised format of the annual written reports are justified. Parental concerns about the range of activities beyond the classroom are noted; however, the inspection found the school to offer a reasonable range of activities beyond the classroom. These include visits to places of interest, visitors to school as well as providing a range of extra-curricular activities appropriate for the number and age of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of children aged under five, when they enter the nursery, is average for children of this age. By the time children reach the age of five, the majority are likely to achieve the nationally expected early learning goals in the six areas of learning known as communications, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development.
2. Overall, children make very good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is above average due to their previous overall good progress. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 2 in reading and writing was very high in comparison with the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was well above the national average. In mathematics, test results at the expected level 2 were below the national average but at the higher level 3 they were well above the national average. When compared to similar schools, results in reading were above the average for these schools, in writing they were well above average and in mathematics they were average. In science, teacher assessment results in 1999 were well above average at level 2 and they were above national averages at the higher level 3. When the school's end of Key Stage 1 results for 1999 are compared with 1996 they show results consistently above national averages. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
3. Recently published test results for 2000 show that attainment in reading and writing at the expected level 2 is well above the national average and at the higher level 3 it is above average for reading and average for writing. In mathematics, test results show that attainment is above average at both level 2 and the higher level 3. Attainment in science, as assessed by teachers, is above average for the expected level 2 but below average for the higher level 3.
4. These results are overall good for reading, writing and mathematics. However, the levels of attainment for higher achieving pupils could be better. Pupils enter Year 1 with above average attainment and while many achieve above average levels by age seven, a significant number do not, particularly in mathematics. There are various reasons for this, one is the slowing of progress in the reception year, another is that, although the quality of teaching is overall good in Key Stage 1, there are inconsistencies between classes. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, it is because lesson planning does not always effectively or consistently address the needs of higher achieving pupils to enable them to make good progress overall. While each cohort of pupils is a mix of different levels of ability, good assessment procedures in the school, and effective tracking of pupils through each class, would highlight areas of concern within different cohorts. Standards in English and mathematics are above average in Years 3 and 4. Standards in science are satisfactory.
5. The school's targets, set in conjunction with the local authority, were exceeded last year. Targets have been set for the next two years and represent a challenging but realistic increase in the number of pupils attaining national standards. The school is confident that, with the existing implementation of the literacy hour and numeracy strategy, they will achieve these targets and inspection evidence supports this view.
6. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress overall in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 both in the lessons observed and as seen in previously recorded work. In almost all lessons observed, progress was at least satisfactory and often good.
7. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 attain satisfactory standards and make sound progress in information and communication technology. They use the mouse with confidence to respond to word and number games and are aware of the different purposes of information and

- communication technology through their own word processing and construction of graphs.
8. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils attain good standards and make good progress in art. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are average and pupils make satisfactory progress.
 9. Pupils with special educational needs make overall good progress in relation to their targets. These targets include the development of their literacy and numeracy skills and also address behavioural difficulties when appropriate. This good progress reflects the finding during the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is effectively monitored and assessed against the targets on their individual education plans. Their self-esteem and confidence also improve as they move through the school. A few achieve or nearly achieve the national standard in English, mathematics and science at the age of seven.
 10. Higher attaining pupils in the school make satisfactory progress overall. As reported after the previous inspection, these pupils are not being sufficiently challenged to enable them to make good progress and achieve their full potential.
 11. Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, in mathematics and history. There are some strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills across the school and across subjects, for example, in design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes to learning. They behave very well in lessons and around the school; the relationship between pupils and between pupils and staff is good. These are strengths of the school and it is the combination of these factors that ensures a positive learning experience for all pupils.
13. Pupils with special educational needs are attentive and respond well to the support provided for them. They have a very positive attitude towards activities in which they are involved. They work hard to achieve their targets.
14. Pupils in the nursery establish very good working habits and quickly settle into school routines. They are happy, confident and motivated learners. Pupils at both key stages enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They are enthusiastic and well motivated, interested in their lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. This has a positive impact on the learning that takes place. Pupils are keen to ask and answer questions and contribute to discussions. For example, pupils in a Year 2 science lesson on light were keen to contribute examples of other sources of light.
15. The very good behaviour of pupils has a positive effect on the quality of life in the school and the learning that takes place. Pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour expected and respond well to the high expectations implicit in the school's ethos. Pupils generally play well together in the playground; they behave very well when they go swimming. Pupils work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour. Harassment and bullying in the school are rare. Around the school pupils are friendly and polite to each other and to adults, including visitors. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting unanimously agreed that behaviour in the school was good. The school has had no exclusions in the past year.
16. The relationships pupils establish are good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. In lessons the good relationships between pupils and their teachers make a positive contribution to their motivation and learning. Relationships with each other are good. Pupils play and work well together. They settle to work quickly and are able to work well independently, in small groups and in pairs. They share equipment and resources sensibly; in particular a Year 1 and 2 class sensibly shared mats in a physical education lesson. Pupils co-operate well sharing ideas, for example discussing how to divide cubes into equal groups in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have a very good relationship with each other and support staff.

17. Personal development is good. As pupils move through the school many listen carefully to each other during lessons and show respect for the feelings and values of others. This was seen in a number of discussions about Remembrance Day, and pupils in Year 1 and 2 listened carefully to each other when discussing feelings. In the classroom, pupils conscientiously carry out any responsibilities given to them. Pupils in Year 4 have additional areas of responsibility - ringing the bell in the morning and at lunchtime and organising the hall for assembly. Clubs are well supported by pupils in Years 3 and 4, and this helps develop their social skills. Pupils show their care for others through their involvement in a range of fund raising activities for charity.
18. Levels of attendance are broadly in line with the national average. A few pupils take holidays during term time and this does have an effect on the overall attendance figures. There is little unauthorised absence, the rate being below the national average. Pupils arrive punctually for school. The good attendance rates contribute to the learning that takes place.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Across the school, the quality of teaching is good, with some very good features. It is excellent in 3 per cent of lessons, very good in 16 per cent, good in 43 per cent and satisfactory in 32 per cent. There is only a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when one third of teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in literacy is good overall and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In numeracy, teaching is overall satisfactory but there are good aspects in Key Stage 1. There was also one excellent lesson seen with in a Key Stage 1 class.
20. The quality of teaching for the under-fives in the nursery is very good overall. In the reception class it is satisfactory overall with a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The very good teaching in the nursery has a positive impact on the children's attainment and enables them to make very good progress. The teacher and nursery nurse are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the needs of children aged under five and they know the children very well.
21. A strength of the teaching across the school is the quality of lesson planning which makes clear what pupils are to learn and how this will be evaluated. A further strength throughout the school is the good management of pupils to ensure they concentrate and do their best. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to, and a good understanding of, their own learning. In the best lessons, the planning includes details of how the class will be organised for particular purposes, which resources will be needed and the tasks to be allocated to other adults. The method of recording outcomes for each activity is suitably planned so that pupils can present their results in different ways and so demonstrate a variety of skills. Resources are tidily stored, clearly labelled and offer easy access for the teacher and pupils alike. Care is taken to ensure that the equipment is cared for and that pupils take responsibility for obtaining and clearing away resources. This contributes well to pupils' independent learning skills and to their moral development.
22. In the two lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory the weaknesses are in the use of time, which results in a slow pace to the lessons. Therefore, pupils are not actively engaged in the lesson and they fail to make the progress of which they are capable. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons, which also hinder the progress pupils make, are linked to work that does not effectively take account of the learning needs of individual pupils. This is particularly noticeable in Years 3 and 4, but also exists within Key Stage 1.
23. On occasions, groups are formed in order to give pupils experience of leadership and responsibility by helping other pupils, less skilled or knowledgeable than themselves, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development. The teachers use a variety of groupings, whether as a whole class, or by ability, friendship, pairs or individual. Decisions about the size and formation of teaching groups are based upon the nature of the subject or the learning needs of the pupils concerned or both. Often other adults are used in an instructional capacity with particular groups or individuals; they are well briefed and supported by the class teacher. In teachers' planning for teaching and learning a very considerable amount of time, both in and out of school, is spent on planning and marking of work. Teachers are aware of the need to obtain and use accurate assessment information in order to provide appropriately challenging work. There is

some good practice in evaluating the success of lessons by teachers and this is a distinct improvement since the previous inspection. The best practice includes identifying what progress individual pupils have made and how the methods and content for the next lesson need to be adjusted as a result. Overall, this is done well in Key Stage 1. However, the most able pupils are capable of greater progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. The work that they are sometimes asked to complete is, on occasions, more of the same exercise rather than an extension of their knowledge.

