

INSPECTION REPORT

St John's Church of England Primary School

Lemsford Village, Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117435

Headteacher: Mr R Archibald

Reporting inspector: Carole Skinner
23160

Dates of inspection: 18th-20th September 2000

Inspection number: 224842

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lemsford Village Welwyn Garden City Herts
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, St John's CEP School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Ingamells
Date of previous inspection:	8 th October 1996

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Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Carole Skinner 23160	Registered inspector	English Art Music	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Helen Griffiths 9446	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Alan Britton 10808	Team inspector	Science Geography History Children aged under five Equal opportunities	
Bob Lever 16492	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's School educates boys and girls aged four to 11. The school has 98 pupils on roll. This is smaller than most other schools of the same type. There are now 32 more pupils than at the time of the school's last OFSTED inspection. There are nine full-time pupils in the Reception year. There are four more boys than girls on roll. About two per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Approximately ten per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The school has 31 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. During the last school year, seven pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission and two pupils left it other than at the usual time of leaving or transfer. This represents a low degree of mobility amongst the pupils in this school. Children generally enter the school at average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that compares very favourably with other similar schools. The pupils achieve very well and attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science. The leadership and management of the school are of very high quality and have brought about considerable improvement in the school since its previous inspection. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and enables pupils to make very good progress in their learning. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very high standards in English, mathematics and science compared with pupils in similar schools in the national tests for 11 year olds.
- The quality of teaching is good in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes and this enables pupils to make very good progress in their learning.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors promotes a happy school in which there is a shared commitment to high standards and excellent relationships between all adults and pupils.
- The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are very good and greatly assist their learning.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and pupils make good progress in these areas of their education.
- The school works very effectively with parents, who value the school highly and support their children's learning very well.

What could be improved

- The provision of a fenced area to improve outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Reception year.
- The use of the library to develop pupils' independent research skills.
- The resources and facilities to teach gymnastics and dance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1996 and, since then, it has made a very good improvement and has an excellent capacity to continue to improve. The key issues identified by that inspection have been addressed very well. For example, the quality of teaching, which had some serious shortcomings,

is now good, with much that is very good. The improved quality of teaching is reflected in the higher standards achieved by the pupils. For example, standards in mathematics have improved considerably from the national average to being well above it. The leadership and management of the school are also much improved. For example, there is now rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, which was a weakness in the last inspection. Governors are much more actively involved in monitoring the curriculum and the standards achieved by the pupils.

STANDARDS

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

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

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The information shows that standards in English and science have been much higher than in other schools for the past two years. In mathematics, standards are less consistent, but still better than in other schools. Overall, pupils achieve very well. The school has set demanding targets to maintain or improve standards in the national tests for 11 year olds. These were exceeded in the most recent national tests. Although the results of the tests in 2000 are still unconfirmed, they show that 92 per cent of the pupils reached expected standards in all three subjects. A high proportion of pupils exceeded these standards, especially in mathematics and science. The findings of this inspection agree with the school's test results in English and science, and judge standards to be well above average, both for pupils in Year 6 and in Year 2. In mathematics, standards are also well above average, which shows an improvement on the 1999 test results. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Pupils attain very good standards in literacy and numeracy. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good, and their reading and writing skills are very good. In mathematics, pupils are very adept at using a range of mental calculation strategies and, in science, their investigative skills are particularly well developed. By Year 6, pupils achieve high standards in history. They also achieve well in swimming and in communicating and handling information using computers. Pupils throughout the school achieve good standards in art and very good standards in singing. In other subjects, standards are similar to those found in most schools.

Children in the Reception class are on course to exceed expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of learning they are on course to meet the targets that have been set nationally for children to achieve by the end of the Reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are interested in all they do and are keen to do their best. They work hard and take a pride in their work, which helps them to make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons, in assembly, around the school and in the playground. They are helpful, courteous and considerate to others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils take responsibility with enthusiasm and show independence and reliability.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and unauthorised absence is well below. Only a few pupils are late for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Thirty per cent of the teaching observed during the inspection was very good or better and all of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is very good. The teaching is of a consistently high quality and meets the needs of all pupils very well. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach, and impart basic skills to the pupils very effectively. They have high expectations of the standards that pupils can achieve and manage them very well. Teachers' planning is of a consistently high standard, takes good account of the diverse needs of pupils in mixed-age classes and is informed by the very good assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress.

Throughout the school, pupils of all ages and levels of attainment work very hard and make very good progress. They respond positively to the challenge which is presented to them, apply considerable effort to their work and sustain concentration very well. They work at a good pace and produce good amounts of high quality work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular provision is good and helps the pupils to make very good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. It is planned very well to ensure that pupils of different ages in the same class have equal access to the curriculum and caters well for the differing needs and interests of boys and girls.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are thorough and effective. Pupils are well supported with appropriate work. They make very good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. Good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Each of these aspects is integral to the life and work of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils well. There are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance, behaviour and personal development. Very good assessment procedures are used consistently by all teachers and the information gained is used very well to guide teachers in their planning.

The school's very effective partnership with parents makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good, purposeful leadership and is ably supported by his deputy, who sets a very fine example, both in the classroom and as a curriculum leader. Other teachers have developed very good management qualities in a short time as a result of this very good leadership and the effective delegation of responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors are very well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to ensuring its continuing improvement. They make a very effective contribution to the management of the school and support the headteacher and staff very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a thorough knowledge of the school's performance and takes effective steps to address any weaknesses. Staff and governors are very involved in monitoring the quality of education offered by the school and the standards achieved by the pupils. Their evaluation of the school's performance determines the priorities in the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	The school's resources are used very well to promote the pupils' learning. Curricular developments are carefully costed and planned over a three year period. The governors have very good strategies for ensuring that they obtain

	best value and for evaluating the cost effectiveness of spending decisions.
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The school has an adequate number of teaching and support staff who are well qualified. The accommodation is satisfactory, overall, but it has some drawbacks. There is no fenced area for children in the Reception class to use as an outdoor classroom and the hall is too small for effective teaching of dance and gymnastics. The library is underused to develop pupils' research skills. Resources in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are good. They are satisfactory in all other subjects, except in gymnastics.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children. • The school is well managed and led. • The teaching is good. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The school works closely with them and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that their children receive too much homework. • A minority of parents are dissatisfied with the range of activities that are provided for pupils outside lessons.

The findings of the inspection support the very positive views of the majority of parents. They also show that the amount of homework provided by the school is not excessive and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The school offers a good range of extracurricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The pupils at St John's School attain very high standards and their achievements are very good. The pupils' results in the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 were above average in mathematics and well above average in English and science when compared with all schools throughout the country. Standards in mathematics were higher than those achieved by pupils in similar schools, whilst in English and science they were much higher. The results of the most recent national tests in 2000, though as yet unconfirmed, show that very high standards have been maintained in English and science, whilst in mathematics, there has been a significant improvement. The school exceeded its own targets in English and mathematics in 2000 and has set challenging targets for 2001. The pupils' results have improved steadily over the past four years in line with the national trend. The most notable improvement has been in the proportion of higher achieving pupils who exceed expected standards by the age of 11. Girls generally do better than boys in the national tests, especially in English. The school is addressing this situation well by ensuring that texts and topics for study are chosen carefully to match the interests of both girls and boys. No significant differences in attainment between boys and girls were observed during the inspection.

2. The findings of the inspection are that in Year 6, pupils are on course to achieve standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This is in line with the results of the 1999 national tests in English and science, and shows an improvement in mathematics. This improvement has come about as a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and teaching of high quality. Pupils achieve consistently high standards in literacy and numeracy. In information and communication technology, pupils achieve average standards overall, though in communicating and handling information standards are above average. In art, pupils do better than expected for their age and achieve good standards in painting, drawing, collage, textiles and three-dimensional work. They also achieve good standards in history as they increase their understanding of life in different times and places through skilful evaluation of evidence. Pupils attain exceptional standards in singing as a result of excellent teaching. It was not possible to judge standards in other aspects of music. In design and technology and geography, pupils attain average standards by the age of 11. In physical education, standards are above average in swimming, as nearly all pupils are able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Pupils achieve average standards in games. It was not possible to make judgements about other aspects of physical education as none were seen during the inspection. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved in information and communication technology, art and design and technology as a result of better teaching and improved curricular planning. Improved resources have also contributed to higher standards in information and communication technology.

3. In English, standards have improved significantly in speaking and listening. They were unsatisfactory at the time of the previous OFSTED inspection and are now good. This is because pupils are now given very good opportunities to develop speaking skills across the curriculum and in extracurricular special events. Pupils are encouraged to express opinions, explain how they work things out and present their ideas or findings to a group or to the whole class. They also make presentations in assemblies and take part in concerts and dramatic activities, where they perform to an audience of parents and members of the local community.

4. Standards in reading and writing have also continued to rise and are now well above average. The school has introduced very effective strategies to raise the attainment of pupils with special educational

needs and that of higher achieving pupils, and the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well. There has also been a clear focus on improving boys' attainment by ensuring that work is matched to their interests. Pupils make very good progress in reading as a result of very good teaching. They read a wide range of texts confidently, accurately and with understanding. They discuss style, character, technique and the writer's use of language and are able to infer and deduce ideas and information from a close study of the text. Pupils make very good progress in developing writing skills, often producing work of a very high standard. They increase their ability to write interesting and varied prose and poetry, using language evocatively to express their thoughts. Pupils generally have a good grasp of spelling and punctuation rules and grammatical conventions.

5. There has been a marked improvement in standards in mathematics since the last inspection, when they were judged to be in line with national standards. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the highly effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy have brought about this rise in standards. Provisional results of the national tests in 2000 show that almost all pupils achieved the level expected of 11 year olds and over half exceeded it. Pupils use and explain their mental strategies well. They convert percentages to fractions, divide numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands and know how to use a decimal point. They construct common two-dimensional shapes and identify rotational and bilateral symmetry. Pupils collect data and use a range of graphs to display it. They make good use of information and communication technology in data handling and use a spreadsheet when investigating holiday budgets.

