

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL'S CofE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

King's Langley

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117441

Headteacher: Mr L Evans

Reporting inspector: Dr Mike Williams
OFSTED No: 19388

Dates of inspection: 6-9 November 2000

Inspection number: 224239

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Common Chipperfield King's Langley Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD4 9BS
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Stephen Morrill
Date of previous inspection:	8 - 10 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mike Williams (OFSTED No: 19388)	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		History	How high are standards? a) The schools results and achievements
		Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
		Special educational needs	What should the school do to improve?
Barry Wood (OFSTED No: 1311)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Abul Maula (OFSTED No: 8696)	Team Inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
		Geography	
		English as an additional language	
Susan Phelps (OFSTED No: 24024)	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Music	
		Under fives	

The inspection contractor was:

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England school with a nursery. There are 206 pupils on roll; 99 boys and 107 girls. The nursery currently has 28 part-time pupils in attendance. The school is located in the heart of the village of Chipperfield and has strong links with the church and local community. It draws most of its pupils from the village, with a small number travelling in from surrounding villages. Children come from a range of social backgrounds. The majority of parents own their properties and work in professional occupations outside the village. A small number live in rented accommodation and work locally. The number of children eligible for free school meals is proportionately well below the national average, while the number with special educational needs is similar to that found in most schools; two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. The number of ethnic minority children is very low. Children's attainment on entry to the school is generally above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Paul's is an effective school with a strong Christian ethos. Compared with similar schools, pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics by age 11. In doing so, they make sound progress. Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning, they behave well and attendance rates high. These high standards are achieved by much good teaching and sound curriculum provision. Leadership and management within the school, including the part played by governors, are good. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, art, history and music by age 11.
- There is a lot of good teaching, with strong links between teachers and support staff.
- The partnership with parents is very effective.
- Pupils enjoy very good guidance and support within a safe and caring environment.
- The teaching and provision for the Foundation Stage (Under fives) is good.
- Attendance rates are high and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' personal development is very good.
- The teaching and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- The headteacher's leadership and management are good, as are the contributions of staff and governors.

What could be improved

- Attainment of the more able pupils generally.
- Standards of presentation of pupils' work.
- The timetabling arrangements, and time-keeping generally, to ensure maximum use of the time allocated for teaching during the day.
- The quality of the accommodation for the library and three of the classrooms and the absence of suitable accommodation for teaching information technology.
- How the school uses its increasingly comprehensive assessment data, and existing monitoring systems, to develop precise strategies to raise the school's academic performance even further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in October 1996. Academic standards have improved in science and history and the high standards already achieved in English, mathematics, art and music have been largely maintained. However, standards in writing and in the presentation of pupils' work are still of variable quality, as is the performance of the more able pupils, who do not consistently achieve in line with their abilities. Teaching has improved, notably in the Foundation Stage, giving the school a much stronger platform for improving pupils' subsequent rates of progress. The curriculum is improved. Subject planning is now more effective, thanks in part to the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The quality of provision in the non-core subjects is also stronger, giving rise to some of the best work achieved in the school. Much improved monitoring and evaluation systems have aided the school progress. Target setting is now used more effectively to help raise standards. Good leadership and management continue to underpin the school's good progress and provide the drive and direction for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	A	B
Mathematics	A	C	A	A
Science	B	A	B	B

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

The table above shows that the school has maintained high levels of attainment in the national tests over the last three years, apart from a slight dip in 1999 when the cohort concerned contained a larger number of pupils with special educational needs. In 2000, the school's results compared very favourably with those of schools of similar background; less so in 1999 when the mathematics results were well below average for similar schools. The school's results at Key Stage 1 display a broadly similar picture. The majority of pupils successfully reach the national standard for their age, including pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress. On the whole, inspectors' findings confirm this overall profile of the school's performance. However, they find less evidence of higher attainment than the school's test results indicate. Not all higher-attaining pupils are doing as well as they should be, bearing in mind that most were achieving at above average levels of attainment when they entered the school. Recent Key Stage 1 national test results, in particular, show evidence of this variability in pupils' performance. While reading standards are consistently high, the proportions of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics and science are variable, occasionally falling below the average for similar schools. Evidence from the current inspection identifies little higher attainment in the present Year 2 cohort in English and mathematics. The situation in Year 6 is only slightly better.

Such variability of performance is much less evident in the standards of attainment achieved in the non-core subjects. Consistently high standards, throughout the school by all ability groups of pupils are achieved in art, music and history. Pupils make good progress in these subjects. In all other subjects, standards are at least sound, interspersed with pockets of good achievement; for example, in some aspects of physical education and in design and technology.

Standards of attainment in the Foundation Stage are consistently good in all areas of learning. Children enter the school with well developed basic literacy and numeracy skills. They successfully build on these. By age 5, they comfortably attain the nationally expected standards for their age group. Most exceed these, often by a long way.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and co-operative.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' relationships, with each other and with adults, are very good. Pupils act responsibly. They are mature, socially confident and morally aware.
Attendance	The school has high levels of attendance.

Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy school. This is reflected in the high rates of attendance right across the school. Pupils behave well as a matter of principle not of sanction. Their values and attitudes are strengths of the school and impact very positively on their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. Half of the teaching seen was good; just under a quarter was very good and the rest was sound. The good teaching enables many of the pupils to make good progress, notably the pupils with special educational needs and the lower-attaining pupils generally. Standards of teaching for the higher-attaining pupils are not as strong and this slows their progress in some lessons, particularly in the acquisition of independent study skills. Teaching of pupils in the nursery and reception classes is consistently good and frequently very good. It is stimulating and challenging, enabling pupils to achieve to their potential. Above all, children are taught how to learn. Throughout the school, the overall good teaching in English, mathematics and science ensures that most pupils have a sure grasp of appropriate skills in reading, writing and number, especially the pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress in developing a sound range of basic skills. On the other hand, as at the time of the last inspection, a small proportion of teaching still does not have sufficient depth, pace and challenge to ensure that the higher-attaining pupils consistently achieve at the levels of which they are capable. Teachers' planning needs to identify more precisely what these pupils need to achieve, taking into account what they already know and can do.

Teaching in most other subjects is of a consistently good, or better, standard for all ability groups throughout the school. Where achievement and learning are particularly strong, as in art, music and history, the teaching is occasionally inspirational and never short of stimulation and very high expectations. Teachers manage pupils well. They value pupils' efforts and successes and in turn command the respect of the pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for science, art, music and history. Good for the under fives. Sound for English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education, information technology and geography. The quality of the curriculum is not always best served by the school's timetabling arrangements. These do not ensure that the time allocated to the various subjects is spent as productively as it should be.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The Individual Educational Plans, coupled with the very good support provided for these pupils, enable them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school provides for its very small number of pupils with English as an additional language appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and good for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal and academic development are not as well established.

The school's partnership with parents is a real strength and much valued by staff, governors and parents. It is a two-way process of high quality, making a considerable impact on the life and work of the school. The quality of the school's curriculum is not helped by the varying lengths of time allocated to the

Literacy and Numeracy Hours, depending on when they are scheduled during the day, and to the overlong duration of some lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, and in many aspects very good, notably in the quality of the headteacher's personal leadership. He is very well supported by the staff, who make a considerable contribution to the everyday life and successful running of the school. There are some management issues that still need attention; for example, the indifferent standards of presentation in pupils' work and the need to improve the teaching and provision for the more able pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors meet all their statutory responsibilities effectively. Their relations with the school are good. Attendance at meetings is sometimes a problem.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. Much of the school's evaluation is very effective; for example, in reviewing the impact of its behaviour policy. In evaluating academic standards it is not quite as effective yet, though well on the way.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Principles of best value are effectively practised. Overall, the quality of the learning resources is good. Staffing levels are appropriate and staff training is well developed. Accommodation, however, is of very variable quality. Much is good but a lot is inadequate. The library accommodation is unsatisfactory; some of the classrooms are too cramped and poorly equipped for teaching the full range of the National Curriculum. There are no specialist facilities for computing.

Lack of space places severe constraints on the school's capacity to raise standards further. Good leadership and management, well supported by governors and parents, do much to compensate for this shortcoming and to ensure that the school provides sound 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 children enjoy school and are well cared for. • The school shares their high expectations for their children. • The school is well led and managed. • The good quality of much of the teaching. • Their strong links with the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's accommodation overall

Inspectors support the very positive views of the school held by parents. They also feel that parents are entirely justified in expressing their concerns about the appropriateness and quality of some of the school's accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The previous inspection report (1996) judged that standards of attainment in the school were generally in line with nationally expected standards. There were higher standards in English, art and music in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in physical education in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory attainment was reported. While the majority of pupils were judged to be making satisfactory progress, pupils with special educational needs were making good progress. In contrast, some of the under five children, although achieving satisfactory standards overall, were making insufficient progress considering that they had entered the school with above average attainment. The overall picture from the current inspection is not vastly different. The major exception is in the attainment of the under five children. They now do consistently well in all areas of learning. On the basis of inspectors' evidence, most pupils in the school achieve the national standard for their age in English, mathematics and science and make at least sound progress. But, only a minority do better than this.
2. This picture might appear to be out of line with the school's national test results since 1996 which, overall, suggest higher standards than those found by inspectors. Close scrutiny of the school's results, however, indicates that while standards are generally high, they are not high enough for a significant number of pupils, namely the higher-attaining pupils. There are inconsistencies in the school's performance, particularly at Key Stage 1, that are borne out by the findings of inspectors.
3. Recent Key Stage 1 results display significant levels of variability. Reading standards are consistently high, with the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard for 7-year-olds being well above the national average. In writing, the proportion of higher-attaining pupils drops sharply to be in line with the national average but below that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard in mathematics has also been consistently high in each year since 1998. In contrast, the proportion of pupils exceeding this standard was well below the national average in 1998, rising to being roughly in line with the national average in 2000. The trend in science is even less satisfactory. Despite the fact that virtually all pupils achieved the national standard last year, only a relatively small proportion did better than this. The proportion of higher-attaining pupils in science has fallen each year since 1998 and is now low compared to similar schools.
4. Considering the advantageous starting point for many of these pupils, they make slow progress in Key Stage 1. They reach the national standard for their age but ought to do better. In contrast, the results show that pupils with special educational needs, and other lower attaining pupils, make better progress and achieve well. Current inspection findings bear this out. Standards of reading are consistently good. On the other hand, standards in writing vary and are spoilt by a lack of care towards spelling and handwriting. While there is little evidence of higher attainment in mathematics, many of the same pupils are confidently achieving above the national standard for their age in science. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Variability in the quality of lesson planning, and in teachers' expectations of pupils, provides one reason for these inconsistencies of performance.
5. Apart from the slight dip in standards in 1999, the school's performance in the national tests at Key Stage 2 since 1996 is more consistently high. Unlike Key Stage 1, there is no conspicuous falling away in the proportion of higher-attaining pupils when the school's test results are compared with national averages. Standards remain at levels at least in line with the latter and usually above. However, inspectors do not find standards to be quite as high amongst the current Year 6 cohort. While pupils' basic literacy skills are well developed, the tendency towards untidiness and indifferent spelling persists. In mathematics, the higher-attaining pupils show gaps in their knowledge and are not sufficiently secure with their multiplication tables. In science, the more able pupils have a strong knowledge base but are not achieving at sufficiently high levels in their investigation work. Accelerated progress in the later stages of Year 6 as a result of intensive preparation for the tests may help to explain the higher standards achieved in the tests than were evident at the time of the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Most reach the national standard by age 11 and are well supported throughout their time in the school.

