

INSPECTION REPORT

THE LEYS PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Stevenage

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117364

Headteacher: Mr P Hewett

Reporting inspector: Mrs Marina Gough
22361

Dates of inspection: 16th - 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 224564

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ripon Road
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Colin Aylin

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Marina Gough 22361	Registered inspector	Art and design Music	What sort of school is it The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
Bernard Harrington 16833	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils How well does the school care for its pupils or students How well does the school work in partnership with parents How well is the school led and managed
Margaret Forsman 8263	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Peter Isherwood 20301	Team Inspector	Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils The work of the EBD Unit
Iain Johnston 7983	Team Inspector	Mathematics	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well is the school led and managed
Robert Coupe 17543	Team Inspector	History Physical education The Foundation Stage	
Shirley Herring 29504	Team Inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils How well does the school care for its pupils How well is the school led and managed
David Carpenter 31807	Team Inspector	English Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Leys Primary and Nursery School is situated on the outskirts of the town of Stevenage and caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. There are currently three hundred and ninety one pupils on roll, but over the next few years, the school will temporarily increase in size in order to cater for children from a new local housing development. The vast majority of pupils live within walking distance of the school, and the school is very much regarded as a focal point of the local community. Fifty seven per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This figure is very high and is well above the local and national averages. The school has a special educational needs unit which caters for up to eight pupils from within the LEA who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school also houses a base which provides support within the LEA for pupils who have specific learning difficulties, (dyslexia). Thirty per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This figure is higher than the national average and reflects the social deprivation within the local area. Thirty one pupils have English as an additional language and eight of these pupils receive additional support. Despite the very good start pupils have in the Nursery, the assessments of pupils when they start full-time education at the age of five show that the attainment of most pupils is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective, and enables pupils to make good progress in many aspects of their work. Although overall, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average at the end of both key stages, pupils make good progress from a very low starting point, and the school is successful in enabling pupils of all abilities to reach their full potential. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and is a great strength of the school. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and very good in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school and have positive attitudes to their work. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, senior management team and Governing Body are very good, and there is a strong team spirit and a real sense of purpose to the school's work. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. It is very good in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The school enables pupils of all abilities to do their best and to achieve their full potential.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs, both in mainstream classes and in the unit for pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, is very good, and is a great strength of the school.
- The school provides a stimulating learning environment, and pupils are very keen to come to school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and most work hard. Behaviour is good.
- Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very good and contribute to the warm atmosphere in the school.
- The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good.
- Procedures for child protection are excellent, and the school is very successful in providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all pupils.
- Procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are excellent and are consistently applied throughout the school.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher is excellent and he is fully supported by the staff and the Governing Body.
- The budget is very well monitored and managed, and funds are used well to support educational development within the school.

What could be improved

- The balance of the curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Standards in music, design and technology and religious education, which could be even higher

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected four years ago, and the rate of improvement since that time has been very good. In addition to addressing the key issues identified in the last report, the school has responded very well to national initiatives, and has received the Investors in People Award for the second time. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching over the last few years. In the last inspection, teaching was described as satisfactory overall and in sixteen per cent of the lessons seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is now of a good standard throughout the school and, in some classes, teaching is very good. Teachers have worked hard to develop assessment procedures and, although there is still some work to be done, good progress has been made in response to the key issue relating to the identification of clear learning objectives in planning. Schemes of work have been introduced and, in the main, they are providing a good basic structure to guide teachers' planning. The senior management team now has a clearly defined role, and team leaders have been appointed to provide a further useful tier within the management structure. The senior management team has been involved in a very rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning across the school, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. The very good team spirit amongst the teaching and non-teaching staff, and the shared commitment to providing the best possible education for the pupils, mean that the school is very well placed for continued improvement, and the maintenance of the high standards seen in many aspects of its work.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	D	E	-	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	E*	E	-	
Science	E	D	D	-	

The table shows that on the basis of the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results, pupils' attainment was well below the national average in English and mathematics, and below the national average in science. The school's results are adversely affected by the unusually high proportion of pupils in the school who have special educational needs. Standards have been consistently below the national average for the past three years, and are unlikely to improve significantly in the near future because of the very high percentage of low attaining pupils, and the small percentage of high attaining pupils. No meaningful comparisons can be made between the school's results and those of schools which are deemed to be similar on the basis of the percentage of pupils who have free school meals. This is because the very high percentage of pupils in the school who have special educational needs distorts the school's results. The school sets appropriate, accurate, and achievable targets for

individual pupils, but group targets are less reliable because of the high level of pupil mobility, especially within Key Stage 2 .

The inspection findings indicate that, despite the good progress that pupils make as they move through the school, standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. A small number of pupils in all year groups achieve good standards of work that are above the national expectation. Standards in religious education at the end of both key stages are below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and could be a little higher. The school has done what it can over the past few years to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, including grouping pupils by ability for English and mathematics, and significantly improving the quality of teaching in these subjects. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been successfully implemented in all classes and are having a positive impact. Whilst there are still some modifications that can be made to the curriculum, such as ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are developed across all subjects, and increasing the time allocated to religious education, in general, the school has done what it can to ensure that pupils of all levels of ability achieve their full potential.

Pupils' attainment in art, geography, history and physical education is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, but standards are below expectations in design technology and music, and more can be done in both of these subjects to raise standards further.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, make very good progress in their learning, often from a very low baseline, but despite this progress, most do not achieve the expected standard in their work by the end of the Foundation Stage.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages and abilities are very keen to come to school and have positive attitudes to their work. Most pupils try hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good. Although a few pupils regularly misbehave, the school's excellent strategies for managing behaviour ensure that these pupils do not disrupt the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils willingly accept responsibility and show initiative, but their capacity for making choices and decisions about their work is limited. Relationships amongst pupils are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
92 lessons seen overall	very 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 quality of teaching was excellent in 4% of lessons seen during the inspection, very good in 26%, good in 40%, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 2%. The best teaching was seen

in the Nursery and Reception classes, and in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. The very small percentage of teaching which was unsatisfactory is insignificant. Teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection, and ensures that pupils make good progress in many aspects of their work.

The teaching of the Foundation Stage children in the Nursery and Reception classes is of a consistently high standard and is very good overall.

In almost all classes in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, English and mathematics are taught well, and the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been very successfully implemented. Literacy and numeracy lessons are very well paced, and introductory sessions are often rigorous and demanding. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, but these could usefully be extended.

The teaching of science is good and pupils are provided with some good practical opportunities which enhance their learning. Teaching in information and communication technology, religious education, art, geography, history and physical education is satisfactory overall, and some good and very good examples of teaching were seen during the inspection in each of these subjects, in individual classes. There are occasions in some classes when the overuse of worksheets constrains the development of pupils' literacy skills, and their creativity.

The teaching of music by a part-time specialist is good, and is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, but this is a subject where most classteachers lack confidence and subject knowledge. There are weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology, where insufficient time is allocated to the subject.

The school is very effective in meeting the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants give very good levels of support in class, enabling these pupils to make very good progress towards their individual learning targets. High attaining pupils are appropriately challenged and enabled to achieve their full potential. Pupils who have English as an additional language receive good levels of support and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good curriculum for pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils is sufficiently broad, but there is a lack of balance in terms of the time allocated to individual subjects. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, and enhances the curriculum with a good range of educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school caters extremely well for pupils who have special educational needs. Individual education plans are of very good quality, and the needs of pupils who have statements are fully met. A very successful programme of integration ensures that pupils who are in the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit mix well with pupils in the mainstream classes.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactorily promoted. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. Provision for pupils' personal development is good, and personal, social and health education sessions are regularly timetabled in all classes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares extremely well for its pupils, and provides a safe learning environment. Child protection procedures are excellent. The way in which the school promotes good behaviour, and manages pupils who misbehave, is excellent.
Partnership with parents	The school has established a good relationship with parents and provides very good levels of information. The quality of pupils' end of year progress reports is particularly good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and is very well supported by the senior management team and Governing Body. The school's programme for future development is well considered and carefully paced.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body is very well informed and supportive. It fully meets its statutory duties, and fulfils its role as critical friend to the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior management team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have initiated a rigorous system for monitoring teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of its funds to ensure that pupils attain their full potential, and to provide the best possible education for pupils of all ages and abilities. The school gives very good value for money.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced and the school employs a generous number of classroom assistants. The accommodation is attractive, clean and well maintained, and the grounds are spacious. With the exception of music where there are not enough instruments, the range, quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory in all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased that their children enjoy coming to school. • Parents believe that teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. • Parents are pleased with the school's open-door policy and state that the school is extremely welcoming. • The vast majority of parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour in the school and do not think that bullying is a problem. • Most parents appreciate the very good levels of information they receive from the school. • Parents believe that the school encourages their children to work hard and to achieve their full potential. • Parents are pleased with the values and attitudes promoted by the school which they believe are summed up by the school motto, 'Friendship and Learning'. • Parents of children who have special educational needs are very pleased with the levels of support the school provides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not think that the school offers a sufficiently wide range of out-of school activities. • Some parents do not think their children receive enough homework. • A small number of parents would like more information from the school about their children's progress.

The inspection findings fully confirm the parents' positive views of the school, but do not support their negative views. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils, including residential visits for all classes in Key Stage 2. An appropriate amount of homework is set in all classes, including regular reading activities. The school provides very good levels of information for parents, and the end of year pupils' progress reports are of very good quality. There are regular meetings for parents to look at their children's work, and parents are encouraged to come into school at any mutually convenient time to discuss their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science from a very low starting point. However, because of the unusually high percentage of pupils in the school who have special educational needs, and the relatively small percentage of higher attaining pupils, standards are inevitably below the national average on the basis of the end of key stage National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments. Comparisons with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, do not give a true reflection of the pupils' performance, the vast majority of whom are achieving their full potential. The school's end of Key Stage 2 test results have broadly followed the national trend of improvement over the past three years, and the school has been successful in increasing the percentage of pupils in both key stages who are attaining the higher levels. There are high levels of pupil mobility in the school, and this makes it very difficult for the school to set group targets, and can have a detrimental impact on the school's end of key stage National Curriculum test results, especially at the end of Key Stage 2.
2. The end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results show that standards in reading have been below average for the last three years, and on the basis of the 1999 test results, standards were well below average. The school's results for 2000 show an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, but the high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs results in an above average percentage of pupils not attaining the expected Level 2. Standards in writing have been below average for the last three years, and in 1999 fell to a very low level. In 1999, no pupil attained the higher Level 3, and only 14% of pupils attained Level 2B and above. The writing results for 2000 show a marked improvement with almost half of pupils attaining Level 2B and above, although there are still no pupils attaining the higher Level 3. On the basis of the 1999 end of key stage National Curriculum test results, pupils' attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 is well below the national average. The picture has been broadly the same over the last three years, although standards rose slightly in 1998 before dropping again in 1999. The school's 2000 results paint a similar overall picture to that of 1999, although there has been a slight increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5.
3. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English are below average at the end of both key stages, despite the very positive impact of the National Literacy Strategy, the setting of the pupils into ability groups, and a consistently high standard of teaching. The school enables pupils of all ages and abilities to achieve their potential, and the needs of all pupils are successfully met. Very good levels of support for pupils who have special educational needs, and English as an additional language, enable them to make very good progress towards their own individual targets. The school is continuing with initiatives to improve writing across the school, and recognises the need to ensure that there are more writing opportunities in other subjects. Although there are some good opportunities for promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills, more could be done to improve the clarity of pupils' speech, through group speaking activities such as choral speaking.
4. On the basis of the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results in mathematics, standards have been consistently well below average for the last three years. The 1999 test results show that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was close to the national average, but the percentage attaining the higher Level 3 was well below the

national average. The school's 2000 results show that just over half of the pupils attained Level 2B and above, which represents an improvement from the previous year, and slightly more pupils attained the higher Level 3. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is well below the national average on the basis of the 1999 end of key stage test results. Standards have been consistently below average for the last three years, and in 1998 dropped to a very low level. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and above is well below the national average. The 2000 results paint a very similar picture overall.