6. Standards in science are also higher than they were four years ago. Almost all pupils achieve nationally expected standards and over half exceed these. Pupils carry out a range of experiments and investigations and draw conclusions from their observations that are consistent with their previous knowledge and understanding. They know that some experiments need to be repeated if conclusions are uncertain. Pupils show a good understanding of the functions of the major organs of the body and use correct scientific names for them. Pupils recognise and understand the difference between reversible and non-reversible changes. They understand the principle of a fair test and use this knowledge well when they experiment with a torch to observe the effect of light through transparent, translucent and opaque materials.

7. In art, pupils in Years 5 and 6 arrange a selection of artefacts imaginatively to form a still life composition. They appraise each other's compositions, making perceptive and constructive comments to help each other improve. In design and technology, pupils understand how to generate a number of ideas to produce a final design that meets the requirements of the task and evaluate their work as it develops. In geography, pupils use their knowledge of rivers and the water cycle to identify physical and human patterns and how changes and adaptations are made. In history, they show a good knowledge and understanding of the changes from 1930 to 1960, and the influence of the war on development, including the need for and growth of new towns, such as Welwyn Garden City, after the war. In information and communication technology, pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet to find out information and combine text and graphics in interesting ways to present information. In music, pupils sing with enthusiasm and achieve very high standards of performance. In physical education, pupils sustain energetic activity over suitable periods of time and show they understand the effect of exercise on their bodies.

8. By the age of seven, pupils also achieve very high standards. The pupils' results in the national tests for seven year olds in 1999 were well above average in reading and mathematics, and very high in writing when compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools. The results of the national tests in 2000 are still provisional, but they show that all of the pupils in Year 2 reached at least the level expected of seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and writing, just under a third achieved higher than the expected level, and in mathematics, just under a half. The pupils' results

have been erratic over the past four years but have steadily improved to their current high level since a dip in 1998.

9. The findings of the inspection are that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average. These findings are broadly in line with the school's results in the 1999 national tests and assessments. Pupils attain above average standards in art and average standards in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography and history. It was not possible to make overall judgements about attainment in music or physical education, although standards in singing are very good. Since the school's previous inspection, standards have improved in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science and art.

10. In Year 2, pupils attain good standards in speaking and listening. They listen attentively to teachers and to each other and express ideas, thoughts and opinions clearly, drawing on a varied vocabulary. Pupils respond readily to teachers' questions in class discussions. Standards in reading are very good. Pupils read a variety of texts with expression and accuracy. They use their knowledge of sounds and word building techniques to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils talk freely about their favourite books and why they like them. They achieve very good standards in writing, showing good awareness of sentence construction, punctuation and spelling rules. Written work is often imaginative and well organised and handwriting is neat and well formed.

11. In mathematics, standards are well above average. Pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and understand the place value of numbers up to 100. They show a good understanding of odd and even numbers, both individually and within a sequence. Pupils identify most two-dimensional shapes and are able to identify half and quarter hour times. Most pupils measure accurately using standard units like centimetres. They collect data and use simple tables, charts and graphs to communicate their findings. All pupils are developing the ability to explain how they make mental calculations. In science, standards are also well above average. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of what makes a 'fair test' when carrying out experiments. Most pupils use their sound knowledge and understanding of life processes when differentiating between living and non-living things like 'animals' and 'not animals'. They use the school grounds to identify ways in which an animal is suited to its environment, by comparing creatures that live in the pond with creatures that live in the spinney. They know that some changes in materials are reversible and some are not, and they understand that some substances dissolve in water.

12. In art, pupils make careful observations of musical instruments, and represent what they see with a good eye for detail, using shading carefully to produce a realistic picture. In design and technology, they select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various materials and ingredients in different ways. In geography, pupils express opinions on features of their own locality which they consider to be attractive or unattractive. In history, pupils show a sound understanding and factual knowledge of major events of the past, such as the Great Fire of London. In information and communication technology, pupils show appropriate knowledge of the keyboard and use the mouse confidently and competently. In music, pupils sing with enthusiasm and represent sounds with pictures. In physical education, they move with appropriate control and co-ordination in a confined space.

13. Children generally enter the school at average standards of attainment. The results of tests administered to children in their first term at school show that their attainment on entry has fallen over the past four years. At the time of the previous inspection, it was above average. The nine children in the Reception class had only been in school for eight days at the time of this inspection and were judged to be achieving average standards for their age in all areas of learning. An analysis of the work done by pupils in the previous year's Reception class indicated that they had reached above average standards by the end of the year, which indicates that they made good progress in their learning during

their first year in school. On the limited evidence available at this early stage in the year, the findings of the inspection are that children in the Reception class are on course to achieve the goals that have been set nationally for children to achieve by the end of the Reception year in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are on course to exceed expected standards. They are beginning to form good, trusting relationships with adults and other children, which helps them to develop confidence. They take turns, share equipment fairly and are beginning to understand the need for a code of good behaviour to enable them to work harmoniously. Children listen to stories attentively and recall the main events and characters. They hear and say the initial sound in some words and some can write letters correctly. They enjoy number songs and rhymes, and can trace numbers up to five in the air with their fingers. Several can count everyday objects and toys up to ten and a few are able to order numbers up to ten. Children show interest in investigating their surroundings and notice differences between features of the school environment. They build with construction equipment and perform simple operations on the computer. They move with control and co-ordination and are beginning to show an awareness of the space around them. Most have the ability to run, hop and skip and can work with a partner in rolling a ball to each other. Children sing simple, familiar songs and tap out repeated rhythms. They engage in imaginative play and express their ideas through drawing and painting.

14. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their earlier attainment and make very good progress in their learning. The school uses a variety of assessment data from teachers and standardised tests to inform target-setting procedures in pupils' individual education plans. As a result of clearly identified targets and focused teaching, pupils make sufficient progress so that almost all reach expected standards by the time they leave the school.

15. Throughout the school, all pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. They reach standards that reflect their potential. Pupils are given demanding work which requires them to apply effort and think for themselves in order to succeed. They respond positively to the challenge and work hard to achieve very good results.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Relationships in school are excellent, between pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good. These are important strengths of the school and have a very positive effect on learning. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when some younger pupils were found to lack respect for adults. Parents are very happy with the attitudes and values promoted by the school.

17. Pupils are keen to attend school and expect to work hard. They listen very well to their teachers, and concentrate very well and are eager to participate in discussions. They are enthusiastic learners and co-operate very well with each other. Pupils take pride in their achievements and can apply what they know to new work. They show initiative and enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning. They are very supportive of one another. Pupils are keen to join in the life of the school and the level of participation in extracurricular activities is good.

18. Throughout the school behaviour is very good, in lessons, assemblies and at play times. Pupils are polite to adults and are considerate of the feelings and values of others. They treat resources carefully and respect their environment. Pupils understand the rules and feel that they are treated fairly. Boys and girls work very well together and older pupils help younger ones. There is no evidence of bullying of any kind and there have been no exclusions in recent years.

19. Pupils undertake responsibility in school very willingly and there are many good opportunities for them to do so. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Even the youngest pupils undertake a variety of tasks. Older pupils look after new pupils and paired reading offers them good opportunities for social development. Teamwork is developed very well on annual school residential trips and on visits. Pupils are confident about approaching teachers and other adults. Children in the Reception class make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and quickly develop confidence and trusting relationships with adults and other children. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in their personal development as a result of the good provision that is made for them.

20. Attendance is satisfactory. The slight drop in attendance since the previous inspection is due to parents taking their children out of school for family holidays. The unauthorised absence rate is below the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching and learning is good when judged on a whole-school basis, but there are variations between different parts of the school and between subjects, which are explained below. During the inspection, 33 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was excellent in six per cent, very good in 24 per cent, good in 52 per cent and satisfactory in 18 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of learning reflected these figures very closely. The quality of teaching seen represents a significant improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection when only 20 per cent of the teaching was judged to be good or better, and 24 per cent was unsatisfactory. Since that time, there has been a complete change of staff and rigorous monitoring procedures have been introduced to ensure that the quality of teaching and the quality of the pupils' learning are checked regularly. There is a much greater consistency in the way teachers manage pupils' behaviour and their expectations of the pupils are higher. Teachers also provide pupils with more opportunities to develop independence and personal responsibility. Teachers and assistants work very closely together as a team, sharing ideas and expertise, and all are committed to finding ways to improve their practice. An example of excellence is the teaching of singing, where the teacher's very good level of expertise is communicated very well to the pupils through highly effective teaching methods that result in pupils achieving very high standards.

22. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Reception year is satisfactory. No judgement was made in the previous inspection. At the time of this inspection, there were nine children in the Reception year, who had been in school for eight days, as had their newly appointed teacher. The children are taught in a class with 12 Year 1 pupils. Six lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these, half were good and half were satisfactory. In the lessons where good teaching was seen, children made good progress in developing their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In the lessons that developed communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills, the teaching was good because it was planned well to meet the needs of the Reception pupils within a mixed-age class. The teacher and classroom assistant worked effectively together to support different groups of pupils and to ensure a good quality of learning through talking to them and asking questions that developed their understanding. In lessons that developed the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, the teacher planned interesting first hand experiences for the children that made learning relevant to them. Where teaching was satisfactory, in lessons that promoted the children's creative and physical development, the teaching was not as well matched to the children's needs and was sometimes pitched too high and sometimes too low for some children. The teacher was still getting to know the children and their capabilities in those areas of learning.

23. In a good literacy lesson, the teacher modified the format of the literacy hour well and planned activities that met the widely differing needs of the children in the class. She provided an interesting assortment of ‘props’ in a story sack to help one group act out the story of the *Owl Babies* that they had just listened to. She participated in their imaginative play by asking them questions that developed their language and communication skills, as well as assessing their understanding of the story. In the whole-class session at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher used effective strategies to teach children the initial sound ‘t’ and encouraged them to suggest words that begin with this sound. The classroom assistant then took a group of children on a ‘sound walk’, using make-believe magnifying glasses to spot objects beginning with ‘t’. The classroom assistant showed a good understanding of the need to say words slowly and clearly, emphasising the initial sound and asking children whether it was ‘t’. In this lesson, all of the children were interested and fully engaged in what they were doing which helped them to make good progress in their learning. The teacher has already established a very good relationship with the children, which has helped them to settle in quickly and feel secure and happy. She has established routines and expectations of behaviour, which help the children to concentrate on what they are doing and make steady progress in their learning.

24. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when there were a number of shortcomings in the quality of teaching. Ten lessons were observed during this inspection, of which ten per cent were very good, 70 per cent were good and 20 per cent were satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science and art. It is satisfactory in all other subjects, except in music where there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. There are many strengths in the teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teachers make very good use of a broad range of assessment procedures, which help them to know and cater for each pupil’s needs and capabilities. Skilful questioning assesses how much pupils have understood and enables the teacher to correct misconceptions and lead pupils to a clearer understanding. Helpful and encouraging comments motivate pupils to do their best.

25. There is good teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and effective planning which gives lessons a sound structure and meets the needs of individual pupils and groups within each class. The teaching and learning are well matched to the pupils’ ages and capabilities and build effectively on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills. The teachers’ very good relationships with the pupils and expectations of good behaviour contribute to a calm and purposeful working atmosphere, where pupils are interested in their work, concentrate well and enjoy learning. Teachers generally have appropriately high expectations of the pupils and pitch work at the right level. However, occasionally, teachers present pupils with too many ideas at once, which clouds their understanding. This is largely due to adjusting to a new class at the beginning of a new school year. Teachers use homework effectively to support pupils’ learning.

26. The strongest teaching was seen in a literacy lesson in Years 1 and 2, in which the teacher led pupils to a clear understanding of how to structure a story using a ‘trigger, main event and resolution’. The teacher’s questioning revealed that pupils had remembered this well from the previous day and she reinforced this learning very effectively by involving pupils in identifying these three aspects in the story they had just read together. The teacher used individual whiteboards and marker pens to involve all pupils in learning to distinguish between words that have the same sound but different spellings, such as ‘ay’ and ‘ai’. She ensured that all pupils were challenged appropriately by asking different groups to spell words of varying difficulty. Pupils with special educational needs were supported well by the classroom assistant who offered guidance where needed. The teacher’s very good relationship with the pupils and management of groups, coupled with her high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and independence, led to their working at a very good pace with high levels of concentration.

27. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the two junior classes is very good overall. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Seventeen lessons were observed during this inspection. Of these, 12 per cent were excellent, 41 per cent were very good, 41 per cent were good and six per cent were satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in English, mathematics, science and history, good in art, geography and history and satisfactory in design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education. Although it was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching in music, the teaching of singing by the music co-ordinator was excellent. Underpinning the very good teaching is excellent planning, which provides an effective framework for learning and ensures that there is very good progression in the pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is very good and shows that teachers have both a very good technical knowledge and a high degree of flair that enables them to make learning interesting for pupils. This motivates pupils to apply themselves very well to their work and to achieve a productive pace of learning. Teachers' very high expectations of pupils challenge them to strive for high standards and to achieve very well. Excellent assessment procedures ensure that teachers know individual pupils' capabilities very well and match work to their needs. Lessons move at a suitably brisk pace and teachers make effective use of support staff and a wide range of interesting resources to enhance pupils' learning. Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

28. All of these qualities were evident in a very good art lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class in which pupils were learning to select and arrange artefacts for a still life composition. First class planning provided a coherent framework for learning and showed how pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding were to be developed from week to week. A very lively, enthusiastic introduction reinforced earlier learning about viewpoint, line and texture and showed pupils how to apply this to their own compositions. The rearrangement of classroom furniture enabled pupils to view and evaluate their own and others' compositions from different angles and a shared critical appraisal of each group's composition helped to develop pupils' visual perception skills very effectively. At all times the teacher engaged pupils' interest and attention through involving them all actively in the task. This led to very good progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding which was made all the more relevant to the pupils because they had brought in a selection of objects from home that had personal value or significance.

29. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs matches that described above for pupils of different ages. Teachers use an appropriate range of methods, which enable pupils to learn effectively. Grouping pupils by ability in lessons promotes effective learning as work is well matched to pupils' capabilities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The targets set out in pupils' individual education plans are clear and sufficiently practical for teachers to implement when support staff are not present. Teaching assistants offer skilled support and help to keep accurate records of pupils' progress.

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

30. The curriculum meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. It reflects the religious aims of the school and the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school is successful in offering a good range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils that interest and motivate them. Issues raised in the previous inspection report regarding the development of schemes of work for all subjects have been addressed. The school has successfully adopted the recently published national guidelines. There has been a significant improvement in the planning of the curriculum, which

was considered to be too narrow at the time of the previous inspection and now offers a suitably broad range of opportunities. There are effective policies in place for all subjects. The whole school curriculum plan ensures that all subjects are covered and that work builds on what has been taught and links well with what will follow. At the time of the last inspection, the school did not devote enough time to the development of pupils' skills in speaking, design and technology and information and communication technology. The time allocated to these subjects is now appropriate with the result that standards have risen in all three. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively. The time allocated to these is appropriate and the implementation has raised significantly the standards of attainment across the school.

31. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of learning (the Reception year) are satisfactory. The teacher with responsibility for this age group is new to the school and is planning the curriculum to take account of the new national guidance. The implementation of the new recommendations is identified as a priority in the school development plan, and resources have been allocated to fund the new developments, including training and support for the class teacher. Current planning also takes account of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, which are adapted well to meet the needs of a mixed age class.

32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Weaknesses at that time included inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' individual education plans, and in the approach of staff to behaviour management. Pupils made unsatisfactory progress. These shortcomings have been remedied. Clear targets are set for pupils in their individual education plans and these are addressed consistently by teachers, assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored closely and reviewed frequently. They receive good support in the classroom and, sometimes, in small groups withdrawn for specific help. As a result of this good provision, pupils make very good progress in their learning during their time in school and most achieve average standards by the time they leave.

33. There is a good range of extracurricular activities, which enrich pupils' learning outside the school day. Pupils participate in football, netball, and summer games, and have opportunities to be in teams for these sports. They take part in competitions against other small schools and enjoy success. There are clubs for recorders, French, tennis, the school band and test preparation. This year the school plans to add lacrosse and cross-country running. Educational visits and visitors to the school are important and regular features of the curriculum and the school makes a good effort to provide a rich variety of experiences for pupils. Years 4 to 6 have the opportunity to take part in extremely successful and challenging residential visits and all classes have planned opportunities to visit places of interest beyond the school.

34. The school has a strong commitment to equality in education. There is very good planning on a day-to-day basis for the needs of all pupils, including higher achieving pupils, and those who have special educational needs. Teachers take very good account of the differing needs and capabilities of pupils of different ages within each class. The school has improved the provision of reading materials, particularly for boys, to good effect.

35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and is a strength of the school. There has been an improvement in the provision for spiritual development, which was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and is now good, and for social development, which was satisfactory and is now very good.

36. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development through assemblies, times when pupils discuss their feelings (circle time), and through religious education and other subjects. Themes in assemblies have led pupils to learn about their faith and think about and pray for others not as fortunate as themselves. Opportunities are given for reflection in acts of collective worship and in lessons. This is particularly strong in the vicar's assemblies. Spirituality is fundamental in the curriculum. Pupils sing very well and listen to music. They appraise pictures painted by famous artists and people in different societies around the world. They learn to express their emotions through writing or reading poetry. In response to literature, one pupil writes, "I think Chinese Cinderella is a brilliant book. It leaves an imprint on you and makes you feel sad when Adeline feels sad, and happy when she feels happy and makes you share her emotion". The school journey provides further opportunities to deepen pupils' spiritual awareness. During the inspection, the youngest children gained real pleasure from chipping away at a breeze block under the guidance of a visiting sculptor and watching the features emerge.

37. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct is promoted effectively through the school's well implemented and maintained policies. This has improved since the last inspection when there were inconsistencies in the way members of staff dealt with misbehaviour. Pupils know what the boundaries are, and the positive use of rewards promotes the school's supportive ethos very effectively. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong at levels appropriate for their age and they know that there is a need to respect the rights and property of others. They have many opportunities to reflect on and discuss moral values. For example, in assemblies during the inspection, pupils heard the story of 'The Prodigal Son' and discussed its relevance to their own lives. Many of the books pupils read in the literacy hour raise moral issues, which pupils consider and discuss. Sporting activities help pupils to realise the importance of keeping the rules of games and observing fair play.

38. There is very good provision for pupils' social development and parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Very good relationships within the school help to form positive attitudes towards social behaviour and self-discipline. Everyone is valued and pupils are given good opportunities to work together in pairs and groups and to take responsibility for tasks appropriate to their age and stage of development. Social development is very well promoted by pupils' participation in a good range of sporting activities and by opportunities to perform in front of others in productions, church services and music festivals. Pupils are encouraged to form links with the community through the parish and to support local projects. For example, they all participate in the annual village fete, which helps to raise large sums of money for the school. Pupils in turn raise money for charities such as Help the Aged, Barnardo's, and the National Children's Society.

39. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures through their work in religious education and other subjects. The ancient cultures of Egypt and Greece are studied in history. Pupils learn about life in Tudor Times, the Victorian era and during World War 2. In addition to work on Christianity, the religious education curriculum teaches pupils about other faiths. Pupils listen to and sing music from many different countries. They study the work of artists and craftspeople from different cultures. Educational visits are an important and regular feature of the curriculum. Pupils visit places of interest such as the Bethnal Green Toy Museum and the Royal Air Force Museum. They have recently benefited from a visit by a local sculptor and a famous writer. They participate in concerts and performances which parents feel to be of a very high standard.

40. Provision for pupils' personal education is good. 'Circle' times provide good opportunities for pupils to explore a range of feelings and issues. A good emphasis is given to teaching about health issues, the misuse of drugs, an awareness of medicines and sex education, and these elements are

treated sensitively. The work is taught within personal, social and health education and within the science curriculum.