6. Previous weaknesses in the school's early years phase, which may be responsible for some of the inconsistencies found in pupils' subsequent progress, no longer exist. The youngest children in the school successfully capitalise on their prior knowledge and their abilities in both the nursery and the reception class. By age five, they comfortably attain the nationally recognised learning targets for their age in all areas. Their language and literacy skills are good. Many can read simple texts, speak and listen well and have good counting and number problem-solving skills. They are well supported by good teaching and a well planned curriculum.
7. Standards in Key Stage 1 and 2 in the non-core areas of the curriculum were sound at the time of the last inspection in all areas except art, music and physical education (at Key Stage 2) where they were above national expectations. The school has been highly successful in sustaining, and even improving upon, these standards. Art and music continue to flourish as areas of strength in the school's academic performance. History has now joined them, displaying standards that are consistently high right across the school. Specialist teaching accounts for some of this success. Teachers' enthusiasm and commitment also play a part. Other pockets of strength exist in aspects of physical education and design and technology. In all other subjects, including information technology, standards remain sound. In many of these areas, pupils are able to develop their basic skills as a result of good planning. Imaginative writing is a feature of the best work in history; pupils' art skills are successfully displayed in design lessons and their numeracy skills extended in geography and science; for example, in the use of frequency charts and graphs. The opportunities provided for pupils to extend their information technology skills through different subject areas are less well catered for, due primarily to a lack of computers.
8. The school sets achievement targets in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 in conjunction with the local authority. It also sets its own targets for Key Stage 1. The targets set for 1999 and 2000 were all comfortably met, apart from mathematics at Key Stage 2 in 1999. Because these targets are largely based on predicting what individual pupils will achieve, they do not require the school to define exactly what it means by "excellence". Thus the Key Stage 1 target for higher attainment in mathematics for 2000 was set at a level below the national average. Yet the vast majority of these pupils entered the school in 1998 with above average numeracy skills, on the evidence of the school's baseline assessment results. Currently the school does not take a strategic enough view of the standards it expects and the means to secure these. Where standards are consistently high, in art, music and history, all teachers and pupils are very clear about the standards expected and how they are to be achieved. This includes standards of presentation. Although the school, on the whole, sets appropriate end of Key Stage 2 achievement targets for English and mathematics, it does not translate these targets into the same kind of shared expectations and strategies for identifying, and producing, the high standards of performance so successfully achieved in some other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The previous report indicates that pupils' attitudes were, in the main, very good and that their behaviour and their personal development were good. These high standards have been maintained. Attitudes remain very good, behaviour is good and pupil's personal development is now very good. Parents see this as a strong aspect of the school's performance.
10. Under five children are enthusiastic and eager to come to school and to learn. They are very responsive to the care and high expectations shown to them by their teachers. As a result, any initial anxieties they might have about school are quickly dispelled. They gain confidence, participate easily in the daily routines and learn with a sense of real enjoyment. They learn how to concentrate and listen and this helps to produce good progress and attainment. This is an area of significant improvement since the last inspection.
11. Most pupils arrive at school in a calm and purposeful mood. They look smart and clean and represent their parents well. They have very good attitudes and are eager and enthusiastic to participate in lessons. Most develop an increasing realisation, as they progress through the school, that hard work will produce good results. At both key stages, they show a consistently high level of interest and commitment to their studies. On the whole, they are attentive and listen well. A small number of pupils occasionally find this more difficult when they are not sufficiently challenged by the work set. This situation is not helped by the fragmented start to the school day. Inspectors found that pupils settle more quickly into their lessons when these start promptly

after registration. They take longer to settle and show less sense of urgency when they have spent much of the first 40 minutes of the day transferring from one venue to another.

12. The behaviour of the pupils in lessons is good. Very occasionally it is marred by immature behaviour. Generally, pupils have a good understanding of the school's expectations for self-discipline. They are accepting of the school's behaviour code and this leads to a calm, happy, and productive working atmosphere. Behaviour around the school is very good. The close interaction of older pupils and younger pupils has a calming effect on younger pupils. Neither bullying nor bad language was observed, although incident books indicate that occasional problems have necessitated teacher investigation. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last three years.
13. The quality of relationships, at all levels, is very good and is a real strength of the school. Pupils value the trust, consideration and care that they are given. The school generates a strong sense of "family" underpinned by a Christian ethos which places a high value on mutual respect and harmonious relationships. The effect is well seen in the way that the older pupils mirror these qualities in their dealings with the younger pupils. They show genuine care, concern and respect for each other, both in the classroom and in the playground. Pupils successfully work together in groups; they share resources and are helpful to each other. Pupils are courteous and polite. They welcome visitors with confidence and engage easily in conversation. Boys and girls mix readily and show mutual respect. In lessons, including physical education, they partner each other without fuss or embarrassment.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. They have a good awareness of health and safety issues. They are also morally and socially aware. For example, the commitments behind the Friendship Tree and the Playground Squad are seen as community responsibilities not as unwelcome chores. By the time they leave the school, pupils take and accept responsibility as a matter of course. They are expected to have their own views about how to improve their community and they fulfil this expectation very effectively through the Pupils' Charter. They are well prepared as individuals for the next stage in their education and eventually as good citizens. Pupils maintain the environment of the site well. There is no litter or graffiti. Overall, pupils take a pride in their community and contribute positively to its effectiveness.
15. The previous report indicated that attendance at the school was satisfactory. Over the last four years the school has improved its attendance levels significantly. They are now at consistently high levels. All classes have attendance rates well above the national average, with many pupils having exemplary attendance records throughout their time in school. Unauthorised absence continues at a very low level, though family holidays, taken during term-time, remain a significant cause of authorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The last inspection report judged the quality of teaching to be sound at Key Stage 1, good at Key Stage 2 and variable for the under five children. Most of the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the school was found in the early years lessons. While a lot of good practice was evident, there were also weaknesses. High teacher expectations were found but so, too, were expectations that were not high enough. Some lessons had good pace, others were too slow and lacked sufficient challenge. In contrast, teaching was reported as consistently good for pupils with special educational needs. Much, but not quite all, of this inconsistency has been successfully remedied.
17. During the course of the current inspection, teaching was good in 50 per cent of lessons observed, very good in 22 per cent of them and sound in 28 per cent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. At the last inspection, only 6 per cent of teaching was very good and there was less good teaching. Now, good practice is much more evenly spread across the school. Good and very good lessons were evident in both key stages, in the early years classes and across most subject areas, where lessons were observed.
18. In the early years phase 57 per cent of lessons were good, 29 per cent were very good and 14 per cent were sound. Teaching is good in all six areas of learning, helped by a very strong partnership between the teacher and support staff. Together they provide the children with a wide variety of stimulating experiences which capture their interest. Children of all abilities are suitably challenged and their progress carefully recorded to ensure that future planning extends their

learning. Basic skills are well taught and give children a very secure platform for entry to Key Stage 1.

19. In both Key Stage 1 and 2, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history, information technology and music. It is sound in physical education. In geography it is good in Key Stage 2 and sound in Key Stage 1.
20. However, in both key stages there are still traces of the less effective practice noted in the 1997 report. The pace and demand in a small number of lessons still lacks sharpness and urgency, albeit that this weakness was compensated for by strengths that enabled the vast majority of pupils to make adequate progress in the particular lessons observed. The pupils least well served by this shortcoming are the more able pupils, whose progress over time is restricted by the tendency to focus more effectively on the lower-attaining and average pupils.
21. The main reasons for the overall improvements in the standards of teaching since the last inspection are:
 - the development and implementation of a whole-school teaching and learning policy;
 - the introduction of specialist teaching in art, music and design and technology;
 - the increasingly effective monitoring of teaching by the headteacher;
 - the positive impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
22. Good subject knowledge is now displayed in much of the teaching, notably in English, science, art, music and geography teaching in Key Stage 1 and English, mathematics, geography and design and technology in Key Stage 2. Though little teaching in history was seen, the strong impact of teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm is very evident in their planning.
23. Basic skills are well taught for most pupils. Planning for broad ability grouping is effective for the lower ability groups but less effective for the higher ability groups. The best lesson plans are very clear about the learning to be achieved by all pupils. Other plans are not precise enough about the skills to be acquired by the higher-attaining pupils. As a result, the tasks set are not always sufficiently well matched to the prior attainment and abilities of these pupils. This is less evident in the teaching of reading but more evident in the teaching of writing skills and in some numeracy teaching. Examples of good mental mathematics sessions were observed in both key stages. For instance, in Year 1, very effective strategies employed by the teacher maintained the pace of the lesson while impacting on pupils' enthusiasm and challenge. In a small number of other lessons, the pace and challenge for the more able pupils was not rigorous enough.
24. Good management of pupils is also a strong feature of teaching in the majority of lessons. Sensitive management improves pupil behaviour and this helps keep pupils focused on their work. This was highlighted in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher's sense of humour and the effective modulation of her voice encouraged and maintained a constant level of interest and challenge throughout the session. In contrast, occasional lessons in both key stages have over-long introductions or an insufficiently focused ending. As a consequence, pupils' interest wanes, rendering learning ineffective. This situation is not helped by the length of some lessons which are over long.
25. Teachers deploy support staff well. This is a particularly strong feature of the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Their learning is well focused and the contributions of the support staff are of high quality. The partnership between class teachers and support staff is very effective and adds significantly to the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
26. Effective use of resources is often integral to effective teaching. It clarifies lesson objectives and enables pupils to complete tasks. In a Year 3 lesson, the use of a careful selection of maps helped pupils to develop their mapping skills. The use of an overhead projector in a literacy lesson enhanced Year 6 pupils' concentration and facilitated the whole-class reading of a newspaper report.
27. In most classes, homework is well used to support pupils' learning. Pupils in both key stages are actively encouraged to take books home. Home reading contributes to many pupils becoming confident readers. Homework in mathematics and history effectively underpins pupils' work in lessons; for example, in Years 2 and 5 where the history topics are well supported by information that pupils are expected to gain for themselves at home.