5. The inspection findings indicate that, although pupils benefit from good teaching and make good progress from a very low starting point, their overall attainment is below the national expectation. Pupils are taught in ability groups, and this has a positive impact on the learning of all pupils, and enables them to achieve their full potential. Pupils who have special educational needs are given very good support and progress at a good rate. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented in both key stages, but although lessons are characterised by rigorous mental mathematics introductions, pupils' recall of number facts is often poor and this slows down their written work. Pupils have only limited opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects and the school has identified this as an area for further development.
6. The end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments for science for 1999 show that standards are below average. Although a high percentage of pupils attained Level 2 and above, very few pupils attained the higher Level 3. The 2000 results paint a very similar picture. On the basis of the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 test results, pupils' attainment in science is below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above was below the national average and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was also below the national average. The 2000 results almost exactly mirror the results for 1999.
7. The inspection findings indicate that standards in science are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils have difficulty retaining scientific knowledge and, although they are keen observers and enthusiastic when carrying out investigations and experiments, their recording skills are limited, and few Key Stage 2 pupils have the capacity to set up their own tests. The school has worked hard to raise standards in science by analysing the end of key stage National Curriculum test results in Key Stage 2, using the information to adjust the scheme of work to ensure better coverage and to guide teachers' planning. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress from a very low starting point, and the vast majority of pupils work hard and achieve their full potential. Teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
8. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations at the end of both key stages, although standards have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. Although pupils are now making good progress, there are some gaps in the learning of older pupils whose previous experience is limited. Computers are not yet used sufficiently in all classes to support teaching and learning across all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment in religious education is below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages, and could be higher. Currently insufficient time is allocated to the subject, with the result that topics are covered at a superficial level, and pupils' experience is too narrow.
9. Pupils' attainment in art, geography, history and physical education is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment in music and design and technology is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. The school has justifiably invested a great deal of time over the past few years in raising standards in English, mathematics and science, and standards have improved in these

subjects. However, as a result, the development of some of the other subjects in the curriculum has been suspended and, over the past two years, the time allocated to subjects other than English, mathematics and science has been insufficient to enable full coverage of the programmes of study. The school has firm plans to review its current time allocation, and to make every effort to advance the learning of all pupils, but especially those who have a particular talent in art, music and physical education.

10. The pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress across all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, but by the time they transfer to Year 1, the attainment of the majority of pupils is still below the expected level because of the very low baseline from which they start when they join the school.
11. Pupils throughout the school who have special educational needs, including those who attend the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit, make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, and achieve the best that they can. They benefit from very good levels of support from their teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported in class and make good progress in their learning. Those who are eligible for additional support make good progress in their language development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and take an active role in their learning. They are polite and ready to engage in conversation with adults, and almost all pupils are keen to share and discuss their work. Pupils of all ages and abilities work well individually or in pairs, but sometimes when they are in small groups they become over-excited and inattentive. This over-enthusiasm is most evident in practical activities, such as science experiments, where pupils are keen to carry out tasks and present their ideas. Pupils listen very well to their teachers and process instructions carefully. They show high levels of concentration in most lessons, and pay particular attention in discussions, showing respect for the ideas of others.
13. Behaviour in and around the school is good, and the vast majority of pupils behave well at all times. The school sets clear and high expectations of pupils' behaviour which are formalised in the school's behaviour policy and which are upheld by all teachers and support staff. Some pupils have behavioural difficulties, and sometimes do not conform to the expectations of the school. However, the routines and support available for class teachers ensure that incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively, and the pupils involved are given the opportunity to resolve their problems. Classmates of pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour are very tolerant, and have a range of strategies for ignoring inappropriate behaviour and carrying on with their own work.
14. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner and at break and lunchtimes play well together. Some support staff have received training in the management of behaviour and this ensures good levels of consistency for the pupils. Parents are pleased with the behaviour of the majority of pupils whom they find to be friendly and polite. Most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible, and some parents work closely with the school in modifying and managing their children's behaviour. Bullying is not a major problem and parents and pupils are confident that staff deal promptly and effectively with any incidents that may arise. The school has a behaviour committee which provides early identification of pupils who are likely to have behaviour difficulties, and this helps to prevent problems from arising.

15. During the last year there were ten fixed term exclusions and one permanent exclusion. The incidents involved only a small number of pupils who persistently misbehaved, and the school pursued all possible options prior to excluding the pupils.
16. Relationships amongst pupils are very good, and pupils try hard to reflect the school motto of 'Friendship and Learning'. The very careful management of behaviour and personal development contributes significantly towards the social harmony which is evident throughout the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities get on well together. They listen to each other in discussions and take turns sensibly when using equipment and resources. They have very good relationships with their teachers and the vast majority show respect for one another and display good manners. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility in many ways. They undertake routine jobs in the classroom, often without prompting, and tidy away sensibly after all activities. Staff provide very good role models and contribute well to the warm and welcoming ethos of the school.
17. The attendance rate is close to the national average and has been maintained at this level for some years. The rate of unauthorised absence is low and is similar to the national average.
18. Registration is carried out at the beginning of each session during which time pupils read silently or carry on with written work. Registers close relatively early, and the names of all latecomers are recorded and analysed for patterns of absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching was excellent in 4% of lessons seen during the inspection, very good in 26%, good in 40%, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 2%. The best teaching was seen in the Nursery and Reception classes, and in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. The very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching is insignificant. Teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection, and contributes to the good progress pupils make in many aspects of their work.
20. The teaching of the Foundation Stage pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good, and some inspirational teaching was seen in these classes during the inspection. Activities are always challenging and interesting, and captivate and maintain the children's attention. Teachers are enthusiastic when they present class activities, and lessons are extremely well paced, ensuring that pupils do not lose concentration. Teachers have very high expectations of the children, and constantly stretch them so that they achieve their full potential. Very good use is made of support staff, who work closely with the teachers in planning activities for the children. Ongoing assessment is very good, enabling teachers to swiftly identify pupils who may have special educational needs, and ensuring that the next stage of pupils' learning builds on what has gone before.
21. In almost all classes in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, English and mathematics are taught well, and the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been very successfully implemented. The practice of setting pupils into ability groups is having a positive impact, and helps teachers to ensure a good match between the activities and the needs of the pupils. Literacy and numeracy lessons are very well paced, and introductory sessions are often rigorous and demanding. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, but these could usefully be extended.
22. The teaching of science is good, and is having a positive impact on standards and pupils' rate of progress. Teaching in science has improved since the last inspection, and pupils

now have more opportunities to learn through practical activities. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory overall, and is constantly improving as teachers become more experienced and confident. The teaching of whole classes in the computer suite is often good, but teachers are not yet providing enough opportunities for pupils to use computers at other times of the day to support their learning across the curriculum. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall, but at present, insufficient time is allocated to the subject in most classes, and this means that the programmes of study are not covered in enough depth.

23. In art, geography, history and physical education, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and some examples of good and very good teaching were observed during the inspection in individual classes. There is some effective exchange of teachers for some of these subjects, enabling them to work to their strengths. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge, but do not always take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning, and do not always clearly identify in their planning the skills that are to be taught. In physical education, some of the sessions are a little short, and this restricts the amount of work that can be covered. The teaching of swimming is good and is a strength of the school's provision.
24. The teaching of music by a part-time specialist is good, and is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, but this is a subject where most classteachers lack confidence and subject knowledge. There are weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology, where insufficient time is allocated to the subject, and where some teachers lack confidence because of insecure subject knowledge.
25. One of the strengths of teaching is the way in which teachers make use of questions to extend pupils' learning, and to help them to clarify their thinking. Teachers phrase questions effectively to support those pupils who have special educational needs, and allow plenty of time for pupils to think of their answers. Questions for the higher attaining pupils are much more challenging and really make them think. In the best lessons, teachers use questions very effectively to establish pupils' previous knowledge. An example of this was seen during the inspection in a science lesson where the teacher was introducing a new topic to the pupils. Through a series of open-ended questions, the teacher discovered that the pupils' existing knowledge was surprisingly extensive, and this enabled her to move more quickly than she had anticipated onto the next stage of the lesson.
26. Of particular note is the very effective way in which teachers throughout the school promote good behaviour, and manage incidents of inappropriate behaviour. All teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy, and praise and encourage the pupils for their achievements and successes. Teachers are very well supported by the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the behaviour co-ordinator, who ensure that sanctions, such as the 'yellow card', are applied fairly, sensitively and without fuss. This strong and collaborative approach to the management of behaviour means that pupils from the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit can successfully be included in whole-class activities.
27. The practice of teachers identifying learning objectives in their planning, which are subsequently shared with the pupils, is a very positive development, which has contributed to the overall improvement in the quality of teaching in the school. In addition to ensuring that teachers have a clear idea about the purpose of the lesson or activity, pupils have some measure of their ongoing success, in terms of whether they have achieved the stated learning objectives for that lesson. Most teachers identify learning objectives in all lessons, but a small number of teachers do not consistently adopt this practice across all subjects.

28. There are some classes in the school where, although the teaching is satisfactory, it could be even better. In these classes, worksheets are often used too much as a means of recording, and this constrains the development of pupils' literacy skills, and their creativity. Teachers do not always provide enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils, especially in lessons where pupils are taught in mixed-ability groups, and activities are over-directed by the teacher, which limits opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions about their work.
29. The school is very effective in meeting the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers and classroom assistants give very good levels of support in class, enabling these pupils to make very good progress towards their individual learning targets. High attaining pupils are appropriately challenged and enabled to achieve their full potential.
30. An appropriate amount of homework is set in all classes, and reading practice is a regular homework task for all pupils. However, most of the tasks are linked to English, mathematics, and sometimes ongoing topics, and insufficient use is made of homework in subjects such as art, music and physical education.
31. The school has introduced a new marking system where pupils' work is marked against the learning objective for the lesson. Early indications are that this is working well, and some very good examples of marking were seen during the inspection, especially in the upper part of the school.

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

32. The school provides a broad curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and all subjects in the National Curriculum, and religious education, are taught during the course of the year. There is currently an imbalance in the amount of time allocated to individual subjects and, where subjects do not receive enough time, this has an adverse impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Over the past few years the school has justifiably given a large proportion of time to the teaching of English and mathematics, but recognises the need to develop other subjects more extensively, especially music, and design and technology, which have been a little neglected recently.
33. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been very effectively implemented across the school, and the positive approach of staff has ensured their success. Teachers make effective use of the strategies to guide their planning and teaching and, whilst flexible in the way in which they interpret the frameworks, present tightly structured lessons which have good pace and rigour. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, but in the case of music, art and design and technology, the schemes do not provide enough guidance for the non-specialist teachers, some of whom are lacking in confidence. The school follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education, but at present not all classes allocate an appropriate amount of time to ensure full coverage of the programmes of study. The school places emphasis on the importance of physical education, and whilst this is appropriate, the current arrangement of more frequent, but shorter lessons is counter-productive, especially in Key Stage 1, where pupils take a long time to get changed.
34. 'Golden Time' is a feature of all Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes, and is regarded as special time where pupils take part in a range of activities. Whilst in principle this time is a valuable way of rewarding pupils for their successes of the week, and for enhancing

the statutory curriculum, in practice, some of the activities lack focus and do not sufficiently advance pupils' learning. One of the positive features of 'Golden Time' is the reading buddy system where older pupils work alongside younger pupils, supporting them in their reading.