41. There are good links with the local community through the parish and these contribute positively to pupils' experiences and their subsequent learning. Pupils learn to consider the needs of others when they visit elderly people and welcome them into the school. There are very constructive relationships with partner institutions, for example, there are good links with local playgroups and liaison with the local secondary schools is effective. There are valuable teacher and pupil exchanges. In sporting activities, pupils take part in competitive fixtures with other schools. Students from teacher training institutions are welcomed into the school for the practical elements of their courses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school is a caring community with effective procedures to ensure the health, welfare and safety of its pupils. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when there were weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of procedures. Child protection procedures are good and the school has adopted the Local Education Authority guidelines. There are good links with outside agencies. Health and safety practices are good and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are good. Pupils who become ill during the school day are well cared for, although the school does not have a medical room. A high number of staff have first aid qualifications. The level of supervision at play times is good and parents feel confident that their children will be safe and secure at school.

43. The school has introduced very good procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour, through a structured system of rewards and sanctions. These were designed to tackle the inconsistencies in the way that pupils were treated, mentioned in the last report. These procedures have had a considerable success. Rights, rules and responsibilities are explained regularly to pupils. Bullying is approached through the same behaviour policy. Parents and pupils feel confident that rules are applied consistently.

44. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The headteacher regularly monitors registers to check for patterns of lateness and absence. Registration complies with requirements. There is good involvement with the educational welfare officer.

45. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are very good. The school has very effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. These include national and internal standardised assessment tests, continuous teacher assessment and comprehensive tracking documents for individual pupils in English, mathematics and science. The Reception class teacher has begun to assess children's progress in line with the new nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. This is identified as a priority for further development in the school development plan. At the end of each academic year, all teachers use the assessment information to measure how each pupil has improved. This information helps to plan the allocation of classroom assistants and learning support time for individual pupils to raise their standards of attainment. There are good procedures for identifying and supporting pupils who have special educational needs.

46. Careful analysis of internal and national tests in English, mathematics and science, in recent years, has led the school to identify weaker areas and those which require further emphasis, such as improving boys' attainment in reading and raising standards in mathematics to the level of English and science. The pupils' results in the national tests for seven year olds are used to start tracking the

attainment and progress of all pupils in English, mathematics and science. These assessments are also used very well to identify children who have special educational needs and those with above average ability. Pupils' progress and attainment, and their physical and social development, are assessed fully as they move through the year groups and the collected information is then passed on to the next class teacher. All class teachers keep very detailed records of pupils' progress in all subjects and notes on their personal development. Analysis of assessment results is used very well to identify and compare the achievements of boys and girls. This information is then used to modify teaching methods or curricular planning.

47. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are also assessed very well. Teachers make useful notes, sometimes assisted by learning assistants, about pupils' behaviour, attitudes and response in class lessons and this applies particularly well to pupils with special educational needs. Allied to this assessment is the involvement of pupils in setting their own targets for improvement at regular intervals. These targets are shared with parents at the regular meetings with staff and give pupils the opportunity to identify those aspects of learning they have found difficult and those in which they have made good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school works very effectively in partnership with parents to enhance the pupils' education. Parents are very satisfied with what the school provides. All feel that the school has high expectations of their children and nearly all feel that the school works closely with parents. Almost all parents say they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel confident in approaching the school with problems. They feel that communication with the school has greatly improved over the last three years.

49. The information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus is informative and attractively presented. The governors' Annual Report is clear and complies with requirements. Regular newsletters give useful information on forthcoming events, and the headteacher's own letter, 'Readabout', is lively and colourful. Teachers send parents advance information on the curriculum each term. The school has its own web site, to which pupils contribute. Homework and reading diaries provide a very good means of dialogue between home and school. Most parents feel that their children receive the right amount of homework and that Year 6 pupils have enough to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Home-school agreements have been issued to all parents and a high percentage returned. There are a good number of consultation meetings each year, together with open days for parents to see their children's work. Parents are pleased with their children's end-of-year reports, which they feel provide them with good information on their children's progress. Communication with the parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are appropriately involved in reviewing their children's progress and the targets that have been set for them. Induction procedures for new parents are good. In the term before the children start school, parents are invited to meet their child's teacher and the headteacher. A good welcome pack is provided.

50. A very good number of parents help regularly in the school, listening to readers and helping in the library, on trips and with extracurricular activities. The School Association is very active and runs a good range of social events, including coffee afternoons for new parents. Fund-raising activities produce very substantial sums each year to buy equipment to enhance pupils' learning. Governors and parents helped to decorate the school and renovate the playground. The involvement of parents in the work of the school and in their children's learning makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school are very good and have a significant impact on the quality of education provided by the school and the standards achieved by the pupils. The headteacher, governors and staff all make a very good contribution to the leadership and management of the school and have worked extremely well as a team to bring about very good improvement in the school during the past three years. The school's previous inspection identified a number of weaknesses in the standards achieved by the pupils, their behaviour, the quality of teaching, the school's curricular provision and some aspects of leadership and management. Since his appointment three years ago, the headteacher has developed a clear vision for the school, which is shared by the governors and staff. He has secured a firm commitment to achieving high standards in all aspects of school life, has built a strong team and developed very good relationships between staff, governors, pupils and parents. Together, they have brought about change in many areas through effective planning for school improvement and taking appropriate action. As a result, the issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed and remedied successfully. The standards achieved by pupils have risen, the quality of teaching has improved significantly and the curricular opportunities provided by the school are planned more effectively.

52. As is usual in a small school, each of the four class teachers has a management role with responsibility for one or more subjects. There is very effective delegation of responsibilities and staff have a very clear understanding of their role. All are fully involved in planning future developments, contributing to the school development plan and reviewing the progress made in areas that have been identified for action. They play an important role in supporting colleagues, offering advice and helping to plan lessons.

53. One of the most significant improvements since the last inspection has been in the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching. The headteacher observes each teacher in the classroom and provides helpful and constructive feedback to identify what went well and what could be improved. The deputy headteacher and other co-ordinators also observe colleagues in the classroom teaching their subject, which helps them to identify areas for improvement. This monitoring is carried out in an atmosphere of openness and willingness to learn from each other, which are key factors in the school's success. The headteacher ensures that any identified weaknesses are addressed through training and has worked hard to provide the necessary support for his staff. The deputy headteacher is a trained mentor who provides excellent support for newly qualified teachers and those who are newly appointed to the school. She and the headteacher work closely together to enable teachers to develop their strengths and improve those areas where their expertise is weaker. Opportunities are provided for staff to visit 'Beacon Schools' and to learn from Local Education Authority advisers. Annual professional development interviews provide an important forum for teachers to discuss their training needs and future aspirations.

54. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now very good. This is because the headteacher works very closely with the governors, keeps them very well informed through regular written reports and involves them actively in the creation and implementation of the school development plan. Governors now have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know exactly what needs to be done to improve the school and maintain high standards. They visit the school regularly, observe classes, work alongside teachers and often meet with staff informally to discuss matters related to their subject responsibilities. They are particularly effective in seeking the views of parents on all aspects of school life and addressing their concerns. Governors also analyse the school's performance in national tests and compare how well pupils achieve with others in similar schools. Overall, the governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory obligations and it makes an important contribution to the leadership and management of the school.

55. The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together to identify appropriate priorities for action when seeking ways to improve the school. These decisions result from a thorough analysis of the pupils' performance, very careful tracking of the progress of individual pupils and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and the curriculum. As well as responding to national initiatives, such as the implementation of the strategies for literacy and numeracy, the revised National Curriculum, and the Foundation Stage of learning for children in the Reception year, the school development plan identifies priorities that are specific to the school. For example, an analysis of pupils' performance in tests revealed some concerns about spelling. This has resulted in a review of the current spelling policy and a focus on improving teaching methods. A criticism made by the previous inspection report was that there was no long term planning of development priorities. The school development plan now includes priorities over a three-year period and also incorporates a five year vision statement.

56. Once priorities for improvement have been identified, they are costed and included in budget plans. Careful financial management ensures that new initiatives are adequately resourced and prudent forward planning takes account of factors such as projected rising staff costs as teachers gain experience. All staff and governors are involved in monitoring expenditure, and governors have a number of very effective strategies to ensure that they obtain best value when deciding how to spend money. They monitor the cost effectiveness of spending decisions through discussions with the headteacher and assessing the impact of spending on the standards observed in classrooms and the pupils' results in national and internal tests. The school makes effective use of new technology to support its administrative procedures and the pupils' learning.

57. The school has an adequate number of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teachers are deployed effectively to make best use of their expertise and classroom assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs in the classroom. There is a recently appointed co-ordinator who also works with pupils in classrooms. Teachers have a good range of expertise and the weaknesses in information and communication technology, design and technology and speaking and listening that were identified in the last inspection have been remedied. Excellent systems are in place to support staff new to the school which help them to settle in quickly and develop their talents to the full. A very good example is the induction of a new teacher this term who is to assume responsibility for the Foundation Stage of learning for Reception children. A planned programme of internal and external support, including courses and visits to other schools, is already being implemented.

58. There have been a number of improvements to the buildings since the last inspection which have had a positive impact on the quality of education that the school provides. The creation of a fourth classroom is perhaps the most significant initiative, as it has enabled the school to ensure that no more than two different year groups are taught in the same class. Improvements to the general appearance of the internal décor have helped to create a bright and colourful learning environment, which is further enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. Improvements to the school grounds have also contributed to making the school environment more interesting and attractive for the pupils. The main drawback to the accommodation is the hall, which is very small and provides limited space for physical education lessons. This inevitably restricts the school's capability to teach gymnastics and dance effectively as there is not enough room to accommodate the larger classes for a whole-class lesson. There is no fixed climbing apparatus and the space is further constrained by the storage of dining furniture. The creation of a conservatory has provided valuable additional space for the youngest children, especially for activities involving sand and water. However, there is no fenced area outside which children in the Reception class can use to develop their learning beyond the classroom. The school library has recently been refurbished and re-stocked after a thorough clear out of unsuitable or outdated books. It is a developing resource which is not being used effectively to improve pupils' independent research skills.

