

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGMEAD JMI & NURSERY SCHOOL

Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117325

Headteacher: Mrs G Cochrane

Reporting inspector: Phil Mann
23219

Dates of inspection: 2nd-5th October 2000

Inspection number: 225269

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hilly Fields Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL7 2HB
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Dixon
Date of previous inspection:	10 th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Phil Mann	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? Standards - attainment and progress
Gillian Smith	Lay inspector		Standards- Attitudes, behaviour, personal development, attendance, How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Josephine Mitchell	Team inspector	Children under five Mathematics Geography	How well are pupils taught?
Paul Stevens	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	How well is the school led and managed? Efficiency of the school
Michael Miller	Team inspector	History Design and technology Art	Equal opportunities, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural and personal development
Bob Battey	Team inspector	English	Special educational needs How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Springmead Junior Mixed and Infant School and Nursery has 450 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11. It is located in the outskirts of the Hertfordshire town of Welwyn Garden City. Many pupils live close to the school but approximately a quarter live in the surrounding area. The school buildings were built in 1972 and are surrounded by a spacious playground and grassed areas. The average class size is 30 pupils. The current circumstances of most families are average. Nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and there are very few pupils from homes where English is an additional language.

At the time of the inspection, there were 79 children under five in the nursery and reception classes. The attainment of children at the start of statutory schooling is above average. Twenty-three per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. There are 78 pupils at the early, school-based stages of assessment and provision. Currently, there are four pupils with a statement of special educational need with an extra 21 pupils needing the support of outside agencies. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average.

The school's current aims and priorities are appropriate for the circumstances of the school. The school has exceeded the targets it has set to raise attainment in the last academic year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that provides a high standard of education for the pupils in its care. Good leadership overall is ensuring that the school still continues to improve on the high standards being achieved in many subjects. Relationships around the school are very positive, providing a very good ethos for learning in the classrooms. As a result, pupils feel valued and display a desire for learning and an ability to care for others. The school makes very good use of available resources to achieve these high standards and consequently provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science at 11; high standards are also achieved in art, music and personal development.
- Very positive attitudes to learning are fostered and pupils behave very well in and around the school.
- Teachers teach basic skills very well and encourage the pupils to do their very best.
- A very good range of learning opportunities and an excellent variety of extra-curricular activities are provided.
- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is setting a high value on developing the pupils as individuals and their role in society.
- The partnership with parents is very good.
- The headteacher provides strong and clear leadership.

What could be improved

- The approach to the curriculum for the children in the reception class to provide more opportunities for independent learning and play.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement on nearly all the key issues identified in the previous inspection. Improvements have also been made in pupil attendance and overall standards in English, art and music. There is now a comprehensive long-term curriculum plan and provision for information and communication technology has significantly improved. There has been an overall improvement in the curriculum for children under five with the installation of a nursery. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for children in the reception classes to learn through play activities.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

When results over the last four years up to 2000 are compared it can be seen that there has been a small decline in overall standards. This is because of a significant increase in pupils admitted to the school with learning difficulties and special educational needs due to some changes in the local population. The school has recognised this factor and has effectively targeted the necessary support. Consequently, the 2000 results and the inspection evidence confirm standards are now back to the previously high levels of attainment reported at the time of the previous inspection.

By the time pupils leave school at 11, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good, and good teaching ensures that most pupils are achieving high standards in reading and writing. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has been effective in raising levels of attainment across the school in mathematics.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained very high over the last four years. The year 2000 tests results indicate that the percentage of pupils obtaining above average levels has risen in reading. Standards have remained at their very high level in mathematics and science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning and the opportunities provided by the school are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour during lessons is good. They behave very responsibly and sensibly as they move around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond very well to the very good opportunities for personal development. Pupils play a big part in maintaining the very positive relationships between themselves and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. There are very few unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall with some very good features. It is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in 71 per cent and very good or excellent in 31 per cent. The school has therefore built on the good teaching present at the last inspection by increasing the amount of good and very good teaching. The quality of teaching is generally consistent between each key stage but the proportion of very good or excellent teaching is higher at Key Stage 2. In this key stage, 38 per cent of teaching was judged at this level as opposed to 30 per cent at Key Stage 1.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the school is very good. The high proportion of good teaching is based on secure subject knowledge and this is clearly evident, for example, in many information and communication technology lessons in the computer suite. Daily planning is of variable quality but in the best lessons, learning objectives are clearly identified to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged. Teachers have good questioning techniques which they use very effectively in whole class sessions as well as when they are supporting individual pupils. Teachers are skilful in matching questions for particular pupils so that all are fully included and suitably challenged. The use of specialist teaching in music is very effective.

The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The nursery team work well together and plan very good activities that cover the curriculum for these young children. However, the organisation is such that there is an imbalance between activities that children choose for themselves and those that are chosen for them. Teaching in the reception classes is too formal. Although the teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective, children are often required to sit on the carpet or do formal pencil and paper tasks for periods of time that do not match their concentration span.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned. It provides pupils with a very good range of learning opportunities. The school offers its pupils an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, which are very well attended.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well supported across the school. They make good and sometimes very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a significant strength of the school. Considerable value is placed on the pupils as individuals and raising their self-esteem.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good care is taken of pupils. Child protection procedures are effective.

The school has continued to work hard to establish links with parents and carers of pupils at the school. As a result, the partnership that has been established is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has a clear vision and works closely with her management team to ensure that the school continues to build upon its success in achieving high standards. In doing so, she engenders support from governors, teachers and parents, which contributes greatly to pupils' learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is highly supportive of the school and its management. Governors are fully involved in planning and monitoring school development. They work hard with the headteacher and the staff to meet the needs of all pupils in a very efficient and effective way.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, governors and staff are strongly committed to looking carefully at the school's successes and at areas where further improvements could be made. They thoroughly assess pupils' work and continuously review everything that contributes to their learning to ensure the school's aims are achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Development plans are carefully prepared for several years ahead to underpin the view which is held for the school's future. These plans are properly budgeted for. The headteacher and governors ensure that the school makes best use both of its funding and all available grants to secure high quality resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Thirty-seven per cent of parents returned a questionnaire and 33 parents attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school. • The high quality teaching. • The way in which the school is led and managed. • The high expectations of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to receive more information about their child's progress. • The level of homework set. • Would like to see the partnership between home and school strengthened.