24. Overall, the skills of literacy are now effectively planned and taught and teachers are competent in the teaching of phonic skills. Opportunities to develop literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum are not always taken, mainly because they are rarely considered in lesson planning. The teaching of numeracy skills is generally satisfactory in both key stages. The quality of teachers' lesson plans has improved since the previous inspection; they now use the objectives set out in the literacy and numeracy frameworks and provide for good gains in pupils' learning, particularly in literacy. The early effective identification of individual needs enables pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2 to learn quickly to overcome difficulties experienced in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills such as spelling and numerical operations.
25. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum in all subjects. Teachers throughout the school encourage pupils to take reading books home. There is less emphasis on homework to support other subjects. It is not always clear what the expectations are for homework, both in regularity or quantity. Class teachers individually provide information to parents about homework. While much of this is clear and well presented, there are inconsistencies both in format and content. When this information is only passed to parents via notes on classroom doors it is not satisfactory because it excludes working parents from having equality of access to information. On occasions the setting of work in this area is inconsistent and is therefore not used effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics. A very positive aspect of teaching across the school is the very good classroom management and discipline, which all teachers maintain. There is a consistent approach to behaviour, which enhances the quality of pupils' learning. When marking pupils' work, teachers assess the work thoroughly and constructively and their comments are usually sufficiently diagnostic to help pupils to understand how to improve. There are some satisfactory medium-term written curriculum plans. These provide an effective framework for teachers' lesson planning and are intended to ensure progression across and through year groups.
26. Good teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Classroom assistants assigned to support individual pupils are usually suitably briefed and have positive working relationships with teachers and pupils. These assistants give good and committed support. Pupils are given work well matched to their needs both when inside the classroom and when they work in smaller withdrawn groups with special needs staff during literacy and numeracy hours. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed by the special needs co-ordinator in consultation with teachers and are kept readily available. Teaching in class lessons in the foundation subjects is suitably modified to suit the individual plans and differentiated tasks are provided to promote the learning of special needs pupils.

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

27. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and meets all statutory requirements. All aspects of science are now properly covered and this was a key issue from the last inspection that the school has fully addressed. The curriculum is thoroughly planned and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is a two-year rolling programme detailing the work that has to be taught each half-term in all subjects to ensure full curriculum coverage. Lessons are planned for the term or half-term ahead and then, in more detail, for the coming week. Clear learning objectives and opportunities for assessment are highlighted and most teachers evaluate their lessons, albeit rather generally, not often picking out, for example, particular difficulties that individual pupils have experienced.
28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers are well supported by a committed group of classroom assistants and by the part-time special educational

needs co-ordinator. More appropriate targets are now being set for pupils and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate fully in all school activities. However, there are a few examples of occasions when some pupils are withdrawn from literacy and numeracy hours in order to receive extra support. This procedure prevents these pupils from subsequently being able to fully integrate into these lessons. The new co-ordinator is currently reviewing these arrangements so that all support can be provided within the classroom.

29. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are now well established in the school and they are proving effective. Standards in both subjects, for example, were higher in Key Stage 1 in 1998 and 1999 compared with 1997. Teachers plan thoroughly for these subjects and conduct their lessons in a structured way that promotes learning.
30. The curriculum in the nursery is well planned and takes full account of the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage of education. This is not so in the reception class where children receive a similar curriculum to the Year 1 pupils in the same class. The expected level of the teacher's lesson planning for this group of children is not in place. This cross key stage grouping is also found in the class that contains pupils from Years 2 and 3 and causes difficulties here too. The school cannot guarantee that Year 2 pupils in this class receive the same curriculum as their peers. In this term's planning of history, for example, they are due to study the Victorian age while other Year 2 pupils are to look at how events from the past, such as the Gunpowder Plot, are remembered today and at the legacy of such people as Florence Nightingale. This is an equal opportunities issue. It arises again when pupils are withdrawn for other work during lessons such as mathematics. When this happened during the inspection, the pupils returned and, because they had missed the introduction, they could not tackle the worksheet. The school has a policy for including everyone equally in its educational provision, but these anomalies are not being monitored closely enough.
31. The school provides a sound programme of work for the personal, social and health education of its pupils. The governors have drawn up a suitable statement about sex education and teachers are prepared to answer any questions that arise. In addition, work in science helps to make pupils aware of the human life cycle and the difference between medicinal and harmful drugs. To promote personal development, a programme of 'circle time' activities has recently been introduced with the aim of promoting confidence and co-operation as pupils work through a series of exercises and discussions. A locally produced programme of work also gives teachers useful guidance on classroom activities to increase qualities such as self-esteem and positive attitudes.
32. The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory number of educational visits and visitors to the school. A visit to Whipsnade Zoo supports work in science and Key Stage 2 pupils spend a day in Ashwell Village for geographical work. Older members of the community share their wartime memories with the younger pupils to help them with their history topic and the children respond politely and ask sensible questions, listening intently to the answers. There are suitable extra-curricular activities. Some parents express concerns over the provision because clubs are only open to Years 3 and 4. But, with the football and netball clubs attracting large numbers of pupils and restricted space in the hall for the dance club, the school is providing suitable opportunities given its size. Sports matches are played with other schools and there are plans to widen the range of clubs so that they are not all centred on sport. A computer club is planned for the near future and, until this term, there was a recorder group.
33. There are good links with other schools. Co-ordinators from all the local schools meet regularly to discuss matters of concern. For example, first and middle schools have agreed programmes of study for Key Stage 2 pupils so that work is not repeated. There is also a suitable programme of events as pupils prepare for their next school at the end of Year 4. Visits are arranged to the middle schools and year tutors likewise visit Victoria School. A useful initiative involves former pupils returning to tell of their experiences when starting middle school. Local headteachers also have regular meetings to ensure a continuity of approach.
34. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, a similar picture to that at the last inspection. The development of spirituality is almost entirely left to assemblies when there is a time of quiet and a chance to reflect on what has been said. In this respect,

assemblies meet the requirements for an act of collective worship and provide satisfactory opportunities for spiritual development. However, teachers do not often take the opportunities offered in lessons to promote spiritual development and lesson plans do not incorporate times for reflection about work or issues that fascinate pupils and cause them to wonder.

35. Provision for moral development is good. Most pupils are well behaved and clearly understand right from wrong and the consequences of their actions. The school has a system of rewards leading to the award of a certificate that can be for good work, behaviour or effort. The school code is displayed in every classroom and there are sanctions for those who stray. One teacher, however, is particularly skilled at using positive reinforcement and praise to encourage constructive attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to think of others by raising money for various charities and this promotes their social as well as their moral development.
36. The school provides very well for the pupils' social development. Good links with the community help to provide a wide range of settings in which pupils can learn to be polite, to mix with all ages and to take responsibility. Groups of children regularly attend events out-of-school – to sing and dance at the local Day Centre and at traditional events such as the Petertide Fair. Older pupils socialise with others from the local schools during the biennial music festival and religious education festival. Visitors to the school are treated politely and courteously taken from the classroom to the front door when it is time for them to leave. Pupils have various tasks in their classes and the oldest pupils are responsible for ringing the school bell and for looking after the playground boxes that contain the play equipment. These responsibilities are carried out conscientiously. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress developing their social skills. There are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults and the school regards these as important.
37. The school makes satisfactory provision for the cultural development of its pupils. It is better at developing an understanding of local culture than an awareness of the multicultural society that we now live in. Nevertheless, commendable efforts are made to introduce pupils to the values, customs and beliefs of others. Religious education lessons also introduce pupils to the practices of religions other than Christianity, with particular emphasis on Judaism. Other subjects of the curriculum, such as history, art and music, are well used to give pupils an appreciation of their own culture. Pupils have been to the local Day Centre to talk to older members of the community about their school days and the games that they used to play. A local artist and a sculptor have made visits and musicians from the local secondary school have performed in school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides a supportive safe environment where the headteacher and staff know the pupils well. There are satisfactory arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. First aid procedures are satisfactory. Six staff members have attended a short first aid course although their formal qualifications have expired so that no staff currently holds a 'First-aid at work certificate'. Where bumps to the head are involved the school ensures parents are notified. Regular checks of the site and premises take place and all equipment is subject to annual checks. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and the policy outlines procedures for staff to follow. However, not all staff are aware the headteacher is the designated person and they have not received any recent training to ensure they are clear about procedures to follow in the event of any concerns.
39. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory. The school has some systems to follow up unexplained absence. Class teachers are responsible for following up unexplained absence of pupils in their class but current registers indicate that this is not always consistently followed. The school is in the early stages of developing regular systematic procedures to monitor attendance and routinely follow up absences.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Individual class teachers are aware of the needs of pupils in their class although a standardised system to record and monitor pupils' personal development is not in place. Through the programme of work for personal, social and health education and the recognition of good work and effort with

certificates in Thursday's assemblies, the school soundly promotes personal development.