59. Well targeted spending has ensured that major initiatives, such as the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the development of information and communication technology, have been well resourced. There is also a good range of resources to support the teaching of science. Other subjects are adequately resourced, although co-ordinators are clear about those areas and aspects that need developing. The resources for teaching physical education, especially gymnastics, such as mats, are unsatisfactory, largely due to the lack of space in the hall. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory, but specific software for developing basic skills is limited.

60. The school's aims express high ideals which are firmly based on Christian values and which are shared by governors, staff, pupils and parents. These aims are reflected clearly in every aspect of the life and work of the school, such as the warm welcome extended to visitors, the mutual respect between adults and children and the emphasis on courtesy and consideration for others. There is a very strong sense of a close knit family, where each member of the school community is treated with respect and consideration. There is an exceptionally high level of commitment to improvement amongst staff and governors and an excellent capacity to continue to succeed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to continue to improve the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- **Provide a well planned, fenced outdoor area for children in the Reception class to enhance the opportunities for them to learn through play.**

(Paragraphs 58, 62 and 67)

This is included in the school development plan.

- **Improve the use of the library to develop pupils' independent research skills.**

(Paragraphs 58, 71 and 81)

- **Find ways to increase the space and resources that are available for teaching indoor physical education so that pupils are able to experience the full range of activities in the National Curriculum.**

(Paragraphs 58, 59 and 126)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	24	52	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	98
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	31

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	4	11	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (67)	93 (67)	100 (89)
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (67)	100 (67)	100 (89)
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87[86]

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Boys' data have been omitted, as there are fewer than ten boys in the year group.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	82 (70)	91 (80)
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	82 (70)	82 (80)
	National	68 [65]	69 [65]	75 [72]

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Separate data for boys and girls have been omitted, as there are fewer than ten of each in the year group.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	87
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	210389
Total expenditure	210941
Expenditure per pupil	2637
Balance brought forward from previous year	1730
Balance carried forward to next year	1178

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	30	5	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	31	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	45	10	2	2
The teaching is good.	71	23	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	32	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	18	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	29	3	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	21	2	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	39	4	7	9

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

62. At the time of the inspection, Reception class children had only been in school for eight days. Their overall attainment is broadly average on entry to the school. The previous OFSTED inspection found that attainment by the age of five exceeded national expectations in all subjects. The judgement of this inspection is that the children are on course to reach expected standards by the end of the Reception year. However, an analysis of the work of the present Year 1 pupils shows that they reached above average standards by the end of their Reception year. This section of the report relates to nine Reception children in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The class teacher was also new to the school. Lesson planning is based on the new Early Learning Goals and the development of curricular planning for these children is identified as a priority in the current school development plan. Accommodation for the youngest children is good, comprising of a large classroom and adjoining room for group work and play activities. The children are taught in a safe and secure environment, but they do not have an enclosed area for outdoor learning. Resources are appropriate and include large wheeled toys for outdoor play. The teacher and classroom assistant work well together, planning activities and assessing and recording the children's progress. Liaison with parents is good and there are appropriate procedures for welcoming new children and parents to the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Children are on course to reach standards that are higher than those found in most schools by the time they leave the Reception class. Although children have been in school for less than two weeks, they show a developing confidence in trying new activities. They are beginning to initiate ideas, especially in imaginative play activities in the 'Florence Nightingale Hospital' play area. They concentrate on their lessons and activities well, and they sit quietly and listen to adults when required. This is especially noticeable when they are listening to a story. All children, including those with special educational needs, are beginning to form good, trusting relationships with adults and other children, which helps them to develop confidence. They are already able to work as part of a group or a whole class, taking turns, sharing fairly and beginning to understand the need for a code of good behaviour to enable them to work harmoniously. At this early stage, not all are prepared to speak out in any large discussion group, leaving answers and comments to the Year 1 pupils. Nearly all children are able to change independently for physical development lessons and manage their own personal hygiene, such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet. The quality of teaching and learning is good and both adults expect high standards of children's behaviour. A quiet working atmosphere already prevails in the activity areas.

Communication, language and literature

64. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and the present standards attained indicate that most children are on course to reach standards which are similar to those found in most schools by the time they leave the Reception class. All children listen attentively to stories and are able to say why they enjoyed them or not. Some children are able and confident enough to come and write the letter 't' on the board and a few can think of words beginning with 't' when accompanying the assistant on a 'sound walk' but most need prompting. After listening to the story *Owl Babies*, children co-operate well in a group, use the appropriate 'props', and are able to act out the story.

They have a good ability to listen to and understand the various elements of stories, such as the main characters, the sequence of events and openings and endings. Some children can write their own names and can hold a pencil effectively to form some recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. In the lesson observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The lesson was well planned to meet the needs of the children and the activities were appropriate to their stage of development. Both the teacher and classroom assistant placed great emphasis on developing the children's communication skills. Staff encourage children to speak by asking questions and responding positively and giving encouragement to their answers. Work is well structured and the format of the literacy hour is being introduced and modified appropriately to meet children's needs. Stories such as *Penguin in the Fridge* and the early morning story time are used effectively to develop the children's awareness of, and interest in, books. Opportunities are provided in the play area for children to write and practise their skills in this area of literacy.

Mathematical development

65. At this stage, children are on course to attain average standards by the time they leave the Reception class. They recognise numbers up to ten and some can write numbers up to five, occasionally writing the numbers '3' and '5' the wrong way round. They all actively participate in, and enjoy, number songs and rhymes, such as *Five Little Speckled Frogs* and can trace numbers up to five in the air with their fingers. Several can count everyday objects and toys up to ten and a few are able to order numbers up to ten. In a board game about a jungle, most children are able to throw a numbered dice, read the number and count the appropriate number of animals to go on to the board. Some can reverse this by taking away the required number of animal tokens with the assistance of support staff. The quality of teaching was good in the lesson observed in this area of learning and children made good progress in their learning due to the organisation and management of whole class and group work. Resources were organised well to give children 'hands on' experience of mathematics in counting and ordering, for example the group working on threading different coloured shapes. Number lines are at the appropriate height for small children in whole class lessons and each group table possesses its own number line to help children recognise and form numbers up to ten in their own recording.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Most children have a sound general knowledge and experience of the world about them on entry to the Reception class. At present nearly all children are on course to reach average standards by the time they leave the Reception class. In their work on sounds, they use their sense of hearing and simple musical instruments to become aware that sounds can be made by a variety of sources and some, for example, musical instruments, can be used to make different sounds. They are also beginning to investigate objects and materials by using their senses of touch and sight, for example, in the lesson on the importance of the eye as one of our senses, and how other senses are used if sight is not available. In this lesson, children worked with a partner 'guide' and were led from a playground surface on to the grass to understand how their feet could be used for touch. Children of all abilities enjoy and are able to build with a wide range of commercial construction kits. They are beginning to develop the ability to select which kits are appropriate for their particular building task. All children have a sound knowledge of the use of computers and are beginning to use this medium for writing simple labels to support their literacy work, for example, in labelling different parts of their 'hospital' play area. In their walk around the school, they observed various aspects of the buildings and grounds and were able to talk about the features they liked or disliked. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children of all abilities make satisfactory progress in this area. Children are provided with a range of opportunities to explore their local environment. Objects and equipment are also provided for children to use and handle, including computers.

Physical development

67. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children are on course to reach standards that are similar to those found in most schools in their physical development. In the hall, children listen carefully to instructions and are able to move safely in a confined space with a developing sense of confidence. They are beginning to move with control and co-ordination in floor-work and are beginning to show a sound awareness of space for themselves and others. Most have the ability to run, hop and skip and can work with a partner in rolling a ball to each other. They handle tools, objects and construction materials safely, for instance, when they used scissors and glue to produce colour patterns in the form of a rainbow. However, some pupils have little manual dexterity in using scissors. The control and co-ordination of all pupils in using the computer mouse and keyboard are good. Although children use the large school playground and a large grassed area for their outdoor activities, they have no enclosed area set aside for them. A satisfactory range of tricycles and other large wheeled toys is available for use but climbing apparatus is sparse both in school and outside. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and full use is made of the available resources and materials. Children are managed well and all adults show a good awareness of health and safety factors. A child with a hearing impairment is well supported by staff.

Creative development

68. All children make satisfactory progress in developing their creative skills. They are on course to reach average levels of attainment by the time they leave the Reception class. They all enjoy learning and singing new songs and most already participate in the singing in whole-school assemblies. They explore colour, shape and form in their work on colour matching. Of particular note is their ability to work in a three-dimensional medium, with expert assistance from adults, by carving a head from a Celcon block. All children participated in using a hammer and chisel safely and correctly. Nearly all show the ability to use their imagination to act out stories and initiate and use role play in the play corner of the classroom. There are good examples of the children using paintings to express their own ideas, such as in the classroom displays entitled, 'Here come the Aliens' and 'Penguins in the Fridge'. All children enjoy these activities which are linked effectively to work in literacy and physical development. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the many activities are appropriately resourced and organised. Although the inspection took place at a very early time of the year a good start has been made in decorating the classroom with interesting and colourful displays. Planned opportunities give all children the chance to play out imaginary roles and situations.

ENGLISH

69. The pupils in Year 6 achieve standards that are much higher than those found in most schools. This judgement is comparable with the pupils' results in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds, which were well above both the national average and that for similar schools. It represents an improvement in standards since the school's previous inspection in 1996 when they were judged to be above average. The pupils' test results have improved steadily since 1997. This is largely attributable to an increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve high scores (Level 5). The school set a formal target for 82 per cent of its pupils to achieve the average Level 4 in English in the 2000 national tests. This target was exceeded as a result of very good teaching. An appropriately challenging target has been set for 2001, based on detailed knowledge of each pupil's achievements and the school's assessment of their capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their previous attainment. They receive good support in lessons, which enables them to make good progress in their learning. The school uses a variety of assessment data to inform the setting of targets for these pupils in their individual education plans. Nearly all make sufficient progress to achieve

nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school. Overall, pupils make very good progress in their learning and their achievements in English, including literacy, are very good.

