

INSPECTION REPORT

LEVERSTOCK GREEN CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117416

Acting Headteacher: Mr Chris Pratt

Reporting inspector: Douglas Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th October 2000

Inspection number: 225267

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Green Lane
Leverstock Green
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire

Postcode: HP2 4SA
Telephone number: 01442 264917
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs B Milnes

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Douglas Hayward 21234	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
Christine Laverock 15527	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	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?
Sandra Brown 18283	Team inspector	English Physical education Special educational needs	
Richard Evans 20692	Team inspector	Science Religious education Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Gail Robertson 24137 Sylvia Gatehouse 26945	Team inspector Team inspector	Areas of learning for children under five Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Leverstock Green CE Primary School is a large primary school situated on the outskirts of Hemel Hempstead. The present school is the result of an amalgamation of the church aided and county schools 15 years ago. Pupils are drawn from mainly private housing in the small village of Leverstock Green as well as from a mixture of owner occupied and rented accommodation close to the school.

Currently there are 254 pupils on roll, including 25 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (6 per cent) is lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs is slightly higher than the national average. However, the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (4 per cent) is higher than in most schools. Children whose fourth birthday is between 1st September and the end of February start nursery at the beginning of the autumn term. Those with birthdays between 1st March and 31st August are admitted at the start of the spring term. Children transfer to a reception class a year later. At the time of the inspection there were 19 children in the reception class. The attainment of most children on entry to school is in line with that expected nationally.

The long-serving headteacher left at the end of the summer term. The governors, acting on the recommendation of the local education authority, appointed the headteacher of another school in Hemel Hempstead to take over at Leverstock Green as acting headteacher until the end of the current term. Governors have appointed a permanent replacement to take up the post in January.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education overall. Pupils at 11 years of age achieve standards in national tests that are above average in English and well above average in science. Areas of weakness identified during the inspection are mainly the result of a lack of clear direction and educational purpose in the past. The appointment of the acting headteacher has had an immediate and beneficial impact on staff morale, the involvement and perspective of governors, and the confidence of parents. Although much remains to be done, it has shown what positive and perceptive management can achieve. Improvements have quickly been made, for example in setting targets for pupil achievement and monitoring the quality of teaching. There is a clear commitment from all who work in school to ensure improvement in the pupils' education. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It helps pupils to achieve high standards in national tests in English and science at the end of Key Stage 2
- It provides a good start to children's schooling in the nursery and reception classes
- It provides good quality information for parents
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and work well together
- The acting headteacher is providing very good leadership

What could be improved

- Teachers' planning, by making effective use of assessment data to raise standards
- Management and monitoring responsibilities
- The school's arrangements for teaching information technology
- The way in which the school organises staff and resources for pupils with special educational needs
- Opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects
- Planned opportunities for pupils to use a problem solving approach in a range of subjects

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 February 1998, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in leadership and management and to provide unsatisfactory value for money. The good quality of education for children in the nursery and reception classes is still apparent and the area for outdoor play for these children is much better. The school's results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved in English and science. The quality of spiritual development has improved and the school now meets statutory requirements in relation to the recording of attendance and collective worship. The quality of leadership and management this term is much better than it was. The standard of teaching is very similar to what it was in 1998. The school's arrangements for setting homework have improved. There are, however, a number of areas where there has been scarcely any improvement since the last inspection. For instance, the school still makes too little use of statistical data to set clear targets for improvement. Its systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are still unsatisfactory, as is the school's provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare. This includes its arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language. With the change in leadership the school is well placed to move forward.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. Comparisons with the results of similar schools are made on the basis of the number of pupils taking free school meals. Pupils nationally are expected to achieve Level 2 at the age of seven and Level 4 at the age of 11.

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

Key

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

During the inspection, standards attained by pupils at the end of both key stages in English and mathematics were in line with the national average. In science pupils attain standards in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. These judgements are different from the results attained by seven and 11 year-olds in tests last year. The reason for this is the difference in ability between different groups of pupils. Pupils' results in tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have stayed very much the same over the last three years. The school's results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show a gradual trend of improvement. In this year's tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' results improved considerably in English. In mathematics the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 was slightly higher than in 1999. Results in science were very similar to the previous year. The pupils' high standards in national English tests are not always evident in the quality of their writing. In the past they have spent too much time completing worksheets and have had too few opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects. Standards in both key stages are unsatisfactory in information technology. Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. They attain standards in religious education that are in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school. Generally they settle quickly to their work in class and work well together. Many younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have become unsettled as a result of frequent changes of teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good in lessons and on the playgrounds. In lessons where there is a lack of challenge a small number of boys become restless and lose concentration.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy helping around the school. They have too few opportunities to take initiative and to develop independent and investigative learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. It is similar to most primary schools in England.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Seventy-six lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons. It was at least good in just over half the lessons and very good in about 10 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory, and occasionally poor, in about one lesson in ten. Good and very good lessons were observed at both key stages, as were unsatisfactory lessons. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in those subjects. The introduction this term of ability sets in English and mathematics has been welcomed by parents and has generally given teachers more confidence. In some cases, however, teachers do not plan their lessons to take account of the range of abilities of all pupils or the difference in their ages. In lessons where teaching could be improved there is often a lack of pace, and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. In good and very good lessons teachers have high expectations, good subject knowledge and class control, and make their lessons enjoyable so that pupils want to learn and do well. There are good standards of teaching for groups of pupils with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Although there are limited extra-curricular activities, the school enhances the curriculum by taking pupils on visits during the school day, and by inviting a range of visitors to the school to support special projects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. There are inconsistencies in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. Work is not consistently planned to match their needs. Targets for improvement are not monitored.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The school has improved its provision, especially in teaching pupils about different cultures

How well the school cares for its pupils	Unsatisfactory overall. Staff know pupils well. There are too few lunchtime supervisors for the site. Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are inadequate.
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One third of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school has not worked closely with them in the past. For example, until this term there has been considerable confusion about the school's arrangements for setting homework, but parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that the new arrangements were much better and they were clear about how they could best help their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Poor leadership and management in the past have resulted in a lack of clear educational purpose for the school and a sense of frustration and disenchantment from many parents. There have been few opportunities for staff to take full responsibility for subjects and for making management decisions to help improve the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are knowledgeable, supportive and hardworking. They are not yet sufficiently involved in judging whether the way in which the school spends its budget is closely linked to how well pupils do.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Currently the school does not use pupils' results from national tests well enough to set targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of a range of existing resources, with the exception of outdated computer hardware

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

One hundred and nine parents (43 per cent) returned their questionnaires and 32 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents say that their children like school • Many parents believe that their children make good progress • Most parents think that teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents feel that the school has not been well led and managed in the past and that it has not worked closely with them • Many parents say that they are not well informed about how their children are getting on • Almost half the parents say that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons

The inspection team agrees with parents' concerns about the quality of leadership and management in the past. The limited range of extra-curricular activities for pupils is enhanced by trips to places of interest and visitors to school. The quality of pupils' written reports is good; they are informative and carefully written. The school provides good quality information for parents, such as newsletters and curriculum information. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Children under five

1. On children's entry into the nursery, tests are carried out to find out how their early academic skills have developed in reading and mathematics, how they manage to cope socially in different situations and whether they have had good opportunities to develop physically. Results over the last few years consistently show that most children attain at the level expected for children at this age in Hertfordshire, which is slightly above the national average. One area in which they do particularly well is in their physical development. This is clearly apparent in the way they change quickly unaided and move easily and confidently in their physical education lessons, and their very good control of tricycles and skilful use of climbing frames. They have well-developed literacy, numeracy and social skills. They have had lots of good experience of listening to stories. They know nursery rhymes and some of the names of characters that feature in them. They are used to counting small numbers and recognise shapes such as circles and squares. They can concentrate and work with other children for long periods without losing interest.
2. They are tested again within seven weeks of starting in the reception class when they are almost five years of age. The results show that they continue to consolidate the good levels of knowledge that they show when they start in the nursery. For example, when given a choice of activities they choose sensibly, sometimes working with a friend and sometimes preferring to work alone. One child chose to listen to a taped story in a quiet area. He inserted the tape, put headphones on, switched the machine on and knew how to pause the machine and rewind, all completely unaided. A group of three children played with small models of zoo animals. They knew the names of creatures, such as the panda, giraffe and elephant, and could tell the difference between a chimpanzee and gorilla, and name parts of animals such as paws, trunk and claws.
3. All children benefit from caring and supportive teachers and from their well-planned lessons and activities. Almost all children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals¹ expected at the end of their reception year, and many are in line to achieve beyond that.

Key Stage 1

4. The results of the 1999 tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2² and above was below the national average in reading, above average in writing and science, and well below average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well above average in reading and writing, above average in science and average in mathematics. In comparison with those in similar schools results at Leverstock Green were below average in reading, average in writing and well below average in mathematics.
5. Comparing these results with the children's tests when they started in the reception class in 1997 it is clear that the progress made by children under five has not been

¹ Early Learning Goals – these are goals for learning for children by the end of the reception year. They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

² Levels – by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who achieve Level 3 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

sustained to the end of Key Stage 1. However, in mathematics tests at five years of age the entire group of children scored significantly lower than the Hertfordshire average and this might account for their well below average results. During the inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. The differences in judgements regarding attainment are because this is a different group of pupils to those in 1999. In the previous inspection report standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be average in English, mathematics and science.

6. In this year's tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 there was a small improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in reading and mathematics. In writing and science the percentage stayed almost the same as in the previous year. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 also rose in writing and mathematics and fell slightly in reading. The trend over the last two years in reading and writing has remained steady in reading and writing and in mathematics it has declined slightly.

Key Stage 2

7. The results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4³ was average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 was above the national average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In comparison with those in similar schools the results at Leverstock Green were above average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science. In this year's tests there was a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in English. In mathematics there was a small increase and in science results were almost the same as in the previous year. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 this year was higher in English and almost the same as the previous year in mathematics and science. Since 1998 there has been an upward trend in the school's results at the end of Key Stage 2.
8. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have helped to improve pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2. The structure of the strategies in class has helped teachers to focus on specific aspects of these subjects. This year the school has also introduced ability setting for literacy and numeracy throughout Key Stage 2 which has given additional focus to teachers' work. The combination of the literacy and numeracy strategies and ability grouping for these subjects is helping to establish a much-needed consistency of approach to planning. During the inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were judged to be average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The difference in judgements is because of the differences in ability between different year groups.

Across the school

9. Although the school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 this year were good in English and very good in science compared with those in other schools, results over the last four years have been rather erratic from year to year. Considering the attainment of pupils on entry results in the past have not been high enough. Pupils of all abilities have not achieved as well as they should have done. This applies to gifted and talented pupils as well as those who have special educational needs. There has been insufficient attention given to using the results of statutory and non-

³ Levels – By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Those who achieve Level 5 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

statutory tests to monitor their progress and set targets for improvement as pupils move through the school.