28. Overall, the generally good quality of teaching impacts well on the quality of pupils' learning. Most pupils respond positively to the teaching they receive and appreciate the commitment of their teachers. The majority of pupils concentrate and show high levels of motivation. They are increasingly aware of what they know and what they need to know, which is considerably helped by the involvement of pupils in their own target setting. In lessons, pupils are co-operative and most take responsibility for their work, given the opportunity. However, opportunities for pupils to do their own research are not frequent enough. The absence of suitable library accommodation does not help this situation, nor the cramped nature of some of the classrooms. These restrictions place constraints on the range of methods used by teachers in lessons. Occasionally, teachers over-direct pupils' learning; for example, in science investigation sessions. Nevertheless, teachers successfully generate in their classrooms an environment of enjoyment and industry. The school has the capacity to extend its good practice even more widely.

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

29. At the last inspection, the curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 was reported as meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and as being broad and balanced. Nevertheless, a number of weaknesses were identified. In some classes, planning was judged to focus too much on content without identifying precisely what pupils were to achieve. In some lessons, there was inadequate provision for problem solving and investigative learning, notably in science. Provision for the under fives, while satisfactory overall, did not ensure effective progression for children when moving into Key Stage 1, particularly the more able pupils. For the most part, these weaknesses have been effectively tackled, though there is still work to be done in some classes to ensure that learning objectives are precise enough to enable all pupils to build successfully on what they already know and can do. Again, the more able pupils are least well catered for in this respect. Improvements to the under five provision are a significant improvement.
30. The quality of the school's provision is:
- good for the under five children;
 - sound overall at Key Stages 1 and 2, but
 - good in English, art, music, history and science at both key stages;
 - very good for pupils' personal development;
 - good for pupils with special educational needs and sound for those for whom English is an additional language.
31. The school's curriculum remains broad, balanced and relevant and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, including sex and health education. There is a good range of interesting opportunities, including visits and an equipped outdoor area, to stimulate pupils' interest and to extend their knowledge. These are available to all pupils without regard to gender, ability, culture or ethnic diversity. Generally, the curriculum provides equality of opportunity and access so that all pupils can make progress, although there is evidence in some lessons that the provision for the higher-attaining pupils is not challenging enough to enable them to make the progress they should.
32. Overall, time allocations for the various subjects are appropriate. In spite of the strong focus on English and mathematics, the school has been very successful in maintaining good standards of provision in a number of the non-core subjects, notably art, music and history. Above average attainment is found in each of these subjects. Educational visits help to maintain a good breadth in the curriculum. Visits to places like Kew Gardens, St. Albans Abbey, the Toy Museum, the Globe theatre and Sadlers Wells significantly enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum as a whole.
33. The use made of the allocated teaching time is not consistently satisfactory, particularly in English and mathematics. This is largely a timetabling issue. Owing to the way that the school's timetable is arranged, the literacy and numeracy sessions range in duration from one hour to one and a quarter hours depending upon where they fall in the day. The longer sessions often prove too long, particularly for the younger pupils, and time tends to be wasted. Cumulatively, this adds up to a sizeable amount of time over the course of a week which could be structured into the

timetable. For example, the school does not timetable specific sessions for speaking and listening. Yet, standards in this aspect of literacy are lower than they should be for pupils whose oracy skills are already well developed by age 5. A slightly relaxed attitude towards timekeeping within the school sometimes adds to the reduction in actual time spent on teaching and learning over the course of the school day.

34. The curriculum for children under five successfully meets the needs of young children. Weaknesses identified in 1997 have been remedied. The statutory curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been effectively implemented, resulting in a very good range of experiences that enable the children to achieve appropriately in all areas of learning. The planning for the children under five links closely with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to ensure a strong base of learning upon which to build. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, the early years provision now ensures a smooth transition into Key Stage 1.
35. There is good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. There are appropriate procedures in place for identification and assessment of these pupils. Individual Educational Plans have been drawn up for all pupils on the register and specific and achievable targets are identified to help teachers and learning support assistants plan for their needs and support them in their learning. Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is also effective and their needs well met.
36. The school has good strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy. The national strategy is effectively developed within the school's curriculum and is helping to build upon the standards already achieved at Key Stage 1 and 2. The skills gained by pupils are successfully reinforced in other curriculum areas; for example, in creative writing and reporting in history.
37. There is satisfactory implementation of the national strategy for the teaching of numeracy, which is not quite as consistently implemented yet as the literacy strategy. Practice varies between classes, reflecting occasional indecision about the flexibility teachers have to fit the strategy to the needs of the pupils, particularly the more able, rather than fit the pupils to the strategy. Even so, improved standards in Key Stage 2 in the 2000 national tests reflect the growing impact of the strategy on teachers' confidence in teaching the subject.
38. The school continues to provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities such as football, netball and gymnastics. These activities are well supported by pupils and are open to boys and girls. Equally, pupils can participate in choir and recorder groups. There is music tuition for pupils to learn to play wind instruments like the saxophone, clarinet and flute, and string instruments like the violin and the guitar. Some pupils have taken and been successful in national examinations in playing these instruments.
39. The programme for personal, social and health education is much improved since the last inspection. The school provides a secure and welcoming environment within which pupils' personal development is effectively fostered, in lessons and in all aspects of their life within the school. This is considerably assisted by the development of clear policies, which are successfully put into practice by staff. Parents, as well as the school, feel that this is a major source of strength in the school.
40. The school has established and maintains very strong links with the church and local community. These strong links enhance the subject provision in the school as well as the provision for pupils' personal and social development; for example, the Church is providing a valuable focus for the Year 4 pupils' history project this term. Other highly productive links include the contribution of music tutors, sports coaches, the school nurse, the village policeman, local shopkeepers, parents and governors in a wide variety of activities both in and out of school time. Effective links also exist between the school and other educational establishments. For example, visits are exchanged with other schools, both local and further afield, to support pupils' learning; for example, in geography, multicultural education and gymnastics. The school is often used by institutions training teachers, by nursery nurses in training and by secondary schools for their pupils as part of their work experience course. This is of mutual benefit to both students and the school.
41. The school is based firmly in the Christian tradition and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is

good. Assemblies are meaningful and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own ideas, and for prayer. There are planned and unplanned opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder in lessons. For example, when the teacher lit the diva lights for reception pupils after they had made the holders, and when older pupils showed their perspective drawings, the class gasped in admiration at one pupil's effort.

42. Provision for pupils' moral development remains very good. The school's policy for discipline is effectively embodied in the school's aims and vision statements. There is a code of behaviour drawn up by staff and children to "keep our school happy and secure". Teachers, who are quick to remind pupils about them, regularly reinforce these statements. Moral behaviour is reinforced through assemblies and special 'sharing' assemblies where good deeds are celebrated. Teachers provide good role models for moral conduct and show clear and high expectations of behaviour.
43. The provision for pupils' social development also remains very good and is strongly supported by the very good links established with the community and parents. A wide range of visits and visitors helps pupils to develop an understanding of themselves in a wider social context. This also helps pupils to develop a broader cultural perspective than was evident at the time of the last inspection. Good opportunities have now been introduced into art, music and design and technology for pupils to study and develop an understanding of non-European culture. The appointment of a teacher to take responsibility for this area has helped the process. In music and assemblies pupils listen to music from non-European countries; in design and technology they were looking at shadow puppets from Indonesia. Evidence from displays around the school reflects these opportunities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The previous inspection report judged that the support, guidance and welfare of pupils was satisfactory overall. Weaknesses were identified in the completion of attendance registers, which was poor, and in arrangements for children's safety at the school entrance, which were unsafe. Both have been very satisfactorily addressed. Improvements generally in this area make it a very good aspect of the school's provision. It supports the school's aims very effectively and has a positive impact on the progress pupils make.
45. The headteacher and staff have a particularly good knowledge of all pupils. This results from a close relationship between parents and staff and the frequent opportunities provided for informal discussion at either end of the school day. The headteacher and his colleagues accept their pastoral role with a quiet dedication and enthusiasm. Pupils feel well supported without any loss to their independence. Parents appreciate greatly the efforts and commitment shown by the headteacher and staff in providing a safe, sensitive and caring environment for their children.
46. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and development within the core subjects are satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' attainment is good. Individual pupil profiles record pupils' targets and progress as they move from class to class. Weekly reviews enable teachers to identify issues on a regular basis. Early identification of pupils with special educational needs is helped by this process as well as through use of the baseline assessment results conducted in the nursery and reception classes. Use of the data gathered to support curriculum planning is sound but a bit patchy. At its best, it identifies areas for development; for example, in writing and in mathematics. At its least effective, it identifies weaknesses but does not take enough action; for example, in dealing with the higher attainment issue in science in Key Stage 1.
47. The overall monitoring of pupils' progress and development in non-core subjects and in the non-academic aspects of their development is not yet sufficiently well established at a whole-school level. The school does not have agreed procedures for this purpose and relies largely on verbal exchanges between staff and the headteacher following identification of issues noted in the weekly evaluations. Exceptions to this practice are the records and reviews kept on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. These are comprehensive, involve parents and impact very directly on the planning of next steps for these pupils. A useful start has been made on extending this good practice more widely. The school financial secretary now uses a computerised data-base to update all pupil-based information. This is sufficiently accurate and focused to be helpful in an emergency.