70. By the age of 11, pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening. This is a great improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when pupils made unsatisfactory progress in this aspect of the subject. This is because pupils are now given very good opportunities to develop speaking skills across the curriculum and in extracurricular special events. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and express their ideas and opinions using a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. They readily engage in discussions, offering ideas and relevant information. In assemblies, pupils read aloud with clarity and answer questions audibly. They take part in concerts and dramatic activities, where they perform to an audience of parents and members of the local community. Pupils have very well developed listening skills and pay good attention to other speakers in class and group discussions.

71. Standards in reading in Year 6 are well above average. Pupils read with accuracy, fluency and good expression. They are undeterred by difficult words and draw on a range of techniques to help decipher them. Pupils read a challenging range of books and are able to infer and deduce information from the text. They analyse a writer's use of language and use this knowledge to good effect in their own writing. A high proportion of pupils achieve very good standards in reading. They demonstrate a depth of understanding when reading challenging texts and make reference to relevant points to justify their views and opinions. Although pupils use books and CD-ROMS independently for research, they are unfamiliar with the library classification system.

72. Standards in writing in Year 6 are also well above average. Pupils write for a good variety of purposes and readers. These include stories with alternative endings, poems, letters, myths and legends, book reviews and factual accounts. Pupils produce pieces of different lengths, ranging from short, focused descriptions to extended writing in chapters. They plan, draft, modify and present their work well, using a variety of sentence structures and a particularly good range of adjectives. Spelling and punctuation are usually accurate and handwriting is fluent and well formed. Many pupils achieve high standards, writing with flair and originality and using an increasingly adventurous choice of words. They use paragraphs correctly and present dialogue in an appropriate form.

73. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are well above average in reading and writing. These are very similar to the pupils' results in the 1999 tests for seven year olds, which were well above average in reading and very high in writing. They are considerably better than the standards found at the time of the last inspection, which were 'in line with national standards'. Girls tend to perform better than boys in the national tests, but no significant variations in attainment were noted during the inspection.

74. The findings of the inspection show that, by the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening are above average and have improved significantly over the past four years. This is because there are now many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills across the curriculum. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They express ideas, thoughts and opinions clearly, drawing on a varied vocabulary. Pupils respond readily to teachers' questions in class discussions. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 willingly related anecdotes about their special thoughts and feelings to the rest of the class in a personal and social education lesson. The teacher's encouraging manner helped to increase pupils' confidence and self-esteem as their contributions were praised and valued.

75. Standards in reading by the age of seven are well above average. They have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy reading a variety of texts with expression and accuracy. They tackle difficult words confidently, using their knowledge of sounds and word building techniques. Pupils can talk about their favourite books and why they like them. By looking closely at

a variety of books during the literacy hour, pupils have developed a good understanding of how books are organised and how stories are structured.

76. Standards in writing in Year 2 are also well above average, with almost all pupils achieving expected standards or higher. At the time of the last inspection, writing was narrow in range and there was too much emphasis on writing news and 'copy writing'. Handwriting was unsatisfactory. All of these weaknesses have been addressed. There is much greater variety in the pupils' writing and a much greater emphasis on independent work. Pupils' writing shows a good knowledge of sentence structure and awareness of punctuation. Spelling is generally accurate or recognisable as a good attempt using phonic knowledge. Handwriting is well formed and many pupils have achieved a fluent joined style by the age of seven.

77. Throughout the school, standards in literacy reflect those found in English. Literacy skills are developed very well across the curriculum. For example, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use and extend literacy skills in science, geography and history lessons, finding out information and writing factual accounts. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote a postcard from Egypt describing their imagined experiences.

78. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. The previous inspection reported teaching to be 'satisfactory overall'. It varied from very good to unsatisfactory. In this inspection, teaching ranged from good to very good. A significant strength of the teaching of English throughout the school is the highly effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers are skilful in developing pupils' reading and writing skills, using a variety of effective strategies. Underpinning the teaching is very good planning, which shows that teachers match work well to pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Coupled with teachers' high expectations of pupils, this results in pupils learning at a productive pace and working with interest and concentration. Another very good feature is the highly effective assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, which teachers use very well to plan appropriate work for individual pupils.

79. Strengths of the teaching of English and its impact on learning were illustrated very well in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 in which pupils were studying *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tyler*. The teacher quickly engaged the pupils' interest and attention by her lively and enthusiastic introduction to the lesson. Through very skilful questioning, she elicited the pupils' personal response to the story as well as developing their understanding of how characters are presented through description, dialogue and action. Subsequent activities were well matched to pupils' capabilities and provided a good level of challenge. Teachers and assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils receive adequate support in the classroom. The co-ordinator for special educational needs also provides valuable support for small groups of pupils in some lessons.

80. An important aspect of the teaching, which contributes to the high standards achieved in writing, is the attention paid to developing pupils' writing skills outside the literacy hour. As well as taking advantage of opportunities for factual and imaginative writing in other subjects, some lessons are devoted to developing extended writing skills. A very good example was a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, which followed on from a history lesson and was also linked to an earlier drama lesson. Using the historical knowledge of Ancient Egypt that they had previously acquired, pupils wrote an imaginative account of their experiences in the "Valley of the Kings" following their discovery of an object in the sand. The teacher made very good use of ideas sheets to focus pupils' attention on key aspects of the story and encouraged them to plan what they were going to write.

81. The co-ordinator has only held the post for a term, but is already making a significant contribution to the development of the subject throughout the school. She has observed colleagues teaching and has provided valuable feedback to all staff on the strengths of teaching and areas for further development. She also monitors the quality of pupils' work and teachers' planning. There are excellent procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress, and these are used consistently throughout the school. Assessment information is used very well to help set targets for individual pupils and to guide teachers in their planning. A considerable investment in resources has ensured that pupils have a good range of high quality texts to study, including large books for whole class shared reading sessions and multiple copies of books for group activities. The library has recently been refurbished and re-stocked but it is still underused as a resource to develop pupils' research skills. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met.

MATHEMATICS

82. The findings of the inspection are that pupils attain standards in mathematics, including numeracy, that are well above average in Year 6. This judgement shows a significant improvement on the findings of the last OFSTED inspection when it was judged that attainment was average. As a result of the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the excellent leadership and the high quality of teaching, standards have improved across the school. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the pupils' results in mathematics were above average when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. The percentage of pupils who exceeded the national expectation was well above average. Trends in performance since 1997 indicate a steady improvement in standards in line with the national trend. Provisional results for 2000 show continuing improvement; the percentage of pupils reaching and exceeding the national expectation is well above last year's average. Pupils with special educational needs receive well targeted support and are making very good progress. The previous inspection reported that these pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. The school has set challenging targets to continue to improve standards. Overall, pupils' achievements in mathematics are very good.

83. By the time they are 11, almost all pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of the multiplication tables up to ten, can convert percentages to fractions and use and explain their mental strategies well. Pupils divide numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands and have a good understanding of the use of the decimal point. They use their knowledge of percentages well in relation to everyday life in, for example, their work on the Kitbits competition, and orders and stock taking. Pupils construct common two-dimensional shapes and identify rotational and bilateral symmetry. They collect data and use a range of graphs to display it. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology in data handling when using a spreadsheet to display and answer "what if..?" questions when investigating holiday budgets. They measure accurately in design and technology and when using thermometers in science. They use time lines in history and measure weather features in geography.

84. The pupils' results in the 1999 national tests for seven year olds were well above average. The provisional results for 2000 show even higher standards with an increase in the percentage of pupils reaching above average standards. The findings of the inspection agree with the test results and judge standards in mathematics, including numeracy, to be well above average by Year 2. This judgement shows an improvement on the findings of the last OFSTED inspection when standards were judged to be average. The implementation of the daily mathematics lesson is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Trends over time indicate above average performance dropping to below the national average in 1998. Since then, there has been a significant rise.

85. By the age of seven, pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and understand the place value of numbers up to 100. Pupils recognise halves and quarters of two-dimensional shapes and numbers. They show a good understanding of odd and even numbers, either individually or as part of a sequence. In their work on shape and space, they identify most two-dimensional shapes and look at rotations. They indicate a sound awareness of time, using both digital and analogue clocks, and are able to identify half and quarter hour times. Most pupils measure well using standard units like centimetres. They collect data and use simple tables, charts and graphs to communicate their findings. All pupils are developing the ability to explain their methods of working in mental work.

86. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers show commitment and work conscientiously to promote high standards. The findings of this inspection are an improvement on the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be mainly satisfactory and pupils made satisfactory progress. In all lessons, teachers clearly explain the purposes of tasks, indicate that they have high expectations of what can be achieved and make skilful use of questions to probe and extend pupils' understanding. In this subject, all teachers now plan for the full range of ability within their classes, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. Throughout the school, the teachers' management and control of pupils are consistently good, and these approaches help all pupils to concentrate and take advantage of the skilful introductions to lessons and the thorough evaluations of what has been learned. These elements are good features of all lessons. Resources are carefully prepared and provide pupils with good opportunities to practise skills and consolidate their understanding. Teachers build on what pupils already know and understand, give a consistent emphasis to practical calculations and work hard to help individuals to develop the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and explain their strategies. This is a result of more sharply focused teaching in line with the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been successfully implemented. Information and communication technology is well used to practise basic skills and to handle data. Clear planning ensures work is well matched to the needs of all pupils.

87. Management of the subject is excellent. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work, and has time to monitor formally teaching and give feedback to colleagues. She has successfully ensured the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and seen an improvement in teaching and learning and a raising of standards. She gives excellent support to her colleagues in school and those from other schools. Very effective assessment procedures are now in place. National Curriculum requirements are fully met.

SCIENCE

88. The findings of the inspection are that the standards attained by the pupils in Year 6 are well above the national average. This finding is in line with the school's results in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds and shows an improvement on the findings of the last OFSTED inspection when standards were found to be above average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Statistics over the last four years show a steady improvement in standards, which have remained above the national average. Test results in science were also well above average compared with similar schools. Provisional results for the tests in 2000 indicate that these high standards are being maintained. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in the subject, which is also an improvement from the previous inspection when progress was considered unsatisfactory.