35. The curriculum for the under-fives is of very good quality, and is a strength of the school. Very good emphasis is placed on free and structured play, enabling pupils to make very good progress, especially in their personal and social development and language development. The school has successfully implemented the recently introduced national guidelines for Nursery and Reception pupils, and provides a wide variety of rich and challenging learning experiences for pupils of all abilities. Good links between the Nursery and Reception classes ensure the smooth transfer of pupils at the start of the new academic year, and team planning enables all staff to have a good overview of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage.
36. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs, both in the mainstream classes and in the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit. Individual education plans for pupils at Stage 2 and above on the special educational needs register are of high quality, state clearly where the pupils are experiencing difficulties, and indicate how their needs can be best met. The special educational needs register is very well maintained and there is appropriate movement from stage to stage as pupils make progress, or are found to be in need of further support. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported in class, and work is appropriately matched to their needs. The specialist input of the part-time teacher who works with these pupils has a positive impact on their learning.
37. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities for pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, although currently not all clubs are running. There is a wide range of activities including a homework club, music groups and sports activities. The extra-curricular activities are well attended and have a positive effect on pupils' learning, and help to promote their social development.
38. The school has very good links with the community and other educational establishments which do much to enhance the personal development of all pupils. The school's partnership with North Hertfordshire College is mutually beneficial. The school is an accredited learning centre for the college and provides facilities for adult information and communication technology courses. Parenting classes are also provided in association with the college, and the school supports Nursery Nurse training courses.
39. The school places great importance on its links with the neighbourhood, and actively seeks ways of enhancing the image and self-esteem of the community. A Parents' Support group that began in the school now operates independently, but close links have been maintained. A Family Literacy project is about to begin in association with the Basic Skills Agency. This is designed to support parents of the youngest pupils and involves teaching staff and specialist tutors. The School Watch Project, which was highly praised in the last report, has continued to be a success. It has drawn support beyond those immediately involved in the school and has forged strong local links. The school minibus, which is sponsored, is used by a variety of local groups such as the Youth Club. Social links are encouraged through visits to local residential homes. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the community through Harvest collection and distribution each year. The Annual Grandparents' Party at Harvest time is a very popular event, which in addition to forging community links, enhances the pupils' social development.
40. The school's links with other schools are very good. The school has good liaison with the local comprehensive schools. The headteacher is involved with other primary and

secondary headteachers in the 'Raising Attainment in Stevenage' initiative that is currently focusing on improving the transition of pupils at the age of eleven. Partnership with other schools allows for shared in-service training, both for staff and governors, and promotes good social and sporting links, enabling pupils to meet regularly with children from other schools.

41. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school is in the process of reviewing its current policy for this aspect of its work to ensure that it reflects the recently introduced national non-statutory guidelines. The personal, social and health education co-ordinator and assistant headteacher are working closely to develop and implement a scheme of work which will guide teachers' planning, and which will ensure that topics are covered systematically, and at the appropriate level. Sessions for personal, social and health education are timetabled in all classes, and are supported by class 'Circle Time Assemblies', and team group 'Achievement Assemblies'.
42. Sex education mostly occurs through the delivery of the science programmes of study, and there are additional sessions for Year 6 pupils which prepare them for the onset of puberty. The school recognises that preparation for adolescence needs to begin at an earlier age, and is considering revising its current teaching strategy for this aspect of personal, social and health education. The school meets statutory requirements in ensuring that pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug misuse, but is keen to develop this area of its work still further.
43. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
44. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted in a variety of ways, and is reinforced by the personal, social and health education sessions which occur in all classes. Pupils of all ages and abilities are presented with moral issues when they listen to class stories, and when they discuss parables in religious education. Good use is made of assemblies to raise moral and social issues which pupils are encouraged to consider. Pupils know that they must take account of the consequences of their mistakes and their actions on others, and are given the opportunity to explain incidents of misbehaviour in a rational manner. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for class duties, and a 'School Council' has been elected to present the views and suggestions of the pupils to the headteacher. Team work in games lessons helps pupils to become aware of the need for team work, to obey the set rules, and to accept the decisions of the referee. Residential visits for all year groups are an important part of pupils' social development, and are popular with all age groups.
45. Pupils are exposed to the stories, songs, art-work and dance of other cultures in some lessons, and the library is very well stocked with books relating to lifestyles around the world, but there are few planned opportunities for pupils to experience the richness and diversity of the many cultures and traditions which exist in Britain today. Visits to museums, and studies of the second world war and the Victorian times have provided some pupils with an insight into the British way of life in the past, and they have a knowledge and understanding of some British customs and traditions. School, team or class assemblies take place every day and are structured to suit the ages of the children involved. Whole-school assemblies incorporate acts of collective worship which tend to be of a Christian nature, and often provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon aspects of their lives. Other opportunities for promoting spirituality are limited, and rely on the sensitivity of individual teachers. During the inspection, some moments of spirituality were observed in several classes as pupils responded with genuine awe in response to inspired teaching. One such example was in the Nursery when the children first saw

their harvest loaf after it had been baked. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for the promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development.

46. There have been some positive developments in relation to the curriculum since the last inspection, and the school has kept abreast of government initiatives, and has shown a commitment to ensuring the success of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. The school is keen to develop the breadth of the curriculum following the introduction of the new National Curriculum, and recognises the value of developing pupils' talents in such areas as art, music and physical education. The school is very well placed for further developing the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and for continuing to promote all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school has excellent procedures in place for ensuring pupils' welfare. There are very good routines for dealing with pupils who are feeling unwell. Four members of staff have received training in first-aid and pupils are often referred to the school secretary and bursar, who deal sympathetically with their needs. The first-aid boxes are well stocked, records of accidents maintained, and all staff have been trained in the use of epipens. Adult volunteers administer essential medicines to pupils. Should it be necessary, letters detailing accidents are sent home to parents.
48. The school has a good quality health and safety policy, and a teacher and governor have been nominated to monitor its effectiveness. The pupils' health and safety are promoted through the personal, social and health education programme and pupils' well-being is closely monitored by teachers and other adults in school. Records are maintained of the regular inspection of safety equipment and for the practice evacuations. The governor with responsibility for health and safety is a safety professional, and the risk assessments that are carried out on behalf of health and safety sub-committee of the Governing Body are of very good quality.
49. The headteacher has been nominated to deal with issues of child protection and is supported in this role by the assistant headteacher. They have both received recent training in child protection and are able to call upon the local support group and a member of the Governing Body. Child protection procedures are a feature of staff induction and these are reinforced by regular discussion of routines within the school.
50. Pupils' academic performance is monitored during lessons and teachers keep informal records. Shared learning objectives help pupils to monitor their own learning, and to recognise what they have achieved. Opportunities are taken to monitor pupils' personal development through general observation, and by teachers noting pupils' responses to issues raised in personal, social and health education sessions. All teachers are very supportive of those pupils who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, and most teachers effectively challenge the more able pupils. Teachers make very good use of praise for good work and behaviour, and weekly school assemblies are used to celebrate the achievements of pupils' work, behaviour, and sporting achievements. Each half term the school assembly celebrates pupils' achievements within the context of friendship and learning.
51. The school's systems and procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and for encouraging good behaviour are excellent and are a great strength of the school. Pupils in mainstream classes, and in the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit, receive excellent support in terms of managing their behaviour. A number of pupils in the school

have special educational needs in relation to their behaviour, and these pupils sometimes become frustrated and disruptive. Pupils who find it difficult to concentrate in lessons can request a temporary transfer to the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit where they are able to continue their studies in private under the supervision of teaching staff.

52. The behaviour co-ordinator is a specialist in the management of pupils with behavioural difficulties and observes pupils who are not co-operating to identify strategies that will help the teacher to deal with any future incidents of poor behaviour. This specialist member of staff has received advanced training in counselling and is available to all pupils who wish to talk to him. With parental agreement, some pupils are benefiting from the weekly counselling sessions that he provides. The school's systems are extremely effective in helping the pupils who are having difficulties and also in ensuring that the learning of other pupils is not disturbed. During the inspection, an incident was observed where a pupil who had been withdrawn to the unit for misbehaviour returned to his class, and went on to lead his group's presentation of work. Support is given unobtrusively and to the benefit the teacher, class and individuals concerned. Such high levels of support and guidance allow for the integration of pupils from the unit into most class lessons.
53. The monitoring and promotion of attendance are very good. Registers are marked quickly and efficiently and good records are kept by the school. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school each month and follows up not only unauthorised absences but also persistent incidents of lateness. The attendance record of each pupil is part of their annual Record of Achievement.
54. Very good procedures are in place for assessing the progress and attainment of pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes, and particularly good use is made of the anecdotal diary, where notes are recorded about pupils' successes during the day. Good use is made of assessment for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs.
55. All pupils undertake the optional statutory tests at the end of Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5, and the results are analysed carefully to target areas for development. The information is also used to group children according to their level of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Year 6 pupils are tested in the spring term and the results are reported to parents. Additional support is given at this time to help pupils to achieve their potential in the end of year National Curriculum tests. Teachers make informal ongoing assessments of pupils' progress and attainment across all subjects, but at present, there are no consistent ways of recording this information. The assessment of pupils' progress in information and communication technology, and religious education has not been sufficiently developed.
56. The introduction of teachers sharing learning objectives with pupils is a useful way of focusing the pupils' and teachers' attention on the main purpose of the activity, and creates a natural opportunity for assessment. At the end of some lessons, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own learning against the objective for that lesson, and teachers note the extent to which pupils have achieved or not achieved the stated objective. However, this practice is not yet consistently implemented in all classes and in all subjects. Although teachers note pupils' progress within individual lessons, they are not always willing to change the next lesson in the series to reflect these ongoing assessments. This means that on occasions pupils are continuing to learn and practise a skill that they have in fact already mastered.
57. Good quality Records of Achievement are compiled annually for all children from the Nursery onwards. These celebrate pupils' work throughout the year and, as well as academic information, they include comments on personal qualities such as

determination, commitment and kindness to others. At the end of the year, information is passed to the next teacher.

58. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its assessment procedures and, although there is still more work to be done, a good start has been made. The levels of support and guidance offered to the pupils are of a higher standard than at the time of the last inspection, and the strategies for managing pupils' behaviour, and for promoting good behaviour are even better than they were. The high standard of care described in the previous inspection report has been further improved, and the school continues to provide a healthy, safe and happy learning environment for pupils of all ages and abilities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. There are high levels of parental satisfaction. Good lines of communication between the home and school ensure a positive partnership which benefits the pupils. Parents are very pleased with the way in which they are welcomed by the school, and are confident that any problems or concerns would be dealt with promptly and effectively. Parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school, and most parents are very pleased with the standard of behaviour. The parents' views that teaching is good, and that the school is well led and managed, are fully endorsed by the inspection findings. Some parents would like more information about their children's progress. However, the school makes every effort to provide good information about pupils' progress, and the parents' criticisms are not justified. A few parents would like their children to receive more homework, but the inspection findings indicate that pupils receive an appropriate amount of homework as they move through the school. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, although some parents would like even more. It is of note that the parents are familiar with the motto of the school, 'Friendship and Learning', and believe that the school actively promotes positive values and attitudes.
60. The school has good links with parents and provides a very good level of information for them about the life and work of the school through the governors' annual report, the prospectus, parents' meetings and pupils' progress reports. The progress reports are of very good quality. Information about pupils' attainment and progress is supported by examples of the pupils' work, academic targets proposed by the classteacher, and a written account of the pupils' personal strengths and weaknesses, produced by the pupils themselves. Home school agreements are in place and parents' views are sought on major issues of school development. There are opportunities at the start and end of the school day for parents to talk to teachers and the headteacher, and most minor concerns are resolved in this way. The information provided for parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and parents are fully involved in annual reviews. Links between the staff in the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit, and parents of pupils who attend the unit, are very good, and, as in the mainstream classes, parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any problems or concerns.
61. The school enjoys the support of parents especially through the Home School Association which, through the organisation of social events for children and adults, raises funds to help provide further resources. The school makes extensive efforts to encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school, and values highly the involvement of those parents who help out in class and accompany pupils on school trips. The school is looking forward to the imminent launch of its Family Literacy Project, which it hopes will help parents and their children to become more confident about reading and writing. The involvement of parents and neighbours in the School Watch Scheme has significantly reduced the level of vandalism to the school premises and this success has generated a sense of pride in the local community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, which enables the school to fulfil its stated aims in a very purposeful and productive manner. He has a very clear vision for the future direction of the school which is shared by staff and governors. He is committed to building a highly committed team of teachers and support assistants, and to enabling pupils of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential.
63. All those involved with the school are keen to continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, and over the past few years many very effective initiatives have been introduced. These include setting the pupils into ability groups for some lessons, reducing the size of some teaching groups, and allocating a substantial amount of the available teaching time to these subjects. However, the justifiable emphasis placed on English, mathematics and science in recent years has prevented the school from developing other subjects as fully as it would have liked to have done, and this is now a priority for the school.
64. There have been improvements in the management systems of the school since the previous inspection, notably in the setting up of an efficient senior management team, which includes the team-leaders, the assistant headteacher, the headteacher, a teacher from the Specific Learning Difficulties Base, and the behaviour co-ordinator. Members of the senior management team have a clear understanding of their roles, and are empowered through well targeted training to fulfil their duties in a professional and effective manner.
65. The headteacher and members of the senior management team monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and have a good appreciation of where there are particular strengths or weaknesses. Good practice is shared, and difficulties are identified and resolved. However, the role of the curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring their subjects is less effective, and some co-ordinators do not have the necessary whole-school overview of provision in their areas.
66. Good analysis of the end of key stage National Curriculum test results ensures that teachers are able to build upon pupils' strengths and help them to overcome their difficulties, and the targets set by the school in relation to the pupils' future attainment are accurate and appropriate.
67. The management of special educational needs within the school is very good. The special educational needs committee has a very good overview of provision, and ensures that all statutory requirements in respect of statements are met. The school has full regard for the special educational needs Code of Practice, and the school's systems and procedures reflect the good practice described in this document. Individual education plans are of a consistently high standard throughout the school and contain precise and measurable targets. Parents are fully involved at all stages of the identification process, and are encouraged to take an active role in meetings about their children's progress and achievements.
68. The management of the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit which is housed within the school is very good, and the pupils make very good progress within a supportive learning environment. The school also manages a specific learning difficulties 'outreach' base for pupils. No pupils attend this base, which is a resource for teachers within the LEA. Staff work within a variety of schools in the area, and one of the teachers is a

representative on the school's special educational needs committee, ensuring good levels of liaison and interaction between the school and the base.

69. The Governing Body plays an important role in the strategic management of the school and is knowledgeable, supportive and active. Governors are well informed about the life and work of the school, and regularly receive presentations from the staff and headteacher about ongoing initiatives and developments. Governors have been nominated for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and health and safety. However, the governor with responsibility for special educational needs is the teacher in charge of the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit, and this means that there is no independent governor to support this important area of the school's work. The full Governing Body meets regularly, and there are several committees which also meet at regular intervals. At present, there is no curriculum committee, and given the ongoing developments within the curriculum, both at national and school level, this would be a useful forum for exploring issues and establishing the next stage of development for the school. The Governing Body fulfils its role of 'critical friend' to the headteacher, and ensures full compliance with statutory requirements.
70. The school's financial planning is well considered, and fully supports the educational priorities identified in the School Development Plan. Whilst ensuring that all of the available money is spent on the pupils currently on roll, the school is prepared for potential fluctuations in the pupil population, and the subsequent impact on staffing levels, and uses its financial surplus wisely to minimise the impact of these changes. The school has the capacity to generate additional funds should the need arise, through consultancy and other initiatives.
71. Very good financial controls ensure that the school's budget is very well managed. The quarterly reviews of all budgets, undertaken by the headteacher, bursar and a financial consultant, ensure that spending is aligned to income, and that expenditure is closely monitored. Designated funds within the main budget, such as those for staff training and special educational needs, are well managed, and are used effectively and appropriately to support ongoing development in these areas. The most recent auditor's report complimented the school on the way in which the budget was managed and praised the very good monitoring systems that are in place.
72. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers, and there is a good balance between experienced staff and newly qualified teachers. Co-ordinators are in place for each subject area, although their level of specialist knowledge varies. In addition to the full-time teaching staff, the school employs part-time staff including a music teacher, a language support teacher for pupils who have English as an additional language, and a general teacher who works with older pupils, enabling them to be taught in smaller groups for mathematics and literacy. Teachers are ably assisted by a good number of well qualified and experienced support staff who often work with small groups of pupils who have special educational needs.
73. The school has a strong commitment to the professional development of its staff, and this is exemplified by the receipt of the prestigious Investors In People award for the second time. This has had a positive effect in raising the quality of teaching since the last inspection, and in further promoting the sense of team spirit that is so evident amongst staff. There is an impressive programme of induction for teachers who are new to the school, and all teachers have regular appraisal interviews. Training needs are closely related to the school's priorities but there is some scope for developing teachers' personal interests. The school is moving towards the recently introduced Performance Management initiative, and as part of the changes in the management structure, staff will

be interviewed by their team-leaders. This practice will enable team-leaders to develop their monitoring capabilities, and share some of the load of the headteacher and deputy.

74. The accommodation is spacious, welcoming and bright, and recent improvements have had a positive impact on pupils' learning and on the quality of relationships amongst pupils. A high standard of care is evident and is due in large measure to the efforts and organisation of the site manager who is a great asset to the school. Teaching areas are generally well furnished and comfortable, although the home bays for the older children are somewhat cramped and can become rather warm in the afternoon. All areas, including the attractive library area, are well used. There is a well-equipped computer suite with internet access, and this is timetabled for maximum effect. Displays are of good quality, although some include only a limited amount of children's work. The school makes good use of the extensive outdoor areas. The secure play area for children in Reception and Key Stage 1 has been painted with a variety of games and also includes an interesting adventure section with soft chippings to ensure safe landings. There is a separate play area for older pupils with a more challenging adventure area and playtimes are staggered to good effect. Accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and children in the Nursery have direct access to their own outdoor play area.
75. There are sufficient resources overall to meet the demands of the curriculum. Resources for information technology are very good, not only in terms of the computer suite, but throughout the school, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage are good. However, resources for music are poor. There is a shortage of tuned percussion instruments and instruments from other cultures. Resources for art are generally sufficient but the limited range of more interesting materials restricts the quality of the pupils' work. The library is a valuable resource. It is well used and supported by the Library Service with a librarian available every afternoon to work with groups of pupils.
76. In the light of the good progress made by pupils across many aspects of their work, the good quality of teaching and learning, the very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs, and the very good standard of leadership and management, the school is giving very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school is providing a good quality of education for pupils of all ages and abilities. Every effort has been made to improve standards in English, mathematics and science, with the result that some of the other subjects of the National Curriculum have been a little neglected in recent years. The school is now well placed to respond to the demands of the National Curriculum 2000, and to ensure better balance within the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 curriculum.

1) The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should improve and develop the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 curriculum, thereby raising standards further, by:-

- ensuring that all subjects receive an appropriate amount of time to enable the programmes of study to be covered in sufficient depth;
- ensuring that equal time is given to art, design and technology, geography, history and music;
- reducing the number of worksheets used in some classes and increasing the opportunities for pupils to use their skills of literacy and numeracy in all subjects of the curriculum;
- providing more problem-solving activities for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils which promote independent learning, especially in mathematics and science;
- ensuring that Golden Time is more structured and purposeful in some classes;
- reducing time slippage when pupils change for physical education activities, and when they move into different teaching groups;
- making special provision for pupils who have talent in art, music and physical education.

(paragraphs 9, 21, 23, 28, 32, 33, 34, 46, 63, 100, 105, 113, 117, 125, 129, 133, 141, 142)

2) The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should raise standards in religious education, music and design and technology by:-

- ensuring that an appropriate amount of time is allocated to each subject;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to record their work;
- increasing teachers' confidence;
- ensuring that teachers are supported by detailed schemes of work in music and design and technology;
- increase the range and quality of musical instruments, especially in terms of tuned and ethnic instruments.

(paragraphs 24, 32, 33, 122- 125, 138-141, 147-151)

3) The school should also consider the following minor areas for development:-

- developing the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they have a clear whole-school overview of their subjects; *(paragraph 65)*
- making more use of assessment to guide planning and developing consistent methods of recording assessment information across the school; *(paragraphs 56, 58, 117)*
- forming a committee within the Governing Body to oversee curriculum development. *(paragraph 69)*

UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

77. There has been very good progress since the last inspection in the work of the unit, and the work of the unit is now a strength of the school. The unit offers very good provision both to the pupils on its roll, and to other pupils in the school who have behavioural and emotional needs. The unit caters for up to eight pupils, although at the time of the inspection only four places had been allocated. Pupils are referred to the unit from within the LEA, and all pupils have statements of special educational needs. The unit is staffed by one teacher and two full-time support assistants.
78. The unit offers pupils a very secure and caring learning environment and fully meets their individual and diverse needs. When pupils have settled into the routines of the unit and the school, and have developed sufficient confidence, they are integrated into mainstream classes for some of their work. The pupils are involved in the decision about when they are to join other classes, and every effort is made to ensure that the experience is rewarding for them. The pupils are carefully monitored and supported by the unit staff, and the classteacher of the class they join. During the inspection, pupils from the unit were regularly observed working in mainstream classes and they usually mixed very well with their classmates. This practice of integration is very effective and the unit teacher is to develop this approach in other local schools.
79. The pupils are learning well, although because of their difficulties, their attainment is often below average. They make very good progress towards their individual learning and behavioural targets. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the pupils' access to the curriculum, and pupils are now involved in more curriculum areas than previously. The school assesses the needs of each individual pupil, and on the basis of the assessments, decides which subjects the pupils should pursue.
80. In addition to providing support for the referred pupils who have statements of emotional and behavioural difficulties, the unit is extremely successful in working with pupils from mainstream classes who sometimes have difficulty managing their behaviour. The unit teacher is also the behaviour co-ordinator, and is able to disseminate his expertise and experience across the school, and this has helped the school to develop an excellent behaviour management policy which is effectively and consistently put into practice. In addition to helping pupils to manage their behaviour, the unit teacher, who is a trained counsellor, offers counselling time to pupils who are in need of such support. The parents of these pupils are very pleased with the support their children receive.
81. The quality of teaching in the unit is never less than good and at times it is very good. The teacher knows the pupils very well. Work is set at the correct level, and very good use of praise helps to develop the pupils' self esteem. The learning support assistants work well with the pupils, both in the unit, and in mainstream classes where they are an important point of security for the pupils who are being integrated. All staff provide positive role models, and show great respect for the pupils with whom they work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	26	40	27	2		

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)	27	364
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	108