48. There is a very good liaison and relationship between the school and the adjacent playgroup. This ensures that children's entry to the school is freed from unnecessary anxiety. Relations with the local secondary schools are also good. Parents and children receive good support at transfer.
49. The school has an abundance of very relevant and updated support, guidance and welfare policies, which effectively guide its actions. These are implemented consistently across the school. Clear guidance in the staff handbook helps to ensure a good understanding by staff of what is expected and required. The school welcomes the help and support of external agencies when needed. For example, the school nurse has over many years assisted the school, very effectively, with its personal health and social education provision. Her leadership of the "mums and daughters" evening on issues concerning puberty is particularly appreciated. The Educational Welfare Officer, albeit that her role is more limited given the school's lack of attendance problems, supports the school well. Child protection procedures are very good and the school is very vigilant in this respect. The school co-ordinator has received a good level of refresher training over the last two years and in turn ensures that staff are well informed on this matter. There are no pupils on the child protection register currently.
50. The school successfully promotes a culture of good behaviour. Its procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good. The headteacher has a quiet determination on this issue. A wide and consistent display of rules and expectations exists; for example, the pupils' charter; school, class and playground rules; and a code of conduct for lunchtimes. These expectations are constantly reinforced throughout the day; for instance, in assemblies, during the personal health and social education lessons and in lessons when attitudes or behaviour deviate from the norm. Learning by example is highlighted as a result of the very good adult role models provided by the staff in the school.
51. Attendance procedures and systems are now very good. The school currently enjoys a place in the upper quartile of Hertfordshire schools for attendance. Unauthorised absence is practically zero owing to the zealous efforts of the school office and staff in reacting to pupils' absence on the first day that this occurs. Parents are made very aware of their statutory obligations. However, the incidence of parents taking holidays within the term-time is quite high, despite the school's ongoing efforts to discourage this practice.
52. The school is, now, a physically safe environment for pupils. It has a very good complement of first-aiders. However, the school's first aid facilities are inadequate. There is no on-site medical room. Use has to be made of a cramped reception area or the school office for this purpose. Health and safety procedures are very good under the guidance of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable consultant surveyor. Pupils are well acquainted with health and safety principles in the home and at school. There are only a very few minor health and safety points that the school needs to address. These have been fed back to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The last inspection report indicated that the school's partnership with its parents was very good and that virtually all aspects of the relationship were well developed. Only in failing to give parents sufficient information about how to help their children overcome weaknesses in their performance and to provide pupils with sufficient amounts of homework, were any shortcomings identified. Both have been successfully remedied. Relations with parents are a major strength of the school, a fact reflected in the very high rates of approval registered by parents in the inspection questionnaire.
54. The school, in conjunction with the church, provides a significant focus for the local community. The school's reputation in the locality continues to flourish. Pupil numbers have risen. It is viewed as a successful school and as a result receives significant levels of interest from parents outside the catchment area. Parents recognise and value the efforts of the headteacher, staff and governors to provide a high quality education for their children. The headteacher's unflinching commitment is particularly appreciated. There are no areas of significant parental dissatisfaction.
55. The school achieves its aim of taking parents into partnership. It successfully practises an open door policy whereby all parents are encouraged to enter the school at the beginning and end of the day and to play a role within the school. Parent volunteers provide an additional resource both inside and outside the classroom on a regular basis. They help to run the successful football and

netball teams. Many governor roles are covered by parents. They take these responsibilities seriously and want to understand and help shape the future goals for the school. The Parent-Teacher Association is an essential element in promoting and developing the distinctive family ethos that characterises the school. They are very hardworking and bring great benefits to the school, both financially and in supporting the school's aims and values.

56. The quality of information for parents is very good. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are high quality documents which meet all the statutory requirements as well as signalling the school's high value for parents. The school's policies and procedures are available to parents and in some cases shared with them. Parental opinion is valued and heeded. However, public display within the school of the major policies would make them more readily accessible to parents. A major strength of the school's communications with parents is its commitment to listen. This enables informal communications to flourish, thereby anticipating potential issues and problems. All formal open evenings are well attended, including the annual governors' meeting for parents. Annual reports on their children's progress, at both key stages, give parents comprehensive and perceptive feedback about their children's performance in all subjects of the National Curriculum. They include targets which are discussed and agreed with both the parents and child. The school keeps a record of its meetings with parents when discussing pupil progress at the open evenings.
57. Communication generally is a strong feature of the partnership. The majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement. Support in helping parents to understand what the school is trying to achieve in pupils' learning is regularly and successfully undertaken; for example, through evening sessions on literacy, numeracy and personal and social education. The Mathematics at Home publication, the home-school reading records, the homework diaries and the national test revision packs are all good illustrations of the effective understanding that exists between the school and parents in respect of children's learning. The school tries to ensure close collaboration with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Individual Educational Plans for these pupils are shared with parents, as are the reviews of their progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The school was judged to be very well led and competently managed at the time of the last inspection. Leadership remains good. Management is now also good. Both have been key factors in taking the school forward since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy, each appointed shortly after the previous inspection, have very successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. At the same time, they have ensured that the high standards already achieved in many aspects of the school's operation have been maintained, or improved; for example, the school's very strong partnership with parents, the enhanced quality of teaching and the improved provision for pupils' personal development. They have not been quite so effective in raising educational standards. Improvements to the early years provision have certainly been significant. On the other hand, standards for the higher-attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, are not as good as they should be. The quality of presentation in pupils' work across the school is a matter of concern for the school, and rightly so. Finally, the organisation of the school's timetable and the relaxed attitude towards rigorous time-keeping do not always ensure best use of the time available for teaching and learning. These are all management issues, albeit that the school is aware of them and in some cases is already taking action.
59. As at the time of the previous inspection, very effective teamwork enhances the school's performance. A highly professional, supportive and committed body of staff all have clear job descriptions and function effectively. The co-ordinator role has been significantly strengthened. Not only do co-ordinators have responsibility for budgets, they also play key roles in managing the processes that link directly to raising academic standards; monitoring, evaluation and development planning. A strength of the school's management is the manner in which these processes are carefully integrated at all levels, from staff through to governors. The co-ordination and management of the school's special educational needs provision highlights the good quality of these arrangements.
60. The School Development Plan is, in most respects, a high quality tool for raising standards. Progress review and prioritisation are presented within an annual cycle as part of a three year rolling programme developed around a series of longer-term goals and annual action plans. The latter are carefully costed, with success criteria and deadlines. Financial planning is effectively

dovetailed into this process to ensure that the school's goals are both realistic and manageable. A comprehensive system of "core" and "development" monitoring provides the means for evaluating progress. This is well managed by the headteacher. Governors play their part, particularly in respect of financial planning.

61. Governors were judged to be fully involved in the life of the school in the previous inspection report. A core of experienced governors remain from the last inspection. They provide a strong focus for the governing body's deliberations and decision-making. Six new governors have been appointed recently. Some have not undertaken sufficient training. Although new governors are members of the various governing body committees, not all are thoroughly conversant with their responsibilities. Low attendance at some governing body meetings does not assist this situation. Relations between individual governors and senior managers in the school are strong. Governors play an increasingly effective role in monitoring standards, in helping to formulate the school's educational priorities and in building these into the school budget. The governing body meets all of its statutory duties. Its annual report to parents is of particularly good quality, giving very positive signals to parents about the value placed on their contribution to the school.
62. The longer-term vision into which the school's development planning fits, apart from issues regarding accommodation and the school's size, is not precise enough about the academic goals that governors and school wish to achieve. The school sets targets but these are not yet used systematically to plot the school's progress towards agreed improvement goals. A performance management policy is now in place to help support the development of this process. The good quality of existing monitoring and evaluation procedures puts the school in a strong position to improve this aspect of its operation. In addition to the monitoring undertaken by subject co-ordinators, the school's test results, and other standardised assessments, are carefully analysed to see where improvements can be made. This is beginning to have an impact on curriculum development and on raising standards; for example, through the prioritising of writing as a focus for development. In other areas of its work, for example, attendance and discipline, the school's performance is carefully monitored against its policies and appropriate strategies put in place where found to be needed.
63. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by the headteacher, sometimes in partnership with the local education authority's advisor. Their reports provide a clear picture of what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. Where weaknesses have been identified, for example, in information technology provision, appropriate remedial action has been taken. Teaching is much improved, notably for the under five children, and effective assessment procedures are in place in the core subjects. Each of these aspects now has a core of successful practice upon which to base continued improvement. Assessment in the non-core subjects and monitoring of pupils' personal development are areas for attention.
64. The school has an income and expenditure per pupil that are well above that found in most schools. Funds are effectively used and principles of best value for money are appropriately adopted. Specific grants are well targeted; for example, the funds for supporting the school's special educational needs provision and the grants received for enhancing the school's information technology provision. Government "booster" funds, to raise standards in Year 6 in preparation for the national tests, have been highly successful in achieving this purpose. Administration within the school is thorough and efficient. The school office is very well run and provides a welcoming and positive interface for parents. Increasing use is made of new technologies to keep records and accounts. Financial administration is equally good. Regulations and controls are fully in place. The recommendations of the most recent local authority auditor's report have been successfully implemented.
65. The school has a sufficient number of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and pupils. Effective deployment of well qualified support staff adds significantly to the quality of teaching and learning in the school, especially for pupils experiencing difficulties. Teachers are appropriately qualified and where gaps exist in their expertise, training and support are provided. The decision to deploy specialist subject teachers to cover some of the teaching in art and music has been highly effective. Pupils throughout the school achieve above average standards in these subjects. There are good induction arrangements into the school for new teachers, including a mentoring system. Provision of training for the literacy and numeracy initiatives has been sufficient and beneficial. Formal teacher appraisal has not been undertaken this year. However, professional development interviews conducted by the headteacher have taken place and have been effective in supporting teachers' needs.