41. The school effectively promotes very good behaviour. Clear expectations on the standards of behaviour expected are implicit in the ethos and values of the school. A behaviour policy briefly outlines rewards but does not include any information on sanctions or provide guidance for staff on when to apply either rewards or sanctions. This discretion is given to individual teachers with the result that there are inconsistencies in the way rewards are applied. Staff manage behaviour very well and this has a positive influence on the high standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school. There is no whole-school system for class teachers to record and monitor any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or to track individual pupils causing concern although the headteacher does record any serious incidents referred to her. Bullying is rare and there are satisfactory procedures to deal with any instances that occur.
42. The issue highlighted in the last inspection report concerning assessment has not been entirely resolved. A sound policy exists that has just been reviewed following widespread consultation with staff. It lays out procedures and practices clearly but there is no co-ordinator to monitor its effectiveness. On entry to the nursery, each child is assessed and detailed records of progress are kept while he/she remains in the class. This is good practice and enables the teacher in the reception class to have a clear picture of what each child has achieved. A further baseline test is administered on entry to this class that gives further evidence of attainment. These tests and written reports form the basis of the pupils' portfolios that stay with them throughout the school. Unaided pieces of writing are occasionally added as well as the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and other standardised tests given in Key Stage 2. The results of all these tests are recorded using a computer program. Pupils' achievements are tracked from the nursery through to reception and on to Key Stages 1 and 2. The same target for improvement is set for each pupil - to advance in a year by two-thirds of a level judged by attainment targets in the National Curriculum. Teachers are required to inform the headteacher if the target is judged unreasonable for a particular individual.
43. At the end of each term, a level of attainment for each aspect of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is entered on to each pupil's record card. This does not indicate what the pupil knows, understands and can do in these subjects and other evidence is sparse. Pupil portfolios contain a few examples of work in English but very little mathematics work and there are no individual assessments made of standards achieved in the foundation subjects. Only in science is there an accumulation of evidence because teachers in Key Stage 1 give short tests after each unit of work. When a pupil moves to another class, therefore, teachers have limited information about what they should plan to enable pupils to make progress. Consequently, some spend valuable time at the beginning of a school year revising work so that they know what each pupil has learned in order that appropriate work can be set. Therefore, the school still has to resolve the issue of devising an assessment system, particularly a system of passing on records, that gives adequate information to teachers when they come to plan the work for their classes. Classroom assistants work closely with class teachers to ensure individual educational plans for children with special educational needs are more focussed and that targets are more readily achievable. Pupils are also becoming more involved in the setting and reviewing of targets. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and with what it provides although some did express concerns about several areas. Most parents who attended the parents' meeting and completed the questionnaire were generally happy with the school. They unanimously agreed that behaviour is good and the school helps children become mature and responsible. Most felt their children like school, that teaching is good and the school well led and managed. They were happy with progress and felt the school expected children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team supports the positive view parents have of the school. There was, however, a minority of parents who did not feel the school works closely with parents, did not feel they received sufficient information about progress and felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum. Inspection evidence supports some of the issues expressed by parents but not all their concerns are justified. For example, the information

provided to parents about their child's progress is very similar to that offered by most schools although some of the concerns expressed about the computerised format of the annual written reports are justified. Parental concerns about the range of activities beyond the classroom are noted; however, the inspection found the school to offer a reasonable range of activities beyond the classroom. These include visits to places of interest, visitors to school as well as providing a range of extra- curricular activities appropriate for the number and age of pupils.

45. The school has established good links with its parents and many are actively involved in their children's learning. The headteacher welcomes parents into the school through the 'coffee shop' and annual 'open day' and is available to discuss concerns. The school has involved parents in decisions having recently obtained their views in a questionnaire. A significant number of parents make a valuable contribution towards school life and pupils' learning, for example, they help in classrooms, accompany visits and escort pupils on the weekly visit to the swimming pool. The supportive Victoria School Association organises a range of social and fund raising events raising considerable funds that enable the school to purchase additional resources and equipment. They currently have a 'playground fund' to improve the playground facilities. Pupils are encouraged to take reading books home regularly and the majority of parents support their children by listening to them read at home. A regular pattern of homework has been established, in most classes, to reinforce learning in lessons. Pupils receive spellings each week in addition to other homework tasks. Parents are given every opportunity to contribute to their children's learning at home. Individual class teachers send letters informing parents of the homework pupils will receive each week. Home-school diaries are a valuable link between school and home and many parents use them to communicate with class teachers.
46. The quality of information provided for parents both about the school and about progress is satisfactory overall. Regular 'circulars' and additional letters keep parents informed about school matters, key dates and forthcoming events. An informative prospectus contains useful information on school routines but the governors' annual report to parents has some omissions about which the school has been informed. The school informs parents about some areas of the curriculum, holding annual workshops to explain literacy and numeracy. All classes provide parents with brief information on topic work to be covered during the term, but as there is no consistent whole-school approach there is variation in the detail. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through two formal consultation evenings each year and they can discuss annual reports should they wish to do so. The quality of information about pupils' progress in their annual written reports is variable. They generally provide information on what has been covered and in some cases detail what pupils can do. Brief targets for individual development are included but they do not always provide parents with clear information on strengths and weaknesses. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved with the review of targets and are kept well informed about their children's progress. Their concerns and comments are valued by the co-ordinator.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management by the headteacher are good and as a result have improved the standards since the last inspection. Her effective leadership gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school. Working closely with the staff, she has been overall successful in developing a dedicated and enthusiastic staff, focussed on improving the existing standards. They provide guidance for the development of schemes of work, which are now in place for most subjects. These schemes help to promote the improved standards being achieved by the school. The carefully chosen delegation of subject responsibilities ensures that teachers make an effective contribution to the development of the curriculum. Liaison between subject co-ordinators is effective. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work well together. Teachers take every opportunity to discuss, share ideas and advise their colleagues. The non-teaching staff are suitably briefed about their work and make an effective contribution to both the standards and the welfare of the pupils. The school has clear aims, which promote the development of individual pupils. Targets are set and these are known to and understood by pupils. Relationships between all members of the school community are good and the Christian ethos of the school is appreciated by parents. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

48. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is good. They have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are working to rectify the latter. The Chair of Governors' role as 'critical friend' to the school is particularly effective. They have identified priorities and are supported by the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating performance against the success criteria of the school's improvement plan, which cover staff development, curriculum development and premises. Several governors have attended various courses.
49. The headteacher monitors teaching and this is of benefit to staff, helping them to evaluate their effectiveness in the classroom, but there is scope for the further development of the existing systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators. Currently, no subject co-ordinators are involved fully in this process and therefore this aspect of their role is under-developed.
50. The management of the special educational needs programme and the pupils' education plans is good. The new and very competent co-ordinator works closely with the headteacher, class teachers and support staff. She plans to look more closely at the possibility of classroom assistants becoming more involved in planning, record-keeping and assessment and more efficient deployment of their time. She provides good support to pupils with special educational needs and is available to advise staff about the identification and assessment of these pupils. The management of the special educational needs classroom assistants is good. These capable and willing assistants are of high quality and are invaluable to the school. They are well trained and closely directed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Record keeping is detailed and effective. Pupils' files are up to date and the level of detail recorded ensures that pupils' individual needs are met. The register of pupils with special educational needs is also up to date and has been analysed according to need.
51. The interests of the pupils with special educational needs are well served by the designation of an experienced governor with responsibility for oversight of the area. He is very supportive and is working closely with the co-ordinator. He hopes to become more involved with monitoring pupils' progress and addressing the needs of all pupils including higher attainers. As a result of his involvement in monitoring policy and procedures there is sharpened awareness of the governors' responsibilities towards these pupils. The school has good procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of its special educational needs policy.
52. The school's finances are well managed by the headteacher and chair of the finance committee. Educational priorities are drawn together in a whole-school consultation process during the spring term when co-ordinators draw up development plans and budget bids for their subjects. These priorities form the annual school improvement plan and the costs are fed into the budget-setting process. A budget plan is agreed by the governors' finance committee before being presented to the full governing body for approval. The school makes appropriate efforts to seek best value when purchasing goods and services. The school office makes good use of information and communication technology in managing the school's financial records and has Internet and e-mail access. However, the governors are not involved in developing effective mechanisms for identifying and evaluating links between expenditure and educational outcomes.
53. There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll and all are qualified to teach pupils of primary age. There is a suitable staff handbook which outlines school procedures for new staff and supply teachers. There are curriculum co-ordinators for all core and foundation subjects and special educational needs. External courses and school-based in-service training are linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. There is a formal mechanism for evaluating and feeding back on the courses which staff have attended. There are no formal teacher appraisal procedures in place but the governors have set performance targets for the headteacher. They are aware that implementation of Performance Management is a priority area for development. The school has a team of five educational support staff. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and trained and give good support to the pupils with whom they work. They meet regularly in order to review progress.
54. The school's accommodation provides a pleasant and cheerful environment for learning and is well

maintained by the caretaker and cleaners. The present layout of the building means that three of the six classrooms are not self-contained and are the means of access to other classrooms. New equipment has been purchased for playtimes and games have been marked out on the tarmac.