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24	212

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	31

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	49

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.2

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	24	19	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	21
	Girls	15	15	18
	Total	30	29	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (70)	68 (58)	90 (88)
	National	N/A (82)	N/A (83)	N/A (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	19
	Girls	15	17	15
	Total	31	36	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (69)	84 (81)	79 (86)
	National	N/A (82)	N/A (86)	N/A (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	22	21	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	16
	Girls	11	8	15
	Total	24	24	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (56)	56 (58)	72 (72)
	National	N/A (70)	N/A (69)	N/A (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	19
	Girls	11	10	13
	Total	26	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (66)	65 (64)	75 (64)
	National	N/A (68)	N/A (69)	N/A (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	7
Indian	2
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	295
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	10	1
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)	21.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	209

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	1.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	963781
Total expenditure	971007
Expenditure per pupil	2563
Balance brought forward from previous year	45280
Balance carried forward to next year	38054

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	29	2	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	5	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	51	5	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	14	3	5
The teaching is good.	58	32	5	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	29	15	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	27	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	35	12	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	35	3	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	39	5	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	30	17	12	27

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

82. The school makes very good provision for the children in both the Nursery and Reception classes which enables them to make very good progress in their learning. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Children are admitted to the Nursery at two points during the school year, and attend on a part-time basis. They transfer to the Reception class in the term of their fifth birthday, and attend on a full-time basis.
83. The last inspection report stated that the school offered good provision for children under the age of five. Since then, the staff and the headteacher have worked hard to consolidate and further improve the good practice evident at that time, and have established a very strong Foundation Stage team which is highly committed to raising standards and providing the best quality of education possible for these young children. The teaching staff are extremely well supported in their work by very competent and highly committed Nursery and classroom assistants, who make an invaluable contribution to the smooth running of the Nursery, and to the quality of education provided.
84. Long term planning for the Nursery and Reception children is appropriately based on the new Early Learning Goals for children of this age. Teachers and support staff work closely together when devising daily plans, to ensure that they are clear about the main teaching and learning objectives for the individual activities. Very good emphasis is placed on structured and free play and, although the children are encouraged to choose the activities they wish to pursue, staff ensure that children experience a broad range of activities during the course of one week. Very good supervision and interaction by adults during play activities ensure that the children's achievements are noted and recorded, and that their language and social development are constantly promoted. The staff make very good use of their ongoing assessments of children's progress and attainment to plan the next stage of their learning.
85. The overall quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good and in some of the lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching was excellent. The high quality of teaching is characterised by imaginative and challenging activities which capture and maintain the pupils' interest and motivate them in their learning. For example, during the inspection, Nursery children dramatised the story of Sleeping Beauty through music and dance, and throughout the activity, they were captivated and mesmerised by the magical aspects of the story. Teachers have very high expectations of the children, and constantly stretch them so that they achieve their full potential. The high quality of teaching promotes very effective learning by pupils of all levels of ability, and enables them to acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills. The children fully appreciate the interesting learning opportunities that are offered to them, and are very willing learners in the exciting and vibrant learning environment which is created for them. Teachers ensure that children with special educational needs are identified as early as possible, enabling the school to give these children the necessary support from a very early age.

86. When they start school, most children's literacy and numeracy skills are well below the national average, and their social skills are often poorly developed. All of the children make very good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes, but by the end of the Foundation Stage, the overall attainment of the majority of pupils is still below the expected level for their age. Although a small number of children attain the expected levels, and sometimes above the expected levels, an unusually high percentage of pupils have special educational needs, and this has an adverse impact on the overall picture of attainment.

Personal, social and emotional development

87. Many children enter school with poorly developed personal and social skills. However they make rapid progress, and learn how to share, and how to work co-operatively with the other children in the class. There are many very good opportunities throughout the day for children to acquire social skills, such as sharing pieces of fruit at snack time in the Nursery, or helping one another to dress and fasten zips in the Reception classes after physical education activities. Staff members work closely with pupils in free and structured play activities, encouraging them to take turns, and to share the equipment, and explaining to children who behave inappropriately what the effect of their actions is on the well-being of the other children. As a result, the children's behaviour is very good and they have a growing understanding of right and wrong. Teachers create some very good opportunities for the children to show care and consideration for others, for example, during the inspection one Reception child was asked to escort a sick classmate to the office, and was given a short message to pass on to the school secretary. All of the adults who come into contact with the under-fives provide excellent role models for the children. Teachers and support staff create a happy and pleasant working environment where the children's self-esteem is constantly lifted and where the children are encouraged to do their best at all times. Staff are keen to acknowledge and celebrate the children's achievements, and to develop their confidence, and they make extremely good use of praise and rewards.

Communication, language and literacy

88. All adults in the Nursery and Reception classes work tirelessly to develop the children's language, through a wide range of speaking and listening activities, and a very good selection of early reading and writing activities. Teachers and support staff engage the children in frequent informal and formal discussions, extending their vocabulary where possible, and ensuring that their speech is clear. Very good use is made of class stories, and 'Big Books', which the children really enjoy, and teachers encourage the children to join in with the reading of well-known parts. However, most pupils' speaking skills are below the expected level at the end of the Foundation Stage, and most pupils use only a limited vocabulary, and short phrases to express their ideas and wishes. The small number of high attaining pupils contribute well to class discussions, and use a more interesting vocabulary when communicating with their teachers. The children's listening skills are satisfactory, and by the end of the Foundation Stage, most pupils listen attentively for appropriate lengths of time, and follow instructions and requests with understanding.
89. At an early age children begin to acquire a knowledge of phonics, by recognising and saying the initial sound of their names. They sing songs which help them to order the letters of the alphabet, and start to distinguish between lower and upper case letters. Literacy activities in both the Nursery and Reception classes help pupils to develop early reading skills, and to learn about books, and in the Reception classes especially, these sessions are extremely well paced and give children a rigorous grounding in letter sounds and blends. Some Reception children use the cues obtained from pictures to talk

about the characters in stories, and some are developing a small sight vocabulary of key words. However, most are at the very early stages of reading, and some have not yet made the connection between reading and writing. Most children write their names legibly, and emergent writing skills are well developed through play activities, such as when taking 'telephone messages' in the playhouse.

Mathematical development

90. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress in developing mathematical understanding and skills, but the majority of pupils do not attain the expected outcomes by the end of the Foundation Stage. Most pupils count securely up to ten, and they are helped in this by the many good opportunities for them to take part in counting songs which reinforce the order of numbers. Very few pupils are knowledgeable about numbers that are greater than ten. A small number of higher attaining pupils count in twos by the end of the Foundation Stage, and have a good understanding of the notion of more than and less than when working with numbers up to ten. Most pupils are secure when matching numbers to groups of objects, and sort objects into sets of different numbers. Most children have a satisfactory understanding of shape and recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes such as triangle, circle, square and rectangle. Some Reception pupils describe these shapes in terms of the number of sides and corners they have, but this is too challenging for most of the children. The teachers work hard to develop the children's mathematical vocabulary through play activities, and help them to work towards an understanding of comparative terms of size such as longer/shorter, heavier/lighter, and bigger/smaller. By the end of the Foundation Stage a small number of pupils successfully and independently write numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

91. Teachers plan carefully to extend pupils' understanding and knowledge of the world in which they live and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, many children have lively enquiring minds and take an interest in their surroundings. The children make good use of the school grounds to explore aspects of nature, watching growth and observing the changes in the seasons. An indoor aquarium and experiments with plants and seeds develop their understanding of living things, and raise their awareness of the need to care for living things. In a lesson seen during the inspection, the Nursery children learned the names of various vegetables, most of which were quite new to them. The children gathered information on how to store vegetables to prevent rot and decay and finally used the vegetables to make soup, which they ate with bread they had also made.
92. Through play and discussion, pupils begin to learn about their local environment, and some of the higher attaining Reception children give their addresses and a sketchy description of their journey to school. A map of the world is made into an excellent display by connecting a range of artefacts to the countries from where they came, and using materials showing that the people who live there have different cultures and traditions. An outstanding lesson in one of the Reception classes led to children gaining a clearer understanding of their position within their own family, and gave them some understanding of the relationship between the past and the present.
93. Computers are well used to support other areas of learning. For instance, pupils use the mouse to click and drag pictures of Jack and Jill into the correct sequence. They use computers to identify and match pairs of numbers, and control a programmable toy to move forward a specified distance.

Physical development

94. Provision for the children's physical development is very good and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most children show satisfactory levels of co-ordination when working in large spaces and with large apparatus, although their manipulation of smaller apparatus, such as pencils and paint brushes is less controlled. Access to large grassed and hard play areas as well as a to a large hall is well managed, and ensures that the children have the opportunity to take part in many good quality physical activities. Outside, pupils show good skills when riding large toys. They change direction, propel toys by pedals and feet, in both forward and backward directions, and they make best use of the space provided. In the hall they show an appropriate standard of gymnastic movement as they develop simple sequences. Children work equally well individually or in pairs, and they respond to the teachers' instructions as they change from stretching activities to demonstrate 'slimy', 'crawly' or 'twisty', movements. They have good opportunities to manipulate pieces of construction kits as they build towers and other objects and, through working with tools such as scissors and knives when modelling, they start to gain better control of small implements. There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in pencil control activities, where they follow an existing line as closely as possible, or when they trace over shapes drawn by the teacher.

Creative development.

95. The development of children's creative skills is very good, and is given high priority in the school. The children have good access to a wide collection of materials to make collages. They include a variety of papers and card, fabrics, wool, straws, shells, feathers and wood. The children are encouraged to mould and shape clay to make models, or to make 'cakes' from dough. When painting, the children often select the most appropriately sized brush for the task, and appreciate that a large space fills more quickly if using a large brush. Most of the children are very confident performers who are keen to take part in improvisations of stories. During music lessons, the children sing with enthusiasm, and most dance and march in time to the rhythm and beat of the music. Children use percussion instruments such as tambourines, Indian bells and drums to demonstrate long and short notes. They enjoy role-play, and use the playhouse well to enact situations and to share their experiences with other children and adults. However, the lack of spoken language for some children limits the extent of their role-play activities, and some of the children have difficulty creating new ideas and are heavily reliant on the suggestions of their teachers and other children.

ENGLISH

96. The inspection findings indicate that overall standards in English are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Although a small number of pupils in all year groups attain above average standards in their English work, the majority of pupils have special educational needs, and this adversely affects the overall picture of attainment in the school. Standards in speaking are not at the expected level for many pupils, but standards of listening are often satisfactory, and pupils process instructions and requests carefully and accurately. Standards in reading and writing are below average at the end of both key stages for most pupils, but some good examples of writing were seen across the school, and there are some readers in all classes who are fluent and expressive. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress from a very low starting point, and in this respect, there has been a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection.