66. The quality of the school's accommodation though sound overall has a number of critical weaknesses. Good features such as the gymnasium, the new classrooms and the quality of the outside facilities are offset by the unsatisfactory accommodation for the school library, the cramped and unsuitable environment provided in three of the classrooms and the lack of a computer suite and medical room. For a school of 220 pupils, the overall teaching accommodation is inadequate. In addition to the pressure on space in most classrooms, there are no facilities for withdrawing pupils from lessons for specialist help, apart from working in corridors and small reception areas around the school. Storage space is minimal. Although the school does its best with the accommodation it has, this handicap seriously undermines its efforts to provide the quality of education to which it is committed. Plans for upgrading the accommodation have been drawn up by the school. The caretaker, staff, and parents all work tirelessly to present the school as a smart, attractive and welcoming institution.
67. The sufficiency and quality of the school's learning resources remain good overall. They are very good in music and for the under five children, and good in the core subjects and art and physical education. They are satisfactory in all other subjects. The school's action plans indicate that continued strengthening of its learning resources remains a focus for development. In contrast to the school's accommodation, its learning resources impact very positively on the quality of teaching and learning.
68. The school gives sound value for money. It receives an above average income per pupil and most pupils enter the school with above average attainment. They exit the school with sound levels of achievement, high standards of personal development and very positive attitudes towards learning. They experience much good teaching, particularly of basic skills, and satisfactory curriculum provision overall. Pupils with special educational needs receive good provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to improve the good standards and practices already achieved in the school still further, governors, headteacher and staff should:
- Improve the academic performance of the higher-attaining pupils, and of standards generally, by:
 - identifying clearly what constitutes high academic achievement for pupils attending St Paul's and devising strategies to promote this level of achievement in practice;
 - taking steps to ensure that teachers' planning builds systematically on the knowledge and skills that pupils have already acquired;
 - continuing to raise teachers' expectations of pupils to ensure that they are all suitably and consistently challenged at levels appropriate to their abilities, especially in the core subjects;
 - establishing whole-school strategies to bring about improvements in pupils' presentation of their work;
 - strengthening the school's monitoring procedures to ensure that the progress of pupils is systematically tracked in relation to their baseline assessment performance on entry to the school.

(Paras. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 23, 31, 46, 47, 58, 62, 63, 89, 93, 108, 112, 113, 114, 125, 130, 150 and 151)
 - Improve curriculum provision, and efficiency, by:
 - establishing timetable arrangements that provide appropriate allocations of teaching time to the various subjects in relation to the ages of the pupils and the particular nature of the learning to be covered;
 - reviewing the start of the school day in order to eliminate the use of undue amounts of teaching time with pupils moving from one venue to another;
 - improving the school's own time-keeping in order to convey to pupils appropriate signals about punctuality and deadlines.

(Paras. 33 and 58)

- Improve the quality of the school's accommodation, by:
 - providing suitable space for the school library;
 - establishing appropriate accommodation for the teaching of information technology on a class basis;
 - seeking ways to develop and up-grade the school's current classroom provision where it is below standard.

(Paras. 28 and 66)

70. In addition to the key issues above, the following subsidiary issue should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- Continue the development of whole-school systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in the non-core subjects and in their personal development.

(Paras. 47, 63, 125, 130 and 151)

- Strengthen further the work and contribution of the governing body, by:
 - developing strategies to improve attendance at governing body meetings;
 - improving participation of governors in training courses and in the running and business of the governing body committees.

(Para. 61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22	50	28	0	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	202
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
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
	2000	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	14
	Girls	13	13	11
	Total	29	29	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (100)	84 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	29	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (100)	93 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	27	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (81)	93 (67)	100 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	27	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (81)	93 (67)	100 (67)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	193
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.6
Average class size	29.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	410,541
Total expenditure	413,835
Expenditure per pupil	1,990
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,591
Balance carried forward to next year	39,297

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	22	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	34	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	37	7	2	7
The teaching is good.	63	31	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	49	6	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	23	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	25	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	40	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	29	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	37	7	1	7

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

71. Children enter school in two cohorts during the year. The older ones commence in September, and the younger ones in January. Children in the nursery attend part time during the mornings. Some children stay all day, for a fee, in the 'Bumblebees' club. This provision is well organised by a nursery nurse and qualified staff care for children during the afternoon. Most spend two terms in the nursery before moving into the reception class where they remain for the rest of the year and where they stay all day.
72. Baseline assessments are conducted in both the nursery and the reception classes. These are different tests and specific to the age of the children in each age bracket. They are taken within a short time of entry. Results show that the majority of children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above average in all areas of learning. From these assessments targets are set for each individual child. Parents are informed of these and work in partnership with the school to develop and meet them. Most children reach their targets and achieve well for their age. They make appropriate progress, given their higher than average attainment when they arrive. This is a good and improving picture compared to the last inspection.
73. The provision for the under fives meets the criteria of the new curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Guided and shaped by the new and enthusiastic co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, the school's revised curriculum is already making a marked impact on the quality of teaching and learning for these children. Above all, they are learning how to learn, how to listen and how to concentrate on what they are doing. A year plan has been produced showing clear links between Nursery and Reception. Teachers and support assistants establish good links with parents ensuring that children settle happily into school. The co-ordinator has ensured that parents are fully informed about the new Foundation Stage curriculum by producing booklets and holding formal meetings with them. Teachers have implemented this curriculum successfully and are inventive in providing relevant activities to complement class-teaching sessions. Teachers make very good use of accommodation, facilities and resources for teaching these children.
74. There are experienced learning support assistants and a nursery nurse. They provide a strong team, who work creatively together to provide practical and stimulating experiences for the children. Detailed records are kept in all areas of learning and these are used very effectively to monitor progress and to plan relevant learning experiences matching children's needs closely. Teachers meet with parents frequently to discuss how children are progressing and to establish new targets for them as they achieve the old ones. The quality of teaching is good, sometimes very good.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. Children start school with a good level of personal and social skills. They make good relationships with each other and with adults. Children care for each other, making sure that all are included in the activity or play situation. They tidy up and put things away after use, making sure that they are returned to their usual place. They co-operate with each other, taking turns and making sure no-one is left out; for example, in the space module in the nursery where two children used the calculators while they waited for another child to finish with the keyboard. Children are well behaved and keen to learn. They are proud of what they can do and speak easily to visitors to their classroom. They are quick to respond to the teacher's requests and most understand the consequences of their actions.
76. The quality of teaching and learning of personal and social development is good. Social training is included at every opportunity and teachers ensure that good progress is being made. Respect for other cultures is promoted well; for example, in teaching about Diwali, the Festival of Light, and children making Diva candle holders. All the adults use praise well to encourage confidence and boost self-esteem. Most children are happy and confident in the environment and find learning fun.

Communication, language and literacy

77. Most children start school with above average literacy skills. At the time of the inspection, ten weeks into the school year, children were listening carefully to stories and explanations by adults. When the Big Book was produced they settled quickly to listen. They were responsive and well motivated. Many spoke confidently and could answer open-ended questions with correct answers. They were able to predict what would happen, linking the story to their own experiences. Children enjoy nursery rhymes and responding accurately to clues in finding rhyming words. All children are interested in books and take them home regularly. They enjoy reading and can tell who is the author or the illustrator: "the one who draws the pictures". Many can write their names and are able to read simple stories and sentences. They are using the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme and are beginning to use this to read unfamiliar words.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is above expectations, sometimes well above. There are good activities to support the teaching of literacy, including opportunities for children to develop their own language through talk, as in role-play situations. Every opportunity is taken to develop language and to clarify words. Teachers and other staff have high expectations of the children and good relationships with them and the curriculum content is relevant to the needs of all children, including those identified with special educational needs.
79. Resources are used skilfully to support learning and children know where these are and are learning to select appropriate materials for their work. They are trying to read notices and asking what the book titles say. They are learning to use books to find out about things. At this early stage good progress is often in evidence.

Mathematical development

80. Most children can count to ten and respond to the register with the number at which their name is called. At this stage they are achieving well and progressing at a steady rate. They are learning through counting, sorting, matching, making connections and recognising relationships between numbers, shapes and patterns. They grasp the idea of number through singing songs - 'Five currant buns' - stories and saying rhymes. The children become familiar with using mathematics in real life situations; for example, counting the spoonfuls of sugar and condensed milk when making Diwali sweets. The nursery has the additional facility of the outside area, of which they make good use, making a roadway and counting the bricks.
81. The children were observed looking for the differences in coins. They found different colours, bronze and silver and different values. Some could read the numbers 1p, 2p, 5p and 20p, and different markings. As the activity progressed, the higher-attainers were able to recognise their coins without looking for the value number on them. Later in the week they were observed exchanging coins for others, making combinations to the same values.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning is clear with well chosen activities based on high expectations and a continuing awareness of each child's specific needs.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Children enter school with an above average knowledge of the world around them and build successfully on this by age 5. Children find their way around the school and describe where different rooms are. They understand that the rain collects into puddles in 'dips' in the road. Children are given opportunities to explore and observe through first hand experiences. They are involved in decision making in their activities; they discuss whether they should use the thick brushes or the thin ones. They decided the thick ones because the paint was thin and a thin brush would not hold enough paint to paint their Diva light holders.
84. The quality of teaching is good, sometimes very good. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is good. Questioning is open-ended and the use of tools and equipment is well taught. Children are encouraged to recall previous activities and to use this information in the task they are about to do. The planning is clear and assessment opportunities are identified. Children use the computer to draw and paint. Role-play areas are used to extend learning and capture the imagination, especially the 'space module', around which hang 'planets' and 'stars'. Teachers achieve a good balance of 'learning through discovery' and consolidation through a range of individual and group activities.