The inspection team found evidence to support the parents' positive views. Throughout the inspection, the quality of teaching seen was mostly good or better. Consequently, the teachers have high expectations of the pupils in their care. This results in very good standards of behaviour, positive attitudes to work and enables the pupils to make good progress with their studies.

The school has developed very good links with parents and they make a strong contribution to their children's learning overall. Inspectors judge that the quality of information parents receive about the children's progress is good. A small proportion of the parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework set. The evidence found during the inspection did not, however, support their views and the teachers regularly and diligently set appropriate homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment on entry for children into the nursery is average overall but there is a wide variation in some areas of development. A large number of children have above average attainment in the areas of personal, emotional and social development and in language and literacy. A significant minority enters with under-developed skills in these areas. Attainment in mathematics is average. By the time they complete the Foundation Stage at the end of the reception year they have achieved levels of attainment that exceed those expected for children of this age in language and literacy, mathematics and personal, emotional and social development. In other areas of learning they meet expectations.
2. Inspection evidence indicates that by the time pupils leave school at 11, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good and good teaching ensures that most pupils are achieving high standards in reading and writing. The introduction of the Numeracy Strategy has been effective in raising levels of attainment across the school in mathematics. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in these subjects at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment was in line with the national average points score in English and above average in mathematics and science. The fall in overall attainment and especially in English from previously higher levels was due to the unusually high proportion of pupils with special needs within this particular year group entering school in this key stage. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in these subjects was, however, above the national average. The newly published results of the 2000 tests confirm that there has been an improvement on the 1999 results to the previously high levels and inspection evidence supports this.
3. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained very high over the last four years. The 1999 results in writing and mathematics are well above average. Standards in reading are above the average points score. The 2000 tests results indicate that the percentage of pupils obtaining above average levels has risen in reading. Standards have remained at their very high level in mathematics and science.
4. When the 2000 results for both key stages are compared with that of similar schools, standards are also very high for English, mathematics and science. When results over the last four years are compared it can be seen that there has been a small decline in overall standards at both key stages. This is because of a significant increase in pupils admitted to the school with learning difficulties and special educational needs due to some changes in the local population and standard admission number. The school has recognised this factor and has effectively targeted the necessary support. Consequently, the 2000 results and inspection evidence confirm standards are now back to the previously well above average and high levels of attainment reported at the time of the previous inspection. The very effective implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, together with a strong emphasis on writing for a wide range of purposes have contributed significantly to these improvements. As a result the school has exceeded its targets set in English and mathematics. The 2000 results in national tests for both key stages confirm that there are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

5. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above national expectations. Pupils speak clearly and are eager to take part in discussions in their lessons. Opportunities are developing well for pupils to express their views and to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils write well about their experiment, and written opportunities for investigative work are good in geography, history and information and communication technology. Standards in reading are now well above average across the school. Most pupils make very good progress and achieve well. This progress is effectively supported by the very good approach the school uses in teaching phonics.
6. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in their mathematical skills. Their confidence in the handling of number is due to the very thorough teaching in whole class sessions and to the reinforcement of numeracy skills in the mental arithmetic sessions. The introduction of the Numeracy Strategy has been very effective in improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and the raising of standards. Good teaching continues throughout the rest of the school with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, pupils continue to make good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. By the time pupils leave the school the majority of pupils have a good basic knowledge of number and a good recall of facts including multiplication tables. The four basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are secure and pupils can apply these to work with decimals.
7. The overall standards of attainment in science are well above average at the age of eleven. A significant proportion of seven year olds have an above average knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. This is partly aided by the experiments they undertake in class; for example, they learn how exercise keeps bodies healthy through measuring increases in pulse rate. They have an early knowledge of the necessity for fair tests when, for example, investigating what plants need in order to grow. They set up experiments methodically, although their recording is not always carefully presented. By the age of 11, many pupils are attaining very high standards. Early in their final year, pupils understand the difference between thermal and electrical conductivity, and identify where they occur in everyday items like irons. They have a very strong grasp of what is involved in filtration, how evaporation and condensation are part of the 'water cycle' and identify changes which are reversible or irreversible.
8. Attainment in information and communication technology at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. All pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall in their skill development and consequently overall levels of achievement are high. As a result of the good teaching of skills, many pupils are able to manipulate the mouse well and navigate their way around the screen with confidence. Keyboard skills are generally satisfactory. The competence of Key Stage 2 pupils in a range of word processing activities and handling data is good.
9. Pupils' attainment in both key stages matches the expectations in what has been agreed locally for religious education. Pupils' knowledge of the Christian faith is at least satisfactory but their understanding of other faiths is more limited.
10. Pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in all other subjects across the school. Progress is particularly good in art and music at both key stages as a result of good or better teaching and the frequent development of skills in these subjects. For instance, pupils in both key stages develop a positive approach to art and show good development in respect of their creative, artistic imagination. The above

average number of teachers with art specialist qualifications, understanding and skills, enhances pupils' development in the subject throughout the school. Standards in music have improved since the last inspection. A music specialist has joined the staff and is making a major contribution to the development of standards. She is one of a number of staff with very good musical knowledge which enables them to teach the subtleties as well as the basics of music. Music lessons are interesting and fun. Consequently, pupils thoroughly enjoy them and listen exceptionally well. Progress is also good in history at Key Stage 2 where pupils make good use of first-hand source materials.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. The special educational needs co-ordinator is effective and ensures that pupils' needs are clearly identified. Good levels of support are provided in lessons. Pupils with statements are monitored regularly and external agencies are used effectively to support this process. This effective level of provision ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning and skill development in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The previous inspection found that pupils' behaviour was exemplary and that they had positive attitudes to each other and to learning. Over the intervening years, these standards have been maintained and pupils continue to be highly motivated and very well behaved.
13. Pupils of all ages, as well as the children in the nursery, enjoy coming to school and buzz with ideas and enthusiasm. They are keen to take part in the wide range of activities available and are very proud of their school. Supported by a consistently high standard of teaching, pupils of all ages approach their work with a genuine commitment and desire to learn. This is a significant factor in the good progress that they make. During assemblies, pupils listen very well and sing clearly and enthusiastically. During lessons, they usually manage to keep working right up to the end of the allocated time. For example, during a mathematics lesson, pupils were counting squares on a grid in order to work out the area occupied by a variety of shapes. They were enthralled by the progressive challenges set by a series of increasingly complicated shapes and this resulted in very effective collaborative working and argued debate. Pupils do not, however, allow their zeal to get the better of them and they rarely shout out an answer. Pupils wait their turn and respect each other's views. They are very keen to help during the school day and relish opportunities for responsibility such as becoming a school 'buddy' or acting as a representative on the school council. Pupils with special educational needs value the support given and work hard to succeed.
14. Pupils behave very well in and around school. They are friendly and bubbly and make very good company. Teaching and non-teaching staff alike lead by example and address the pupils with the respect and consideration they deserve. Pupils, in turn, respond sensibly and their mature approach to learning helps to make this school a calm and pleasant place to be. Pupils socialise well at lunchtimes and approach the staff with confidence. The 'buddy' system helps to ensure that any problems are dealt with at an early stage and that, if needs be, pupils have someone of their own age in whom they can confide. There is an air of close co-operation and relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good. They are built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect and are reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes during lessons. When required to do so, pupils work well on their own or in pairs or small groups. They have a very good understanding of the way in which their behaviour affects others within the school community. For example,