55. Since the last school inspection learning resources have been audited and increased funding for new books and equipment has been targeted appropriately through the school improvement plan. In particular, books and resources for the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been a priority and these subjects are now well resourced.
56. Co-ordinators regularly monitor teaching resources within their responsibility area and are able to bid for extra funding as part of the annual school improvement plan and budget-setting process. The resources are used efficiently to raise achievement and to ensure best value for money; for example, the school makes effective use of the money allocated to support pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils make good progress. All other available grants are managed well and linked to the priorities identified within the school development plan.
57. There is a good range of reading scheme and other fiction books in each class. Non-fiction books linked to current topics are attractively displayed in classrooms. There is a small, well developed library area which has an adequate range of books.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to build on the existing standards in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - Raise the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 to ensure that all pupils maintain their previous good progress; (*paragraphs 22, 23, 73 and 82*)
 - Ensure that the needs of more able pupils are effectively and consistently addressed in teachers' lesson planning; (*paragraphs 22, 71, 73, 82 and 83*)
 - Ensure that assessment information available to class teachers at the beginning of each academic year makes clear what pupils already know, understand and can do in order to better inform lesson planning and build on pupils' previous achievements; (*paragraphs 43 and 80*)
 - Ensure that the curriculum planned for Foundation Stage children in the reception class effectively addresses the early learning goals and that children continue to maintain the very good progress made in the nursery; (*paragraphs 30 and 59*)
 - Further develop the role of subject co-ordinators in the monitoring of learning and evaluating of standards. (*paragraph 49*)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Develop further opportunities for older pupils to fully develop their research skills; (*paragraph 70*)
- Provide pupils in Key Stage 2 with more opportunities to fully develop their making and evaluating skills in design and technology; (*paragraph 103*)
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to develop their data handling skills; (*paragraph 75*)
- Ensure that the quality of information for parents is consistent. (*paragraphs 25 and 46*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	16	43	32	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	172
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	21	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	14
	Girls	21	21	19
	Total	38	38	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (89)	100 (93)	87 (89)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	16
	Girls	21	19	21
	Total	38	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (98)	92 (87)	97 (89)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	189
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58.25

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	408,569
Total expenditure	398,491
Expenditure per pupil	2012
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,006
Balance carried forward to next year	20,084

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	218
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	3	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	43	11	0	18
The teaching is good.	50	39	4	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	54	12	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	7	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	38	4	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	24	53	13	2	8
The school is well led and managed.	31	52	5	4	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	46	0	1	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	26	31	9	26

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

59. Provision by the school for the children under five is very good in the nursery. Children are admitted part-time, at the beginning of the term in which they are four. A very effective programme of meetings prior to starting school ensures they have a confident, happy start to their school life. At the time of the inspection, there were 43 children in the nursery, attending either the morning or afternoon session. There were a further 2 children aged under five in the reception class and 12 children of non-statutory school age were also in this class with Year 1 pupils. The nursery provides them with a very secure and caring environment, with daily routines firmly established. The programme of activities is very well planned on the basis of the recommended areas of learning for this age and fully supports the children's intellectual, physical and social development. More formal work, linked to the literacy and numeracy strategies, is phased in, as the children enter the reception class. Attainment on entry to the nursery is average, although a significant number are above average. From this starting point, the great majority of children in the nursery, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. By age five, most pupils are likely to meet what are known as the 'early learning goals' in many areas of their learning. The school has good procedures for involving parents in the life of the school, which are made clear in the good quality booklet given to them when their child is admitted. The high standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained in the nursery. However, children in the reception class are not consistently maintaining these high standards and neither are they making the progress of which they are capable. Standards in reception are satisfactory and attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is overall above average but it could be better, particularly for higher attaining children.

Communications, language and literacy

60. Many children enter the nursery with satisfactory speaking and listening skills, and mostly good verbal comprehension. The children are provided with a wide range of activities which support the development of language and literacy. From the start of their school life they begin to develop their personal and social skills alongside those for speaking and listening. Staff offer frequent opportunities for children to talk with an adult and actively seek to extend the children's vocabulary. Through participating in role-play situations, such as acting out the role of shoppers in the baker's shop, staff encourage and extend the children's use of language. Children learn to listen attentively, follow instructions carefully and develop a growing vocabulary, enabling them to speak with increasing confidence in a variety of situations. They begin to read familiar words and understand that print carries meaning when following the story of the 'Little Red Hen'. The reception teacher works satisfactorily within the structure of the literacy hour and numeracy strategy. Many children soon develop an understanding that words and pictures carry meaning. They know how books are organised and, with support, recognise some familiar words in simple texts. Satisfactory use is made of the literacy strategy to introduce children to phonics, for example, identifying rhyming words with the 'ay' pattern and hearing and finding words with 'y' at the beginning or end of them. Most children are aware of the purpose of writing and can write their names legibly. Children are introduced to an appropriate style of writing from an early age. This is effective and some children, with support, quickly develop this style and attempt to write in short sentences using prompt cards for unknown words. The children make good progress overall and by the time they are five, most attain the expected standards in reading and writing.

Mathematical development

61. Most children make good progress in their mathematical development and their attainment at five is above that expected for children of this age. The children are provided with a good range of practical activities for the development of their mathematical skills and there is good quality direct teaching of mathematics. They gain a good foundation for future mathematics work through play in the baker's shop, through activities linked to snack time and those involving pattern making. They are able to correctly sequence the numbers one to ten by joining dots to make a picture of a gingerbread man. They count and order the numbers to five very confidently, using items 'bought'

in the shop and many can solve problems to ten by adding on. The higher attaining children show an appropriate understanding of addition and subtraction when solving problems involving ten objects and can write the numbers involved. Most develop an understanding of what is meant by 'one more' and 'one less' and their good language skills contribute well to their explanations of what they have learned. Mathematical knowledge is further developed when children cook gingerbread men for snack time. They weigh ingredients effectively and understand the concept of 'more' and 'less', and 'heavier' and 'lighter'.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Children's personal and social development is given a high priority, to very good effect. Children are happy and content to be in school. They play well together, share resources and take turns. Children work happily on their own and alongside others, as well as in groups. They are interested and responsive, taking part in all the activities provided for them with enjoyment. In whole-class sessions, most children listen with considerable interest and respond positively. Many are able to work with concentration and persevere in their learning. Very good use is made of 'circle time' in the nursery to develop the children's awareness of their own feelings, to take turns and to acknowledge the strengths of others. Free play is planned very effectively and gives children very good opportunities to select and pursue an activity of their own choice. All staff act as very good role models for the children, helping them to form positive relationships and to care about others. Most children show independence in dressing and personal hygiene. This aspect of children's development is excellent in the nursery.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developed well through relevant topics such as the baker's shop and discussing firework night and the use of fireworks. Their progress is good overall and attainment is as expected in most elements of this area of learning. In the scientific area of learning, they use their senses well to explore the smells and tastes of different foods, such as the ginger spice used in their cooking, and they talk enthusiastically about their observations. They have a good understanding of why they need to wash their hands thoroughly before they prepare or cook their gingerbread men. In the reception class children understand that the Gunpowder Plot happened a long time ago and can recognise the link with fireworks on 5th November. Children in the nursery know clearly the routine for the day and understand there are different times for daily events. They all enjoy making models using construction apparatus and use the tape recorder confidently to listen to story tapes. They operate the mouse confidently when they use the computer to develop further their number recognition and sequencing skills.

Physical development

64. Provision for children's physical development is very good. Manual dexterity is well developed by the time the children are five. Through their play with table-top games and jigsaws, using modelling materials, pencils and brushes, they show a growing ability to manage small items. Physical education is timetabled and planning shows a good range of gymnastic, dance and games activities that promote the larger-scale movements of the children. Provision for frequent physical play is very good because there is excellent open access to their own designated play area with its wide variety of wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. However, although there are future plans for children in the reception class to have access to this area, this is not happening at present. As a result, some children do not have equal opportunities to develop this aspect of their physical development.

Creative development

65. Progress is very good in the creative areas of learning and attainment is above average by the time the children are five. They are working well towards the designated early learning goals for five-year-olds and in some aspects are near to achieving them. They respond enthusiastically in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. Children experiment with plasticine to make models and learn to cut and stick paper with some skill. They have the

opportunity to express their own ideas through painting and enjoy using colours, for example the splatter pictures of fireworks. Through role-play situations in the baker's shop and using emergency services uniforms, the children spontaneously develop their own situations. This makes a good contribution to their speaking and listening skills. Most children enjoy singing, recognise familiar songs and number rhymes and sing with enthusiasm. They recognise and some can name a variety of percussion instruments.