89. In experiments where they immersed sand, soil and small pebbles in water to observe escaping air, pupils in Years 5 and 6, working with a partner, showed a good ability to draw conclusions from their observations, consistent with their previous knowledge and understanding. They also showed an awareness that some experiments need to be repeated if conclusions are unsure, for example, in the

case of soil immersion. These experiments lead to work on separating solids from liquids, when pupils recognise and understand the difference between reversible and non-reversible changes. Pupils show a good understanding of the functions of the major organs of the body and use accurate scientific names for some of them, like the heart, lungs, kidneys and liver. Most pupils can explain the use and purpose of muscles in exercise and this knowledge is linked appropriately to their work in physical education and the effect of exercise on the body. They understand the principle of a fair test and use this knowledge well in their work on light and shadow. They experiment with a torch to observe the effect of light through transparent, translucent and opaque materials. The older pupils are able to make generalisations about motion affected by gravitational and magnetic forces. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 recognise common rocks and are aware that some are harder or softer than others. Through investigation, they have found that this can be identified through testing by scratching or rubbing.

90. The judgement of the inspection is that pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain standards that are well above average, which is roughly in line with their teacher's assessments in 1999. This judgement also represents a very good improvement on the findings of the last OFSTED inspection, when standards were found to be generally in line with national expectations and progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. In their work on materials and their properties, most pupils are able to classify various changes as reversible or not, for example, in their experiments in changing ice to water and back to water. They demonstrate a good awareness of 'fair test' principles in experiments on dissolving various substances like sugar and flour in water by ensuring that the amount of water, spoonfuls of substances and mixing time are the same. Most pupils use their knowledge and understanding of life processes well when differentiating between living and non-living things like 'animals' and 'not animals'. They use the school grounds to identify ways in which an animal suits its environment, by comparing creatures that live in the pond with those that live in the spinney.

91. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including that for pupils with special educational needs, are good in the infant classes and very good in the juniors. Teachers' introductory exposition and challenging questioning indicate good scientific knowledge and understanding, and it is apparent that most teachers enjoy teaching the subject. All teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary. For example, in the Year 3 and 4 class, 'rock' words are placed on a word bank display for pupils to recognise and use. Lessons are planned very well to cover all the aspects of science. There is a very good emphasis on experimental and investigative science, which contributes significantly to the very high standards of attainment, and the very good progress pupils make in their learning. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, especially in the junior classes, where lessons have a high degree of challenge and move at a fast pace. Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are many examples of helpful comments, especially for pupils with special educational needs, to enable them to achieve their learning goals. Teachers throughout the school insist on neat, well-presented work and pupils respond accordingly. Ongoing assessment is used very well to track the performance of all pupils in order to maintain the very high standards and recognise any problems in understanding by pupils. Pupils make very good progress in their learning, and this accelerates as they move through the school. All pupils demonstrate a keen interest in the subject and concentrate very well on their work.

92. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has only held the position for just over a year. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met, with a particular emphasis on observation, investigation and experimental work. The curriculum is planned around the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines with particular attention to mixed-age group classes to ensure that pupils of all abilities and ages are given full and equal access to the curriculum. The co-ordinator has observed the teaching of science in each class and has provided valuable feedback to colleagues. She has also monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that scientific knowledge and skills are being taught in progression to build on pupils' earlier learning. There is a good range of

resources for the subject, which is also linked well to other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy and physical education.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Pupils throughout the school, including those who have special educational needs, attain standards that are higher than those found in most schools. Pupils achieve well in this subject. As this inspection took place in the second full week of the autumn term, samples of pupils' work from the previous term were taken into account when coming to this judgement. There has been an improvement in standards since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be in line with expectations for age. Much of this can be attributed to the enthusiasm of the deputy headteacher, who has assumed responsibility for the development of the subject throughout the school, and the example that she sets in achieving high standards in her own class. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, which was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection and is now good.

94. The good teaching enables pupils to learn new skills, use a variety of tools, media and techniques and to achieve good results when they undertake a task. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are able to select from a range of artefacts that have significance for them, and arrange them imaginatively to form a still life composition. They appraise each other's compositions, making perceptive and constructive comments to help each other improve. After discussion, they evaluate their own work and rearrange the artefacts to achieve a better effect. Pupils then select a viewpoint from which to make a preliminary sketch of their composition. The teacher challenges pupils to apply their previously acquired knowledge as they work and builds effectively on their earlier learning. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the teacher's energetic and lively approach, and are fully engaged in the activity. They show good awareness of line and form and creativity in their positioning of objects. Pupils study Picasso and Klimt and produce work of a high standard, which shows the influence of each artist. They create collage pictures using cuttings from magazines to resemble a Picasso painting, and decorate plates, cups and bottles using a decoupage technique, also in the style of Picasso. Pupils make very colourful three-dimensional fish, incorporating a variety of media and techniques, and display these against an underwater backdrop, which combines the effects of painting and printing.

95. Standards are good because teaching is based on a well-planned curriculum, which provides all pupils with the opportunity to develop visual perception, explore ideas and acquire and use different skills and techniques. Pupils are introduced to the work of many different artists and craftspeople and learn from studying their style and techniques. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to consider the starting points for their work and to collect information and artefacts to help them develop ideas. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 studied Millais' painting of Ophelia and learned about how it was created before beginning their own work. The teachers' enthusiasm and expertise inspire pupils to strive for high standards in their work. Opportunities to learn about art from different cultures are linked effectively to pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 create Indian Mendhi designs as part of their work on world faiths, and there are obvious links with mathematics in older pupils' textile designs. Above all, teachers allow pupils time to develop and improve their ideas over several lessons, teaching them that the creative process cannot be constrained within time limits, while at the same time ensuring that pupils work productively and at a good pace.

96. In Year 2, pupils achieve good standards in drawing, painting, printing and collage. They make careful observations of musical instruments, and represent what they see with a good eye for detail, using shading effectively to create a realistic image. Art work is planned carefully to link with other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils explore the school grounds and make plasticine imprints of tree bark and the ground, which they then use as printing blocks. They make rubbings of different

surfaces as they explore texture. After listening to *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Dukas, pupils respond to it through dance and by drawing pictures using pastels and crayons.

97. As with the older pupils, good teaching is underpinned by a well planned curriculum, which provides pupils with a broad variety of opportunities to try out different tools and techniques, to learn from studying the work of other artists and to review and evaluate their work. For example, during the inspection, pupils' learning was enhanced by working with a local sculptor, helping to create a totem pole as part of a special millennium project. Pupils are encouraged to respond imaginatively and creatively to what they see, hear and touch, and are given opportunities to experiment.

98. The subject is developing very well under the leadership of the deputy headteacher, who provides very good support and guidance for colleagues and ensures that they have a good range of resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. She has successfully raised the profile of the subject throughout the school and has also helped other members of staff to improve the way that work is displayed in classrooms and shared areas. Some of the pupils' artwork is displayed very attractively in frames. The school has chosen to follow national guidelines for the subject, which teachers are gradually tailoring to meet their needs and to blend with other aspects of the curriculum. The school acknowledges those pupils who have special talents and offers them opportunities to use these, such as in creating murals.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. During the course of the inspection, there were limited opportunities to observe lessons. Evidence gained from these lessons, an analysis of the work on display, teachers' plans and discussions is sufficient to show that pupils attain average standards at both key stages. Their achievement is satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, standards were average in Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6.

100. In Year 6, pupils understand how to generate a number of ideas to produce a final design that meets the requirements of the task. They evaluate their work as it develops and suggest changes. Pupils work accurately and use tools safely. They pay attention to the quality of finish and function and, in most cases, are willing to adapt their work and learn from their mistakes. They know how to take products apart in a structured way and identify the components carefully. In Year 6, pupils designed and made slippers. They considered their designs as they progressed and the needs of the end user. They used appropriate tools and materials and considered function, appearance, cost, and safety.

101. In Year 2, pupils understand that the making process begins with a plan. They use models and pictures to develop and communicate their designs. The pupils select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various materials and ingredients. They know the importance of making judgements about what they have achieved and how they might improve. This is evident from their work on designing and making a salad and the project on play park equipment.

102. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory overall. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This shows an improvement from the previous inspection where unsatisfactory teaching led to unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. In the lesson seen in Class 3, teaching and learning were good. The teacher provided a good range of money containers for pupils to evaluate and they used carefully labelled drawings when designing their own. These indicated materials, fastenings, measurements and making techniques to be used.

Lessons are now well planned and the purpose of each lesson and activity is made clear to the pupils. The key skills of planning, designing and evaluating are now taught effectively.

103. The school has introduced national guidelines, which ensure that skills are systematically built on. Satisfactory assessment and recording procedures are in place to record the skills that are being acquired as pupils move through the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was no policy or scheme of work to guide teachers in their planning and assessment of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Standards in Year 6, including those reached by pupils with special educational needs, are similar to those found in most other schools. This judgement is in line with the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection when standards were also found to be in line with expectations. The judgement is based on a small sample of lessons, classroom and corridor displays, pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils. Displays of geographic work are bright and colourful and illustrate well the current work in the school on India. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall.

105. Year 6 pupils use their knowledge of the water cycle and rivers to identify physical and human patterns and the changes and adaptations, including settlement, that follow. They recognise and record on a map the main rivers of the British Isles and can explain and use geographical terms, such as erosion, attrition, traction and suspension. Pupils are beginning to understand the reason for the formation of mountains and valley shapes and are beginning the study of plate tectonics. As a forerunner to this work, Year 4 pupils are able to identify the main features in three pictures and select areas of change over the years. Using these secondary sources, they are able to identify physical and human changes over a short period of time and to explain how people affect the environment.

106. In Year 2, standards are similar to those found in most other schools. Pupils of all abilities are able to use simple plans of the school and classroom, and maps, including those made by themselves of their route to school. In their writing, pupils use geographical vocabulary appropriately when comparing other localities with their own. Discussions with pupils show an ability to express opinions on attractive or unattractive features of their own locality.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Lessons are planned well and the lesson introduction and questioning and analysis of pupils' work indicate a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject by teachers. Pupils are successfully encouraged to work from maps and plans to identify land uses in their work on rivers and changes in the environment. However, worksheets are used widely and there is little evidence of work outside the classroom or use of the local environment. Classes are managed well and teachers insist on neat and well presented work from their pupils. Independent learning and good use of geographical vocabulary are developed, for instance, in a Year 4 lesson when pupils worked effectively with a partner to identify human and physical change in the pictures of a rural scene. The quality of ongoing assessment is good; teachers record pupils' progress in record folders and make notes on their weekly and daily plans about individual pupils' progress and any necessary changes in the curricular planning.