during a science lesson dealing with electricity, pupils were asked to form a group around a display of a clown so that they could see how the various lights and buzzers worked. Without prompting, the pupils arranged themselves so that everyone could see, with the shorter members of the class at the front and the taller at the back. Pupils are polite and friendly towards visitors and holding doors open for each other comes as second nature. This awareness and consideration for others is perfectly in keeping with the school's very positive and constructive atmosphere within which pupils are encouraged to do their very best. Although there have been two exclusions during the year preceding the inspection, these were the first for many years.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good. Older pupils undertake residential visits to France and Myddleton Place and these visits encourage pupils to use their initiative and become more independent. Pupils of all ages play a full part in deciding their personal targets and in assessing the extent to which past targets have been met. Pupils have to submit an application to become a 'buddy' and forums such as the school council encourage pupils to use their initiative and to have a voice in the running of the school.
16. Attendance is very good and is well above the level found at other schools. There are very few unauthorised absences and pupils arrive in good time for the start of the first session. Registration takes place quickly and time-keeping during the day is good. This helps pupils to make the most of their time at school and underpins their very positive attitudes and the high standard of work they are subsequently able to achieve.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. It is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in 71 per cent and very good or excellent in 31 per cent. The school has therefore built on the good teaching present at the last inspection by increasing the amount of good and very good teaching. The quality of teaching is generally consistent between each key stage but the proportion of very good or excellent teaching is higher at Key Stage 2. In this key stage, 38 per cent of teaching was judged at this level as opposed to 30 per cent at Key Stage 1.
18. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The nursery team work well together and plan very good activities that cover the curriculum for these young children. However the organisation is such that there is an imbalance between activities that children choose for themselves and those that are chosen for them. Day-to-day assessment is very thorough and the nursery staff have high expectations of behaviour. Children respond well and they have good attitudes to their work.
19. Teaching in the reception classes is too formal. Although the teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective, children are often required to sit on the carpet or do formal pencil and paper tasks for periods of time that do not match their concentration span. For example, children enjoyed sharing a 'Big Book' story and were stimulated into predicting unknown words and identifying words that started with the 'd' sound. However, this very good session was followed by more teaching of phonics and then pencil and paper tasks. This resulted in the children becoming restless. Planning for play is unsatisfactory. A deficit of time allocated to play means that children have insufficient opportunities for independent learning and little time to develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects across the curriculum through play.

20. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school is very good. Teachers use the new plans and methods effectively, building up skills in a particular area over several lessons. Lessons have a clear focus and teachers are clear on what they want the pupils to learn. Pupils have clear targets and they know what they are expected to learn. In the most effective lessons, which make up the majority, teachers plan and sustain pupils' interest and concentration throughout. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 6 pupils knew the purpose of the lesson from the outset. As a result they concentrated well and made good progress in the understanding of percentages. During the whole class sessions at the end of lessons pupils reviewed their progress and knew that the day's learning objectives had been reached. In a very good English lesson in Year 1 the teacher generated interest and enthusiasm. The pupils were highly motivated and successfully learnt when to use a capital letter and full stop in a sentence. They then worked hard practising their new skills. In the mental sessions during numeracy lessons, teachers challenged pupils' ability to recall number facts quickly although few of these sessions generated speed and excitement.
21. The high proportion of good teaching is based on secure subject knowledge. The quality of teachers' day-to-day planning is good overall but variable. The best lessons have clear learning objectives and these are linked to the relevant parts of the National Curriculum. Plans identify the use of time and ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged. In a Year 3 science lesson the teacher gave a very clear explanation to ensure that pupils understood the resources they were to use to conduct a 'fair test' to investigate the effect of adding extra light bulbs to a circuit. Good subject knowledge, planning and organisation allowed sufficient time for pupils to complete their work and draw conclusions from it.
22. Teachers employ good questioning techniques which they use very effectively in whole class sessions as well as when they are supporting individual pupils. They are skilful in matching questions for particular pupils so that all are fully included and suitably challenged. This is particularly evident in some numeracy and literacy lessons. Easier questions are targeted at less confident pupils so successfully building their self esteem while other pupils are challenged with more demanding questions.
23. Teachers working in the computer suite combine their good knowledge with effective methods of organisation resulting in consistently good teaching. Although there are a few occasions where opportunities have been lost for some of the younger pupils to save their work, the computer suite is well used to teach computer skills especially in data handling. The use of the large monitor was very effective in one lesson where the teacher used it to appraise pupils work and therefore support pupils learning.
24. The use of specialist teaching in music is very effective. As well as excellent subject knowledge, planning and the use of time and resources, expectations are high both in terms of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils therefore enjoy their music and make good progress, playing instruments and singing with gusto.
25. Teachers, with very good assistance from support staff, effectively modify teaching methods and resources to provide good support overall for pupils with special educational needs. The support assistants provide support within classes and by carefully focused withdrawal through carefully prepared and planned programmes of work. These are well planned in conjunction with teachers. They very clearly spend their time assisting the understanding and progress of targeted pupils. The pupils have good opportunities for small group or individual work with approaches and resources modified to meet their needs. For example, pupils effectively use adapted

materials for literacy to aid their progress in English and mathematics. Pupils effectively learn to improve their reading, spelling and writing as well as mathematics. What they need to learn is appropriately linked to what they do in class.