66. The curriculum meets the needs of children under five in the nursery very well. It is broad, balanced, and well planned within the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. It fully promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares the children well for the next stage in their education. Children are regularly assessed in the recommended areas of learning and detailed records are kept. The nursery teacher completes some tests on entry to the class, namely in language and number, and children are re-tested on entry to Year 1. Baseline assessment is completed during the first few weeks of entry into the nursery. These tests are used very effectively to identify individual needs. There are concerns about equality of access to the Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the reception class. Although there is some liaison between the nursery and reception class for the planning of activities, the curriculum planning for the reception class does not sufficiently address the early learning goals that are appropriate for all children in the Foundation Stage.
67. The quality of teaching for the under-fives in the nursery is very good overall. In the reception class it is satisfactory overall with a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The very good teaching in the nursery has a positive impact on the children's attainment and enables them to make very good progress. The teacher and nursery nurse are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the needs of children aged under five and they know the children very well. The planning of work is thorough and effective. The learning intentions of the activities are clearly expressed in the planning and are shared with the children; all tasks are purposeful and well-organised. There are high expectations, routines are well established and the management of the children is very good. Adults listen with interest to what the children have to say, and through skilful questioning, develop their knowledge and understanding. There is very effective use of the nursery nurse and parent helpers to provide very good support to both the teacher and the children. The nursery nurse is involved in the planning for and delivery of some activities, alongside the teacher. The quality of day-to-day assessment is very good and informs the next stage of learning. There are very good links with parents who are very welcome in the nursery and detailed reports for parents are written each term to enable parents to understand the progress their children have made. The accommodation is bright and attractive and the space very well used. Learning resources for both indoor and outdoor activities are good and are used well. The provision for pupils in the nursery is a significant strength of the school. A positive feature in the provision for children in the foundation stage within the reception class is the well-qualified and experienced classroom assistant who supports these children very well in group work and practical activities. During these sessions, children's attitudes to and enthusiasm for learning improve markedly and at these times they build on their previous very good progress.

ENGLISH

68. Pupils' attainment in 1999 in the end of Key Stage 1 national reading and writing tests was very high in comparison with the national average at the expected level 2 and well above the national average at the higher level 3. When compared to similar schools pupils' performance was well above the average for these schools in writing and above in reading. The school exceeded the target set with the local authority for this year. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected of seven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was well above average in both reading and writing. Thirty-three per cent achieved the higher level 3 in reading and 8% in writing. Both these level 3 results indicate a significant drop when compared with the results in 1999. The school states this was because there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. There were no significant variations in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are achieving good standards in reading and average standards in writing for pupils of this age.
69. In both key stages attainment in speaking and listening is high and reflects the findings in the first report. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move

through the school. Most pupils are confident to speak in class when asked a question. They speak clearly and think carefully before responding. They listen attentively to adults and their peers and respect each other's views. During the literacy hour pupils enjoy listening to and taking part in the shared reading of stories and are very willing to express their ideas and opinions. Older pupils demonstrate well their developing vocabulary when giving more mature reasons for expressing preferences for particular extracts from shared texts such as *Matilda* by Roald Dahl and when comparing these with other books they have read. They also make sensible suggestions when compiling a list of questions for a reporter to ask when interviewing Jack of 'Beanstalk' fame.

70. The standard of reading is good both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4. The school has maintained the standards recorded in the previous report. Pupils demonstrate a keen interest in books and enjoy reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, both in school and at home. Pupils of all ages willingly and confidently express preferences when discussing authors and styles of reading materials. Younger pupils understand the function of a book's contents and index pages. Older pupils use a classification system in the library to find information books and are developing the skills to use a library effectively. Pupils' research skills are less well developed due to insufficient opportunity to carry out their own research and practise these skills regularly. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn to read using various schemes and by learning to recognise commonly used words. By the end of the key stage, most pupils confidently explain the plot and describe their favourite part of the story. They are also developing the ability to sensibly predict future events in the books they are reading. The majority of pupils use a wide range of skills to work out unknown text. They accurately blend letter sounds to build up words and try to work out unknown words from the context of the sentence. Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop these skills well and most pupils read confidently and fluently with very good use of expression. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress. Their progress is carefully monitored and appropriate targets are regularly set for them.
71. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in writing is above average overall and has improved since the last inspection. However, there are elements of this aspect of English in which pupils in both key stages fail to perform as well as expected. Pupils of all abilities know how to punctuate their work with appropriate accuracy for their age. The standard of handwriting in the school is generally accurate and of an appropriate standard. This is an improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils write several sentences demonstrating a good understanding of how to structure a short sequence of events as in a short story. They also produce poems of a good standard. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in developing their writing skills. Although some pupils in Key Stage 2 produce written work of a good quality, the rate of progress for most of these pupils is not maintained and the standard of work often fails to fully reflect ability, especially that of high attainers. These pupils would benefit from opportunities to improve their work by careful re-drafting and being given sufficient time on a more regular basis in which to produce more extended pieces of independently written work. This is an issue raised after the last inspection which is yet to be fully addressed.
72. Pupils' attitudes are positive and their behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy listening to and discussing stories. They show an interest in all written tasks and work hard to complete them. They willingly talk about their activities and appreciate contributions made by their peers. Pupils share resources sensibly and treat them with respect.
73. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall and in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers plan literacy lessons with clear objectives which are readily understood by their pupils. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have good subject knowledge and teach the basic skills well. In Key Stage 2, assessment of pupils' previous attainment is not used consistently, which sometimes results in lesson tasks being too easy or occasionally too difficult. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations about the quality and quantity of writing that older pupils, especially those who are more able, should produce. This results in the rate of progress slowing down as pupils move through Key Stage 2. All teachers provide opportunities for pupils to read and enjoy a wide range of material. This is reflected in the good standards of reading achieved by most pupils in the school.

74. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on the English curriculum and literacy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum such as maths and history. Test results have been recently analysed in depth by the co-ordinator and teachers have begun to use these to set individual targets for their pupils. The good standards of achievement and progress demonstrated by pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is a direct result of good teaching. The subject is well-resourced and good use is made of the well-stocked fiction and non-fiction libraries with pupils having easy access to both. Older children are chosen as monitors for the fiction library and parents take responsibility for the care of the non-fiction library. Pupils also benefit from the annual Book Week, visiting theatre groups and authors and the very popular Book Swap organised by the school.

MATHEMATICS

75. Pupils' attainment in 1999 in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests was below the national average at the expected level 2 but well above the national average at the higher level 3. When compared to similar schools pupils' performance was close to the average for these schools. The school exceeded the target set with the local authority for 1999. Recently published 2000 test results show that the school improved on the 1999 test results at level 2 but the percentage gaining the higher level 3 was not so high. From the evidence seen in lessons and in work analysis, the attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 is above the national average. While pupils have completed a suitable amount of work in most aspects of mathematics, there is a shortage of work in mathematical investigations and data handling.
76. The previous report stated that standards were satisfactory and that pupils were achieving in line with national averages. Standards have improved since then, most notably in number and shape, space and measures. Although there is now effective coverage of National Curriculum requirements, there are aspects, as mentioned above, that receive less coverage.
77. By the end of Year 2, average attaining pupils confidently add and subtract simple numbers, and read, write and order numbers to at least 100. They competently solve money problems, using addition and subtraction to £1. They correctly draw and measure lines in centimetres. They have a good understanding of rounding numbers up or down to the nearest ten. When using and applying mathematics, pupils confidently construct block graphs using information they have gathered. Higher achieving pupils add three numbers successfully, know how many centimetres in a metre and use this knowledge successfully to answer problems related to length. They also investigate number patterns to discover whether there is a common rule when adding odd and/or even numbers together. Lower attaining pupils correctly total coins up to 50 pence and have a sound understanding of measuring items and recording correctly whether the object is less or more than a given unit. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Numeracy skills are satisfactorily applied in other subjects, for example, in science when pupils record information about materials in a Venn diagram and in information and communication technology when collating information in bar graphs.
78. By the end of Year 4, pupils satisfactorily divide and multiply two digit numbers by a number less than 10. However, they are hindered in this process because many do not know their multiplication tables well enough to instantly recall the facts needed to complete these tasks. They competently solve money problems and record money both in pence and as a fraction of a pound. They effectively find the perimeter of shapes by totalling the measurement of all four sides. They correctly draw various polygons and correctly label them according to how many faces, corners and edges they contain. In the work samples seen there was little difference in the work set for all abilities which resulted in many pupils not making the progress they could and should be making. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Numeracy skills are effectively applied in other subjects, for example in design and technology, when pupils correctly measure materials used. Overall, standards by the end of Year 4 are above average.
79. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress but progress is very good in Year 2. These pupils make

this progress because there are high expectations of what they are capable of doing, the teaching is challenging and effectively addresses the learning needs of different groups of pupils. However, the progress that other pupils make is inconsistent and very dependent on which class they are in. Overall, pupils in the mixed-aged classes in Year 3 and 4 are not making the same good progress as pupils in the current mixed Year 1 and 2 classes. Pupils with special educational needs are given work that is usually appropriate for their needs. However, the needs of the most able pupils in most classes are not always effectively met and they do not therefore make the progress of which they are capable. Most of the good progress in number work is due to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