10. Although the assessments carried out on children in the early years are accurate and play a significant part in forming a view of the ability of year groups and monitoring their progress, the same cannot be said of the remainder of the school. Work has not built logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. Additionally there has been too little monitoring of the standard of pupils' work to ensure that progress is consistent and that areas for improvement are identified early and addressed satisfactorily.
11. The standards attained in literacy by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Although there is now evidence that the school's strategies for implementing the National Literacy Strategy are having an impact, the shared approach to planning is a relatively new introduction and the success of the literacy strategy has not been fully monitored. This is most apparent, perhaps, with regard to the contribution of literacy to pupils' work in other subjects. There are particular elements that show real promise but other areas where the contribution of literacy is very limited.
12. For example, pupils' literacy skills are apparent when they read for pleasure. Many have favourite authors and firm views on their favourite books. They read fluently with good expression and comprehension. Some are able to use their retrieval skills well to find books on specific subjects and use the contents, index and glossary pages to locate information within those books. Unfortunately pupils have very few opportunities during lessons to use these skills and they are rarely required to work independently from non-fiction books. The ways in which they use their writing skills well are apparent in some other subjects, but mainly in the work of older pupils. For example, a pupil cleverly linked literacy, history and science when writing an 'article' for *'The Techno Times'*. *"A mad inventor has a so-called 'analytic machine' that adds and subtracts using holes cut into card. How will this ever catch on using a machine the size of a house to perform the most basic maths? The inventor is Charles Babbage who has been working on his design for two years, confident that in the future his contraption will be used worldwide!"* Another pupil, as part of his geography work wrote the following vivid description:
*"The great river
Made just by rain
Rapidly, marvellously, mighty
Like a snake slithering away
Like an arrow showing the way."*
Too often, however, pupils are limited in the way in which they can use and extend their writing skills in other subjects. There is an over emphasis on teacher and commercially prepared work sheets and a fixed format for writing that restricts pupils' originality.
13. Standards in numeracy are average. Pupils' work in using and applying mathematics is particularly underdeveloped at both key stages. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has had a marked effect on improving their mathematical vocabulary and speeding up their recall of number facts and times tables, but there are too few opportunities for them to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. For example, there is very little evidence of data handling using computer programs. There are hardly any occasions when pupils record observations and communicate their findings mathematically in geography. There is little obvious planned progression in the development of their accuracy in making and recording observations and measurements in science or design and technology. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 do cover a wide range of mathematical work in the work sheets

that they complete, numbering in excess of 100 during the year. Emphasis is quite rightly placed on increasing accuracy and an increasing level of difficulty, but there have been too few planned opportunities for pupils to make links in mathematics, to discover for themselves various ways of tackling problems and to become increasingly aware of mathematical patterns.

14. Standards in science meet expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a sound knowledge of living processes. They correctly sequence pictures of people's development from babyhood to old age and accurately describe the observable signs of ageing. Other pupils study the life cycle of a butterfly, again describing pictures illustrating each stage. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about the effects of heat on different substances and learn to predict whether these changes are reversible or irreversible. Older pupils show good knowledge of electrical circuits and learn about testing for conductivity and variable resistance. Pupils develop a good scientific vocabulary and a set format for writing up their investigations.
15. In all the foundation subjects, except information technology, pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages overall, although their rate of progress varies from year to year according to their teacher and their exposure to different subjects. There has not been a tradition of close planning between year groups or within key stages in this school. This has meant that not all pupils have had the same curriculum entitlement as others and their progress has been erratic. For instance, pupils in Year 2 last year were members of two different classes. Although both sets of pupils studied history and made satisfactory progress, one group studied the *Victorians* and visited a 'Victorian' classroom, whilst the second group visited *Bekonscot Model Village*. In geography one set of pupils visited the local shops whilst the others carried out a transport survey. In religious education standards at both key stages meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the principal teachings of Christianity and Islam. They know what festivals Christians and Muslims celebrate and gain an understanding of the importance of symbolism in religious thinking.
16. In information technology pupils make unsatisfactory progress at both key stages. Work is not carefully planned to develop a gradual progression in their level of skills. The work in school does not capitalise on pupils' existing knowledge from home and information technology fails to make a significant contribution to other subjects. By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
17. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and a few make good gains, particularly in improving literacy skills, where sessions are linked to their ability and need. In literacy and numeracy lessons pupils on the special educational needs register make similar progress to other pupils, although there are inconsistencies in the school's provision that affect the progress of pupils with special educational needs and a lack of a whole school approach that is understood by all staff.
18. For instance, support for pupils in Key Stage 1 is currently the responsibility of the class teacher. In Key Stage 2 all pupils with special educational needs are supported in separate ability sets for literacy and numeracy, which results in teaching having to cater for a broad range of ability and need. Individual targets are not being met although group targets are incorporated into planning in Years 5 and 6. Teachers do not monitor closely enough the school's provision on pupils' literacy standards and whether their learning builds on what they have already done and becomes gradually

more challenging. Individual education plans are in place, but targets are not specific. This makes the amount of progress pupils make very difficult to evaluate. In any case, targets are only referred to in lesson planning for the few pupils who receive individual support and not in class lessons. Review dates for pupils' individual education plans are set, but there is little written evidence of what has been decided about how much progress has been made or what the school intends to do next.

19. Most pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall, although the school's haphazard arrangements for identifying them and the lack of support they receive adversely affect the progress that some pupils make. The school has little recognition of the presence of pupils with English as an additional language or the support they might need. No such pupils were identified in school documentation by the former headteacher, despite the fact that a significant number of pupils were identified with English as an additional language. This percentage of pupils (4 per cent) is higher than in most schools. The school has no formal procedures for identifying these pupils, their home language, or pupils' levels of competency in English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall. In the nursery and reception classes they are consistently good and they have a positive impact on learning for the youngest children. In Key Stage 1 attitudes vary from very good to unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory responses are almost all due to the temporary staffing arrangements during the inspection and the unsettling result of frequent changes of staff over recent months. In Key Stage 2, attitudes also vary from very good to unsatisfactory, but are mainly good. Pupils of all ages are capable of concentrating for long periods and this contributes to the progress they make in many lessons. However, when lessons lack interest and challenge pupils lose concentration and are easily distracted. In the previous inspection pupils' attitudes were good in both key stages. Just as in the last inspection, pupils are keen and eager to come to school. Nearly all parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires say their children like school. The vast majority of pupils show interest in school life and in the activities that are provided for them.
21. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, pupils behave well in lessons and pupils of all ages behave well in the playground. However, in Key Stage 1, behaviour is unsatisfactory in a significant number of lessons. This is as a direct result of the many changes these young pupils have experienced towards the end of last term and at the beginning of this term, and pupils are unsettled as a result. In the dining hall, behaviour tends to be loud and rather unruly. Some older pupils move around whilst eating and drop food on the floor.
22. In lessons that are well planned and move at a steady pace, pupils' attention and interest are maintained. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are generally as positive in their responses to learning as other pupils. Most persevere willingly and they take pride in completing their work. When expectations are low, or the class teacher doesn't have a good relationship with the class, pupils sometimes misbehave and this impedes their learning. When behaviour is unsatisfactory it is usually minor restlessness and mainly from boys. Pupils are usually trustworthy and courteous, and generally show respect for property such as resources and display material. There have been no pupil exclusions.

23. Pupils have good relationships with each other, with teachers and other adults. They work well together in groups and pairs. For example, this was seen in a music lesson when pupils were asked to compose a 'rain sound' sequence. A few pupils talk about experiences of bullying, but none was observed during the inspection. Through the school council pupils have added an anti-bullying clause to the home - school agreement.
24. Pupils are aware of how they should behave and have some understanding of the impact of their actions on others, even if they do not always put this into practice. They generally respect other people's differences, feelings, values and beliefs. One parent at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern about racism in the school. There were no racist incidents observed during the inspection and, in the judgement of the inspection team, pupils of different races get on well together.
25. Pupils show initiative and are willing to take responsibility for jobs around the school and in their classroom. Pupils in Year 6 have additional responsibilities for looking after younger pupils during wet lunchtimes, for setting up the hall for assemblies and distributing lunchboxes. Two pupils in each class are elected as members of the school council. Unfortunately they are not given full responsibility to chair and minute their own meetings. In the past, pupils have been involved in decisions to improve classroom resources. Pupils' independence in learning is underdeveloped due to too few opportunities provided for this to take place. For example, pupils rarely visit the library for research purposes and it is not furnished for independent study. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection and has not yet been addressed.
26. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and is similar to the national average. There are few unauthorised absences and the punctuality of the vast majority of pupils is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 91 per cent of the 76 lessons observed. In 43 per cent of lessons teaching was at least good and in 8 per cent it was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory, and occasionally poor, in 9 per cent of lessons and was observed in both key stages. The major weaknesses were: teachers expecting too little from their pupils, lessons that are so slow and lacking in challenge that pupils become bored, and lapses in pupils' behaviour that are not corrected. In the previous inspection almost the same percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was observed, but over half the teaching then was at least good and very good teaching was observed in 13 per cent of lessons. The lower figures for good and very good teaching are due to many staff changes and the lack of leadership that has not given advice to teachers on how they can improve. However, the acting headteacher has already started to monitor teaching and provide feedback to teachers on what they did well and what they can do to make their lessons better.
28. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 80 per cent of parents thought that teaching was good. The quality of teaching for children under five is never less than satisfactory and in half the lessons it is good. The literacy and numeracy strategies provide a strong framework for all teachers which supports their planning and provides a clear structure to the lesson. The teaching of literacy skills is good in English lessons, but there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. The quality of teaching in information technology is unsatisfactory. Teachers lack confidence and most computer hardware is old, unreliable and not suitable for current use. Teachers are soon to undergo training in

the best use of the new computers the school is investing in.

29. The school has experienced a significant number of staff changes since the previous inspection, with Key Stage 1 being the worst affected recently. Recently teachers have indicated that there was a lack of clear guidance and they felt unsupported by the former headteacher. Staff referred to experiencing low morale, a lack of cohesion and a sense of isolation.
30. The common theme that runs through all good and very good lessons is that of high expectations on the part of the teacher. That is, the teacher expects the best work that pupils can do, in the shortest time available, completed as carefully as possible by pupils who behave very well. To achieve that, teachers plan their work carefully, pose searching questions to find out how much pupils know, manage their behaviour and keep up a fast pace with interesting, exciting information.
31. In the best lessons the learning intention is made clear to pupils. Teachers explain, usually in no more than one or two sentences, what they expect pupils to learn. The learning intention is written on the board and occasionally referred to as the lesson progresses or at the end of the lesson. It helps to focus the main points of the lesson in order to help pupils understand; it helps to establish what resources will be needed; it helps to determine how the teacher finds out whether pupils have learned what was planned at the beginning of the lesson. In these lessons teachers use precise vocabulary that is specific to the subject; for example, in a geography lesson the teacher refers to '*locality*' and '*human features*', whilst in physical education and mathematics lessons the teachers specify a '*bridge balance*' and '*closed shapes and quadrilaterals*'.
32. In the best lessons activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers then have clear and high expectations of what their pupils can complete in a given time and set work for them that is challenging, yet achievable. In short, they '*keep pupils on their toes*.' For example, in a very good geography lesson the teacher, wanting to revise the content of the previous lesson, told the pupils, "*You have five minutes to jot down all you remember about river systems*". The sense of urgency that is instilled by comments like this make a valuable contribution to lesson pace. In the best lessons the plenary session at the end is brisk and captures the main points of the lesson and quickly sets the scene for subsequent lessons; for example, '*Did you find any problems? Tell the other groups what you found out*'. When time is not managed quite as well, insufficient opportunities are allowed for pupils to make a worthwhile contribution to this important element of the lesson.
33. The best lessons contain examples of teachers' very good questioning. They often start with a brisk question and answer session in which teachers pose challenging, rapid questions about '*how*' and '*why*' that make pupils think very carefully about their answers. For example, questions such as '*What happens when...?*' and '*Why is that important?*' or '*What is characterisation?*' form part of teachers' ongoing assessments to find out how much pupils know. During the course of the lesson and in the plenary, further questioning tests whether pupils are listening to and understanding information. For example, '*How are you going to evaluate Sophie's report? Does it follow the criteria for report writing?*' In the best lessons teachers take these opportunities to assess pupils' understanding through listening carefully to their responses and to their discussions with other pupils. Direct questioning during the lesson also sets expectations for pupils' input and for their levels of behaviour. For example, '*Who on the back row can give me an answer?*' or '*How many of you will get a sticker for concentrating hard?*'