Physical development

85. On entry to the school, most children achieve at levels above those expected for children of this age. In the classroom, children control pencils well, manipulate jigsaw pieces, mix ingredients without spilling them, thread beads competently and fix pieces of construction sets with a good level of skill. Hand control activities are a daily feature of the nursery planning and teaching. Outdoors, children handle hollow bricks safely and manoeuvre large toys like wheelbarrows with precision. Within the classrooms, they move confidently without bumping into others, showing a good sense of space. Children listen carefully and respond quickly when in the outside area. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Creative development

86. Children's creative abilities are good for their age when they enter school and good at age 5. They know a wide range of songs and sing tunefully. They listen to the teacher singing and are eager to join in. They recognise a difference between wet and dry sand and have experience of malleable materials such as dough and modelling clay. Children's paintings are colourful; they use colour well. In the hall, collages of their pictures, using only their one favourite colour, are very effective and children are proud of them. They respond enthusiastically to opportunities to discover; for example, when painting Mendhi patterns on their hands.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good, sometimes very good. Teachers achieve a good balance of teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities. In the outdoor session where they made a roadway the nursery teacher joined in their imaginative activities and successfully helped to extend their ideas and subsequent learning.

ENGLISH

88. The school's 2000 national test results for seven-year-olds indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving the national standard is higher than the national average in both reading and writing. When compared with similar schools it is average. This broadly reflects the overall trend in the school's results since 1997. However, when judged in terms of the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard in last year's tests, the picture is not quite so good. Standards in reading remain above average but in writing they fall below the national average. Inspection findings for the current cohort of Year 2 pupils show a similar picture. Their attainment is in line with the national standard expected for their age but only a minority are on track to achieve at higher attainment levels by the end of the key stage.
89. The 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds show standards to be well above average compared to all schools and above average compared to similar schools. This is broadly in line with the school's performance since 1996, apart from 1999 when standards were slightly lower but still above the national average. Inspectors find the attainment of the Year 6 cohort of pupils to be slightly lower than this trend with most pupils achieving in line, rather than above, the expected standard for their age. Explanations for this variance in inspection findings are :
- the current Year 2 and Year 6 cohorts both contain high proportions of pupils with special educational needs;
 - the inspection took place early in the school year and could not take account of the accelerated progress customarily made by pupils in Year 2 and 6 in the school.
90. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Key Stage 1 pupils listen carefully and respond to questions appropriately. They have started paying attention to tone of voice when reading a poem. Higher-attaining pupils can sustain concentration and are beginning to express their views confidently. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils demonstrate sound speaking and listening skills. They contribute to discussion thoughtfully and with increasing perception. No role-play or drama activities were observed during the inspection but evidence suggests that pupils throughout school respond positively to opportunities such as the closure of lessons to develop their oral skills. Older pupils have 'performed' on stage during their visit to the Globe Theatre and they were observed contributing to discussion. Opportunities for speaking to larger audiences are not, however, always planned and there are no agreed procedures for formal assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

91. Reading standards are good throughout the school. Key Stage 1 pupils show a good awareness of letter sounds and how to use this to work out how to pronounce words that are not familiar to them. Higher-attainers read accurately, fluently and with understanding and expression. Many average ability pupils achieve similar levels of accuracy but not understanding or expression. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, have difficulty with comprehension, though most make good progress over time.
92. Higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 have well developed technical reading skills. They retrieve information from a variety of texts. They discuss the texts they read with confidence; for example, they talk about the plot and the characters involved. They express opinions about authors and, in some cases, the way the author uses language to create the effect he or she wants. Pupils of average ability show good comprehension skills. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The strategies employed by the school, such as guided and silent reading and the home reading scheme, are all helping pupils to achieve to their capabilities. Many pupils in both key stages enjoy reading poetry but make less use of non-fiction texts. Independent research activities were little in evidence during the inspection.
93. Standards of pupils' writing are satisfactory in both key stages but could be better. Key Stage 1 pupils sequence instructions and write poems using appropriate vocabulary. Higher-attainers change poems into playscripts and have started re-drafting. Pupils of average ability describe pictures but a significant minority, including less able pupils, in both Year 1 and 2 have difficulty with writing unaided. Their handwriting and spelling often lack care and attention. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils demonstrate well developed knowledge and understanding of the content and style of newspaper writing. Pupils of all abilities, particularly higher-attainers, use extended sentences to give greater meaning and continuity to their writing. They possess an increasingly extensive vocabulary. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 write poems showing imaginative use of words with particular reference to similes and metaphors. Some of the poetry gives vivid descriptions of the moods and feelings associated with wars. Some less able pupils are, however, unable to express their ideas successfully. In the main, pupils' presentation is untidy and their spelling insecure. Given their abilities, this is a significant shortcoming in their performance.
94. Teaching is good overall. Sometimes it is very good, in both key stages. In the best lessons, effective questioning, rooted in good subject knowledge and detailed planning, enhance pupils' learning. This, together with imaginative use of resources, provides appropriate challenge and expectation for pupils. Good organisation and management are also much in evidence. Less effective lessons often contain too little precision in identifying what each group of pupils will achieve. Teachers tend to overdirect pupils' learning and lessons lack the variety of approaches that hold pupils' attention and capture their interest. Teachers largely use the plenary sessions to reinforce learning but in some cases these are not well enough focused to achieve this purpose. Support staff are well used to promote pupils' attainment and progress.
95. Learning has good, and sometimes very good, features throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2. The majority of pupils show high levels of motivation and concentration. A few find concentration more difficult. Most pupils engage readily in purposeful interaction and contribute well to discussion. Many work independently, when encouraged to do so. They are enthusiastic and collaborate well. The result is that most pupils make appropriate progress both in lessons and over time.
96. The National Literacy Strategy is now soundly established, giving breadth and balance to the curriculum. Strategies such as the home reading scheme are beginning to have an impact. The subject benefits from good management, resourcing and regular assessment. Planning does not, however, sufficiently cater for the full ability range, particularly higher-attainers. The school has accurately identified the need to raise standards in writing. The co-ordinator is now aware of the need for more planned opportunities for developing pupils' speaking and listening as well as their independent research skills.

MATHEMATICS

97. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is in line with nationally expected standards at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This matches the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. It also matches the broad trend in the school's national test performance at Key Stage 1 since 1997. On the other hand, it is not in line with the overall national test performance at Key Stage 2 over the same period and is significantly out of line with last year's results, which were high in relation to both the national average and in comparison with schools of similar background.
98. In the 2000 national tests, the school's results at Key Stage 1 were:
- below average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
 - average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
 - below average compared to similar schools.
99. These results, overall, are slightly lower than those achieved between 1997 and 1999. The general trend is for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard to match national norms, while the proportion of pupils doing better than this falls below the national average. This is not dissimilar to the current inspection findings. Most pupils are achieving in line with nationally expected standards for their age, but very few are doing better than this. Given that most of these pupils entered the school with above average numeracy skills, their progress to this point is unsatisfactory. In contrast, the small number of pupils who find mathematics difficult are, in the main, making good progress. They now achieve in line with the national standard for their age.
100. The picture at Key Stage 2 is noticeably stronger. The school's most recent test results (in 2000) were:
- well above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard;
 - well above average for the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard;
 - well above average compared to similar schools.
101. Apart from 1999 when the school's results were well below the national average as a result of having an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs in its Year 6 cohort, the school's performance at Key Stage 2 has been broadly consistent since 1996. In relation to both the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard and the proportion exceeding this level, the school has done better than the great majority of schools nationally and locally. Inspectors do not find this to be the case with the current Year 6 cohort. While standards are satisfactory in terms of the number of pupils achieving at nationally expected levels for their age, higher attainment is not much in evidence. Possible explanations for this finding are:
- as with the 1999 cohort, the current Year 6 cohort contains a significant number of children on the special educational needs register – 11 out of a total of 29 pupils in the cohort;
 - the present cohort has not yet received the additional tuition provided through nationally allocated "booster" funds, nor had the benefit of the school's test revision work designed specifically to help pupils improve their test performance.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' basic number skills are broadly satisfactory. Most confidently add and subtract numbers up to 10 in their heads and understand the value of each digit in numbers up to 100. Most can double small numbers, recognise odd and even numbers and continue number patterns using one less than and one more than. Pupils successfully identify the common two and three-dimensional shapes, measure in centimetres and solve simple money problems. The higher-attaining pupils add and subtract numbers up to 15, describe the properties of the shapes they learn about and can add 9 to single digit numbers. However, this represents rather limited progress and achievement for higher-attaining pupils in Year 2, who have already successfully covered much of this basic work in Year 1. They are unfamiliar with fractions, decimals, minus numbers or division sums where there is a remainder. They are not provided with sufficient scope to build on what they already know, understand and can do.
103. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have adequate numeracy skills but again, these are not as well developed amongst the higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 as their abilities would merit. Although they are familiar with decimals, fractions and percentages and can work with numbers up to 10,000 and beyond, some of these pupils continue to use their fingers to calculate simple

addition and subtraction sums up to 20. Pupils tend to achieve appropriately in terms of the work covered in lessons. In the lessons observed, most understand and work confidently with shapes, with understanding and measuring perimeters, with co-ordinates in four quadrants and with making calculations using decimals. On the other hand, as in Key Stage 1, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. The higher-attaining pupils do not know how to work out volume and surface area, or to estimate the answers to complex multiplication problems using approximation. Little data handling and analysis is evident, nor pupils applying their mathematical skills in practical, real-life situations. In general, the better progress is made by the average and lower attaining pupils.