80. Pupils' progress through the school is recorded using a system of highlighting how well pupils have achieved in a variety of tests. However, this system is comparatively new and so far has been used to reflect on progress rather than the school being proactive in measuring and monitoring progress. The school at present does not measure whether progress is consistent through and across the school in order to take action to ensure that all pupils maintain and build on their previous progress. As a result, progress is variable throughout the school. It is particularly noticeable on transfer from the nursery and in Years 3 and 4. There are however, recent systems in place to address this issue in the future. There is insufficient information passed on to teachers at the beginning of each academic year. Consequently, this lack of useful information on what pupils know, can do and understand hinders teachers in setting appropriate work for pupils of varying attainment to ensure that for the great majority of time pupils are challenged in their work. Pupils therefore spend an inordinate amount of time at the beginning of each academic year revising previous knowledge while teachers make judgements about their levels of attainment. This situation is clearly unsatisfactory and was highlighted as a concern at the meeting for parents.
81. Teaching is overall satisfactory and there were some good and, in one lesson, some excellent features in Key Stage 1. Where teaching was excellent, for example in a Year 2 lesson on adding odd and even numbers, there were high expectations of behaviour and what pupils were expected to learn and this was shared with the pupils. The lesson was very well planned and the teacher used a variety of techniques to ensure pupils remained interested and their attitudes to this learning were very good. Very good teacher subject knowledge enabled the teacher to be flexible in developing the very good pace of the lesson. This ensured all pupils developed a very good understanding of the rules applying to the addition of odd and even numbers. The brisk pace of the lesson ensured all pupils remained on task and made excellent progress, including those pupils with special educational needs. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject created a fund of learning and effectively encouraged pupils to develop very positive attitudes. A significant strength of the lesson, which made a very good contribution to pupils' learning, was the short reporting back session at the end. Pupils were asked to explain what they had learned and how they had progressed since the previous lesson and this made them aware of how they can be responsible for their own learning.
82. A weakness of the teaching in otherwise satisfactory lessons is a lack of sufficient focus in parts of the lesson. As a result, pupils are not always clear as to what is expected of them and they therefore take time to start working on their own. When the weakness is at the end of the lesson pupils are unable to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to know next. A further weakness is that the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and are often completing more of the same work rather than furthering their knowledge and understanding. In the mixed-age classes of Year 3 and Year 4, pupils are not always given work appropriate for either the higher attainers, the middle or the lower attainers and this negatively affects the progress they are to make. Most teachers have good commercial displays of number lines, number squares and multiplication tables in their room. There is also a good display around the school of pupils' own work in mathematics in order to celebrate their achievements. Although numeracy skills are being well taught, there is a shortage of work in mathematical investigation and data handling, which whilst not unsatisfactory, could be better.

83. In all lessons observed during the week of inspection, there was planning for three levels of ability. However, the work pupils are asked to complete is often based on the higher achieving pupils completing more of the same work rather than extending their knowledge. Planning was suitable for the implementation of the numeracy strategy, with time set aside daily for mental arithmetic in a whole-class setting. These mental and oral sessions were a strength of the mathematics teaching in the school. All teachers had a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which was reflected in their planning of activities, use of resources and appropriate questioning for all levels of ability. Teachers' discipline was at least satisfactory and there were good relationships between pupils and teachers, which enabled pupils to make at least satisfactory and often good progress in their learning. There was usually a clear and efficient organisation of activities and grouping, which pupils understood. However, in one Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils experiencing problems would have coped better if practical apparatus had been available to support them in their understanding.
84. There is no up-to-date policy for mathematics that outlines how the subject is to be taught. Mathematics is effectively linked to the numeracy framework. However, there is no mention of National Curriculum requirements in the school's documentation for the subject. There is therefore insufficient guidance for teachers in order to guarantee progression and continuity throughout all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. The co-ordinator has worked effectively with teachers in each class to develop lesson planning. The staff have been suitably trained to implement the Numeracy Strategy and the co-ordinator has been involved in some monitoring and evaluating of learning. However, this aspect of her role is under-developed.
85. Targets have been devised in order to raise attainment and address the needs of different ability groups and these have been shared with the pupils and their parents. This target setting is a particular strength of the subject and is contributing effectively to raising pupils' attainment. There are samples of pupils' work which are annotated, assessed and moderated in order to assist teachers to make consistent judgements relating to levels of attainment. Since the last inspection the school has spent a considerable amount on new resources linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. Every room has commercial displays of number lines and number squares and there are adequate resources.

SCIENCE

86. In 1999, teachers assessed that the number of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above average and that the number gaining the higher level (level 3) was above average. These results compare very favourably with what was then expected nationally. In comparison with schools of a similar type results were average. However, indications from the assessments in 2000 indicate that there has been a slight fall in the number gaining the higher level of attainment and inspection evidence suggests that the present Year 2 pupils are working at above average, rather than well above average, levels overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were said to be satisfactory. Pupils make good progress from the time that they enter the nursery until they are seven. After that, however, progress slows so that standards at the age of nine are, on average, not much better than satisfactory, a similar picture to that reported at the time of the last inspection. This is due to some less inspired teaching and lower expectations of what can be achieved so that there is less work in books than might be expected and much of it lacks quality.
87. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are currently studying light. They can identify natural sources of light such as the sun and artificial lights such as car headlights. They carry out an investigation with different materials to decide which ones are opaque, transparent or translucent and are beginning to use these scientific terms confidently. In earlier work this term, Year 2 pupils have sorted materials into those that are bendy or not bendy and displayed them using a Venn diagram to support their mathematical work. They have conducted an experiment to find the best waterproof material. Work in their books suggests that pupils are broadly covering the same work whatever their ability and that the higher attaining pupils and gifted pupils in particular are not being sufficiently challenged by being given more complex tasks. This is confirmed when lesson plans are scrutinised. Different work is usually planned for the groups within a class but it is often a case of expecting the higher attaining pupils to get through a greater volume of the same work that

everybody is doing rather than pursuing different, more challenging tasks. Nevertheless, most pupils are making good progress. They enjoy science, particularly when it encompasses practical activities and they work well together to solve problems. Most concentrate throughout the lessons, which sometimes last for most of the afternoon, and present their work tidily. In one class, for example, pupils automatically use rulers to draw their table of results because of the teacher's expectations, established in earlier lessons. The skills of literacy are suitably developed in science lessons when pupils are introduced to new vocabulary and are able to use these new words when recording their observations. Equally, numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed when they record their results in diagrams, for example in the Year 2 lesson on differences in materials.

88. The work of Year 4 pupils submitted to inspectors for examination showed only two pieces of work this term, one of which had been completed during inspection week. Year 3 pupils who are in the same classes have completed more work, for example, conducting an experiment to discover what happens to an image's shadow as it gets further away from a light source. However, a younger Year 3 pupil, who is in a class with Year 2s, has more work in his book and it is of better quality. Pupils in this class have explored reflections using a mirror and, as part of a topic about living things, they have measured their height and weight, entered the information into a database and produced a spreadsheet of the results. This difference in provision is a matter of some concern. The co-ordinator is aware of the problem and has informed the headteacher. Nothing so far has been done to resolve the issue.
89. In conversation with a group of Year 4 pupils, it is clear that they retain good background knowledge of the science that they have experienced since being in the school but they have to be prompted to explain their answers and to use scientific terms. They have only a tentative understanding of how to make a test fair and, while knowing that animals grow, breathe, eat and move, they have to be reminded that they reproduce. This knowledge of materials and their properties is sound and they give examples of some materials that can be reconstituted after they have been heated or cooled. They know that light travels in a straight line and that, when adding a second bulb to a circuit, the light produced by both is dimmer. Attainment is therefore satisfactory. Nevertheless, the progress of these pupils has slowed since seven when, on average, they were achieving at least above average standards.
90. One of the reasons for this can be found by comparing two lessons where the same topic is being taught. Pupils are considering the importance of a balanced diet and have to produce a meal with a variety of food. Both teachers introduce the topic by sorting food into various types – those with vitamins or fat or fibre – and introduce words such as carbohydrates and starch. It is in the activity session, however, that the differences of approach occur. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils are required to draw a large circle in their books and sketch the foods that would make their balanced meal. Some do not take the activity seriously and produce poor quality drawings and foods that do not generally go together, for example, fish, eggs and meat in one meal. The teacher does not insist on high standards of work or behaviour and in a short discussion period, one boy has to be moved to calm him down. The lesson overall is only just satisfactory. In the Year 2/3 lesson, which is good, there is a different atmosphere. Pupils here have a paper plate and magazines from which they cut out foods that they stick on to make a balanced meal. This practical activity catches their imagination and they set to work enthusiastically. The teacher encourages them to work at a brisk pace and she stops them occasionally to share good ideas and to set time limits for the completion of work. She has high expectations that pupils will work hard and that, at the end, they will tidy up quickly and efficiently. Pupils respond to this and make good progress in the lesson so that they are confident about explaining their choice of foods during the concluding discussion.
91. The teaching of Key Stage 1 pupils overall is good. Teachers encourage scientific enquiry through experiments and investigations and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the school was given the target of improving work in this aspect of science. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that teachers are more confident in this area of work and provision is now good. Most teachers evaluate their lessons. During the inspection, a second lesson about light was correctly adapted as a result of the pupils' work in the first lesson. This teacher has a skilful way of firing rapid questions to help pupils think and to assist her in assessing the extent of their understanding. She uses positive comments to reinforce good

behaviour and work practices and has a warm relationship with her class. These features are found in other Key Stage 1 classes and, together with secure knowledge of the subject and an insistence that pupils use scientific vocabulary, learning is enhanced. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress particularly when the co-ordinator supports one pupil in a science lesson.