26. Teachers know their pupils very well and have warm, supportive relationships with them. Pupils are happy and secure in their teacher's presence. Most teachers control and manage their pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour. When these expectations are not so high, pupils fail to concentrate sufficiently and often disrupt the lesson by inattention and talking. In a very small minority of lessons, learning intentions are not matched effectively to the needs of the pupils, resulting in an unsatisfactory lesson.
27. The use of classroom assistants is very good. Teachers provide detailed plans for them to use with groups of pupils. These often include language to use, especially in mathematics. The use of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory and together with regular evaluations of lessons, this information is used effectively to plan for the next stages of learning.
28. The quality of teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' work is good. All work is marked but the quality of marking remains variable. This is especially so in mathematics where much work just receives a tick. The best marking contains evaluative comments as well as praise and encouragement so that pupils fully understand what they have achieved and they are led on to the next stage.
29. Homework is set regularly starting with the taking home of storybooks in the nursery. This is suitably developed into reading books and words as soon as children begin to read. The pattern is therefore established early on and the amount of work gradually increases as pupils move up the school. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are fully aware that this is preparing them for secondary school. Teachers make sure that pupils realise the importance of doing homework and returning it on time. This gradual development throughout the school provides good support for the pupils' learning in school and provides satisfactory opportunities for parents to be involved.

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

30. The curriculum has been much improved since the last inspection. The school has now developed a very good, long-term curriculum framework across Key Stages 1 and 2. This effectively caters for most aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The school has ensured that information and communication technology is developed as a subject across the curriculum. However, the recent appropriate planning for design and technology, in line with the new National Curriculum programme of study to be in place from September 2000, is not yet fully or effectively taught. The school has made appropriate arrangements for reviewing the new arrangements for all other subjects.
31. The school has put into place very good and progressively developed plans for all subjects. Termly and half-termly planning clearly outline the content to meet the statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum and they are effectively translated into weekly plans for each subject. These plans are evaluated to determine the assessed needs of each pupil and to influence further planning. The school's curriculum is properly inclusive and ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

32. The curriculum is stimulating and offers a good quality and range of learning opportunities for children up to the age of six at the Foundation Stage and, at Key Stage 1, up to the age of seven. At Key Stage 2 there is a very good quality and range of learning opportunities. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum are satisfactory at the Foundation Stage. There is at least a good breadth and balance representing the teaching of the Early Learning Goals¹ in the nursery, but this is not yet fully extended into the reception class. At Key Stages 1 and 2 there is a very good breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum.
33. The curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage of learning is starting to provide them with a good range of opportunities to develop their learning through first hand experiences. The interpretation of the Early Learning Goals for children under five is good within the nursery curriculum and relevant to children of this age. Planning in the reception classes is, however, still too focused on the National Curriculum and the approach is too formal. Consequently there are too few opportunities for independent learning through play. As a result, the approach to the curriculum in the reception classes is not consistent with that of the nursery.
34. The very good application and resourcing of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies at Key Stages 1 and 2 provide a very sound basis for learning. Pupils are given a very good range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening and reading and writing skills. The very good application of the development of pupils' mental arithmetic and number skills effectively supports the very good standards they achieve. Pupils are positively encouraged to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem solving and at Key Stage 2 in handling data. They have a good introduction to the use of shape, space and measurement, where they reach good standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 and very good standards at Key Stage 2.
35. Teachers are providing a good range of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning of basic skills through most subjects. For example, pupils apply measurement in science when conducting experiments. They effectively use their reading, writing and research skills in geography and history, displaying competence in their ability to write in an analytical manner.
36. Curriculum policies support planning but some are in need of a review. This has been recognised by the school. It has clearly costed a developmental plan for the updating of policies and for further relevant development of the curriculum, emphasising the school's clear focus on improving standards. Long-term and mid-term plans clearly identify the curriculum content for each subject. The school effectively uses the national schemes for literacy and numeracy and has adopted the national and local authority outlines for many of the subjects. The recently appointed curriculum co-ordinator has clearly identified the need for further development. The school uses a very good model for curriculum development, which effectively supports the long-term plan for each year from the nursery to Year 6. This plan indicates the skills children and pupils need to attain for each subject. This skills based plan is then effectively developed into the curriculum content for each subject in the termly and half-termly plans. These plans are then used to develop lesson plans. The whole curriculum is influenced through target setting and a carefully assessed awareness of the pupils' needs. All staff are fully involved in planning and the weekly plans allow for daily evaluations. When completed, these evaluations are very effectively used to influence further planning throughout the week to meet the discerned needs of the pupils.

¹ Early Learning Goals: The identified expected levels of achievement for five year olds on entry into Key Stage 1.

37. The quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs is good overall with some very good features. These pupils have an appropriate access to the broad and balanced curriculum provided by the school. They also have a very good range of relevant opportunities for extra support to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills as needed. For example, the school very effectively teaches additional literacy skills and plans modified work for pupils with special educational needs. It clearly supports their learning and helps them to achieve the same objectives as the remainder of their class. Individual education plans are generally well constructed to further support work matched to the needs of pupils. The policy of including all pupils in the full curriculum provides all with a very good equality of access and opportunity. Pupils with special educational needs are usually very well supported in classes and by tasks modified to meet their needs in withdrawal sessions. When they are withdrawn, mainly for literacy, great care is taken to plan tasks that are relevant to their needs and similar to those that are followed in their classes. As these pupils progress, staff effectively support them to ensure full integration back into their classes.
38. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent, with many teachers, staff and voluntary helpers giving freely of their time. The use of specialist teachers, in music and French activities and the employment of a professional footballer to take football classes for girls and boys, does much to raise pupils' standards in these subjects. All pupils benefit from the curricular and extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils participate in very large numbers with over 400 attending a very wide range of activities each week. These include netball, football, golf, cross country, gym, dance, rounders, cricket, athletics, choir music, art, handicraft, information and communication technology and French. Most activities are held at the end of school but there is a growing number of activities, including the French club, which meets at lunchtime. At the time of inspection, 72 pupils drawn from Years 5 and 6 were attending the club during the twice weekly lunchtime sessions being held every lunchtime. Here, pupils very quickly progress in their understanding of basic French. There is a Year 6 club on Friday evenings and opportunities are also provided for movement, drama and costume and making. There is a good range of outside visits and residential experiences.
39. Overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. The school's approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is implicit in its ethos and inherent in its teaching approach. It is also effectively integrated and reflected in its approach to other policies, for example those relating to pupil self-esteem, behaviour, racism, equal opportunities and personal and social education. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when a comprehensive programme for spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning was just starting to be developed.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school places high value on its pupils as individuals and upon their work and achievement. Its philosophy is firmly based around qualities such as fairness, respect and tolerance. They are helped to come to an understanding of the contributions each member of the school community can make. Pupils' creative imagination is particularly enriched through the arts subjects and school productions.
41. Assemblies are of good quality and always contain an act of collective worship. A quiet time for pupils to properly reflect on spiritual matters, regardless of their individual faith or belief, is always provided. During the inspection, this was further enhanced by live musical performances. In keeping with the theme on appreciation of people's personal talents, a visitor to the school gave a 'cello recital. Pupils were