34. Unfortunately not all teaching is of this standard. Over a third of lessons were sound but not as effective. That is, the lessons contained strengths and weaknesses, the tasks were not entirely appropriate and pupils did not learn as much in them. The learning intentions were not always made clear to pupils. Work was not planned for the abilities of all pupils, including those in ability sets. This indicates that teachers did not use on-going assessments of what pupils had learned in previous lessons to plan future work so that it revised what had been done before or that it became gradually more difficult. In foundation subjects, lesson planning often took no consideration of the variation in ages between pupils in mixed age classes. Lesson pace was slow and contributed to a loss of interest and involvement from pupils and the management of pupils was not decisive enough.
35. In the few unsatisfactory and poor lessons weaknesses outweighed strengths. Teachers still maintained good relationships with pupils, but their own subject knowledge was lacking. For example, in rather specialised subjects such as physical education they lacked the necessary subject expertise required to ensure that pupils are fully challenged and reach high standards of performance; for example by full extension of limbs and smooth movement. In physical education lessons health and safety factors had not been fully considered and pupils were inattentive and placed their own and others' safety at risk.
36. The quality of marking varies considerably between staff. It is clear from a scrutiny of past work and recent comments that the school has recently introduced a shared marking policy, although it is equally clear that not all teachers are following it. In the best examples of marking, teachers are perceptive, positive and enthusiastic and offer good advice. For example, one teacher wrote, "*This is a really good story. You have thought very carefully how to make the characters as real as possible*". There are indications that teachers in numeracy lessons, for example, are correctly concentrating on marking pupils' mathematical skills rather than their spelling or grammar. One teacher wrote, "*Well done! You have tried hard to draw your shapes accurately*". The least effective examples of marking are usually restricted to a single word or short phrase and offer pupils no real idea of how they can improve. Some teachers' on-going assessments are accurate and perceptive, but overall teachers do not consistently take sufficient account of their assessments, including marking, to inform their planning for the next lesson.
37. A small number of pupils with special educational needs benefit from good teaching in withdrawal sessions during the day. In these sessions work is well targeted to their needs and teaching methods and approaches to learning are carefully selected. In mainstream classes, apart from literacy and numeracy lessons in Key Stage 2, teachers' planning and strategies, especially in group work, do not sufficiently reflect the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Except in literacy lessons, there was little variety of task to take account of pupils' abilities, and frequently all pupils followed the same activity. There is little evidence of individual pupils' targets being taken into account in lessons. Teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is inconsistent. Good teaching takes full account of the difficulty pupils sometimes experience in the finer understanding of technical language; for example, in a mathematics lesson one or two pupils found difficulty appreciating the difference between the number of coins and their value. When pupils are well supported they feel secure and valued and have good opportunities to develop their spoken and written language. This is clearly not the case in all lessons.
38. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 30 per cent of parents felt that there was insufficient homework. At the pre-inspection meeting parents pointed out that the school's homework arrangements had been reviewed by the acting headteacher at

the beginning of the term. They were now aware of the school's homework policy, including how often homework was to be given and how much, as well as the part they could play. Appropriate homework had already been set this term and they were far happier with the new arrangements. During the inspection teachers were observed setting written homework on several occasions, including work in English, mathematics and science. The work supported well the activities that pupils had been following in class.

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

39. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements. The school plans appropriate coverage of the Early Learning Goals by children under five and provides a broad and balanced curriculum for them. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and religious education is in accordance with the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The allocation of time given to each subject is appropriate, providing a curriculum that is satisfactorily balanced. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The training of teachers, the introduction of new planning methods, the provision of resources and closely structured lessons have had a strong impact on raising the standard of pupils' learning, particularly in English. The curriculum for information and communication technology and the lack of up-to-date resources are unsatisfactory. Technology is inadequately used to support and develop pupils' learning in all subjects.
40. The previous report found that the curriculum lacked relevance for certain pupils in a mixed-age class because it did not recognise different levels of pupils' maturity. As there are now mixed-age classes for all years, this weakness is more extensive. The school has recently sought to address this issue in English and mathematics by organising groups according to ability. However, within each group teachers' planning takes insufficient account of the pupils' ages or different levels of attainment. This is particularly significant for pupils with special educational needs.
41. Although the balance of the curriculum provided for pupils is satisfactory, its breadth is limited. The school gives pupils insufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills across the curriculum. Much written work is based on the completion of worksheets by all pupils. Other work, for example in science, is directly copied from textbooks. An exception to this is in religious education where there are examples of very good writing by pupils, for instance in accounts from an imaginary diary of the death of Jesus.
42. There are satisfactory schemes of work for all subjects. Many of these are based on nationally published material designed to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in accordance with the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. The school has organised the curriculum in two-year cycles so that pupils in the mixed-age classes do not repeat the same material in subsequent years. In their medium-term planning teachers produce satisfactory units of work derived from the schemes. Short-term subject planning is sound, but the lack of proper assessment procedures precludes planning for pupils' immediate learning needs. Unsatisfactory assessment arrangements were criticised in the previous report.
43. The governors have agreed a sex education programme for pupils in Year 6. The school nurse is involved in this. Healthy living is strongly promoted through the science programme and physical education. To supplement this the local education authority organised a day's teaching on drugs education. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attended, along with those from other schools. The school provides appropriately for

pupils' personal and social education by the inclusion of a period of '*circle time*' when matters affecting pupils' personal development, school issues and wider questions can be discussed. A limited range of extra-curricular activities includes coaching in football, netball and a choir practice. Fifty per cent of parents felt that the choice of activities was very limited. However, pupils have the opportunity for good quality instrumental instruction in piano, recorder, woodwind and guitar. Teaching is provided by the local authority and paid for by parents.

44. Additionally, the curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors to school. All pupils have the opportunity to visit the parish church, theatres, zoo and undertake local environment studies. Excursions associated with particular scientific, historical, geographical and religious studies are stimulating experiences to aid pupils' learning. Visitors to school have included musicians, medical staff, the local vicar and other members of the local community.
45. In accordance with the school's equal opportunities policy, all pupils have access to the curriculum and school activities. However, opportunities for some to learn and make progress are limited by the school's lack of specific planning for pupils of the same age but in different classes, pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who could be identified as gifted and talented. The curriculum committee of the governing body meets regularly to monitor the school's work. They receive reports from subject co-ordinators and scrutinise national and other test results. Specific governors liaise closely with the co-ordinators for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. They have attended training days and observed lessons.
46. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound and makes a satisfactory contribution to their personal and social development. Pupils' spiritual development is now satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to most pupils' spiritual awareness, although some older pupils remain passive and uninvolved. There is a good range of activities and themes that are interesting and informative. For example, in one assembly pupils learned about a variety of people, famous or otherwise, who achieved much despite their disability. Opportunities to reflect on such ideas are provided in each assembly. Religious education also provides good opportunities for pupils to develop in spirituality. As well as learning about the teachings and traditions of faiths such as Christianity and Islam, pupils also write with good insight about their own ideas, opinions and beliefs. Other occasions for pupils to develop their imagination, self-awareness and expression are limited. There was no evidence of drama, role play or poetry writing taking place during the inspection.
47. Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school demonstrates their satisfactory understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They help to draw up the rules of classroom and school behaviour. These are clearly understood by the pupils and help to provide an atmosphere that supports teaching and learning. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment by pupils during the inspection. The school's inclusion of '*circle time*' within the timetable provides opportunities for matters of behaviour and relationships to be discussed and developed. It also provides time for the consideration of wider moral issues such as the environment and current affairs.
48. Relationships in the school are sound. Teachers provide good role models in their dealings with pupils and with each other. Pupils are generally helpful, tidying up after lessons. Some older pupils prepare the hall for assembly without supervision, setting out sheet music, a cassette player, an overhead projector and other equipment.

Pupils from each class are elected to the school council which assists in making decisions about school life. Excursions to places of interest and a residential experience for the older pupils develop relationships and social interaction.

49. The curriculum, enhanced by visitors to school and visits to places of historic and environmental interest, provides pupils with an awareness of their own local history and culture. Music and art in particular offer pupils an opportunity to develop skills and appreciation of their own and other cultures. For example, there are good displays of Islamic art around the school which pupils have produced in connection with their studies in religious education. In an assembly the acting headteacher described his recent holiday experience in South East Asia. He showed pupils a lungi, a long skirt which is worn by the local people, and demonstrated how they produce gold leaf to adorn the religious statues.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Just as in the previous inspection the school's provision for caring for its pupils is still unsatisfactory. The school has failed to address areas of weakness identified two years ago.
51. Staff know pupils well and pastoral care arrangements are satisfactory. Parents and governors value this aspect of the school's work. They describe Leverstock Green as '*a caring school*'. However, pupils' individual academic needs are not always identified accurately or provided for adequately. For example, arrangements for identifying pupils with special educational needs are not consistent throughout the school. Pupils with English as an additional language are not identified and consequently no specific provision is available to them. Pupils of different ages in mixed year groups are not always planned for separately, so their academic needs are not always met.
52. The arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and safety are unsatisfactory. There are too few staff to supervise pupils at lunchtimes, given the nature of the site. There are several areas that are not supervised adequately. There is no medical room, and first aid is provided in the corner of a classroom at lunchtimes. Visitors to the site are not all required to wear identity badges.
53. The acting headteacher has taken over as the designated teacher for child protection. His training is up to date and he has recently briefed all staff about the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about individual pupils.
54. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory overall. Registers record attendance for each session. However, these are often completed hastily and for some sessions it is unclear whether pupils are present or absent. Registration is carried out efficiently and pupils receive a friendly welcome when they arrive in school. Work is prepared for them to do on arrival and this means they settle quickly. Pupils enjoy responding to registers in a range of different languages in some classes.
55. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory overall. Most teachers have very effective strategies for managing classroom behaviour and these have a positive impact on the amount of progress which pupils make in their learning. However, in a few classes this is not the case and classroom control is not firmly established. This prevents pupils from making adequate progress. At lunchtimes, pupils behave well on the playgrounds. However, rules are not consistently applied in the quiet area or the dining room. Pupils are allowed to run

around in the quiet area, and talk loudly and move around in the dining room. The last inspection identified a lack of confidence amongst parents about the way that the former headteacher dealt with a few disruptive pupils. There is recent evidence that this is now being tackled.

56. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. Policies exist to address bullying and racist behaviour. Records are maintained of any rare incidents which do occur, and the policy indicates how these are to be dealt with. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. All pupils have a personal profile which builds up as they move through the school recording their attitudes, relationships with others, self-esteem and perseverance. They have begun to set targets for academic improvement. For example, one pupil wrote, *"I need to work on my science experiments. I need to get my head down and finish my work in the time that has been given"*.
57. There are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs who find it difficult to work without adult help and support. Pupils with statements of special educational need are well supported in literacy and numeracy lessons. A good level of support is available for other pupils in lessons, although its focus is not always clear. Teachers and support staff do not always negotiate the most efficient ways of providing levels of help in classrooms.
58. Systems for managing special educational needs are under review, resulting in inconsistent structures in the school. There is currently a lack of a whole school approach that is understood by all staff. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and the support teacher are in the process of timetabling support. Currently Key Stage 1 support is the responsibility of the class teacher, whereas in Key Stage 2, all pupils with special educational needs are supported in lower attaining sets for literacy and numeracy, which results in teachers having to cater for a broad range of ability and need. Closer monitoring is needed to assess the effect of additional provision on literacy standards and the overall effect on the continuity of pupils' learning.
59. The school's formal assessment procedures include testing pupils on entry to the nursery and reception class, administering the statutory national tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and using non-statutory tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils also undergo reading and spelling tests. Data from this testing is analysed and used to set the school's targets for improvement. It is not used sufficiently well to track pupils' progress in the core subjects and to provide a basis for setting individual targets. Some pupils' work is kept in subject portfolios but there is not a systematic compilation of pupils' work that has been assessed according to National Curriculum levels. Thus there is no standard to which teachers can refer in assessing their pupils' attainment across the curriculum.
60. The previous report found that, *'formal assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory'*. This is still the case. The school has an assessment policy that comprehensively provides the reasoning behind assessment and its benefits. However, it does not lay down a specific structure for teachers to follow consistently through the curriculum. The result is that teachers use their own discretion with regard to when and how to assess pupils' work. Teachers' weekly evaluation sheets assess teaching rather than pupils' learning. They provide general comments for each subject. There is no evidence that teachers keep detailed records of how well individual pupils are achieving in all subjects. There are no criteria by which pupils are assessed during and at the end of units of work. This means that teachers do not have the appropriate information to underpin their

planning of how to set learning objectives for individuals or groups of pupils of similar age or attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents' views of the school expressed in the inspection questionnaire are very negative. They reflect the serious concern that many parents had last term about the school, and in particular about the headteacher. However, this term's parents' pre-inspection meeting was more positive and parents are pleased with recent changes that have been made by the acting headteacher. For example, there is now a homework policy in place which is ensuring a consistency of approach throughout the school and that provides advice about how parents can help their child with work at home.
62. The areas which parents expressed dissatisfaction about include the leadership and management of the school, the amount of homework given, not feeling well informed about their child's progress, not feeling closely involved in the school's life and the range of extra-curricular activities provided. The inspection team agrees with the parents' concerns about the quality of the leadership and management of the school in the past. Although there is only a limited range of extra-curricular activities available, and only for older pupils, the school uses visits to places of interest and visitors to the school to enhance the curriculum. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through regular consultation evenings and annual reports.
63. As a result of recent efforts, links between the school and parents are now satisfactory. The information that the school provides for parents is good. The information provided for parents in the Foundation Stage is of good quality. Links with parents of the youngest children in the school are very strong and result in very few problems when children start school. Home-school reading diaries are in use throughout the school and many parents make use of them to communicate on a regular basis with teaching staff. Annual reports on each child's progress have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall. Some examples seen are of a very high quality, with a detailed analysis given of each child's strengths and weaknesses and their achievements and progress within each subject. Parents and pupils are invited to contribute to reports and this is good practice. The best reports also have clear and very specific targets for future development.
64. A small number of parents help in school. For example, a few help with reading in classes and with after school football sessions. There is an active Parent Teachers' Association which provides good support for the school and arranges regular social functions for parents, children and staff.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. In the previous inspection, serious weaknesses were identified in the leadership and management of the school. It was reported that, *'The headteacher provides insufficient drive and direction to develop a coherent educational purpose for the school. There is insufficient delegation of responsibility by the headteacher to give senior staff and co-ordinators full involvement in the future development of the school. Consequently poor management limits the impact that staff make towards raising standards'*. Other criticisms related to ineffective management of the school's finances, unsatisfactory arrangements for support, guidance and pupils' welfare, unsatisfactory assessment procedures in all subjects, the unsatisfactory way in which

the headteacher handled parents' complaints, and a school development plan that did not clearly identify priorities and had no strategies to tackle school improvement.

66. A key issue for action directly relating to management and leadership was to '*ensure clear direction for the school through effective management by the headteacher and clear, strategic management and rigorous monitoring by the governing body*'. The follow-up visit to check on the school's action plan reported that '*leadership and management have improved*', and that '*it is clear that the headteacher is beginning to provide clearer direction for the school through effective management*'. It is evident from the school's documentation that this was the case. A senior management team was formed that met regularly, but infrequently and without an agenda for action. Subject co-ordinators were given only a limited period of time in which to start monitoring pupils' work and, in some cases, the quality of teaching in lessons. Resources were improved in the early years and the National Literacy Strategy was heavily funded.
67. However, improvements in delegating responsibility and developing the role of the subject co-ordinators were short-lived. Opportunities for monitoring became infrequent, key issues were not tackled and staff morale fell. The senior management team lacked influence in debates on important issues. The role of the subject co-ordinator once again declined in status and value. Many of the outstanding issues from the previous inspection have still not been resolved two years on. There was little regular monitoring of teaching by the headteacher to provide advice for professional development. Poor leadership and management from the former headteacher have been responsible for a failure to act on these important issues and for a failure to give the school clear educational direction. In their pre-inspection questionnaires over half the parents who replied expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of leadership and management and a third felt that the school did not work closely with them. A significant number of parents made written representations criticising the quality of leadership.
68. The former headteacher retired at the end of the summer term. The governors, acting on the recommendation of the local education authority, appointed, on an acting basis, an experienced serving headteacher until the end of the autumn term. Meanwhile they have also appointed a permanent headteacher to take up post at the start of the spring term. The acting headteacher has had an immediate and significant impact on the school. He has already clearly identified the need to raise expectations of what pupils at Leverstock Green can achieve. He has also identified areas for improvement, including the school's links with parents, teachers' planning, the role of subject co-ordinators and the contribution of governors to the running of the school. He has implemented immediate changes, such as in the fabric of the building and the school's arrangements for setting homework. He has instituted other changes, such as monitoring teaching and reviewing the school's marking policy, where improvements will take longer to have an impact. He has had an immediate and beneficial effect on staff morale, the involvement of governors and their perception of their role in improving the school, and the confidence of parents.
69. The governors are knowledgeable, determined and committed to the success of the school. They feel that the criticisms of the former headteacher's and their own roles in leadership and management during the first inspection were justified. They also feel that their efforts to become more involved in the running of the school have frequently been thwarted, that they have lacked guidance and that they have, on occasion, been provided with information which is not entirely accurate. Accordingly the governing body has not been able to fully exercise its role as '*critical friend*' to the school.

70. There is a sound committee structure in place that deals with areas such as finance and curriculum, but the governing body is still not sufficiently influential in analysing the school's performance and providing a strategic view of improvement. The school development plan has, in the past, originated from within school and been submitted to the governors for comments and approval. It is too vague to be an appropriate tool for development. Areas for action are not identified clearly or sufficiently well linked to school improvement. Costings are too general and success dates and criteria are not specific. The criticism in the first report regarding the management of the school's substantial income from leasing one of its buildings can still be made. This has led to some confusion about long term funding of projects that are linked to the school development plan and, in turn, to school improvement. The governors have often approved staff costs that have been regarded as '*historical*', for example funding the large number of classroom assistants employed in school. They now realise that their role can be more productive if they try to determine whether money spent in this way is '*best value*'. A nominated governor takes a keen interest in the school's provision for special educational needs. She meets regularly with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, attends training and keeps the governing body informed of the latest initiatives.
71. The school has an adequate number of teachers whose experiences broadly match the demands of the National Curriculum. In addition the school employs a part-time teacher for special educational needs. The support offered to the newly appointed unqualified teacher is good and arrangements have been put in place for her training to begin in January 2001. The mentoring arrangements for the newly qualified teacher are also good and provide a programme of monitoring and non-contact time for professional development.
72. There are a number of specialist support assistants who give effective support to pupils with statements of special educational need. The very efficient office staff provide a warm welcome to visitors to the school. All other staff, including the site supervisor, cleaners, classroom assistants and midday supervisors, contribute to the smooth running of the school.
73. The school occupies a large and pleasant site. The accommodation is generous for the number of pupils it serves. Classroom space is used well to provide sufficient areas for learning. The hall is well used for assemblies and physical education. The dining area is also used as an additional teaching area for literacy and numeracy sessions. At present, however, it does not provide a good learning environment for lower attaining pupils, who are easily distracted by background noise from the kitchen, and by adults and pupils requiring access to the office and other parts of the school.
74. Taking into account the children's attainment on entry to school, the quality of teaching provided, the attainment of pupils by the ages of five, seven and 11, the quality of leadership in the past and at present and the cost of education per pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to raise pupils' standards of attainment further the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) **improve teachers planning by making effective use of assessment data to raise standards by:**
 - a. analysing the information provided by national tests and assessments and other non-statutory tests to identify any weaknesses in pupils' learning;
 - b. using this analysis to develop strategies for addressing the identified weaknesses;
 - c. recording the information from teachers' assessments of what pupils know to plan future learning objectives so that work is more effectively matched to pupils' needs;
 - d. tracking the progress of individual pupils, as well as groups of pupils, so that effective targets can be made for their learning, for example gifted and talented pupils and those with English as an additional language;
 - e. making explicit what pupils are expected to learn in lessons and checking at the end of lessons whether it has been achieved;
(paragraphs 9-11, 19, 34, 42, 45, 51, 59-60, 101-102, 116, 118, 122-123, 132, 135)
 - (2) **improve management and monitoring responsibilities by:**
 - a. ensuring that the headteacher and senior management team regularly monitor standards of work and the quality of teaching throughout the school;
 - b. ensuring that the governing body is fully informed about, and involved in the work of the school, including the school development plan, and monitoring of standards and finances in order to fulfil its role as 'critical friend' to the school;
 - c. ensuring that subject co-ordinators are fully trained to play a part in monitoring and raising standards throughout the school;
(paragraphs 66-67, 69, 102, 118)
 - (3) **ensure that full use is made of information technology, as already identified in the school development plan, by:**
 - a. ensuring that all staff are fully trained to take full advantage of new information technology resources;
 - b. extending the use of information technology in other subjects to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are used in other subjects;
(paragraphs 16, 18, 39, 96, 104, 106, 113, 135-140)
 - (4) **review the current arrangements for pupils with special educational needs to ensure:**
 - a. that the review of the school's provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs is completed quickly and made known to all staff;
 - b. that pupils' individual education plans are carefully targeted and that the school has the means to measure any progress that is made;
 - c. that pupils' individual education plans are monitored and reviewed regularly;
 - d. that additional adult support for pupils with special educational needs is carefully focused in lessons;
(17-18, 37, 51, 57-58)

- (5) **review the range of pupils' written work to ensure:**
- a. that pupils have opportunities to undertake a wide range of different types of writing across all subjects;
 - b. that pupils' written work is presented in a consistently well-formed, legible handwriting style;
(paragraphs 28, 41, 95-96, 129, 139)
- (6) **plan opportunities for pupils to use a problem solving approach in a range of subjects by:**
- a. extending opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for a problem solving approach to their work, including its pace and direction, thus reducing the amount of time they spend completing worksheets;
 - b. providing opportunities for pupils to use, independently, a range of resources such as reference material and information technology to support their investigations.
(paragraphs 12, 25, 102, 105, 111, 113, 116, 135)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	8	35	26	5	2	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)	13	229
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		67

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	14	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	19	21	20
	Girls	9	12	9
	Total	28	33	29
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	76 (71)	89 (86)	78 (79)
	National	82 (81)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	20
	Girls	11	9	11
	Total	31	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (84)	78 (84)	84 (90)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	17
	Girls	12	9	13
	Total	25	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	76 (76)	73 (64)	91 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	11	10	10
	Total	25	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	71 (76)	71 (69)	71 (78)
	National	68 (65)	69 (58)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	0
White	207
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	229
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR-- Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	142