104. The majority of teaching is good at both key stages. Lessons seen in the Years 1, 3 and 4 classes were very good. Of the remaining lessons seen, one was good and the rest satisfactory. Successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy gives most teachers an increased confidence in their mathematics teaching, resulting in higher standards in pupils' learning. In the best lessons, very clear learning objectives are shared with, and understood, by pupils and serve as the basis for the plenary session and for assessing the effectiveness of the lesson. The mental mathematics component is full of pace and challenge, as, for example, in the Year 4 lesson which had a real buzz about it. Pupils had the confidence and insight to offer the teacher alternative strategies for estimating solutions to complex calculations. Where teaching could be improved, albeit that it is satisfactory, teachers are not precise enough about what they want each group of pupils to learn at levels appropriate to their abilities. This is especially the case for the higher-attaining pupils, whose progress is sometimes slowed by a lack of challenge in the standards of attainment expected, notably in Years 2 and 6. Occasionally this leads to unsettled behaviour and a lack of sustained concentration. Levels of achievement decline accordingly.
105. In most respects, the subject is well managed. The development of systematic opportunities and procedures for analysing pupils' academic performance and progress is beginning to have an impact, as highlighted by the school's latest Key Stage 2 national test results. The school now has ample data for this purpose. At the moment this information is rather better used for setting individual learning targets for pupils than it is for setting whole-school improvement targets and developing strategies for achieving these. Thus the current Key Stage 1 target for higher attainment in mathematics is set below the national average, yet the pupils concerned entered the school with above average attainment in numeracy. This is not consistent with the school's claim to be committed to the highest standards of achievement. The school is now in a good position to identify and reach the standards of excellence it seeks.

SCIENCE

106. At both Key Stage 1 and 2, standards in science have improved since the last inspection. On that occasion, they were reported to be in line with national averages. Current inspection findings now judge them to be above average. This finding matches the school's performance in the Key Stage 2 national tests for 2000 but is slightly higher than the school's performance at Key Stage 1.
107. The school's results in the Key Stage 1 national assessments for 2000 were:
- close to the average for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard for seven-year-olds;
 - in line for the proportion of higher-attaining pupils;
 - below average compared to schools of similar background.
108. Overall, these results are not quite as good as those achieved in the preceding years. In 1999, for example, all pupils achieved the national standard at age 7. However, as with the 2000 results, the school does less well compared to national averages in getting pupils up to the higher levels of attainment, albeit that in 1999 the proportion was still higher than the national average. This is also the pattern found by inspectors with the current Year 2 cohort. Though most pupils reach the national standard for their age, the number of pupils doing better than this is lower than it should be, particularly given that most of these pupils entered the school with higher than average attainment. Since 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving higher attainment levels has dropped each year.
109. The school's results in the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2000 were:

- above average in relation to the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard for 11-year-olds;
 - above average in relation to the proportion of higher-attaining pupils;
 - average compared to similar schools.
110. These were very good results. All pupils (100 per cent) reached the national standard and over half of them exceeded it. Apart from a drop in standards in 1998, standards have been consistently above the national average since 1996, both for pupils reaching the national standard and for those exceeding it. Inspectors' findings largely endorse this picture though there are occasions when the higher-attaining pupils could be challenged more; for example, in their investigation work.
111. At Key Stage 1, pupils successfully name parts of a plant, recognise that they need light and water for growth and have investigated the plant's root system. In their studies of electricity and light, pupils discuss the safety aspects of electricity and know that electricity is dangerous. Pupils are able to build simple circuits using batteries, bulbs and wires, with crocodile clips. They predict and investigate, using appropriate terminology. They draw conclusions from their experiments and extend the activities a result; for example, by using two batteries and finding that the bulb was then brighter.
112. At Key Stage 2 pupils work well in most aspects of the subject. When investigating the properties of materials, for example, wood, plastic, metal, paper and glass, they identify similarities and differences and record their findings. They discuss their findings though not always with sufficient regard for appropriate scientific vocabulary. Pupils' scientific knowledge is better developed than their investigation skills. For example, they know a lot about the Earth in space, as evidenced in a lesson in which pupils made significant spoken and diagrammatic contributions to the information gathered on this subject. In contrast, their experimental work is strongly directed. As a result, pupils capable of using more rigorous analysis and independent exploration do not achieve at this higher level. They show little individual initiative in hypothesising and exploring their own ways for recording the validity of their findings.
113. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. This has been an important factor in the higher standards of attainment achieved. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good, thanks to the effective support received from the subject co-ordinator and to the more precise guidance provided by the school's schemes of work. Teachers plan effectively for the majority of pupils. The exception is for the higher-attaining pupils, where teachers' lesson plans are not always sufficiently precise about what these pupils are to achieve in the light of their capabilities and prior attainment. This helps to explain the inconsistencies in the school's performance at higher attainment levels in the Key Stage 1 national tests.
114. Although the subject is generally well managed, this lack of rigour in relation to the more able pupils is not sufficiently picked up in the school's monitoring systems. Careful attention is paid to the resourcing of the subject and to helping teachers. Records of pupils' progress are kept but evidence that these are systematically analysed at a whole-school level to check that the school's provision is enabling all pupils to make appropriate progress is patchy. For example, although in the school's analysis of its 2000 national test results the low figure for higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 is noted, there is no response to this underachievement in the "Action Proposed" section of the document.
115. The records of pupils' achievement are good and there is a good awareness of pupils' special educational needs. Often another adult is present to support pupils with Individual Educational Plans in their work. While standards have improved, the time allocated is not always best used to allow the higher-attaining pupils to extend their work into hypothesising, analysing and exploring their own ways to record the validity of their findings. The vocabulary of the subject could be extended for all pupils.

ART

116. At the last inspection, pupils' attainment at both key stages was judged to be good in relation to nationally expected standards. These standards have been maintained. Art continues to be a strong area of achievement in the school.

117. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to explore techniques and make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs. Pupils use a variety of papers and materials to make collages; for example, colour wash pictures with black shadow shapes to give the impression of a setting sun scene. They show increasing accuracy and attention to detail when drawing and painting. They talk knowledgeably about the paintings and styles of Monet and Van Gogh.
118. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress and use their skills very successfully in other subject areas; for example, in history and in design and technology. They effectively analyse their work; for example, they discuss the perspective lines on the buildings in Crevelli's painting of the Anunciation. They discuss and appraise modifications to improve their work. Many display a good use of a variety of media and techniques. They show a good understanding of colour, line, shape and form and can analyse the work of the famous artists they study. Pupils display a good knowledge and application of shadows, lightness and darkness in their work. They use sketchbooks effectively to record their work.
119. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. The specialist teaching in the school is of a high standard and the quality of pupils' learning and achievement are of correspondingly higher standards. Lessons are carefully planned, with good teacher feedback to pupils as the lesson progresses. Teaching is at times inspirational. Classroom helpers contribute effectively to the quality of achievement throughout the school.
120. The enthusiastic co-ordinator successfully monitors performance throughout the school by teaching different classes, supporting teachers' planning and evaluating the quality of display and pupils' work in their sketchbooks. This gives her a good insight into standards overall in the school as well as identifying areas for development. The school is clear about the standards it expects and these are effectively conveyed through display and the quality of presentation. The subject enjoys high status in the school with teachers and pupils readily responding to the challenges presented to them.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. The previous inspection report judged that pupils' overall attainment in design and technology was in line with that expected of pupils at age 7 and 11. It considered pupils' designing skills to be a strength but that the learning resources needed to be strengthened. This has been done. Also, the adoption of the nationally recognised scheme of work for the subject has enabled the school to maintain the focus on designing skills. The standards found at the last inspection have been maintained.
122. Key Stage 1 pupils have designed a shelter and younger pupils have designed and made a Christmas card. They take care with their work and try to make it as accurate as they can. When making the products, they refer to the designs and are beginning to appreciate the relationship between designing and making when evaluating the quality of their work.
123. Pupils in Key Stage 2 further develop their design and building skills and sometimes use diagrams to illustrate their ideas. However, their recording lacks sufficient detail in terms of the different stages of planning and designing. Evidence from pupils completed work indicates that they measure accurately, cut to size and join materials together with increasing confidence. They develop good basic skills through practical tasks, such as making money containers from cardboard and stick puppets, as part of their science topic 'Light and Shadow'. Most pupils learn to choose tools, materials and techniques purposefully. Puppets made by older pupils confirm their ability to manipulate a range of materials and tools and to solve problems in developing and completing models.
124. Specialist teaching raises the profile of the subject. Teaching is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge and expertise. Skilful questioning encourages pupils to evaluate their work, leading to modifications. All of this impacts on learning, which is often good, enabling pupils to make sound progress both in lessons and over time. Pupils consolidate and extend their understanding of design techniques. They are enthusiastic about designing and making models, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils co-operate and share resources readily, talking about their designs with enthusiasm. Some younger pupils are unable

to sustain concentration and become unsettled. For the most part, however, pupils are well behaved as a result of sensitive management .

125. An analysis of documentation and discussion with staff and pupils indicates that lessons are carefully planned, a variety of resources are used to stimulate ideas and appropriate use is made of homework. Pupils' design and technology skills are sometimes well used and developed in other subjects; for example, science. Further enrichment for pupils is provided by the visits of design artists. The school is currently developing technological themes across the curriculum. The co-ordinator is focusing on successful implementation of the nationally prepared scheme of work for the subject in order to ensure progression in pupils' learning. She has also identified the need for developing better guidance for teachers. Monitoring of teaching and the establishment of whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are further areas for development.

GEOGRAPHY

126. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at both key stages. This matches the standards found at the time of the last inspection.
127. At Key Stage 1, pupils display a growing awareness of the major physical features of their school. They look at, and draw, their school and its environment in plan form. Higher-attaining pupils are eager to talk about what kind of photographs of their school they would send someone who has not visited the school. They have started interpreting maps and aerial pictures. They begin to grasp the concept of scale and the idea of using symbols to identify landmarks.
128. By Year 6, pupils have developed sound mapping skills. They can find their locality on a map and an atlas in relation to other places. Year 3 pupils plan a route from home to school, though some have difficulty in drawing a plan of their classroom. Pupils begin to appreciate that different countries have different climates and cultures; for example, how daily life in an Indian village differs from that in Britain. Older pupils demonstrate well-developed knowledge and understanding of physical features relating to weather; for example, in offering ideas about the physical features of rainwater based on an investigation. Most pupils use appropriate vocabulary, such as 'condensation' and 'evaporation'. Pupils show positive attitudes to developing their geographical skills.
129. Overall, the quality of teaching observed is good in both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge, link their planning to pupils' prior knowledge and skills and use resources effectively. In Key Stage 1, teacher intervention enables pupils to focus on learning points, such as which aspect of the school building is appropriate for a photograph. Teaching in Key Stage 2 encourages pupils to use appropriate geographical vocabulary, as, for example, in a Year 3 lesson observed. The use of homework and CD-ROMs enabled Year 4 pupils to undertake a project focusing on an Indian village. Teachers use a good array of questions to challenge pupils' thinking and assess their progress.
130. On the other hand, systematic records of pupils' progress are not kept. This was a weakness identified at the time of the last inspection and continues to limit the school's capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of its provision overall. Even so, the school is alert to some developments that are needed; for example, the need to review some units of study and to promote more effectively the use of information technology within its provision.