92. The programme of work for science is good. It provides a clear framework from which teachers can plan their lessons and a two-year rolling programme of topics ensures that all aspects of science are covered. Resources are adequate. The co-ordinator has overseen significant improvements since the last inspection but finds it difficult to force the needs of science to the top of the agenda for development. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching but regularly looks at planning and pupils' work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers identify assessment opportunities on their lesson plans and, after each topic in Key Stage 1, pupils complete an assessment activity that provides evidence for teachers to make statutory assessments at the end of the key stage. Teachers can refer to a portfolio of work to moderate their assessments. The portfolio contains exemplars of work that have been assessed after discussion within the school and with other first schools. At the end of every term, a level of attainment for each pupil is entered on to a record card for each aspect of science but this does not provide evidence of precisely what a pupil knows, understands and can do.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

93. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4 overall attainment for all pupils is in line with national expectations in all aspects of the curriculum. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.
94. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching was satisfactory with clear lesson planning outlining the purpose of the lesson and what pupils were expected to learn. Sound subject knowledge by the teacher ensured that pupils made satisfactory progress in their skills of loading a datafile, linked to the topic on Victorians, and they knew the correct vocabulary in order to carry out the task. The pupils were observed putting what they had learned into practice in a lunchtime session. They settled well to this activity and showed good attitudes to learning and were keen to learn as a result of the teacher's enthusiasm and clear instructions. There was clear evidence of progression of skills for pupils.
95. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows they can use the Internet and access information, for example, the significance of Remembrance Day. There is good support provided by a parent for pupils to find and download information on the Victorians. As a result of good lesson preparation by the teacher, these pupils were given good, prepared worksheets which enabled them to be more precise in their search for information. The use of these worksheets effectively enhanced their learning and enabled them to make good progress. The teacher's expectations of pupils co-operating with one another were high and they therefore worked well together, took turns and helped and supported each other in their work.
96. The management of the subject, as a result of the knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, is well developed and as a result the subject continues to improve. There has been some development, monitoring and evaluation of the subject. However, this aspect of his role is currently under-developed. The school has adopted nationally recommended guidance for their scheme of work, which details what pupils will learn in each year and how it will be assessed. There are tasks outlined in the school's strategic plan for the next year to further develop the monitoring of the subject in order to track progress and raise attainment. There is no portfolio of moderated, assessed and annotated work, which teachers can use to make secure judgements on pupils' levels of attainment. The co-ordinator has been effective in raising teacher expertise in the subject through staff training and ensuring there are sufficient, good quality resources to enable pupils to use their skills in other areas of the curriculum. He is experienced and well qualified, and keen to spread his skills and expertise throughout the staff. He has attended many courses and provided in-service training for teaching staff. At the moment, there is no time allowance for monitoring and supporting teaching and learning in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

97. No lessons were observed during the inspection and judgements on pupils' attainment and progress are based on scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and records and interviews with staff and pupils. The standards of attainment in the work completed by pupils both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by age nine are generally of a higher quality than that found in most schools. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory. Standards have been improved by careful and detailed lesson planning and effective leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator. It is evident that this lesson planning ensures that pupils' interest in art is developed well and that they experience a good range of stimulating activities, resulting in pieces of work in which they can take pride.
98. A range of work in portfolios, sketchbooks and displays was seen and by the time pupils are seven years old they are able to work competently in a variety of media, including pastels, charcoal and watercolour. They produce high quality work in water colours and are developing skills in the use of such techniques as patchwork. They draw accurately with a sense of perspective and mix colours effectively. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have used a variety of collage materials to represent effectively, the sky, sand and sea. Year 3 and 4 pupils appraised and evaluated pictures from famous artists and produced some good quality water colours of the school's Centenary garden. Pupils in Years 2 and 3, in their work on Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers', were able to evaluate their pictures and discuss the similarities between their work and the originals their pieces were based on. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
99. Throughout the school pupils are introduced to the work of a variety of artists and craftspeople. They are able to discuss the work of established artists thoughtfully, using a range of appropriate vocabulary. The subject contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the consideration of art and artefacts from other cultures.
100. Resources for art are good with a range of materials, images and equipment available. A variety of information and communication technology packages support pupils' work and evidence of their use was present in displays and portfolios of work. Sketchbooks are used but they do not accompany children through the school to act as a record of their development in art. The co-ordinator is well qualified, offers a good level of informal support to colleagues and as a result the subject is suitably led and managed. However, there are no formal methods in place to monitor and evaluate standards. The school has recently adopted nationally recommended guidance for its scheme of work in order to support staff in their teaching and the co-ordinator intends to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in the future once it has been fully implemented.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards in design and technology in Key Stage 1 are good. Standards in Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with national expectations. The school has improved overall standards since the last inspection.
102. In Key Stage 1 pupils successfully develop their designing and making skills. Their designs are thoughtful and they take time and care when selecting the natural resources and man-made materials they are going to use. Pupils make sensible choices and competently use a variety of methods such as sewing, folding and sticking, when joining and attaching sections of pictures, puppets and models. Their designs show a developing sense of proportion and understanding of the importance of using appropriate colours, sizes and shapes. Pupils make good progress learning to use a range of techniques in order to incorporate moving parts in jointed puppets, vehicles such as trains and carts and pneumatic monsters. They make good use of opportunities to test the success of their model making. Pupils are becoming more skilful when using scissors, needles and spreaders and are beginning to learn how to evaluate and improve their work. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress by the end of Key Stage 1.

103. Pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, developing the knowledge and skills they acquired lower down the school. They use more complex methods of stitching and show greater understanding of texture and shade when producing larger pieces of work such as the centenary and millennium quilts. Pupils use construction kits to make more sophisticated models of robots and vehicles but there is limited evidence of opportunity to use tools such as drills, clamps and saws. When learning about food technology, pupils use more complex evaluation sheets and use more mature vocabulary when discussing properties, uses and presentation of different types of food and the importance of hygiene and safety considerations. As judged in the previous report, there is still a need to improve the extent to which pupils at Key Stage 2 develop the making and evaluating skills they gain lower down the school. However, since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in pupils' design skills.
104. Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities offered to them. They work with a high level of co-operation, willingly sharing resources and ideas and positively responding to the efforts made by their peers. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and persevere until they are satisfied with their finished products.
105. The quality of teaching is sound overall with some examples of good practice. Both teachers' knowledge of the subject and teaching methods have improved since the last inspection. The best lessons are well planned and teachers ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers use the appropriate range of resources to provide pupils with opportunities to begin to develop their knowledge of the ways in which materials such as wood, plastic, clay and fabric may be used and assembled. Teachers keep records of pupils' knowledge and skills. However, there has been inconsistency in the way in which this information has been used in the past to ensure that pupils progress well as they move up the school.
106. The co-ordinator does not monitor the subject effectively but is committed to improving standards of teaching and learning. A new structure was introduced this term to ensure progressive development of all technological skills. It is hoped that further training will be provided for teachers. The range and quality of available resources are satisfactory. These are well organised and readily available to staff. Parental support is actively encouraged and the additional resources and classroom assistance they provide are both valued and appreciated.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Standards in geography at Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected nationally. This judgement is based almost entirely on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, as it was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection. Geography is not currently a focus of work in the majority of classes. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Key Stage 2 because pupils in Year 4 did not have any work in their books. Many pupils in Year 3 have a limited amount of work but some is left unfinished and the presentation generally is untidy. This is not the case for all Year 3 pupils. Some of the youngest, who are in a different class, are producing better quality work. This is a less favourable state of affairs than was indicated in the last inspection report where the quality of learning was deemed to be good.
108. In Key Stage 1, pupils study contrasting areas taking a seaside town and the countryside as an example. They use pictures from a travel brochure to decide why people go to the seaside. The written accounts that follow support the development of their literacy skills. They locate the countries of the United Kingdom on a map and, in connection with their design and technology work, they draw simple plans of the play equipment in Butts Meadow. Satisfactory use is made of the local area to support geography and visits further afield, for example to Ashwell Village, enable pupils to study geographical features first-hand. The Year 2 pupils for whom geography currently is a focus, are studying settlements and creating their own imaginary village containing features such as a river, church, post office and houses. They explain why they create a grid to do this and locate particular features by quoting grid references correctly. The teacher has high expectations that pupils can create their own simple maps and skilfully uses their deficiencies to take learning forward so that pupils learn by their own mistakes. She asks one pupil, for

example, why the road he has drawn suddenly ends or why another pupil's river takes a sudden ninety-degree turn. Pupils concentrate well on the task and make satisfactory progress in this lesson, which is competently planned and delivered.