97. Speaking skills are variable within both key stages, but overall are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils speak clearly and confidently answer questions and take part in discussions. They communicate effectively and enthusiastically with their classmates and teachers, but they often have narrow vocabularies, and this limits the extent and outcome of their discussions. Speaking skills are enhanced as pupils move through Key Stage 2, and by Year 6, most pupils express their views with some confidence on a wide range of subjects. At times, Key Stage 2 pupils are fluent and confident when expressing their ideas, but some pupils continue to be hampered by restricted vocabularies. In most classes pupils have the greatest confidence when discussions are led by teachers, and open-ended questions are skilfully used to direct their answers. Listening skills are satisfactory overall, and most pupils in both key stages listen attentively and respond well to questions and instructions. There are some good opportunities in Key Stage 2 for pupils to participate in drama activities, and these sessions have a positive impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to take part in group speaking exercises, such as choral speaking, which make rigorous demands in terms of articulating words clearly, and maintaining a steady and sometimes fast pace and rhythm.
98. Reading standards are below national expectations at the end of both key stages, although a minority of pupils in all classes are attaining good standards in their reading. Pupils in Key Stage 1 literacy sessions enjoy sharing 'Big Books' with their teachers, and show a good interest and involvement with the text, the pictures and the structure of the stories. As part of their reading development they are encouraged to explain the events of a story and the highest attaining pupils tentatively predict what is going to happen next. In group and individual reading sessions, Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to use a range of strategies when deciphering unfamiliar words, but are not always confident in doing so. It is apparent that many pupils, even those who struggle with the process, find great joy in their reading experiences, and are beginning to treasure books as objects of intrinsic value.
99. Pupils' reading skills and their appreciation of books continue to develop during Key Stage 2 and pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils successfully use a range of reading skills, and the most able identify the characteristics of different forms of literature such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry. For some pupils in Key Stage 2, the challenge of the text often causes them to lose fluency in their reading, and it is only a small number of high attaining pupils who read clearly, with expression and fluency. For many pupils, their reading experiences out of school are limited, and few pupils have favourite authors or books. Most pupils use dictionaries and reference materials with confidence and are becoming familiar with the library system in the school. Pupils successfully develop their reading skills in other subjects of the curriculum and older pupils have a good understanding of the importance of the written word for storing and transmitting information.
100. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their written work although standards are below average at the end of the key stage for the majority of pupils. The highest attaining pupils are independent writers who use basic punctuation appropriately in their work, but some of the lower attaining pupils need a great deal of support from their teachers and are still struggling with the use of full stops and capital letters. Spelling is highly variable, with the lower attaining pupils showing little awareness of the rules to be followed. The more able pupils produce good pieces of extended writing which are well structured and often imaginative, but the majority of pupils have difficulty sequencing their ideas on paper, and write only short pieces. Most Key Stage 1 teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum, but in some classes, the overuse of worksheets which require only one word

answers limits the opportunities for pupils to write independently. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers for drafting and editing their written work.

101. By the end of Key Stage 2, although overall standards in writing are below national expectations, some pupils make good use of expressive language in their written work, and show a secure understanding and awareness of the basic rules of grammar. However, for many pupils, writing at anything beyond a basic level of expression continues to present problems, despite the good progress made across the key stage. Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity of writing in a variety of styles and contexts and their work books are clearly a source of pride that they are keen to share with others. The best work shows that pupils are starting to use skills of drafting and editing, and most pupils know how to plan a piece of writing to ensure that the main ideas they wish to convey are presented in sequence. Pupils have some opportunities to use word-processing programmes on the computer to draft and edit their writing, and this is an area of development within the school.
102. Standards in handwriting vary greatly across the key stages, with the best books being neat, tidy and comprehensive. Letter formation is a problem for some pupils in all classes and this slows progress in the development of their handwriting.
103. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and some very good lessons were observed during the inspection. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy in all classes, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The practice of putting pupils into ability groups for English is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning, and is enabling teachers to match work closely to the needs of the pupils. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the National Curriculum and of the National Literacy Strategy, and present their lessons in an enthusiastic and effective manner. They use questions well to support the lower attaining pupils and to extend the thinking of the highest attainers. Marking is often of good quality, especially in the upper part of Key Stage 2, where helpful comments encourage pupils to set targets for their own learning. Where the teaching is inspired, pupils are often motivated to a sense of awe and wonder by the skilful way in which teachers read and tell stories and use poems in their teaching of literacy. Teachers throughout the school enjoy the assistance of a dedicated group of classroom support staff who provide valuable additional support for pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language.

MATHEMATICS

104. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' overall attainment in mathematics is below national expectations at the end of both key stages, although standards are better in the number aspect of the mathematics curriculum than in other aspects. There has been a clear emphasis on raising standards in number work and this has had a positive impact, although pupils' mental recall is still too slow. An unusually high percentage of pupils have special educational needs, and this means that a significant number of pupils in each year group are working at a level which is below the expected level. Furthermore, high levels of pupil mobility have an adverse effect on standards. Despite the low attainment in relation to the national picture, the school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. The vast majority of pupils start from a very low baseline but pupils of all abilities make good, and at times very good, progress. All pupils do as well as they can.
105. The introduction and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant impact upon standards of teaching and learning. Teachers are confident in

their approach, and introductory mental mathematics sessions often move at a rigorous and demanding pace which challenges pupils of all abilities. The school provides a broad mathematics curriculum for all pupils, although there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding by solving problems, and taking part in open-ended investigations. In Key Stage 1 especially, there is an overuse of worksheets in some classes, which constrains pupils' learning.

106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently count forwards and backwards in tens, but their understanding of the concept of 'ten more than' or 'ten less than' a number is less secure. Most pupils work out double numbers up to twelve, but only a very small number of pupils can accurately double larger numbers. Although pupils carry out written calculations using addition and subtraction, they are not confident about working out which operation to use when presented with a problem that is expressed in words. There are currently too few investigational activities which would give pupils the experience of working out practical problems independently, using a variety of different approaches.
107. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a range of basic computational skills which they use with reasonable accuracy in their work, and the majority of pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of number facts and multiplication tables. In general pupils' understanding of place value is secure when using numbers up to one thousand, but they are less secure when working with larger numbers. For example, most Year 6 pupils had difficulty with a task where they were asked to find numbers between thirty-five thousand and thirty-six thousand. Pupils' skill in the application and use of number has progressed well, but few pupils have immediate recall of multiplication tables and number facts, and this makes it difficult for them to solve problems in their heads. Most pupils have difficulty retaining their learning, and are not very confident about investigating number or solving 'real-life' problems. The most able pupils have an appropriate knowledge of the relationship between decimals, fractions and simple percentages, but the lower attaining pupils struggle with numbers that are less than one. Pupils currently do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects of the curriculum.
108. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 have a growing understanding of measurement, and by the end of the key stage are working in standard units of length and capacity, although their knowledge of units of weight is sometimes sketchy. Pupils have a basic knowledge of simple two dimensional shapes and many pupils describe them using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. The highest attaining pupils know some three dimensional shapes, including cone, sphere and cuboid, which they describe in terms of their properties, using a fairly limited vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand reflective symmetry and have found and drawn shapes on which the line of symmetry is identified.
109. By the age of eleven, pupils in Key Stage 2 have a secure knowledge of some aspects of shape and measure, but their experience is relatively narrow. Although they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the properties of a wide range of shapes, they do not have sufficient opportunities for investigation, and this prevents them from drawing generalisations about shapes, such as the relationship between the number of angles and sides. Only the high attaining pupils are secure in identifying and naming angles that are greater than or less than a right angle, and few pupils accurately use the terms obtuse, acute and reflex when describing angles. Pupils have little experience of using co-ordinates for drawing layouts, shapes and patterns. The highest attaining pupils know how to make accurate measurements of weight, length and capacity using standard units, but are not always confident about making estimates.

110. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand the purpose of graphs and tables for displaying information, and have made several graphs of their own from data they have collected. The highest attaining pupils know how to use graphs to find answers to questions. By the age of eleven, pupils effectively use collected data, and analyse and interrogate different types of graphs. During a lesson seen during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were particularly skilled in interpreting line graphs which showed the relationship between time and distance travelled. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of the notion of probability, which they explain in terms of the likelihood of events taking place.
111. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. In more than half of all of the mathematics lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good. The most effective teaching is characterised by lessons that are stimulating, and which move at a brisk pace, seizing the attention and interest of the pupils. Teachers working with low ability groups have to work hard to motivate pupils, but they are often successful in their efforts, and rewarded by the interest the pupils show in their learning. Teachers throughout the school have a secure subject knowledge, which helps them to identify clear learning objectives for the pupils and to explain new concepts effectively. Teachers have good class management skills, and very good relationships with the pupils. The setting of pupils in small ability groups for mathematics lessons has had a very positive impact upon the pupils' learning, as lessons can be more accurately targeted to meet their needs. Teachers give very good support to pupils who have special educational needs, and those for whom English as an additional language, and are particularly flexible in their organisation when pupils from the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit are integrated into their classes. Although there are some opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum, they are at present limited. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the use of information technology to support pupils' development in mathematics.

SCIENCE

112. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were judged to be below the national average. Since then there has been a considerable improvement in the number of pupils achieving the expected level at both key stages, due to an improvement in the quality of teaching, careful analysis of end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results, and the introduction of a clear scheme of work. Nevertheless, attainment in both key stages is still below the national average. This is due partly to the amount of time being allocated to the national initiatives of literacy and numeracy, particularly in Key Stage 1, resulting in a smaller proportion of time being spent on science, and partly to the fact that an unusually high percentage of pupils throughout the school have special educational needs. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress overall, and show a good understanding of their ongoing science work. However, discussions with older pupils in both key stages indicate that many have difficulty in retaining information from previous terms.
113. Since the last inspection, teachers have been providing more opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations and experiments and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, standards in this aspect of the science curriculum are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Although Key Stage 1 pupils have some good practical opportunities, which increase their scientific knowledge and understanding, most pupils have difficulty in explaining their own ideas and presenting information clearly. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils become more confident in making suggestions and offering ideas. They make careful observations, and have a good

understanding of the notion of fair-testing. However, whilst most pupils are able to draw appropriate conclusions from their findings they are not yet confident in devising their own tests. Pupils in both key stages approach practical activities with enthusiasm and enjoy making scientific discoveries.

114. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a secure knowledge of living things, although their recall of their previous learning is sometimes sketchy. Pupils know that both animals and plants are living things and have a variety of needs to keep them healthy and to make them grow. As part of an ongoing topic on healthy eating, younger pupils have tasted carrots, apples and chocolate, and know which of these would help to keep their teeth healthy. By the end of the key stage, most pupils name the parts of a plant, and explain the life cycle of the sunflower from seed to plant, from plant to flower, and from flower back to seed. Pupils have carried out some interesting investigations into the rate at which plants grow under different conditions, and have learned that plants need water, warmth and light for healthy growth. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the requirements for healthy eating. They know the function of their heart and lungs and describe the effects of exercise on their body. They understand that the skeleton is a framework for their body, name the main bones, and explain the purpose of muscles. Pupils understand the stages in the growth of humans, from baby to old age, and know that reproduction is a feature of all living things. Pupils' understanding of food chains is insecure, and they are not sure about the feeding relationship between plants and animals. Pupils classify animals into vertebrates and invertebrates, and this work has raised their awareness of issues relating to conservation and animals that are at risk.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a basic understanding of materials and their properties. Pupils observe changes in substances as they are heated and cooled, noticing that chocolate melts when it is heated but becomes hard again when it is cooled. The highest attaining pupils understand that some changes to materials are permanent, such as burning paper, but not all pupils make the distinction between permanent and reversible changes. Pupils have looked closely at different materials, noting that certain papers crumple or tear more easily than others. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils develop their understanding of materials and how they react. As part of their work on electricity, pupils learn that metal is a good conductor but wood and plastic are not. Pupils successfully classify materials according to whether they are natural or man-made, and look at their suitability for a variety of purposes. Older pupils develop their understanding of materials by testing their suitability in relation to the purpose for which they are intended, and know that factors such as strength, durability, texture, flexibility and colour are important when selecting materials. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils classify materials into solids, liquids and gases and explain the changes made when substances are heated or cooled. They understand the processes of condensation and evaporation, and explain what happens as sugar is dissolved.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of physical processes. They complete simple electrical circuits, understand the function of switches, and know which objects require electricity in order to work and which do not. Pupils have examined the different ways in which things move as part of their work relating to forces, and know that they can pull their tray out of the drawer and push the door closed. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils extend their knowledge of electricity and show a good awareness of the dangers posed by electricity in the home, and in areas such as railway lines. They learn to make more complex electrical circuits and record their findings in diagrammatic form, although most pupils have difficulty explaining what a series circuit is. Pupils have looked at magnets and their use in everyday life, and have made a simple compass. By the end of the key stage, most pupils know how the effects of friction can be reduced, for example, by waxing skis or

using a lubricant in engines. Pupils have a good understanding of the solar system and understand the passage of day and night in terms of the earth spinning on its own axis. They are clear in their explanations of the effect of gravity and know that the gravity of the earth is six times that of the moon. Most pupils are aware that friction differs according to the surface, and can use a Newton meter to measure which surface exerts the greatest friction.

117. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, and has improved since the last inspection. This improvement in teaching is a significant factor in the raising of standards, and in ensuring that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress. A strong feature of the teaching is the management of behaviour. Pupils are sometimes inclined to become over enthusiastic in practical activities, and any potential disruptions are dealt with quickly without interrupting the learning for the rest of the class. Pupils from the emotional and behavioural difficulties unit are well supported to enable them to play as full a part as possible in science lessons. Learning objectives for each lesson are clearly stated to ensure that all pupils are aware of what is expected. Opportunities for assessing pupils' progress are clearly identified and in some classes teachers make brief notes of their observations whilst working with a group. However, in some classes, insufficient use is made of this information to adjust the focus of subsequent lessons. Where teaching is best, lessons are very well organised and activities are suitably practical. In these lessons, teachers make particularly effective use of questions to challenge pupils to think. Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and often good. This helps teachers to enthuse the pupils and captivate their attention. The introductory sessions of most lessons are good, with clear explanations given. Where teaching is less successful, group activities are not as well focussed as they might be, and there is insufficient challenge for the pupils. The plenary sessions at the end of most lessons are used well to share and to evaluate pupils' learning. At present there are not enough opportunities in either key stage for pupils to use information technology to support their learning in science, and the overuse of worksheets in some classes as a means of recording, restricts the opportunities for pupil to extend their independent writing skills.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Pupils' attainment in art is at the expected level at the end of both key stages, and there are some good examples of pupils' work on display in corridors and classrooms. The school recognises the value of art, and the subject is taught regularly in all classes.
119. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are competent painters, and many have a good eye for colour. Pupils know how to create secondary colours by mixing primary colours, and understand that the tone and shade of a colour can be varied by adding a small amount of another colour. Pupils have studied the work of Mondrian, and the computer generated art-work they have produced reflects his style and shows that they have picked out the main features of his work. Pupils' drawing skills are satisfactory, and the highest attaining pupils show good levels of detail in their work. Pupils' cutting and sticking skills are satisfactorily developed, and they have good experience of creating collages using a variety of materials. Although teachers value pupils' work highly, the pupils themselves sometimes show a lack of pride in what they produce, and are too easily satisfied with their first attempts. However, in the Year 2 class where the teacher has extremely high expectations, the pupils take much greater care with their work, and have a greater sense of ownership. This was evident in a lesson seen during the inspection where pupils studying the work of Goldsworthy used pebbles and polished stones to create patterns and designs which were photographed and subsequently transferred to CD ROM.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress in developing their painting skills, and mix colours with confidence. A display of work in Year 3, showing pupils' interpretations of portraits in the style of Picasso, is particularly colourful. Pupils have some experience of printing using objects such as leaves, but have not extended their knowledge of printing techniques by using screens, or by printing on fabric. Pupils' knowledge of well-known artists is limited because their recall of their previous learning is poor and they have no written record of the work of the artists they have studied. However, most pupils recall studying the work of Monet, and know that this artist was an impressionist painter who used his own garden as inspiration for much of his work. Pupils have only limited experience of using three dimensional materials such as clay in their art work, but know and explain the various techniques they used to make coil and thumb pots. Pupils often make very accurate drawings, and a very attractive display by Year 6 pupils of sea-shells shows good attention to detail. Pupils have used a variety of media to capture the shells, including pastels, pencil crayons and charcoal for their drawings, and wool to create three dimensional reproductions. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils have some good opportunities to use computers to support their art-work, and Year 4 pupils have produced some attractive symmetrical designs.
121. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall and ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, the quality of teaching varies too much from class to class, depending on the expertise and enthusiasm of individual teachers. During the inspection an excellent lesson was seen in Year 2, and this was characterised by extremely good subject knowledge, which enabled the teacher to motivate the pupils to produce high quality work. In other classes, activities are not always sufficiently challenging, and teachers are too intent on sticking to the termly plans instead of advancing and accelerating the pupils' learning. The scheme of work for art is effective in guiding teachers' planning, but gives only limited support for those teachers who are not specialists. Although the school has plenty of basic resources, the shortage of specific resources for printing, three dimensional work, and resource material about well-known artists, limits the range of activities that can be given. All pupils have sketch books, and these are potentially useful, especially where they are carefully marked and annotated by teachers. However, in most classes, insufficient use is made of sketch books for preparatory work, and for pupils to practise and refine their skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is below national expectations, and most pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Because of the school's efforts in recent years to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, insufficient time has been allocated to design and technology, and although the subject has now been reintroduced into the school's curriculum, there are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, and they lack some of the basic skills. Although a scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection, there has not been enough improvement in the standards pupils attain. The school does not place enough emphasis on design and technology as a subject in its own right, and it is often regarded by both teachers and pupils as an extension of art or science.
123. Key Stage 1 pupils use a range of materials and tools to make models and by the end of the key stage are competent when cutting, shaping and joining materials. Pupils have access to a variety of commercial construction materials which they use to make scale models and which promote their use of manipulative skills. Although pupils sometimes achieve satisfactory standards in terms of their making skills, their breadth of experience is very limited. They have little access to materials other than paper and card, and do not

have the necessary practice in using tools such as saws, drills and hammers. Pupils have some experience of food technology, and understand the importance of working in hygienic conditions. Pupils' knowledge of the design process is poor, and they do not understand the purpose of initial designs and plans, nor are they confident about evaluating their finished products.

124. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have used wood, clay, paper and fabric for their making activities but have little recall of the special characteristics of these materials. They make moving and static artefacts and models and have experience of the use of wheels and axles. When making models they gain some insights into the use of strengthening techniques such as angle and corner supports and learn that it is possible to incorporate electric motors into their designs. However, too much emphasis is placed on pupils producing similar end products, rather than investigating alternative possibilities, and this constrains the creativity of the most imaginative pupils. In making models, for example, wheels tend to be ready made and of similar size, axles are pre-cut, angled corner pieces are pre-formed. When making models of Tudor Houses, pupils all work from pre-existing drawings or templates, and this practice does not give pupils enough experience of working on their own designs and plans. Whilst older pupils are familiar with the idea of evaluation, they are given too few opportunities to practise the skill, and do not make enough links between the finished products and the initial designs.
125. There are weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology arising from the inadequate amount of time given to the subject, and the lack of emphasis placed on the designing and evaluating processes. Teachers' planning is guided by a scheme of work, but it does not provide enough guidance for those teachers who lack confidence and subject expertise. The range of experiences provided for pupils in both key stages is insufficiently broad, and does not enable pupils to systematically develop the necessary knowledge and skills as they move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

126. Pupils' attainment in geography is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages and abilities make satisfactory progress from a very low starting point, and achieve their best. Most pupils have few first-hand experiences on which to draw, and their geographical knowledge is based almost entirely on their immediate locality.
127. Key Stage 1 pupils draw simple maps and plans, and have an appreciation of the purpose of maps for recording directions and showing important features and landmarks. The highest attaining pupils make a distinction between manmade and natural geographical features, and describe those they pass on their journey to school. In discussions about the weather, the pupils confidently use words like sunny, rainy, misty and windy to describe the conditions they have observed, but only a few pupils draw conclusions from their observations, for example, by linking clouds to the onset of rain. The pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their own area, and talk about the 'old' and 'new' towns. They do not, however, have knowledge of other towns or areas. The higher attaining pupils are starting to talk about the local environment and things that they like and dislike. Some of this work raises their awareness of moral and social issues, such as the pollution caused by litter.
128. In Key Stage 2 the pupils build on the knowledge they have acquired earlier. They have a growing understanding of maps and use co-ordinates to identify main features. Their understanding of water and rivers is particularly good, and by the end of the key stage, pupils confidently explain the effects of water erosion on limestone. When discussing

rivers, pupils talk knowledgeably about meanders and explain how ox-bow lakes are formed. Environmental issues are understood satisfactorily by the pupils, for example, the implications of cutting down large numbers of trees in the tropical rainforest, but their knowledge of other areas of the world is limited and pupils cannot compare their life with that of people in the developing world.

129. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and the recent introduction of a scheme of work is ensuring that pupils' learning is systematically built upon. Currently however, insufficient time is allocated to the subject, and this means that some of the topics are covered at a superficial level. The school's proposed plans to combine geography with history and religious education under the umbrella of humanities will further reduce the subject's status within the school. Lessons are well planned, and teachers give clear explanations enabling pupils to know what is expected of them. Teachers encourage pupils to develop observational skills, and try to extend pupils' geographical vocabulary, which is often very limited.

HISTORY

130. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school is successfully adapting its scheme of work to reflect the new national curriculum guidelines, but the subject is in danger of losing its individual identity, and its fair share of curriculum time, if the school continues with its plans to combine it with religious education and geography, under the wider umbrella of humanities. At present, there is an appropriate programme of designated topics for each class to study.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are satisfactory. Pupils have an appropriate recollection of what they have learned. They understand how things change with the passage of time and have a growing awareness of the difference between the recent past and the long-ago past. Most pupils understand that the world was very different at the time when there were dinosaurs. They are aware of the changes since their grandparents were children, and talk about some of the differences between then and now by comparing how toys and things in the home have changed. Pupils in Year 2 recall the impact of some famous historical figures such as Florence Nightingale. They know why she was called the 'lady of the lamp', and this work has given them an understanding of the devastating effects of war. Pupils' ability to carry out simple historical research is weak, partly because of their limited literacy skills, and also because there is an overuse of worksheets in some classes which constrains pupils' learning, and prevents them from finding things out for themselves.
132. By the end of key Stage 2, overall standards continue to be satisfactory. Pupils build upon the knowledge they gained in earlier classes, and have a better sense of chronology and a broader knowledge. Teachers of the older pupils offer good opportunity and scope for pupils to gain insight into the past, and this has a positive impact on pupils' historical understanding. Through their studies of World War 2 pupils have gained empathy with the plight of the evacuees, and know which countries were fighting at that time. The higher attaining pupils show some understanding of the notion of cause and effect, and appreciate that the outcome of battles and wars often had an important impact on the course of history. As part of a topic linked to the Victorians, pupils write letters to a friend about a day in a Victorian school and respond to questions by relating the experiences of a young chimney sweep. Some good homework activities linked to this topic promoted pupils' historical research skills as they interviewed older people about their experiences as children. Other topics, such as, the Romans, Greeks, Ancient Egyptians and several others are studied elsewhere in the school, and give pupils the

opportunity to consider the effect on Great Britain of the invaders and settlers. Field trips organised by the staff, for example to Cuffley Camp, enable pupils to learn from 'living history' about life in a Celtic village. These and other similar opportunities, such as an overnight stay in the British Museum's Egyptology department, enable pupils to gain lasting first-hand experiences, which make an invaluable contribution to their learning.

133. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and some good teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers use questions well to promote pupils' thinking, and to consolidate their learning. Pupils of all ages and abilities are appropriately challenged, and given the support they need. In the best lessons, teachers successfully promote pupils' historical enquiry skills by encouraging them to carry out research, to make notes, to consider artefacts, and to draw conclusions. In some lessons, however, there is an overuse of worksheets which constrains pupils' learning, and prevents them from developing their literacy skills. Some use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning, especially for research, but this is an aspect of pupils' learning that could be developed even further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Standards have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection, and recent developments have had a remarkable impact on pupils' learning. The subject is an ongoing priority in the school development plan, and is given a high profile in the school. The setting up of a well-equipped computer suite has enhanced pupils' learning, and has made it easier for teachers to ensure that pupils learn the necessary basic skills. Pupils make good progress, but there are still some gaps in the learning of older pupils, whose previous experience of information technology has been limited. At present, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' work in other subjects, with the exception of art, where pupils make good use of a range of programmes to produce designs, patterns and pictures.
135. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use information and communication technology to communicate simple ideas through words and most effectively through pictures. Pupils create attractive pictures, for example, in the style of Matisse and Mondrian, and younger pupils successfully make town plans, selecting and placing appropriate symbols. Pupils' mouse control is good, but their keyboard skills are poor, and this slows them down in their work. Most pupils know simple editing functions, and copy text accurately, but are hesitant when entering their own text. Pupils lack opportunities to practise their skills regularly, and some pupils lack confidence. With adult support, pupils create graphs to present information, and Year 2 pupils recently used graphs to show the comparison between their favourite television programs and those of their parents when they were young. Pupils independently control the tape recorder in the listening corner, but have little experience of other aspects of control technology such as planning instructions, or giving directions to programmable toys, for example.
136. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are well aware of the facilities of graphics packages and produce pictures using a range of tools. They confidently enter text, select font styles and lay out pages, but their keyboard skills are still very slow. Pupils know that data can be presented as graphs, and have produced some good examples after conducting traffic surveys. Most pupils know how to enter information into prepared databases and how to retrieve information, and during the inspection, some pupils followed instructions to set up fields to record information they had researched on Tudor monarchs. A few pupils have used the Internet to find information, for example, about

Band Aid concerts, but most have little experience of e-mail. Pupils program a floor robot to draw shapes and apply their knowledge to a screen turtle. Some have progressed to using repeat commands, but most pupils have not reached this stage in their learning. Pupils' experience of monitoring is limited, and few demonstrate the higher order data-handling and modelling skills.

137. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and is improving all the time as teachers become more confident and competent. The curriculum is now secure and offers proper progression and continuity in pupils' learning. During the inspection, the teaching of information and communication technology in the computer room was often good. Learning objectives are appropriate and lessons have a clear structure and a good pace. Staff are now willing to undertake whole class teaching of information and communication technology, and this enables skills to be taught effectively. The use of information and communication technology in the classrooms is less well developed. Although computers are available in all classrooms, they are not used sufficiently regularly to support other subject areas, and pupils do not get enough practice of basic keyboard skills. Teachers set good examples by using information and communication technology to make resources and to enhance lessons.

MUSIC

138. Pupils' attainment in music is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Over the past few years, because of the justifiable emphasis placed by the school on raising standards in English, mathematics and science, music has not been developed, and teachers lack confidence and subject expertise. The scheme of work which supports teachers' planning is satisfactory, but does not provide enough help for non-specialists, and some of the teaching material is unimaginative and insufficiently challenging. The range, quantity and quality of instruments are unsatisfactory and prevent full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. There are insufficient tuned and ethnic instruments, and many of the untuned instruments are in a poor state of repair. The school has recently employed a part-time music specialist who is working with pupils from both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. His input is already starting to have a positive impact on standards, and pupils respond well to the level of challenge in his lessons. Pupils do not have music books in which to record aspects of their learning, and this makes it difficult for them to recall what they have previously learned.
139. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing enthusiastically, but not always tunefully. They are slow to pick up new songs, and some pupils have difficulty articulating the lyrics. Most pupils have a satisfactory sense of rhythm, and accurately copy short and simple clapping patterns. During the inspection, when pupils were asked to compose music to represent the 'Three Little Pigs' building their houses, few pupils approached the task with any real sense of purpose, and for most this was an experimental session enabling them to become familiar with the sounds made by the various percussion instruments. Most Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively to extracts of recorded music, and sustain good levels of concentration. When listening to 'Peter and the Wolf', pupils quickly picked out the distinctive motifs for the cat and the grandfather, and enjoyed responding to the music through movement. Pupils' recall of music they have previously appraised is poor, and few pupils understand the notion of a composer.
140. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing in two parts, but are sometimes unsuccessful in maintaining their own part when listening to the other part. Pupils enjoy singing, but have difficulty maintaining pitch, especially when there is no accompaniment. Pupils whose reading skills are below average are slow to learn new songs, and some pupils in all year groups have difficulty articulating words when the pace of the song is fast. In key stage

assemblies, most pupils sing hymns with good levels of enthusiasm, but a minority of pupils do not take an active part, and staff are not sufficiently demanding in terms of ensuring full participation from all pupils. Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy composing music, but they lack experience of this aspect of the music curriculum, and the pieces they compose are often very short and a little unimaginative. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good understanding of the need for notation to record their compositions, and in a lesson seen during the inspection, pupils successfully used graphical notation to record the rhythm and pitch of the pieces they had composed. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to compose more complex pieces, using the pentatonic scale for example, nor are they aware of devices such as drones and ostinato patterns. Although pupils really enjoy listening to recorded music, their recall is poor, and they have little knowledge of composers or of different musical styles. There are missed opportunities for developing pupils' cultural understanding through listening to music from different styles, countries and traditions.

141. Although the teaching of music in the lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, and good when lessons were taught by the part-time specialist, there are weaknesses in the teaching of music which are leading to below average standards and limited progress for the pupils as they move through the school. Individual lessons are always well prepared and contain clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. However, the format and content of lessons are too tightly prescribed by the termly planning, and teachers do not have the confidence to deviate from the planned programme of work, even when they have doubts about the relevance and quality of the proposed activities. Some lessons lack interest and challenge and do not promote pupils' learning. Insufficient time is allocated for music and this means that the National Curriculum programmes of study can not be covered in enough depth.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations, and standards in swimming are good throughout the school. Pupils' attainment is similar to what it was at the time of the last inspection. The school places great importance on physical education, and allocates an appropriate amount of time to the subject. However, the current practice of allocating three short lessons to each class, rather than two longer sessions, poses some organisational problems, as too much time is lost whilst pupils change their clothes, and the lessons are then sometimes extremely short. Pupils are offered a number of after school activities, which include netball, cricket, basketball and gymnastics. The school is also involved in a programme of competitive games and matches with other local schools, and these opportunities have a very positive impact on the development of pupils' social skills.
143. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils appropriately link a short sequence of two or three gymnastic movements together. They evaluate their work carefully, and try hard to make improvements. Pupils travel in a number of ways, by jumping, crawling and sliding on their backs or fronts, and they make thoughtful stretched and curled shapes on the floor and apparatus. Pupils know how to make safe and controlled landings when jumping from platforms and benches, and their final positions following a jump are usually well balanced. Most pupils demonstrate good levels of co-ordination in their work, but some pupils in all year groups have difficulty controlling their movements. Key Stage 1 pupils have some good opportunities to learn dance movements and to express their own ideas when listening to music. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils were taught the steps of a Muslim dance by an expert in this field. The pupils responded very positively and their movements were fluid and mostly well controlled. This activity successfully raised the pupils' awareness of other cultures and they were most respectful when responding to

the teacher. In ball games, most pupils bounce and catch balls of various sizes across an appropriate distance, and the majority have good hand to eye co-ordination.

144. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with national expectations. In lessons pupils know about the effect of physical activity upon their bodies, and appreciate the need to warm up before exercise. Most move with control in gymnastics, and use rolls and jumps to effectively link sequences of movements together. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate good symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes in their gymnastics work, but some pupils are not as proficient, and their work is not as imaginative or refined. In a Year 6 games lesson seen during the inspection, most pupils accurately threw and caught a ball. They practise rudimentary rules of defence, by shadowing and marking their partners, and show a good team spirit and an awareness of the rules of the game.
145. The provision for swimming is good. All pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 have free access to swimming lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils swim at least the recommended twenty-five metres, and almost half swim considerably further than this. In addition, most have learned to dive, and several pupils use a number of different strokes, including crawl, breaststroke and butterfly. Although the provision for swimming is good, the organisation poses some problems, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils are taken to the swimming baths in groups, and this disrupts the normal timetable, as throughout the designated morning, pupils are leaving or returning to their lessons.
146. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers plan lessons well, but there are times when they do not advance pupils' learning as quickly as they should, because they are too concerned about sticking to the planned termly programme. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject, and move lessons along at a brisk pace. Where the best teaching occurs, teachers give good demonstrations, and work alongside pupils, giving them advice about how to improve their work. Some teachers are particularly keen to provide opportunities for pupils to perform their movements to their classmates, and to evaluate their own performances and those of others. These opportunities help pupils to focus on the key teaching and learning points of that session, and enable them to see how their work might be improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. Pupils' attainment in religious education is below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. The subject is currently not given the status of a core subject, and insufficient time is allocated to enable full coverage of the programmes of study. There are occasions when teachers do not make enough distinction in their planning between religious education lessons and personal, social and health education lessons. There have been significant improvements in the subject since the last inspection. A new scheme of work is being implemented and the quality of planning is more consistent than it was. Pupils' recent progress has been uneven, but it is now more consistent and is satisfactory overall.
148. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the basic features of Christianity. They explain clearly how babies are welcomed into the Christian community at Baptism. A visit to the parish church has had a considerable impact on the pupils, and this first-hand experience has enabled them to recall many features such as the font, the altar and the lectern. Most pupils recognise that symbols have meaning and know that the cross is a symbol of Christianity. Pupils know a few religious stories from the Old Testament, such as Noah, and some parables from the New Testament, but their understanding of the

underlying messages is weak, and they do not connect the stories with Christian beliefs. Pupils are uncertain about other world faiths, and their knowledge and understanding are limited. They are positive in their attitudes to religion and feel that religious beliefs will help them to lead a good life.

149. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know the main events in the life of Christ and understand His role as a teacher and leader. They recognise some well-known figures from the Old Testament. Pupils know that religions differ and recognise there are some similarities such as belief in one God. They recognise Buddha as a religious leader, and know of the respect Buddhists give to all forms of life. Pupils are not familiar with all of the world faiths stipulated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and have no recent experience of visits to places of worship or interaction with representatives of other faiths. Older pupils are aware of some of the more difficult features of faith such as resurrection and reincarnation, but their knowledge is not sufficiently secure to allow them to make comparisons and connections.
150. Key Stage 2 pupils recognise the value of religious education and the impact it has on the lives of many people. When required, they compose prayers and interpret religious language into their own words. Pupils know that in religion the teaching of complicated ideas is conveyed in a variety of ways, for example through visual images like stained glass windows. They know that there are many stories that carry a moral, and understand what a moral is, but are not confident in giving examples. Because pupils' knowledge of religion is weak, this impinges on their ability to apply their knowledge and to gain understanding from religion.
151. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and in most of the lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good, with most teachers displaying confident subject knowledge. However, there are weaknesses in teaching, which are linked to the lack of time allocated to the subject, and insufficient opportunities for pupils to record their work. The lack of written records makes it difficult for pupils to recall, and therefore build upon, their previous learning. Religious education lessons are generally well paced, and teachers make effective use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking. Most teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and try hard to present activities in a way which will make pupils reach their own conclusions, but in some lessons, there is a lack of inspiration and purpose to the teaching. Pupils of all ages are offered a broad range of experiences including dance, drama and art, and during the inspection, the valuable contribution of a specialist in religious dance provided an additional dimension to the subject, and raised pupils' awareness of other faiths. At present, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.