HISTORY

131. Although only one lesson was observed during the inspection, evidence from pupils' completed work, teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and classroom display all indicate that standards throughout the school are higher than those found in the majority of schools. By age seven, standards are good and by age 11 they are very good. This is an improvement on the school's performance at the time of the last inspection.
132. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the concepts "long ago" and "now and then". Year 1 pupils ask questions about the past in order to work out how and why things are different; for example, how toys have changed over time and how we look for signs that some are older than

others. They understand that historians depend on evidence to learn about the past. By Year 2, pupils have good investigative skills. They use paintings and pictures of the fire of London to support what they have learned from Pepys' diaries, in English lessons. They successfully recall the names of the leading figures of the time and how, why and where the fire started and ended. Both in their knowledge and skills they are well prepared for Key Stage 2.

133. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress. They continue to display a secure knowledge of the major historical figures and events of the periods they study. Their understanding of chronology is well developed; for example, in accurately attributing dates to significant events and being able to make comparisons between one period in history and another. They do their own research from books and from information technology sources to produce topic booklets of good quality; for example, on the Romans, the Victorians and on life in Chipperfield 100 years ago. By Year 6, pupils confidently address such questions as "Why would the Romans want to invade Britain?", arriving at conclusions that display high levels of historical knowledge and insight. This enables them to reconstruct historical situations based on an accurate knowledge of the events that took place; for example, when reporting the death of Queen Boudice in an imaginary newspaper of the time.
134. The quality of teaching is a key factor in pupils' achievements. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and enables pupils to experience the past as an exciting adventure into other people's lives and motivations. They are made to feel close to, and even part of, the historical events and figures they study. Visits to museums and other places of historical relevance add significantly to the success of this approach. The result is work of considerable depth, rigour and historical appreciation; for example, in pupils' personal accounts of the Roman invasion of Britain. Pupils feel an ownership for their studies that is highlighted in their eagerness to spend time researching their projects for homework, including collecting data from the internet. Pupils take a great pride in their projects, achieving standards of presentation that are of a better quality than those displayed in much of their other work.
135. Effective leadership plays its part in this success. Planning and teaching are very effectively linked. Pupils are required to use and extend the skills and knowledge they have acquired in other subjects; for example, in the Year 2 project on the fire of London, which benefits significantly from its carefully planned links with art, science and the Literacy Hour. Opportunities to extend pupils' literacy skills are a strong and successful feature of much of the planning and teaching in history across the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

136. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally by the end of both key stages. This matches the levels of attainment found by inspectors at the last inspection.
137. In Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils become familiar with the mouse and keyboard. They can word process, use capital letters appropriately and save the text. By Year 2, they make sound use of various software packages to support their learning. For example, they can use literacy programs such as 'My World Easy Text' for word processing and know how to use art programs such as 'Colour Magic'.
138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use desktop publishing for a newsletter. Pupils develop sound retrieval skills. Year 3 pupils retrieve and print a file, while some Year 4 pupils retrieve information from a geography program. Year 5 pupils word process to produce final drafts of their work in literacy lessons. Older pupils know how to change features such as font, size and colour for emphasis and effect. Most pupils know and use appropriate computing terminology.
139. Pupils' attainment reflects the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers' levels of subject knowledge vary but are, in the majority of cases, appropriate for the groups they teach. Many teachers successfully integrate the development and practising of skills into other areas of pupils' work, thereby encouraging pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts. Teacher intervention generally reflects a balance of teaching, explanation and practical activity. Effective use is made of resources and pupils are managed well.
140. The quality of learning is sound overall. Many pupils develop high levels of competence in computing at home and they achieve well. Most pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic

about hands-on experience of computers. They collaborate well in sharing computers, showing good standards of behaviour. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute to their learning, including those with special educational needs. They make sound progress overall and achieve appropriately for their age.

141. Since the last inspection the school's provision has been strengthened by adoption of the nationally developed scheme of work. Inadequate levels of resourcing have been partially remedied. Classrooms are equipped with only one computer each and the school has no computer suite to enable the timetabling of specific information technology lessons. The latter issue is being addressed, but until it is resolved, the school's capacity for improving the quality of its provision is severely limited. The subject is well managed.

MUSIC

142. Pupils' attainment, in relation to national expectations, was judged to be good at the last inspection. Music remains a strength of the school and standards of performance are above those normally expected at both key stages. The standard of singing and performance is high. The school provides a wide range of musical experiences for its pupils. Much learning occurs within the curriculum; other learning experiences are extra-curricular. There have been visits to the ballet and to local performances and there are instrumental teachers who visit the school. The instrumental tuition covers saxophone, clarinet, flute, violin and guitar. There is photographic evidence of the Aklowa village group visiting with their African instruments. Parents who are musicians perform to, or accompany, the pupils from time to time. The choir sing to the senior citizens of the village at Christmas. Music in the school is well supported both by the school and by the community. In addition to the choir there are recorder groups taught in the school.
143. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing well and maintain a two part round, watching the teacher carefully to ensure consistent volume between the parts. They use clear diction and good tone. Music is taught and used within other subjects to support and introduce new concepts or topics. Pupils enjoy using tuned and untuned instruments. They listen well to music and have enjoyed the music from non-European countries, which they are able to talk about.
144. Key Stage 2 pupils sing well, maintaining a three part round. They use clear diction, control their pitch and demonstrate a sense of phrasing and some musical expression. Older pupils are able to layer a syncopated musical chant using instruments and voices. They were able to appraise the outcome of the whole-class performance, which was stimulated by a chant they had listened to. Many pupils learn to play instruments and have successfully gained graded examination certificates.
145. Teaching overall is good. It is very good when taught by specialist musicians. Many of the teachers have a good subject knowledge and understanding, in addition to good levels of personal performance and a love of music. The impact of this is found in the high standards and levels of attainment in the school. Lessons are well planned, closely linked to the National Curriculum and with clear assessment opportunities identified. There are plans for an orchestra to be established as an extra-curricular opportunity.
146. The subject co-ordinator leads colleagues well and manages the subject with enthusiasm. Music successfully permeates and supports the teaching of many other subjects in the school. Music is given a high profile in the school. Standards of excellence are very effectively identified and promoted for teachers and pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Standards match those expected nationally for pupils at ages 7 and 11. This judgement is broadly in line with the conclusions reached at the time of the last inspection, though on that occasion standards in Key Stage 2 were judged to be slightly better than those in Key Stage 1. Currently, there are good elements in pupils' achievements in both key stages. The older pupils achieve consistently high standards in swimming. Pockets of higher attainment are also evident in dance and gymnastics throughout the school, but less consistently so. In athletics, the school's assessments indicate that standards are satisfactory. The school's provision for extra-curricular sport is very good.
148. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 1, a dance lesson, standards were above those found in most schools. While the majority of pupils display appropriate control, accuracy and expression, a significant minority produce work of higher quality. They respond with considerable sensitivity and creativity to a song about falling autumn leaves. Changes of direction, pace and mood are all effectively displayed. Pupils understand what is required to improve their performance, both as individuals and with a partner. They also show an appropriate respect for the efforts of others and an ability to work as a team, when required.
149. By the end of Key Stage 2, levels of performance vary quite widely. At their best, pupils demonstrate good physical abilities and good standards of performance. These are highlighted in swimming where virtually all pupils by the end of Year 6 achieve the national target of swimming 25 metres unassisted. Many exceed this target by a considerable margin and are highly competent swimmers with water survival awards. Above average standards are also occasionally found in games. Quite a number of pupils, both girls and boys, display good technical skills when throwing, catching and hitting a ball. The Year 4 pupils, for example, know how to hold a tennis racket and many hit through the ball very effectively. Year 6 pupils understand the techniques for passing a ball accurately by hand. The more physically adept can do this at pace and have a good understanding of the principles of team games. However, their further improvement is hampered by a reluctance to put these skills into practice in games situations and an inability to listen and concentrate carefully enough when being taught. In gymnastics and dance, pupils show increasing control and poise in their movements but are not always clear about what is needed to improve their performance.
150. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound. Several lessons seen were good. On the whole, the variations in teaching quality correlate with the variations in pupils' standards of performance. The best teaching is based on very clear understandings of what pupils need to learn and how this is to be achieved. Teachers provide pupils with the technical knowledge, skills and experiences to practise and improve their performance. Such teaching usually inspires high levels of pupil concentration and motivation, with pupils making progress in line with their abilities. But, as noted above, there are occasional departures from this practice. When this occurs, pupils do not consistently make the progress in lessons of which they are capable, especially the physically more able pupils.
151. Since the last inspection, sound progress has been made with strengthening the school's provision, in spite of reductions in time allocated to the subject. Effective records are kept for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in swimming. Other areas of the subject are not as systematically monitored. This limits the school's capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of its overall provision in order to target future developments. The school continues to benefit from schemes of work that offer practical guidance to teachers about the activities to be taught. The next step is to underpin this guidance with clear indications about the progression of skills to be developed through these activities from Year R to Year 6. Sport has a high status within the school and deservedly so. The sporting opportunities provided for pupils outside lesson time is very good. Participation in local sports events, close links with local clubs and organisations and good parental support all contribute to the successful enrichment of the school's physical education programme and its sporting achievements.