109. The school has sufficient resources to teach geography and the subject is planned from a programme of work that combines the best of the school's previous scheme with the nationally recommended one from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This has recently been adopted and a two-year cycle of topics aims to ensure that work will not be repeated. The co-ordinator monitors the subject by scrutinising planning and collecting samples of work. She is not yet addressing the issue of curriculum coverage in Year 4 and the difference in the quality and quantity of work that is being demanded of Year 3 pupils in the three classes where they are found. The school uses information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in a local studies program. There is no system for assessing the standards that individual pupils are achieving.

HISTORY

110. The standards being achieved by pupils throughout the school are in line with those found nationally. This is similar to the judgement in the last inspection report. However, there has been some improvement since then in that all aspects of the subject are now taught and there is a two-year rolling programme of work to ensure that this happens. Teaching too is better with two of the three lessons observed displaying good practice. The school has a problem with the class containing pupils from both key stages. Currently the Year 2 pupils in this class are studying the Victorians while the rest of the year group are learning how events from the past are remembered today and the legacy left by such people as Florence Nightingale. The long-term plan makes no provision for them to cover these historical topics and indicates that they will study the Victorians again when they are in Year 4. This is not satisfactory.
111. The judgement that standards are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 is based entirely on the lessons seen and a review of teachers' planning since history so far this term has not been a focus and there is no work in pupils' books. Pupils are learning about Guy Fawkes' involvement in the Gunpowder Plot and can give reasons as to why a picture shows events from the past citing the clothes and the furniture as 'old'. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good because the teacher sticks too rigidly to her lesson plan and does not take the opportunity to explore pupils' interests expressed in their questions. Discussion is therefore somewhat curtailed. In another lesson, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are fascinated to hear a first-hand account of experiences during the Second World War from two visitors who answer their questions and give a vivid and moving account of how life was different then. In their writing after the talk, pupils show that they appreciate the difficulties of being a soldier in the war or a child at school at this time and clearly understand the significance of Remembrance Day. The initiative to invite speakers into school is bearing fruit and, by preparing pupils to ask questions and speak clearly when they do so, teachers ensure that best use is made of the time and learning is well promoted. The pupils behave impeccably and listen so carefully that the visitors are prompted to offer their congratulations.
112. While standards in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory, a worrying feature is that a scrutiny of work in books shows that a lower attaining Year 3 pupil is producing better quality work than a higher attaining pupil. They have different teachers and, by observing a lesson taught by the teacher of the lower attaining pupil, it is clear that she has good knowledge of the Victorian topic and an enthusiasm that conveys itself to the pupils. She has high expectations that they can assimilate the information about a servant's life and uses questions well to test their understanding. Pupils respond positively and are obviously interested in learning. They therefore make good progress, including those with special educational needs and pupils who do not have English as their first language. It was not possible to see a lesson taught by either of the Year 3 and Year 4 teachers because of timetabling arrangements. However, one of them in another lesson introduced pupils to a computer program that provides information about Victorian inventions and some followed this up during a lunch-break by loading the disc successfully and answering questions on a worksheet. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology in Key Stage 2. A parent regularly helps pupils in one class to download information from the Internet about the

Victorians enabling pupils to conduct their own research. Literacy skills too are promoted satisfactorily through history mainly through the accounts that pupils write, for example, following the visitors' talk to Key Stage 1 pupils.

113. The co-ordinator does not monitor the subject effectively but is aware that the history policy is dated and needs revision. However, the nationally recommended programme of work has only recently been adopted and teachers are quite rightly evaluating it before adapting it and the policy for future use. There are no formal systems for assessing the standards achieved by individual pupils. The local area is used well to stimulate interest in history. A visit to the War Memorial, for example, prepares pupils well for their talk about life during the last World War. There are sufficient books to support the subject and some artefacts but the fact that some teachers have to provide their own suggests that there are not enough. This was stated in the last report.

MUSIC

114. In those elements of the National Curriculum Programme of Study which were observed during the inspection, standards are above those expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school. Standards in performing skills have improved since the last inspection.
115. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing familiar songs and hymns tunefully and with enjoyment. Pupils recognise and accurately reproduce quite sophisticated rhythms and patterns. They carefully watch and follow a conductor and correctly differentiate between 'louder' and 'more quickly'. Pupils know the names of a wide range of instruments, including wind chimes, maracas, tulip block and several types of drums. They use appropriate terms such as 'deep', 'high' and 'quiet' to describe sounds and notes made by these instruments. Pupils handle instruments with confidence and care and demonstrate very good control when playing them. They listen very carefully to individual and group performances and are very willing to show their appreciation. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to develop their skills and knowledge well. They listen attentively to music by a good range of composers including Handel, Elgar, Beethoven and Gershwin. They correctly identify instruments such as trumpets, violins and drums when carefully listening to music and demonstrate a good use of rhythm when clapping in time to recorded music. Pupils become more selective when choosing instruments with which to play their own compositions in response to themes provided by their teacher. They also creatively incorporate their voices into their compositions in order to produce the desired overall effect.
116. Pupils participate enthusiastically. They work hard to improve their performances and willingly discuss ideas and show appreciation of each other's efforts. They treat instruments with respect and are ready to share them sensibly, taking turns when necessary.
117. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good use of the wide range of resources. They encourage pupils to listen carefully and critically and expect a good standard of performance. Lessons are paced well and pupils remain focussed throughout. Pupils are taught the names of instruments at an early age and are expected to use the correct terms when describing the pitch, tempo and structure of music. Pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate and improve their performances and they benefit significantly from these experiences as standards improve during lessons and over time as they move up the school. Pupils also benefit from the valuable additional support provided by the part-time pianist and peripatetic violin and guitar teachers.
118. The music co-ordinator has successfully used her knowledge of the subject to give teachers specific guidance to ensure pupils develop their composing and performing skills as they move up the school. However, her role in the monitoring and evaluating of standards has not been effectively addressed. Pupils are given the opportunity to perform their own compositions during class assemblies. The school choir performs at Christmas events and throughout the year there are many opportunities for pupils to participate in events within the wider community. These include the local First Schools Music Party and entertaining residents at the local hospice. Performances given by local middle schools and visiting African performers have enriched pupils' experience and broadened their knowledge and understanding.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. It was only possible to observe three lessons during the inspection. The standards that pupils in Key Stage 1 are achieving in gymnastics are above those found nationally and Key Stage 2 pupils are achieving similar standards in games. In swimming, nine-year-olds are reaching well above the expected standard in swimming with over half already able to swim the 25 metres expected for eleven-year-olds with a term and a half of lessons still to come. These observations, however, do not provide enough evidence to make a secure judgement about standards for physical education overall in the school. In the last report, attainment was judged to be satisfactory and this position has certainly been maintained.
120. At the parents' meeting, some concerns were expressed about the provision of physical education. The inspection team judges that provision is satisfactory. All classes have sufficient lessons on the timetable and teachers' planning for this term shows that they are providing a variety of work to develop essential skills. A satisfactory number of extra-curricular activities attract large numbers of the older pupils. Netball and football clubs operate after school and matches are played with other schools. A dance club meets at lunchtime and is also popular. Pupils enjoy these activities and have a positive attitude to their lessons. They work sensibly together and appreciate the efforts of their classmates when watching demonstrations.
121. Teaching was good in all three lessons observed. The swimming instructor keeps pupils really busy and develops their backstroke technique through a series of linked exercises that test their endurance and their ability to swim without the benefit of arm and then leg actions. There is noticeable improvement during the final activity when they swim a length using the full action. In a games lesson, pupils practise their dribbling and passing skills using plastic hockey sticks and become aware of the importance of teamwork in playing games. The teacher gives clear instructions, constant reminders about safety and sets challenges for pupils that test their skills and enable them to make good progress. Some, for example, find it difficult to pass to a partner and move on but they improve after practice. Younger pupils in gymnastics are also well challenged to try different kinds of roll. The teacher keeps up a brisk pace but gives time for individual pupils to demonstrate their achievements enabling others to see the standards that can be achieved. In all three lessons pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress by being actively involved. They are suitably tired at the end.
122. The management of physical education is being shared by two capable teachers on a temporary basis and as yet there has been no monitoring and evaluating of standards. The nationally recommended programme of work has just been adopted and teachers are evaluating it this year. There are no formal systems for assessing the skills acquired by individual pupils. There is sufficient equipment and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the playground has limited space when older pupils are all practising their games skills. The school taps into outside resources for the benefit of pupils. At present, for example, those in Year 4 are combining their swimming lesson with basketball tuition at the Sports Centre led by a qualified coach. This initiative, which lasts for five weeks, is creating an interest in the sport and giving opportunities for ball skills to be developed in a purposeful way.