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 / 2000
	£
Total income	547,324
Total expenditure	538,760
Expenditure per pupil	1,913
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,993
Balance carried forward to next year	10,557

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 42.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	255
Number of questionnaires returned	109

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	48	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	29	55	9	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	53	17	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	45	21	9	8
The teaching is good.	28	51	11	4	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	50	23	7	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	44	10	7	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	28	51	8	6	7
The school works closely with parents.	17	45	24	9	5
The school is well led and managed.	6	34	31	20	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	53	9	6	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	25	25	24	19

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE

CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

76. Children enter the nursery on a part-time basis at the age of three and transfer to the reception at the beginning of the year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection 25 children attended the nursery part-time and 19 children attended school full-time in the reception class. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is generally in line with county expectations. Many children have had the benefit of pre-school experience at playgroups or other similar establishments, whilst almost all have had a very valuable and enriching foundation provided by their families and communities. Nursery staff maintain good links with pre-school establishments such as playgroups. They offer pre-admission visits and provide parents with good written documentation. These practices all help to ease the transition between home or playgroup and the nursery. Children and their parents become familiar with daily routines and are helped to understand what their children will be doing whilst attending the nursery. A good foundation across all areas of learning is provided, particularly in language and literacy development and physical development. Children make rapid progress in the nursery and also later, in the reception class. By the time children come to the end of their reception year, the majority of them are on course to attain levels which are at least in line, and often above, expectations for their age across all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. This is so for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. A secure foundation is laid down in the nursery and is developed still further by their experiences in the reception class. They settle very happily each day to their tasks. Staff plan structured activities which provide many opportunities for the development of social skills. Children work well in groups or in pairs, taking turns and sharing toys and resources co-operatively. For instance, they co-operate very well in pairs when they use the computer, working side by side, taking turns and watching carefully to see what their partner is doing. These day-to-day routines encourage the children as they play together happily, showing concern for each other and helping each other for instance when it is tidying-up time. Personal development is particularly well fostered through careful planning. For instance, children exercise choice and plan their work each session. This is very good practice for them as it enables them to take responsibility for their activities and to develop a sense of responsibility and self-esteem. The balance of formal and informal work is good. Children are given appropriate opportunities to learn through structured play activities as well as through those directed by the staff. Children show patience and determination. They help to tidy up without complaint and take pride in getting things back to their right place; for example, they return their activity mats neatly to a pile, and take pains to fit drawers back into their correct position in a rack.

Communication, language and literacy development

78. Children make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills and in acquiring the skills they need to read and write. Children with special educational needs receive effective support to enable them to make progress. In the nursery and reception class children are given many opportunities to speak, to offer their opinions and to question. For example, they are fascinated by the feel of pasta when making pictures with it, discussing how it feels and describing it as, *'floppy'*, *'sloppy'* and

'slithery'. They enjoy sharing their views and opinions as they decide whether they like it or not. At snack time they have a discussion about their favourite foods, such as, *'cornflakes with lots of milk'*. In the home corner they practise their conversational and questioning skills as they play at shopping together. They exchange views, opinions and questions as they come and go, emulating a shopping trip; for example, *'How much is this, please?'* and, *'I think I've got enough now'*, as they push an over-laden trolley to the check-out. All staff have good questioning skills which they use effectively to promote children's thinking and to provoke responses. During outside play the children find time as they move about on the apparatus to have conversations and to offer each other advice. *'Look at me going up here, I can go right to the top.'* The good progress children make in the nursery continues in the reception class, where staff consolidate past learning in personal and social development. Teaching and support staff work together well to provide a happy and encouraging ethos. For instance, when discussing food from other parts of the world, children and staff enjoy smelling and tasting a range of unusual ingredients from China, India, Italy and Mexico. This is an interesting activity which the children enjoy very much, acquiring a greater knowledge and understanding of words such as *'tacos'*, *'spicy'* and *'sticky'*. All staff have good questioning skills which they use effectively to promote children's thinking and to provoke responses.

79. Children have many opportunities to observe how to handle books as staff take time every day to read stories, modelling with books as they do so. This would be more effective still if more *'big books'* were used so that children could see more clearly. They have comfortable *'book corners'* where they are encouraged to look at a wide range of books of good quality. They take books home, and parents and school keep a dialogue going by means of reading records which both parties use to record progress. Children are beginning to use pencils to write letters and make attempts at writing words. Most enjoy writing their names, and in the reception class they are proud to point out their names on a display. Both classrooms are alive with labels and captions on displays around the walls. Children experience a rich environment in which to develop their language and literacy skills.

Mathematical development

80. Children make good progress in mathematical development in the nursery and in the reception class. Staff plan activities which stimulate interest and provide a thoroughly secure foundation for further development. There are daily activities to promote children's awareness of the world of number. In the nursery children count around at registration time to see how many children are present. They are beginning to learn that objects can be sorted in different ways; for instance, they sort a collection of greengroceries into fruit and vegetables, and then sort again by colour. There are plenty of good resources to support mathematics activities, such as shapes and bricks. Children enjoy using these as they discover the meaning of words such as *'corner'* and *'side'*. They use the sand and water trays to discover how many cups will fill a large bottle, and can order apparatus by size – cup, then beaker, then bottle. They are acquiring a wide mathematical vocabulary including *'half'*, *'full'*, *'more than'*, *'high'* and *'long'*. They are beginning to gain a knowledge and understanding of the passage of time and recite the days of the week and of the weekend.
81. They enjoy pointing out their birthdays on the classroom display, and know that they are older than some children but not as old as others. They identify plane shapes such as *'squares'*, *'rectangles'*, *'triangles'* and *'circles'* and know when someone has muddled up the numbers on their large number line. They identify how many children there are in each group, which is the biggest group and which the smallest.

They describe the number of books they have at home using words such as *'lots'*, *'loads'*, *'hundreds'* and *'millions'*. In the reception class children build on this experience well. They consolidate past learning and are confident at tackling new learning. Children are beginning to count on and count back using number lines. They recite jingles which consolidate their knowledge and understanding of numbers, for example *'ten tiny turtles on the trampoline'*. Staff take incidental opportunities to promote the children's awareness of mathematics in day-to-day routines, such as lining-up for assembly and at registration when they count the number of children present and acknowledge the date.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. Children are on course to reach standards at the expected level. They are developing good skills of investigating when engaged in conversation with adults. They are becoming curious and interested in the world around them and are making rapid progress. They have looked at autumn leaves and studied fir cones. They know that the leaves are brown and red, and that they make crunchy noises because they are dry. They are aware of the different seasons and know that winter will soon come. They discuss the clothes they will need to wear then, such as *'hats'*, *'gloves'*, *'coats'* and *'scarves'*. They enjoy feeling their heart after jumping a lot to notice how it thumps and bangs. Children are given opportunities to use a range of resources to stimulate and support their investigations; for instance, they use large magnifying glasses and have watched bean seeds growing in a grow-bag outside. Through the use of computers they are beginning to gain a knowledge and understanding of the power of technology, especially when closely supervised and supported by an adult. They are beginning to gain an understanding of forces by experimenting with sand and water using wheels and paddles, and as they push the pedals on their large-wheeled toys. In the reception class they build on their experiences well; for instance, they draw and write captions about important events in their lives, such as weddings, parties and visits to local parks, shops or swimming pools. They study a map and a globe and begin to understand the relationships between the two. They know that Australia and America are far away, and that there are big seas called oceans separating the continents. Children talk fluently and with interest about their activities. Staff plan interesting activities for their children based on very secure knowledge of their subject.

Physical development

83. Progress is good in physical development. In the nursery, children develop self-confidence as they experience a wide range of activities planned to exploit their physical skills. For instance, they have regular times to use large apparatus out of doors. There they use fixed apparatus for climbing and balancing as well as a range of smaller apparatus and large-wheeled toys such as trucks and tricycles. Other activities requiring greater precision are provided, such as throwing hoops over cones. There are regular lessons in the school hall. Children change quickly into appropriate clothing for this lesson and enjoy having space to move around in, showing that they can run and walk quickly and lightly around the hall avoiding mats, stopping on a signal. They are nimble and take care when moving backwards and forwards. They jump, hop, stretch and roll up in succession, practising their listening skills and learning to curb their speaking skills. Children handle small apparatus like mats carefully and competently. All children including those with special educational needs clearly take much delight in using the hall for physical education lessons; they work very well, showing concentration and perseverance. Children are developing their fine motor control skills in drawing and writing, painting and cutting, using the computer mouse and construction apparatus. They use glue with precision, carefully

and accurately sprinkling small items such as pasta and sequins. Opportunities are provided for children to use construction apparatus such as a train-set; this demands good manipulative skills whilst enabling children to use their imaginations in designing the shape of the track. Children are adept at operating themselves the listening station and computer peripherals such as the mouse and the printer. Children readily discuss their activities, explaining fluently and confidently what they are doing.

Creative development

84. Children are making the expected progress in creative development in the nursery and in the reception class. They have developed very good work routines, for example when they put overalls on without being reminded when engaged in these activities. They enjoy using paint and glue and draw readily, for instance when illustrating the important events in their lives such as going to Disney World. They show their increasing dexterity when threading pasta to make bracelets and necklaces and enjoy using dough when modelling by rolling, pulling and squeezing. Opportunities for drama and imaginative play are provided for children in the home corner as they pretend to be shopkeepers or customers. In a movement lesson, good use is made of music such as *'Carnival of the Animals'*. Children are encouraged to move in a way that the music suggests to them, expressing their interpretations with confidence and concentration. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy this lesson and make good progress. They have a planned weekly lesson with a good range of musical instruments when they re-learn nursery rhymes and begin to explore the different sounds they can make with the good quality instruments.
85. Accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are very good: they are particularly well-planned in the nursery, which also enjoys a very good outdoor secure play area. The outdoor play area for the reception class is satisfactory. Both the nursery and the reception class are kept very well and provide a stimulating environment for the children. However, the reception class is a considerable distance from the nursery. This physical distance makes a close liaison potentially problematical for the staff and the children. Staff are acutely aware of this problem and are having to spend time and energy in overcoming this arrangement.

Teaching

86. The quality of teaching for children under five is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. There are some very good features, such as managing behaviour and classroom organisation. Teachers provide stimulating, well-paced and interesting lessons and activities and their support staff make a significant contribution to the good teaching. In the previous inspection the teaching of children under five was identified as a strength of the school and that is still the case. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of young learners are good. Learning objectives are clearly identified. The children's activities are focused well on the full range of their abilities. All the adults provide good role models. They listen carefully to children, show interest in their conversations and speak with courtesy. Teachers work hard to plan a range of relevant learning activities that are suitable for children under five and that meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage. Their assessments, made through observation, discussion and tasks are very good. They are used extremely well to record children's achievements on a day-to-day basis. This is a strong feature of the daily routines, as children are encouraged to tell the rest of their class what they have achieved during the session. The teachers provide an interesting, safe and secure environment for the children. They establish caring

and confident relationships which result in children behaving well and having good attitudes to work.