fascinated and listened attentively and there was genuine awe and wonder that the 'cello used was 200 years old. The school's approach to the value of the individual was further enhanced by the response of the 'cellist who praised the pupils for listening so well and how their response had helped her performance. The singing assembly also involved the school recorder group and enhanced social and cultural provision in enabling pupils to perform in front of an audience. Teachers also draw pupils' attention to the meaning of the words of hymns and encouraging, for example, pupils' creative imagination when thinking about "purple headed mountains" or "rivers running by" when practising "All things bright and beautiful". A celebration of Rosh Hashanah was also held, involving Jewish pupils and enabling the whole school to share in wishing each other a happy New Year. The explanations about the symbolism of the bread, apples and honey associated with the festival also provided well for pupils' multi-faith understanding.

42. Provision for the pupils' moral development is also very good. Pupils have a very good understanding of right from wrong. The school encourages the consideration of facts when dealing with matters involving moral choices, and pupils are helped to appreciate, and properly consider, both sides of an argument. Pupils are encouraged to be polite and helpful and this is strengthened by the quality of their considerate behaviour around the school. Parents see behaviour and discipline as a strength of the school. As a community, the school has high expectations of its pupils and communicates its values well. Personal and social education is very well planned and also plays an important part in this. For example, right from Year 1, teachers lead pupils in discussions about such issues as fairness and encourage pupils to make their own, sensible rules about the sharing of playground equipment.
43. Opportunities for the pupils' social development are very good and the school has a very supportive pastoral system. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and a developing strength. Personal and social education also explores pupils' roles as young citizens. Pupils throughout the school are given good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. For instance, all pupils in Year 6 are monitors and take their responsibilities seriously. All pupils have the chance to undertake class monitor duties on a rota basis. Social responsibility is encouraged through the school's fund raising, for example for various children's charities. Older pupils are encouraged to become 'buddies' to help younger pupils. This is properly seen as a serious and responsible undertaking. 'Job descriptions' are provided and the pupils have to apply for the position. There is a relatively new school council involving elected pupil representatives from all classes from reception to Year 6. In a meeting held during inspection week, new officers were democratically elected. Pupils listened to each other's contributions with consideration, promoting thoughtful discussion when the representatives had the opportunity to report back to their classes later in the day. The partnership between adults and pupils is further illustrated by the fact that, last year, a teacher and one of the older pupils together attended a training course on setting up a school council.
44. Provision for pupils' cultural education is good. Curriculum opportunities to study and appreciate elements of Western European cultural heritage are often very good. This is seen in, for example, local history work and visits, the study of major artists, the French Club and trips to France, and the study and use of western heritage music. Religious education appropriately deals with religious issues. However, broader opportunities for the promotion of the pupils' understanding of contemporary Britain as a richly diverse, multi-cultural society have still to be fully developed. This is the final element in the establishment of the school's well considered programme for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which was started at the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The previous inspection found that this school looked after its pupils well and this continues to be the case. All members of staff work hard to create a welcoming and positive environment and everyone does their best to ensure that the time the pupils spend at school is productive and enjoyable.
46. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. Since the previous inspection, an on-site nursery has opened and the children are now able to benefit from the greater continuity that now exists between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. When the youngest children join the school, they are assessed and detailed records of each child's initial and subsequent achievements are maintained. As they move into Key Stage 1, and on through the school, individual social and academic targets are regularly set for each pupil. Each pupil plays a full part in assessing the extent to which they feel they have managed to meet their past targets and they also help to identify targets for the future. Parents are fully involved and have a very good partnership role as they are informed of their children's success in achieving their targets. Over time, a profile is compiled that details exactly what each pupil is able to do and this information plays an important part when assessing pupils' progress. There is an appropriate and sensitive balance between this system of termly target setting and teachers' ongoing assessment. During lessons, close attention is paid to the needs and abilities of all pupils and they receive well-considered advice and support. The school uses an appropriate range of assessment and the results are put to good use when planning what pupils will do next. The school is also able to pinpoint pupils who may need additional support because they have special educational needs or are talented in a particular area. The development and use of these procedures for assessment have had a significant effect on raising the standard of pupils' work and in ensuring that they make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.
47. Pupils are assessed effectively in English, mathematics and for their social, emotional and behavioural needs. The school duly completes regular reviews of targets in the pupils' individual education plans and statements of special educational needs. It therefore fully meets its statutory requirements. It usually successfully involves parents, teachers and support staff in all its reviews at all stages of the Code of Practice². The information it obtains from these reviews is used well to plan further input and provision for all pupils who have individual education plans. The school has appropriately identified a need to make targets in these plans more evenly detailed throughout the school. This is with regard to the specific skills matched to the National Curriculum attainment levels that pupils are working towards. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recently been allowed more time to play a greater role in monitoring and developing the individual education plans.
48. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective. The standard of teaching is high and, by providing lessons that are very interesting, teachers motivate pupils to learn and lay the foundation for a calm and orderly environment. On a formal level, good behaviour or the achievement of individual targets, for example, are rewarded by the award of a bronze, silver or gold 'leaf' that is added to the Tree of Achievement displayed in the school hall. Pupils respond positively to this system and proudly collect these leaves during the weekly achievement assembly. On a less formal level, class teachers know their pupils very well and relationships are very good. Any worries the pupils may have are dealt with sensitively and this helps to ensure that any such issues can be identified at an early stage. Teachers talk to

pupils with respect and pupils absorb such consideration, becoming very good at considering the impact that their actions have on others.

49. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Registers are regularly reviewed and the school keeps a close eye on individual attendance and picks out any emerging trends at an early stage. Parents reinforce the work of the school and ensure that their children attend regularly. Great care is taken when authorising term time holidays and all absences are scrupulously followed up.
50. Procedures for child protection are good. The governing body works closely with staff to undertake risk assessments to ensure the pupils' safety while at school. As a consequence, routine health and safety procedures are good and statutory requirements are met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. This school places great emphasis on working closely with parents and does everything it reasonably can to ensure that they are closely informed about day-to-day events and the progress made by their child.
52. The majority of parents respond positively to these overtures and hold the school in very high regard. For example, virtually all the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that their children enjoy coming to school and feel that the school is well led and managed. They are also confident that their children are helped to make good progress and encouraged to achieve their very best. Some parents, however, are dissatisfied with the level of homework set and feel that they do not receive sufficient information about the progress their children are making. The inspection, however, does not support their concerns and finds that both the level of homework and the level of information provided for parents compares very well with other schools. Annual reports contain detailed comments about pupils' academic progress and the extent to which they have achieved their various targets. Parents also receive topic sheets each term that give detailed information about forthcoming themes, subject by subject. In addition to an autumn term 'Welcome Evening', there are also various other meetings that deal with specific issues such as the introduction of literacy and numeracy hours. The school also hosts consultation evenings during the spring and summer terms and members of staff are always willing to meet parents should they need additional clarification or verbal reassurance about the progress made by their child.
53. The school prospectus is exceptionally informative and gives parents lots of really useful information. The governors' annual report, however, does not yet contain all the information it should.
54. Links with parents are very good and many are keen to contribute to school life. They offer valuable support in a number of ways. For example, they regularly hear their children read at home and many try to avoid booking a holiday during the term. In addition, numerous parents and grandparents regularly provide voluntary help during the school day and they work closely with the class teacher to offer well-informed support to the pupils. The impact of this involvement on the work of the school is very positive and helps to ensure that the pupils are helped to achieve and maintain a high standard of work. Several parents also help with the excellent range of extra-curricular activities and many provide very generous financial support for the parent teacher association.

55. Parents are informed by verbal contacts on their children's needs. The school does not send a suitable letter home to parents informing them when their child is first registered as having special educational needs and the implications of this. The school suitably informs the parents on their child's progress and how it is meeting the defined targets in their individual education plans. However, it does not send letters informing the parents of the review date, inviting them to be present at the review or to send their comments. There is too much reliance, at present, on verbal contacts.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Management of the school is good. The school is effective and it has made good improvement on nearly all the key issues identified in the previous inspection. Improvements have also been made in pupil attendance and overall standards in English, art and music. There is now a comprehensive long-term curriculum plan and provision for information and communication technology has significantly improved. There has been an overall improvement in the curriculum for children under five with the installation of a nursery. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for children in the reception classes to learn through play activities.
57. The headteacher provides strong, clear leadership. She has a clear vision and works closely with her management team to ensure that the school continues to build upon its success in achieving high standards. In doing so, she engenders strong support from governors, teachers and parents. This contributes greatly to pupils' learning and standards within the school. The deputy headteacher uses her non-contact time effectively to carry out duties which benefit the whole school, and also provides an example with the quality of her teaching. The headteacher promotes a broad curriculum. She attaches importance both to pupils learning literacy, numeracy and scientific skills and to them being creative in subjects such as art, music and drama. Much of her delegation leads to good co-ordination of subjects and key stages in the school. However, there are some inconsistencies in the interpretation of some school policies by staff in that there are variations in the quality of pupils' writing and presentation. Moreover, some children are taught using methods inappropriate for their age in the reception classes. This means that co-ordinators' expectations are not always met. However, the school has strong, clear values, such as in its policy for equal opportunities. Consequently everyone, including the pupils, has a say in how the school develops.
58. The governing body is very effective in carrying out its duties. Governors are highly supportive of the school and are fully involved in planning and looking at its development. They work hard with the headteacher and staff to meet the needs of all the pupils. Where possible, governors visit the school regularly in order to keep aware of the school's progress so that they are in a position to give informed help. They liaise closely with the headteacher so that financial decisions about such matters as the design and furnishing of extensions are based upon what pupils need.
59. Procedures for looking at how the school is performing are good. The headteacher, governors and staff are strongly committed to looking carefully at the school's achievements both for its successes and for areas where further improvements could be made. They thoroughly assess pupils' work, and continuously review everything that contributes to their learning in order to ensure that the school's aims are being achieved.
60. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that a very good team approach amongst staff supports the overall good levels of provision and consequently these pupils

make good progress. Staff working with pupils who have special educational needs are suitably qualified and funding is prudently and well used.

61. The special educational needs co-ordinator successfully manages the provision. She effectively teaches pupils with special educational needs across the school and successfully monitors and evaluates some teaching. The school effectively deploys its support staff for in-class support and teaching by focused withdrawal. This level of input makes a significant contribution to the standards and the good progress pupils achieve.
62. The special educational needs co-ordinator, assisted by the headteacher, has developed a good, suitably professional relationship with the external support services. They inform them suitably on the needs of the pupils with special educational needs.
63. The governor for special educational needs has a good oversight of provision. The special educational needs co-ordinator maintains a very good contact with the senior management team of the school and the governing body. However, in the governors' annual report to parents, the governors do not meet their statutory requirements to indicate to parents how the policy is being implemented. They do not indicate how funds allocated for the provision for pupils with special educational needs are spent. The school does have suitable access for disabled pupils, but the annual governors' report to parents does not state this. They do appropriately state the number of pupils at each stage of the Code of Practice.
64. There is a thorough system for developing all teachers' performance, which includes classroom observation, looking at pupils' work, interviews, target setting and in-service training.
65. The school's systems for making improvements and resourcing them are very good. Development plans are carefully prepared and costed for several years ahead, in order to support the view that is held for the school's future. The headteacher and governors ensure that best use is made both of its funding and of all available grants to secure high quality resources. For example, there is a rolling programme for continuing to develop the school's computers, and ways are continuously being sought to make best use of the premises. The school has proper procedures to secure value for money when ordering its resources or developing its facilities. Administration of the school finances is very efficient and effectively enables the headteacher and staff to concentrate on educating the pupils.
66. The school is appropriately staffed and there is a good mix of experienced and newly qualified teachers. There is also a sufficient number of non-teaching assistants who are suitably experienced and very well trained. Relationships within the school are very good and, by working closely and very co-operatively, the staff forms a very good team. There are thorough procedures for the induction of new members of staff and arrangements for appraisal meet statutory requirements. Professional development is well funded and all members of staff benefit from the wide range of courses available. The office staff and headteacher work well together to ensure that the school's day-to-day systems run smoothly.
67. The overall quality of the accommodation is good. The facilities for music, information and computer technology and physical education are of particularly high quality. Indoor facilities such as the hall and corridors are put to very good use. For example, part of the main corridor houses the library and is also used as a dining area and for small group work. Most of the classrooms are big enough for the

number of pupils in the class and attractive displays of pupils' work help to create a bright and interesting learning environment. Some classrooms, however, are more cramped and this makes the organisation of some lessons such as Circle Time when pupils sit on the floor more difficult. School grounds are spacious and include a quiet area within the playground and an enticing wooden play area. The caretaker takes great pride in the appearance of the school and its grounds. The school is very well maintained and decorated. It is exceptionally clean.