108. The co-ordinator for the subject has only very recently been appointed and has had little time to manage or monitor the subject. The curriculum contains all the required elements of the revised National Curriculum. The subject co-ordinator has identified as a priority the need for a new subject policy. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in the subject as pupils write or record geographical findings. Pupils' work is neat and well presented and their good attitudes and interest in

the subject play a large part in the satisfactory standards and progress. Resources are satisfactory and support staff are used well to assist and work within the class with individual or groups of pupils especially those with special educational needs.

HISTORY

109. Standards in history, in Year 6, are better than those found in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve good standards for their capabilities and receive good support. Standards have improved since the previous OFSTED inspection when they were judged to be in line with those found in most schools. Although only two lessons were observed during this inspection, the judgement is made on the evidence of a thorough analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning, classroom displays and discussions with pupils and teachers. In particular, excellent work was produced by Year 6 pupils in their personal study folders and taped interviews relating to the Second World War, where they showed a very good factual knowledge of this aspect of British history. In this same topic, nearly all pupils produced well structured work from selected and organised information using appropriate terms and dates. By examining artefacts from the Second World War like ration books, identity cards and gas masks, pupils can describe the main changes, events and people and the reasons for the changes in life at the time. They use their writing and literacy skills well when composing letters and reports. They show a good knowledge and understanding of the changes from 1930 to 1960, the influence of the war and modern times on development, including the need for and growth of new towns, including Welwyn Garden City, after the war. In their current work on the Tudors, older pupils show a good factual knowledge and understanding of the reign of Henry VIII and are beginning to evaluate secondary sources such as reports and portraits of the period and to be critical of their origin. In Year 4, pupils observe artefacts relating to Ancient Egypt and make inferences and deductions about life at that time. They also understand why it is important for historians to observe and consider a wide range of sources of information before making a deduction.

110. A thorough analysis of pupils' work and classroom displays indicate that by the age of seven, standards in history are similar to those found in most schools. This judgement is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities show a sound understanding and factual knowledge of major events of the past, for example, the Great Fire of London. They are beginning to develop research and enquiry skills by looking at secondary sources, such as books and pictures of the time and discussing and recording their findings. They learn to use appropriate vocabulary

111. The quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils' work is neat and well presented, indicating high expectations from teachers for pupils' performance, especially in the junior section of the school. For these pupils, lessons are planned carefully and teachers create interesting and varied opportunities for pupils of all abilities to develop their research skills and to record their work. The organisation of lessons to include co-operative work with partners furthers the social development of all pupils. Teachers achieve a good balance between giving pupils information and encouraging them to become active enquirers. In the lesson observed in Years 5 and 6, the teacher used a large, moveable display to ensure that pupils knew the order of King Henry VIII's wives and their children. She enlivened the lesson by telling pupils how a contestant in a popular quiz show on television missed winning £250,000 because he couldn't recall this information. Pupils are managed well in history lessons and this leads to good behaviour and concentration, which contribute to very good progress in pupils' learning at Key Stage 2.

112. The subject co-ordinator has very recently been appointed and manages the subject in conjunction with English and geography. She has recognised the priority of formulating a new subject

policy to cover the return to full coverage of history in the National Curriculum. There is a well planned scheme of work, which provides a good framework for teachers' planning, and meets the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and include a variety of books in the library and in classrooms, as well as a range of artefacts. The school enhances its resources well by visits to places of interest like the British Museum for study on Ancient Egypt. Pupils of all age groups show a very active interest in history and most are willing and able to work independently on various research topics relevant to their area of study. This active interest, concentration and good behaviour have led to above average standards of attainment in the subject by Year 6 pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. There has been a significant improvement in all aspects of the subject since the last inspection. This is particularly evident in the provision of computer resources, the quality of teaching and a well-planned curriculum.

114. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment, including that for pupils with special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. It is above average in communicating and handling text and data, but average in controlling, monitoring and modelling. There has been good improvement since the last inspection where standards were found to be below average and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning which leads to sound achievement.

115. Pupils in Year 6 show an awareness of audience when combining text and graphics in their work. They use a variety of fonts, colours and sizes. The pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet to find out information. They have all contributed a page to the school's website. Pupils use a spreadsheet to portray holiday spending and ask "what if..." questions if elements are changed. They have the opportunity to control events in a predetermined way, sense physical data, and explore patterns and relationships with the aid of computer simulations or models. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is developing well. Pupils make good use of word processing to produce their work and presentations, and are confident in searching for information for various topics. They have good access to a scanner and digital camera to support their work.

116. By the age of seven, attainment is average. Pupils make steady progress in extending their knowledge and developing their skills. At the time of the last inspection, standards were average but progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 can generate and communicate ideas using text and pictures. There is a good example of the use of an art package in Reception and Year 1. Pupils show appropriate knowledge of the keyboard and confidently and competently use the mouse. They use the features in a variety of programs. They can use computer simulations to explore imaginary situations and can give direct commands to produce a variety of outcomes when using controllable toys.

117. There was limited opportunity to observe direct teaching but other evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory across the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be mostly unsatisfactory. In Class 4, the teaching of spreadsheets was good. When pupils are working on computers, teachers show sound awareness and intervene appropriately.

118. The headteacher co-ordinates the subject well. He has carried out an audit of the skills of the staff and has identified appropriate training needs. The school has adapted national guidelines to ensure that pupils receive a balanced programme and build systematically on skills and knowledge. Good use

is made of text packages to display and present written work and mathematics software is well used to consolidate the development of basic skills. Pupils confidently use CD-ROMs and the Internet to research their topics. The ratio of pupils to computers is generous and the software provision is good.

MUSIC

119. It was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection, and, as a result, there is insufficient evidence to make sound judgements about standards, or the quality of teaching and learning, in the subject overall. However, there is ample evidence to show that pupils achieve very high standards in singing, which is a significant strength of the school. The music co-ordinator is a talented musician who has very high expectations of the pupils, and her excellent teaching has a remarkable impact on the pupils' learning. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, sing with gusto, demonstrating a very good ear for a melody and awareness of pitch. They learn songs very quickly and are soon able to perform to a very high standard. The teacher begins by warming up the pupils' voices and concentrating on developing correct pitch as they sing up and down a scale. She sings clearly so that pupils can hear the notes and how to fit the words in and gives them ample time to practise, listening carefully and picking up on those notes that sound sharp or flat. By repetition and clear demonstration, she ensures that pupils quickly correct their mistakes. The quality of pupils' singing in collective worship contributes significantly to the spiritual dimension of morning assemblies.

120. A class music lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 provided a good example of listening and appraising and the introduction of graphic notation. Part of a well-planned series of lessons on how sounds are made by different instruments, the lesson led pupils to consider ways that sounds might be represented pictorially. After a very good introductory activity, which showed pupils that it is difficult to describe a sound in words, the teacher led them to explore ways of describing sounds in pictures. She encouraged them to "think about the sound, not the instrument" and assessed their responses as the lesson progressed. Recognising the need to develop this still further, the teacher modified her approach well in response to the needs of the pupils. The lesson also made a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development as they listened to music from several different countries and discussed which instruments were making the sounds.

121. The subject is being developed very competently by the co-ordinator, whose considerable expertise is used to the full. She works alongside colleagues in the classroom, plans lessons for non-specialist teachers and provides very good support and guidance for all staff. She has overseen the introduction of a new scheme of work, which provides a helpful framework for teachers to follow and is being evaluated and modified to suit their needs. The co-ordinator has a very clear overview of teaching throughout the school and ensures that it builds upon pupils' earlier learning effectively. She runs the choir, which is open to all pupils in Years 1 to 6, and has recently started a band. Pupils produce a concert each term, each of which features a different style of music, and these are performed to parents and members of the local community. The school also provides opportunities for pupils who have a particular musical talent to develop it and share it with the rest of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe two lessons, which were wet weather alternatives to planned outdoor games lessons. It is, therefore, not possible to make overall judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning.

123. In Year 6, pupils show average fitness and records show that, by the time pupils leave the school, all attain the national expectation for swimming and many exceed it. In the last inspection,

standards of attainment were judged to be average at both key stages and pupils made satisfactory progress.

124. In a circuit training session for Years 5 and 6, pupils sustained energetic activity over suitable periods of time and showed that they understand the effect of exercise on their bodies, appreciating the need for careful warm up and cool down. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4, pupils took pulses before and after exercise. The Year 3 pupils show above average knowledge of the effects of exercise on their bodies. They know that the heart beats faster to pump blood round the body, that they breathe faster to take in more oxygen, that the body sweats and gets hotter and that " your cheeks go red".

125. In the few lessons seen, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers start physical education lessons promptly and in a well-organised manner. Warm-up activities are appropriate and interest the pupils, who work at a good pace. In one lesson, the teacher showed very good control of a well planned range of activities and pupils were very attentive. They carried out tasks in pairs and made good progress in developing the skill of taking a pulse and understanding why the pulse rate increases. The pupils with higher achievement make good progress when taking part in school teams in inter-school competitions. They show keen interest by participating in extracurricular sporting activities.

126. The curriculum is well planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the school still has poor indoor facilities with an unsatisfactory range of indoor resources. The hall is very small and there are inadequate storage facilities. In addition to physical education equipment around the hall, other items such as dining tables and chairs take up valuable space. Other resources are adequate and there are very good outdoor facilities. The school enjoys good levels of success in sporting competitions against other small schools. The exciting residential visits provide a very good range of adventurous activities. The subject makes a good contribution to the social, moral and spiritual development of the pupils as they learn to understand the benefits of teamwork. They know the rules of the games, and display sporting behaviour. They are really challenged by the activities on their residential visits and gain a good sense of personal achievement.