ENGLISH

87. Standards of attainment are average at the end of both key stages and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is in line with the judgements made on English in the previous report. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 was below the national average in reading and above the national average in writing. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in reading and writing was well above average. Standards in reading at Leverstock Green were below average compared with those in similar schools, and in writing they were average. In this year's tests the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 has increased in reading by seven per cent. In writing it is the same. The percentage achieving Level 3 has fallen in reading but has risen in writing.
88. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was above average. In comparison with those in similar schools, results at Leverstock Green were above average. Differences in the judgements made on standards during the inspection and those attained by pupils in the end of key stage tests are because they refer to different groups of pupils and there are differences in ability.
89. The school results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show a gradual trend of improvement. In this year's tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' results improved considerably in English. Ninety per cent of pupils achieved Level 4. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 also increased from 30 per cent to 46 per cent. The school exceeded its targets for pupil achievement in English.
90. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' speaking and listening skills are average overall. Throughout the key stage they are prompted to listen carefully. Teachers speak clearly to pupils and listen carefully to them. They expect good levels of concentration. A small but significant number of pupils do not concentrate fully when listening to their teachers' explanations in class and they sometimes find it difficult to listen for sustained periods, for example in the introduction to the literacy sessions. In Key Stage 1, pupils are keen to talk about their work. For example, pupils talking about their '*Victorian*' topic commented that, '*Life in Victorian times was hard, especially for poor people and children*'. Teachers provide good opportunities for questions and answers, but too few opportunities to enable pupils to express themselves in a more sustained way that develops advanced conversational skills including those of debate and persuasion.
91. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are average overall. They learn to listen and respond sensibly to questions and sometimes raise questions of their own. They listen to stories and texts read by adults and some share with their classmates what they have written. In a lesson with older Key Stage 2 pupils, based on an extract from '*The Hobbit*', the teacher's use of skilful questioning encouraged them to justify their own texts when describing characters. Pupils are able to discuss plot and character, and use language naturally and effectively, for example when retelling stories. They were not observed to speak at length in any formal context and, although there are opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills in pairs and groups, this is largely unstructured. No drama was seen during inspection.

92. Standards in reading are above average at the end of both key stages. The introduction of the books associated with the Literacy Hour is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' interest in reading, as they experience a range of literature in a variety of forms.
93. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy reading whatever their ability level, and most have a positive attitude to reading whether individually or in groups. Pupils are beginning to read well by learning to read commonly used words and by blending sounds. They can remember details and make predictions about what is likely to happen next in a story. Lower attaining pupils rely on a core of basic words that enable them to access simple text with some independence. More able pupils read widely with a good understanding of fiction and non-fiction, and understand the different parts of a book and how to use contents' pages. Higher and average attaining pupils use indexes, contents pages and glossaries to find information. Pupils talk about their reading scheme books and most enjoy sharing them at home with their parents. As a Year 2 pupil said, *"I enjoy reading and leafing through art books and talking about them with my au pair"*.
94. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read fluently and accurately, both aloud and silently, with good comprehension. They use the strategies taught in the Literacy Hour to assist in tackling unfamiliar words. Pupils have preferences for authors and type of book. Higher attaining pupils evaluate text well and use inference and deduction to support their ideas. Most lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, reach sound levels of accuracy and understanding, although some do not have secure strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They use skimming and scanning to read for a specific purpose and this complements their work in other subjects such as science. They know how to locate non-fiction books using alphabetical order and some can use a CD-ROM to extract information for topics, but these skills are under-used and there is little evidence of the use of the library for private research.
95. Standards of writing are average in both key stages. The contribution that writing makes to other areas of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise spelling patterns and spell common words correctly. They produce simple, coherent pieces of writing on a range of subjects. They write stories, accounts of their holidays and letters to 'Goldilocks'. Most pupils know how to use capital letters and full stops, but some do not regularly use these in their writing. Lower attaining pupils have weaknesses in spelling and use a limited range of vocabulary. Standards of spelling are satisfactory and maintained through regular spelling tests. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a range of punctuation, including paragraphs. Higher attaining pupils know how to control words well. Pupils write to achieve particular effects, choosing vocabulary with care. For example a poem from Year 6 read:
- "The furry-legged Tarantula
Creeps across the leaves
Its hairy legs and glary eye
Like a walking piece of spiky string
Like a stretched leg.....fear..
It makes me fascinated."*
96. There is little evidence of redrafting work and the range of writing is not developed sufficiently to extend and challenge the skills of all pupils. Some pupils do not apply

known rules and techniques to their writing and do not use punctuation consistently. Handwriting and general presentation are unsatisfactory. A significant number of pupils have not developed a neat, legible joined handwriting style. This affects the presentation of their writing, which is a weak feature throughout the school. The same criticism of handwriting was made in the previous inspection report. The high standards of written work that pupils are capable of achieving are not consistently evident. For example, a piece of work from a pupil in Year 6 is dramatic, keeps the reader in suspense, uses vocabulary to very good effect and shows what can be achieved. *“The passengers cried out in horror as the ground came surging towards them. The ‘plane was spiralling hopelessly downwards with terrifying speed. It shuddered as smoke came from the engines. As it hit the ground there was what sounded like an enormous clap of thunder.”* There are few occasions when pupils throughout both key stages use word-processing programs to write their stories and descriptions. This means that they do not have opportunities to experiment, for example to cut and paste work to produce the best effect.

97. In Key Stage 1 teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 2 teaching is always at least satisfactory, with half of all lessons being good and a quarter very good. Lesson planning is thorough. Teachers maintain the structure of the Literacy Hour, and lessons have a good balance of whole class teaching and group work. In the whole class sessions teachers use effective questioning to establish understanding and to promote the text that the class is reading. Some teachers model writing effectively to show pupils how to improve their work. For example, in a lesson with lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6, based on an extract from *‘The Hobbit’*:
“It had a lopsided termite ridden door, with a rusty knob hanging half off. The door opened on to a dark and gloomy tunnel, with worms coming out of the walls...”
98. In the majority of lessons teachers explain the group activities well to pupils and the activities are well matched to group needs and connected to the first part of the lesson. Where pupils understand what they have to do they settle quickly so the pace of the lesson and learning is maintained. Pupils share what they have learned in the plenary session, which gives them an additional opportunity to talk. In some group activities pupils work individually rather than in pairs or in a group. In this way opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss their thinking with one another, which would improve their speaking and listening skills. Some teachers’ handwriting skills do not demonstrate an appropriate model for the development of a consistent cursive script.
99. Teachers ensure good quality learning in the Literacy Hour for pupils with special educational needs and for the few with English as an additional language. These pupils are sensitively involved on whole set activities.
100. Pupils’ attitudes to learning in English are good and, where teaching is lively and enthusiastic, the response of the pupils is very positive. They enjoy the Literacy Hour and respond well to the established routines. However, some pupils do not show initiative in checking or extending their work and are satisfied with a basic standard, rather than setting themselves high expectations.
101. There is a new subject co-ordinator who recognises that assessment procedures are underdeveloped. She has plans to develop a consistent form of assessment throughout the school and to collate and use assessment results to analyse the progress of pupils. Since the last inspection the school has made progress in improving teachers’ planning in English. However, it still needs to develop formal

assessment procedures and to develop the skills of all pupils in writing in detail and length.

MATHEMATICS

102. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with the national average. The inspection findings are in line with judgements made in the previous inspection. Pupils are competent in number work, accurately finding the answer to sums. They develop good mathematical vocabulary, and their knowledge of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes is impressive. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on the way pupils learn and the content of their work. In the past, in both key stages, there has been an over-emphasis on the completion of worksheets. This has excluded problem solving activities in which pupils can make informed guesses based on their existing mathematical knowledge. In short, there have been too few opportunities for them to try things out for themselves, to make mistakes and to correct them themselves. There has also been too little planning for pupils' different abilities. Although the subject co-ordinator undertook some lesson observations during the introduction of the numeracy strategy, this has not been maintained.
103. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 was in line with the national average. In this year's tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and Level 3 had risen slightly. In the 1999 tests at Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 was above the national average. This year's test results at the end of Key Stage 2 are very similar to those in the previous year. There has been very little significant improvement in the school's results in mathematics at both key stages over the last three years. This indicates that the school has not been methodical enough in analysing the pupils' results in statutory and non-statutory tests as they move through the school to diagnose where there are areas of weakness and to ensure that teaching compensates for these.
104. The majority of pupils generally enter Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment that are in line with those expected nationally, although a minority still require support and carefully staged numeracy work. By the time they are seven many pupils work confidently with large numbers, counting in 10s, 20s and 50s to 100. They enjoy doing sums involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, but have few opportunities to use their thorough knowledge of number rules in problem solving activities. Pupils measure lines accurately in centimetres and make up different amounts of money using the fewest coins possible. They recognise right angles in shapes and name two-dimensional shapes and their properties, such as squares, rectangles and hexagons. They are able to use correct mathematical vocabulary when, for instance, naming edges, faces and vertices in three-dimensional shapes. There is little evidence of data handling and only a very few examples of incorporating information technology, for example the use of programmable robots and data handling programs to produce different types of graphs.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have covered a very wide range of mathematical work, but the great majority of it is by means of worksheets, which are thoroughly completed but which leave very little scope for pupils to use their own ideas. Pupils have a very good understanding of place value and number patterns, but there are no opportunities for them to investigate why numbers change as they do, for example investigating '*Koprekar's Sequence*' linked to the nine times table. They have a good

knowledge of how to represent information using scatter graphs, straight line graphs and pie charts, but no opportunities to apply these practically. For example, recording the results of spelling tests or daily temperature, where they could put to good use their knowledge of negative and positive numbers on the 'x' and 'y' axes. They have a good understanding of many of the 'geometric' aspects of mathematics, such as rotational symmetry and how to construct shapes from a 'net' of that shape, and a thorough knowledge of the properties of two- and three- dimensional shapes.

106. The potential for making links between mathematics and other subjects is frequently missed. Information and communication technology is greatly under-used, for example the collection of information to represent in graphical form and the use of control technology, such as Logo. It is the data handling and word-processing elements of information technology that are missing in other subjects, such as geography and history. Because so much of pupils' work in the past has been linked to the completion of worksheets there are few instances of pupils writing up any mathematical investigations they have carried out, either in handwriting or using the word processor.
107. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. Pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 is less marked than at Key Stage 2 in terms of coverage of work. The structure of the numeracy sessions has given young pupils good opportunities to develop their basic number confidence and agility. Their progress in increasing the speed of their mental calculations becomes more marked as they get older. Their work becomes more challenging as they move through Key Stage 2; for example, the time limits placed on pupils to carry out mental calculations become stricter. Throughout the school, however, the rate of pupils' progress is left to chance, rather than being the result of careful planning. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that the rate of progress for pupils of below average ability is tied in to the work that average pupils are required to do. The same is often true of work that above average pupils tackle. Even in the mathematics ability sets work is not planned with a wide enough perspective of pupils' ability in mind to ensure progress at an appropriate rate. When pupils with special educational needs are taught in separate groups they make sound progress. There are clear links between the targets for speech and language difficulties and the oral element of their work in plenary sessions.
108. Pupils respond well to mathematics overall. They enjoy the 'quick-fire' questioning and the competitive aspect of numeracy introductions. They invariably listen well to instructions and settle quickly to work. There is very little loss of time as pupils change classrooms for numeracy sets. They show good powers of concentration and a determination to do well. They co-operate with each other well and maintain low noise levels during the lesson. They handle resources carefully and sensibly.
109. Teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They have gained a great deal of confidence in their ability to teach numeracy successfully through the introduction of the numeracy strategy, the opportunities for shared planning and training and the support of the subject co-ordinator. In the best lessons the intended learning outcome is shared with pupils at the beginning and then again at the end. Work is very well planned for all abilities. Those lessons are well balanced in terms of time, so that the plenary session is as carefully planned as the introduction and main activities. These lessons are most effective because the teachers ask challenging and rapid questions that keep all pupils involved. They use correct mathematical vocabulary and are very good at ensuring that all pupils work hard. One very important feature of the best lessons is the way in which teachers make very good on-going assessments. They

use their question and answer sessions to do this, as well as moving constantly from group to group discussing work and making perceptive assessments of which pupils understand and which pupils might need further explanation. Less successful lessons contain positive elements; for example, teachers organise whole class, group and individual activities well, but they tend to lack the pace, urgency and teachers' awareness of the best lessons. In these lessons there are occasions when pupils are not pressed to complete their work quickly and when their levels of attention and concentration are not as high.