68. The school is well resourced overall and the teachers make efficient use of the available books and equipment. There is currently a shortage of equipment and resources in design and technology. This has been recognised by the school with the development of a technology area. Good use is made of nearby places of interest such as the Europa Centre and Myddleton Place. Older pupils are able to undertake residential trips to Myddleton Place and France.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. To further develop the effectiveness of the school and continue to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- improve the curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that planning provides a balance between teacher directed and child initiated activity;
 - planning activities that are carefully matched to the individual needs of children.
- Paragraphs 18, 19, 33, 56, 72, 78 and 83*
70. In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs 30, 55, 63, 126:
- fully implement the curriculum for design and technology;
 - fulfil statutory requirements with regard to pupils with special educational needs.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	84
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	29	4	24	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	417
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		103

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	37	25	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	32	32	32
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	57	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (93)	92 (91)	92 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	32	35	36
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	57	60	61
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	97 (95)	98 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	25	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	21	18	24
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	45	41	48
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	90 (74)	82 (72)	96 (85)
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	24
	Girls	24	23	25
	Total	43	42	49
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	86 (80)	84 (76)	98 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	12
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	334
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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)	17.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4:1
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30:1

Total number of education support staff	3.8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10:1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	743,157
Total expenditure	729,265
Expenditure per pupil	1,712
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,000
Balance carried forward to next year	54,892

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	417
Number of questionnaires returned	154

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	41	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	46	12	2	4
The teaching is good.	53	45	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	53	16	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	37	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	53	13	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	34	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	47	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	32	6	1	8

Some totals do not equal 100% because some parents felt unable to respond to all the questions.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The school operates an admissions policy for children to start in the nursery in the term preceding their fourth birthday. They then transfer to the reception class before they are five. A detailed analysis of entry assessment results, based on Hertford criteria, confirmed that attainment on entry for this group of children is average overall but there is a wide variation in some areas of development. A large number of children have above average attainment in the areas of personal, emotional and social development and in language and literacy but a significant minority enter with under-developed skills in these areas. Attainment in mathematics is average. By the time they complete the Foundation Stage at the end of the reception year they have achieved levels of attainment that exceed those expected for children of this age in language and literacy, mathematics and personal, emotional and social development. In other areas of learning they meet expectations.
72. Planning in the nursery is good and meets the needs of all children. The curriculum provides experiences for the children that are based firmly in the nationally identified goals for learning. Planning in the reception class is still too focused on the National Curriculum and the approach is too formal so that there are too few opportunities for independent learning through play.
73. The 56 children in the nursery attend part-time with the three year olds attending in the afternoon and the older children in the morning. The teacher, nursery nurse and classroom assistant work very well as a team and create a warm and secure environment for children to start their education. The unit is organised efficiently and managed and resourced well. The two reception classes work well together with the support of classroom assistants.
74. Relationships with parents are very positive. The school has an effective induction policy with meetings and visits for parents and children ensuring a smooth transition from home to school.

Communication, language and literacy

75. By the end of the reception year, children have exceeded the goals that are expected for children of this age. Children work confidently in the area of language and literacy and make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and in writing. They are keen to communicate and are able to articulate their thoughts clearly. Staff engage children effectively in both planned and spontaneous conversations, which help them to listen and respond appropriately as they work. Stories such as 'Elmer' are read with expression and enthusiasm so that children listen attentively and can talk about the events confidently, re-telling the story accurately whilst making good use of vocabulary. From the time children enter the nursery, staff provide good role models and book handling skills are quickly acquired. They enjoy books, understand their purpose and handle them with care. Following story time children participate well in question and answer sessions.
76. In reception almost all children know the sounds that some letters represent, for example the letter 'd', and name words that begin with that letter. They recognise that capital letters are used for people's names and during a 'Big Book' reading session in reception the teacher effectively used the name of the character 'Dan' to

teach both the upper and lower letter. The use of rhyme to predict unknown words excited the children during this session and they predicted 'train' from 'crane' and 'trees' from 'seas'. By the end of reception year all children have started to read and many are reading simple texts with accuracy. All children recognise the letters in their names and can match and write these confidently. Some children are beginning to sound out and write words such as 'dog' and 'drum' while others progress to forming simple sentences.

77. In the nursery children develop their language skills well in role-play situations acting out characters found in a jungle house. In the circus café in reception, children can take on characters and practise writing skills while preparing menus, however this good resource is under-used.
78. Although the introduction of the Literacy Hour in reception is effective in developing some areas of children's literacy skills, whole class sessions when combined with formal follow up activities are too long. These require children to sit for periods that are beyond their levels of concentration.
79. The early assessment of children is effective and this helps to identify those with special educational needs. Daily assessment is especially good in the nursery where staff keep daily notebooks to record observations of children's learning and this is used appropriately to support the next stage of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

80. The children attain above average levels of understanding by the end of the reception year in this area of learning. They make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding. They sort and match objects into large and small, can recognise repeating colour patterns and then make up patterns of their own. Teachers use imaginative methods of demonstrating patterns including painting their nails in a pattern using different colours of nail varnish. Children explore different styles of wrapping paper and recognise patterns of different coloured stripes
81. Counting skills are regularly practised in both the nursery and reception by counting rhymes and in counting children present in the whole class or in small groups. In the reception class the rhyme 'five green and speckled frogs' was extended to 13 so that all children could be included in the actions. This provided excellent challenge to some children. With the support of the teacher and the number line on the wall children managed to count backwards from 13 subtracting 1 each time. Incidental opportunities are used well. For example, when a line of children was lining up for lunch, a few children worked out that because there were eight children in the line, two must be missing as 10 children had school lunch. By the end of the reception year children have a good understanding of counting and count to 50 and some beyond. The Numeracy Strategy is used well especially when whole class sessions are kept short and are followed by practical activities to reinforce what they have learnt. For example, work on identifying pattern was followed by well planned and matched activities where children made snakes of play dough and copied patterns with counters, threaded cardboard circles to make clowns' necklaces and created their patterns by printing.
82. Through structured water and sand play the children develop a good understanding of quantity and successfully compare objects by size. Children in the nursery understand the terms full and empty in relation to containers they were filling in the water play. Children in the nursery are beginning to develop a satisfactory sense of time and can recognise significant times of the day such as tidy-up time and story

time. In reception children know the days of the week and recognise Thursday as being the day they use the computer suite. The daily routine of altering the calendar and recording the weather while children have a drink is effective and children excitedly select the correct words and numerals for the date and symbols for the weather. Teachers and support staff effectively promote the use of correct mathematical language. Opportunities are taken to introduce the language of position in physical education sessions in the hall when nursery children sit 'on the end', 'in the middle' or 'along the side of' a rope.