SCIENCE

110. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment overall is in line with national expectations. However, the percentage of pupils attaining a higher level is above the national average. This is similar to the judgements made on science in the previous report. In the 1999 teachers' assessments the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 was below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was above expectations.
111. Pupils in Key Stage 1 show sound knowledge of living processes. They correctly sequence pictures of people's development from babyhood to old age and accurately describe the observable signs of ageing. They show good reasoning and deduction in this. Other pupils study the life cycle of a butterfly, again describing pictures illustrating each stage. At the end of the lesson the vast majority of the pupils understand what a life cycle is and have learned the correct vocabulary such as '*pupa*' and '*chrysalis*'. A scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that it consists principally of the completion of worksheets. Pupils show a broad knowledge of the different aspects of the science curriculum and pupils of higher attainment make sensible deductions, giving reasoned answers to questions. There is very limited evidence of pupils taking responsibility for conducting experiments themselves and recording their findings.
112. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. In national tests in 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 was above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was well above the national average. These good standards have been maintained in the school's results for 2000. They represent good progress over the key stage and satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection. In comparison with those in similar schools the results are above average.
113. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a good knowledge of electrical circuits. In a good lesson they progress well in learning about and testing for conductivity and variable resistance. When testing pencils they note that wood does not conduct electricity whereas graphite does, and that there is an observable variation between hard and soft pencil lead. Pupils transfer this knowledge of resistance well in discussing how the output of a power station is stepped down for domestic use. Younger pupils observe the effects of heat on various substances. They predict what will happen as butter, chocolate, sugar and ice are separately placed in foil cups and put into a bowl of hot water. Pupils match their findings with their predictions. They understand that some changes in state are reversible and predict what will happen when the materials are placed in the freezer. Some pupils choose other materials such as wood, paper and metal and suggest what the outcome might be when they are subjected to heat.
114. Pupils' progress over Key Stage 2 is good. A scrutiny of their written work shows that they develop a high degree of knowledge of the science curriculum. Many

produce carefully labelled diagrams and present their work well. However, much information is copied so that science makes insufficient contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Information and communication technology makes little contribution to the development of learning in science either as a tool for data handling or as a method of independent research; for example, pupils do not use sensors linked to computers to show the impact of insulation on the loss of heat. The investigative approach to science is underdeveloped and tied to the completion of worksheets. Pupils' science books show little evidence of them writing up experiments in their own words. Although pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of scientific principles such as fair testing, there is insufficient incorporation of these into their written work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language participate fully in science lessons. There is, however, little planning for their particular needs.

115. Pupils clearly enjoy their work in science. Their attitude and behaviour in lessons are good overall. They approach practical work with enthusiasm and are anxious to obtain successful results. When asked to do so they collaborate well in groups and in pairs and treat materials and equipment with care.
116. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Almost half the lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory. The rest were predominantly good or very good. One lesson was unsatisfactory. Good and very good subject knowledge, and good use of time and resources in well-devised investigations, characterised the better teaching. Pupils' learning and progress in these lessons were marked and standards of attainment were high. In lessons where there were weaknesses the pace was too slow, objectives were insufficiently clear and pupils' thinking was not challenged. Teachers do not effectively plan work to match the needs of different age groups and levels of pupils' attainment in their classes. There is not enough planned extension work for more able pupils to stretch their thinking. Work is not planned for pupils to use the school's extensive resources of books and materials for independent learning and enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs do not have targets set which are appropriate for them. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is inadequate and not recorded in sufficient detail to provide a firm basis on which to plan for their development. Pupils' scientific knowledge and development are enriched by visits to places such as the London Planetarium and the Natural History Museum.

ART

117. Only three lessons were planned during the inspection. Judgements on art are made additionally on a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactory standards. This is in line with the judgement on art in the previous inspection. Pupils' work includes printing, batik, sketches in pencil and pastel, watercolour scenes and paintings in the style of famous artists.
118. Although progress is satisfactory overall, there are few planned links between art and other subjects, such as geography and history. Where there are links they are usually in the form of pencil or crayon sketches to accompany pieces of written work. Whilst older pupils in Key Stage 2 tackle work that demands a greater degree of skill and appreciation than do younger pupils in Year 1 there is no clear, logical progression in the development of their skills through carefully planned experiences through the school. The collection of art work provides a useful start to monitoring standards and progression through the school. The limited opportunity for the co-

ordinator to monitor pupils' techniques provided a valuable insight into the development of skills that could usefully be continued.

119. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have opportunities to use pencils to make simple sketches. They use different material to make repeated printing patterns and learn the techniques of batik patterns. Some of their pattern work is linked to their multi-cultural studies, specifically to Hindu signs and symbols. At Key Stage 2 pupils have opportunities to use watercolours and fine brushes to paint landscapes. They draw colourful pastel pictures in the style of Monet and Picasso and undertake environmental art projects in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. They have good opportunities to compare the methods used by famous artists to show facial expression and experiment with those in their own work. Pupils in both key stages have started to use their newly introduced sketchbooks to record their ideas and experiment with different media. They tend to be used as a means of practising work they are about to undertake in lessons. Currently they do not have enough unrestricted opportunities to use them on a more adventurous basis.
120. Pupils' attitudes range from good to unsatisfactory and are good overall. They usually show a keen interest and enthusiasm and a real enjoyment of their work. Pupils are eager to ask questions and contribute ideas for discussion. Their behaviour in lessons is usually good. They work extremely well together, sharing both ideas and resources, and treat equipment sensibly and carefully. When their attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory it is as a result of being made to sit too long during the lesson introduction and having too little guidance regarding the nature of the task they are supposed to be doing.
121. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to good and is good overall. One weakness in planning is that teachers do not usually plan for separate year groups within mixed-age classes. Whilst this does not present too much of a problem with older pupils in Key Stage 2, it can mean that teachers of younger pupils are unrealistic about what they can achieve. This was the case in the unsatisfactory lesson. In good lessons great attention is paid to the detail of paintings. Resources are thoughtfully selected and give pupils a very good idea of the difference in style of different artists. Good questioning makes pupils think very carefully about their work and how they will approach it to get the best results.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. Only two lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Judgements on design and technology are made additionally on a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school, a collection of photographic evidence and discussions with pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and attain standards expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. This is in line with the judgement made on design and technology in Key Stage 1 in the previous inspection, but lower than the previous judgement on work and progress in Key Stage 2.
123. The lower judgement is because the school has not given careful consideration to how pupils' skills in designing and making can be developed as they get older. In fact, the photographic evidence indicates a wide range of topics covered, but not always systematically planned to provide a logical progression of skills. The school has now decided to adopt the recently published national subject schemes that provide the degree of continuity that the school is seeking.
124. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have opportunities to fix items with glue when they make their puppets out of material, paper plates and wooden spoons. They use a variety of

materials to make a 'house' for their puppet or pet. They make sound progress in the development of their cutting and sticking skills and learn the basic needs of simple designs. Pupils in Year 1 designed and made a *'fantasy playground'*, whilst pupils in Year 2 followed up their day trip to *Bekonscot Model Village* by designing and making their own 'village' using wooden blocks. In Key Stage 2 younger pupils designed and made a buggy that moved. This involved making a design drawing, cutting with scissors and saws and gluing with hot and cold glue guns. In his evaluation one pupil wrote, *"We learnt how to cut and measure when making a chassis, axle and body. Also that sticking triangles on the corner of the chassis made a strong joint"*. Older pupils designed and made an 'animal' from various items that moved in its environment. This involved the use of pneumatics to produce movement in limbs and other parts of the bodies. Other design and technology projects have involved pupils in paper strengthening experiments and food technology.

125. The links between design and technology and other subjects are strong. For example, although written evaluations do not form an integral part of all pupils' work, there are occasions when they are able to write in detail about their work. Pupils had the opportunity to make masks of mythological creatures that featured in their work on Greece. This work was planned for different abilities by using material that required different levels of competence. As well as making 'healthy' pizza toppings as part of their science work, pupils also had to draw nets of three-dimensional shapes to make containers for their pizzas. The co-ordinator's collection of photographs and annotated work provides good evidence for staff to reflect on when planning design and technology work.
126. Pupils have good attitudes to design and technology. They talk enthusiastically about what they are going to do and work effectively in mixed gender groups. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 develop the ability to constructively criticise their own work, but have not had the opportunity and do not yet possess the expertise to judge the work of others. Pupils use materials safely and are determined not to give up. They talk about their work as it develops, *'We're building bits and bobs and then we'll see if they all join together'*.
127. In the two lessons observed the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are secure in their understanding of the subject and use resources very well. They use questions well to promote discussion, assess pupils' understanding and extend the activity. One teacher constantly probed with questions such as, *'Whose idea was it? Whose are you going to choose at the end? How do you think you could strengthen that?'* Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and their supportive relationship with pupils helps to create a purposeful working atmosphere in their classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY

128. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards in geography have been maintained since the last inspection. Geography is taught as a separate subject. Although the school has recently allocated less time for the subject due to the implementation of literacy and numeracy, teachers plan to cover the breadth of the curriculum for geography. During the inspection lessons in geography were observed in both key stages. Evidence was also sought through discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of displays and pupils' work and teachers' planning.
129. Pupils in Key Stage 1 describe their route to school from home. They use appropriate vocabulary such as *'turn'*, *'corner'*, *'right'* and *'left'*. They are beginning to

gain an understanding of place and distance, and to gain knowledge of some features of their immediate locality. Pupils in Year 2 are developing their knowledge and understanding further by designing a brochure for visitors to the school, based on plans of the building. They gain an understanding of the use of a 'key' and apply their learning to their work, showing clearly on their plans where various year groups and classes are to be found. They make decisions about which areas of the school they would like visitors to see and which they would prefer to avoid, such as the rubbish bin area. Pupils in Key Stage 2 investigate how people affect the environment with particular reference to noise levels; for example, which is the noisiest place in school? Pupils seek reasons to support their findings and attempt to link the time of day with their findings, for instance in the dining hall at lunchtimes when a lot of children are in one place. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are revising their previous learning about the water cycle. They identify features correctly and use geographical terms such as 'flood plain', 'valley' and 'estuary' confidently. They are beginning to build upon previous experience to understand the erosion of river banks and cliffs through studying different types of soils and their composition.

130. Teaching in geography lessons observed was at least good. Some teaching was very good. Lessons were well paced and made interesting through imaginative planning and lively presentations by teachers. For instance, a demonstration of the water cycle using a three-dimensional model and a watering-can sprinkling 'rain' brought the water cycle to life for older pupils. The use of recordings of activities around the school brought relevance and meaning to a study of noise levels. These approaches capture pupils' interest and stimulate discussion, in which pupils make use of their speaking and listening skills. Links with numeracy are less secure; pupils had some difficulty in constructing their own bar graph accurately and teachers did not make sufficient use of information technology in lessons.
131. Pupils enjoy geography and respond well, particularly when lessons are lively and well paced. They do their follow-up tasks conscientiously, such as completing a key on the plan of the school or recording information on a bar graph. Using globes and atlases they enjoy a fast-paced session identifying as many oceans and rivers as they can find in five minutes. Behaviour is generally good; they listen well to their teachers and each other and treat resources with respect.

HISTORY

132. The school organises history as a separate subject. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making sound progress. During the inspection no lessons were planned in Key Stage 1 and only three lessons in Key Stage 2. Judgements are made additionally from discussions with pupils and staff, and a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and teachers' planning. Whilst progress is satisfactory overall, it is clear that the school's system of planning different historical work and experiences for pupils of the same age, but in different classes, produces some inequality in provision. For example, last year some pupils in Year 2 dressed up in 'Victorian' clothes to visit a 'Victorian' classroom. Other pupils of the same age visited a model village instead that was built in the early part of the twentieth century.
133. Pupils in Year 3 have a secure knowledge of life in Victorian times. They describe the clothes worn, the sort of houses people lived in then and the hard lives the poor people in those days experienced. They have an understanding of 'now' and 'then'. Some classes are studying the differences between Celts and Romans. They observe differences in clothes and armour and compare how the Celts and the

Romans were prepared for battle. For example, they discuss how effectively the Romans organised themselves and protected their bodies and heads with armour compared with the Celts who fought bare-chested and without training. They study drawings of Roman soldiers forming their *'tortoise'* using their shields, and explain how effective this was in protecting the soldiers inside. Pupils in Year 5 consider how they would feel if they were Celts in the face of a Roman raid: *'frightened'*, *'terrified'* and *'sad'* if one of their friends could not run as fast and was left behind.

134. Pupils' attitudes are positive towards history. They enjoy their discussions. Pupils generally behave well and work on their worksheets assiduously. They become animated and enthusiastic when discussing how they would feel if attacked by a band of well-armoured Roman soldiers, or when they recall previous learning about the Victorians, or Britain during the Second World War. They remember having a talk from a visitor who had been a conscientious objector and know what that entailed. They express their views and opinions with sensitivity and tolerance.
135. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. For instance, teachers use imaginative methods in which to capture pupils' interest and secure their understanding of terms such as *'archaeology'*. *'Digs'* have been set up using large crates and sand in which remnants of pots and other artefacts have been *'buried'*. The accompanying worksheet asks pupils to guess what they think they have dug up, what it is made of and whether we have anything similar today. Some teachers make good use of a video as a starting point, freezing the tape and commenting to maintain the pupils' concentration and interest. Pupils are reminded to watch out for particular features and later take part in a discussion about how the Celts lived. For instance, they know that the Celts lived in huts with straw roofs and dressed in clothing resembling tartan. However, pupils generally work at the same tasks, which are often based on photocopied sheets. Few opportunities are taken to encourage pupils to use their literacy skills to express their ideas and feelings in their own words. Not enough use is made of information technology to support history work. Too few opportunities are planned for pupils to use the library independently to find information. In some classrooms teachers are establishing timelines as features which serve to link history with numeracy. Pupils are beginning to understand chronology, and the meaning of words such as *'millennium'*, *'decade'* and *'century'*. The school has made satisfactory use of resources in the wider community, such as Carisbrooke Castle and Hasely Manor, where staff and pupils dressed in Tudor clothes.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

136. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress. They do not attain standards expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be in line with national expectations. The school does not teach all the aspects of information technology it is required to, such as using spreadsheets, and there is very little evidence of word-processing, data handling or controlling programmable robots. The subject has suffered from a lack of investment, training and planning over the last few years. Pupils' skills have not been developed methodically and teachers have lacked the confidence to manage computers in their classrooms. The problems of hardware and training are soon to be addressed; the hardware through substantial funding identified in the school's development plan and teacher proficiency through centrally funded staff training.
137. During the inspection direct teaching of information technology was planned only

twice. Judgements are based additionally on discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work. There is very little evidence of any planned link between subjects and information technology. For example, only in one class was information technology used to support the literacy strategy. During lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 computers were hardly used at all. Yet in the nursery and reception classes children have little difficulty using the mouse and keyboard controls unaided or printing with a minimal amount of help. Many pupils have experience of computer technology at home. The school does little to recognise this or to capitalise on pupils' existing knowledge. The progress that children make in the Foundation Stage is not maintained in the rest of the school.

138. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know how to use the basic commands of a word-processing program and can operate the keyboard and mouse controls, but they have few opportunities to do so. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use the mouse control to click and drag and use a word-processing program successfully to spell-check and to change font size and shape. Pupils with special educational needs have limited access to computers. Programs specifically designed to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy are not used; there are few opportunities for them to use tape recorders to encourage a love of literature. Tape recorders and listening stations are not used to provide effective models of spoken language to help those pupils with English as an additional language.
139. Pupils' attitudes to information technology in school are satisfactory. Pupils are so unused to working together that they find it difficult to share the computers and find changing responsibilities frustrating. Those older pupils who work independently do so responsibly and stay on task well. The limited number of computers and pupils' restricted access to them leads to some understandable discontent on the part of pupils, especially when they have to stop '*mid task*' to let others have their turn.
140. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. The management of resources posed real problems in one lesson, as the teacher tried to ensure that some pupils were on task whilst another group received direct skills teaching. The tasks in both lessons were mundane. In one lesson pupils clearly knew already how to amend and save text. In the other lesson the task was better suited to traditional methods than information technology. In one lesson the teacher used good questioning to urge pupils to think constantly about font size and the impact of their decisions about the positioning of type.

MUSIC

141. Pupils' attainment at both key stages is in line with expectations for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This represents some decline from the findings of the previous report, where pupils' standards were described as above national expectations and their progress as good. Pupils' singing is a weakness in their music-making activities, both in class and in assembly. It is lacking in control of pitch, diction and tone quality.
142. At Key Stage 1 pupils understand the musical importance of contrasts, such as '*loud*' and '*soft*'. Sitting in a circle they pass round a whispered message followed by a drum '*message*' also tapped very softly. The pupils also listen to recorded African music and give their reactions, deciding that it sounds '*happy*'. In this lesson pupils make satisfactory progress in listening and appraising, instrumental control and the understanding of musical ideas.

143. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils accurately clap and tap strong and weak beats as they listen to recorded music. They understand what *'rhythm'*, *'pulse'*, *'beat'* and *'metre'* each means in music. Having listened to a recording of *'The River'* song, they sing fragments of its melody in parts. Singing these unaccompanied, their pitch is unfocused and their tone and rhythm lack confidence. However, when they sing with the taped backing the overall effect is more successful. Younger pupils in the key stage listen to a recording of extracts from *'The Carnival of Animals'*. Most successfully decide what kind of animal the character of the music suggests. Listening to the music a second time they focus more carefully on the musical aspects of the piece. They have a good idea of the descriptive power of music and use good vocabulary to describe both the music and the animals. One pupil comments on the *'Aquarium'* that the music sounds, *"bubbly and as though it reaches a waterfall"*. The pupils make good progress in listening to and appraising music, stating their preference and giving supportive reasons. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons and make a good contribution, particularly in rhythm work.
144. Pupils enjoy their music. They try hard to succeed in the activities that are offered. They treat classroom instruments and equipment with respect. Though anxious to play the instruments they willingly take turns and listen to each other's ideas and performance with appreciation.
145. Teaching was satisfactory in most of the lessons observed. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson where the teacher's knowledge and understanding were insecure and expectations of pupils' attainment and progress were low. Formerly the school's music co-ordinator taught a number of classes, but has now reduced that to one, with the class teachers taking over responsibility for their own class. The scheme of work has been recently reviewed and teachers are in the process of adjusting to it. Generally class management is satisfactory and lessons have sufficient pace and balance. The school is very well resourced with a good range of songbooks and tuned and untuned classroom instruments. Lessons observed during the inspection did not make sufficient use of these resources; for example, no tuned instruments were observed in use.
146. Membership of the choir is open and it rehearses weekly. The choir performs in the community at Christmas as well as in school and in church. Pupils who choose have the opportunity to learn the piano, guitar or woodwind instruments on an individual basis. Groups of pupils in Year 4 are taught the recorder by a visiting specialist. The instrumental tuition is of high quality.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and as a result most reach the standards expected for 11-year-olds in gymnastics and dance. Nearly all pupils can swim 25 metres and some exceed this standard. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils move safely and they make good use of space. Their co-ordination and expression in dance are average. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop satisfactory individual sequences combining running, jumping, climbing, rolling and stepping, using mats, ropes and a range of apparatus. They devise imaginative balance positions and ways of moving. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress.
148. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and try to do their best. Enthusiasm and good listening skills help them to follow instructions and so quickly learn new

skills. Most move and use equipment responsibly and work well individually and as part of a team.

149. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although there were examples of unsatisfactory or poor teaching in both key stages. Most teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding. They ensure that pupils warm up before exercise, although in unsatisfactory lessons the warm-up is not strenuous enough and pupils are not clear of the purpose of warm-up activities. Teachers give precise instructions for activities and use of equipment. Demonstrations by teachers or pupils in most lessons often enable pupils to improve their performances, for example in balance or dance movements. They benefit from opportunities to watch and access each other's performances, although there are too few occasions when they can comment critically on others' performances. Teaching and learning are less effective when staff and pupils do not wear appropriate clothing for lessons and when pupils do not listen effectively to instructions resulting in the development of poor techniques. In poor lessons teachers lacked adequate class control and the pupils' health and safety were compromised by inadequate levels of supervision.
150. The school offers football and netball clubs to enhance pupils' physical development. The residential visit during Year 6 provides good opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. No lessons at Key Stage 1 were timetabled during the inspection. However, discussion with pupils and a scrutiny of teachers' plans show that pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the principal teachings of Christianity and Islam. They know what festivals Christians and Muslims celebrate. They discuss the creation story from the Bible and from different parts of the world. By drawing items of church furniture such as the cross and font they gain an understanding of the importance of symbolism in religious thinking.
152. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils consider the necessity for rules. In a satisfactory discussion they acknowledge that communities such as the class, school, family and country need a code by which to relate to each other. Although there is a sound contribution to pupils' social and moral awareness, religious development is less satisfactory. There is no inclusion of religious rules for living, such as the Ten Commandments. Pupils' written work however, contains good in-depth work on Christianity and Islam. There is good writing on Christian teaching, writings and seasons, especially concerning the events of Good Friday and Easter. Pupils write imaginary eye-witness accounts, some containing a considerable amount of personal feeling. Their writing contributes substantially to the development of their literary skills and their power of self-expression. Pupils also write in depth about the Five Pillars of Islam. Altogether pupils' writing in religious education is a significant factor in their understanding of spirituality and their own and other cultures.
153. Pupils' interest in religious education is genuine. They work well in lessons. They contribute readily to discussion and offer thoughtful and personal ideas and opinions. In one lesson a pupil told how his parents were interested in what he had learned about Islam. Written work is usually carefully presented. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other in discussion. They value others' points of view. Behaviour is good and pupils work well to complete written tasks in the time allotted. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English

play a full part in lessons and contribute satisfactorily to discussion. They make sound progress.

154. The teaching of religious education is at least sound. Teachers are satisfactorily adapting to revisions in the curriculum brought about by changes in the local syllabus. In one lesson observed the teaching was very good. Here the teacher's knowledge was of high quality and she used resources very effectively. For example, in discussing Muhamad's (pbuh) early life she used a globe for younger pupils to identify the region and showed how Islam has spread throughout the Middle East and beyond. In this lesson one pupil made a very perceptive comment in comparing how Aminah and Mary both knew that their unborn babies were very special. Teachers lead discussions well. They use questioning sympathetically to draw out pupils' personal ideas and beliefs. The planning and pacing of lessons are satisfactory. Marking of pupils' written work is good, with useful comments on their opinions and descriptions. Assessment is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient recording of pupils' attainment and progress through and at the end of the units of work.