Personal, emotional and social development

83. Children make good progress and exceed the goals expected by the time they leave the reception class. Children show an enthusiasm to learn. They enjoy sharing their activities with other children and adults alike. They concentrate well and take pride in their achievements. Many children have high levels of confidence, they co-operate with one another well, take turns and have a good sense of right and wrong. Children collaborate well in groups, for example playing in the café or jungle house, and share equipment in the sand and water. They are becoming independent and concentrate long enough to complete an activity. However, overlong carpet sessions and lack of choice of activities too often stretch their powers of concentration. For example, a child in the nursery commented that he wanted to go and play when he was directed to go and paint after a long session on the carpet.
84. Parents rightly perceive that the behaviour of children is good. It is firmly based on the good relationships that have been built up between members of the school community and parents. Adults provide good role models in their caring relationships with children and with each other. They make good use of praise to encourage children to try hard, to raise their self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning. The nursery team provides good opportunities for children to play together through a range of activities. The good standards maintained in their personal and social development take place in a calm, ordered atmosphere of mutual respect. Children develop positive attitudes and good working routines from the time they start nursery. However, in the reception class there are too few opportunities for children to develop independent learning skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. By the end of the reception year most children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They can compare the homes of some animals such as the nursery rabbit and know that the needs of animals are different to those of humans. They understand the important elements of looking after pets. They know the names of animals that live in different countries and what they eat. Children start looking at the environment around them both in the classroom and beyond. Staff make good use of the school grounds, which builds a secure foundation to work on local studies as children progress up the school. Children use scissors well and cut accurately round marked templates to make clowns. They use glue to make both fixed and movable joints in model aquariums. They are introduced to early computer skills and use the mouse effectively to put characters and furniture into 'teddy's house'. Children are excited about using the computer suite but these experiences could be provided for just as effectively in the classroom. Children show a willingness to talk about their everyday lives and where they live. They explain family events in response to questions or as explanations of something they have done.

Physical development

86. By the end of the reception children have developed satisfactory physical skills. They are confident in their movements in and around the nursery play area and when using the large wheeled toys and climbing frame. Children play well together sharing equipment and taking turns. Many opportunities are provided for children to cut and fold paper, to build with construction kits, to explore materials including sand and water and to manipulate jigsaws. They have good control of pencils and use them successfully for writing, drawing and colouring. Most children can manipulate scissors to cut round shapes.
87. Teachers make good use of the space in the hall when children are given good opportunities to explore space. Through imaginative settings such as spiders in a jungle, teachers inspire children to experiment with body movements when trying to move like spiders. Children use space well and walk, jog, run and skip, changing direction with confidence. Good intervention by adults using children as role models provides opportunities for pupils to learn to move more imaginatively and with increasing co-ordination and obvious enjoyment.

Creative development

88. By the end of the Foundation Stage children make good progress in their creative development and attain levels of understanding and skill which are appropriate for their age. The children's expression of their ideas and feelings is developed through art, music and role-play. Children are able to use good skills to create observational paintings of sunflower seed heads and butterflies. Children are given access to a range of musical instruments, which they use to beat out rhythms to songs effectively. The use of a music specialist for planned music sessions is very effective. Children are inspired and they respond well using their voices to make sounds of various wild animals. They can sing in tune and play instruments with enthusiasm achieving standards that above that expected for children of a similar age.

ENGLISH

89. Pupils' attainment at the age of seven is well above expectations in reading and writing. In the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained levels above the national average in reading and well above the national average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment in reading is above average and in writing it is well above average. The results of Key Stage 1 tests in reading and writing over the past four years for boys and girls indicate that pupils' attainment in reading and writing is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils obtaining above average levels in the 2000 tests has risen in reading and has stayed the same in writing. A further rise in attainment was seen at the time of the inspection in both samples of pupils' work and in lessons.
90. High standards are maintained at Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment overall, by the age of 11, is well above the average. The results in English of the Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 indicated the pupils were close to the national average. Over the last four years, although results dipped in 1997 and to a greater extent in 1999, the performance of boys and girls is well above the average. The school's results in 1999 were adversely affected by the number of pupils, many having special education needs, who joined the school during this key stage. The school monitors very carefully the overall impact of ability on standards where relevant targets support progress well. This very good monitoring of progress has enabled the school

to bring about a big improvement in attainment in the 2000 tests. This improvement is being maintained at the time of the inspection.

91. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above national expectations. Pupils speak clearly and are eager to take part in discussions in their lessons. On many occasions during the teachers' introduction to lessons, pupils readily contribute their ideas. When asked, pupils clearly articulate their opinions. They listen with interest to their teachers and respond very well to comments. Good questioning by teachers ensures that pupils are drawn into the subjects being studied. Here they readily contribute their ideas, expressing clearly their thoughts with a good range of vocabulary. They benefit from the friendly and engaging atmosphere which teachers and support staff create.
92. Opportunities are developing well for pupils to express their views and to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils write well about their experiment, and written opportunities for investigative work are developing well in geography, history and information and communication technology. Very good levels of support are given to pupils with special educational needs. The adoption of the additional literacy strategy for pupils who have not reached the expected levels is having a good effect. Teachers and classroom assistants support these pupils well and give further, effective help to develop pupils' reading skills. Parents support reading well with their input.
93. Standards in reading are now well above average across the school. Most pupils make very good progress and achieve well. This progress is well supported by the very good approach the school uses in teaching phonics. The school has a wide range of well organised reading schemes and reading records are kept. These records are supported by teacher assessments in all areas of reading. Teachers and parents hear pupils read frequently. Teachers use time effectively to develop the pupils' reading competencies during parts of the Literacy Hour and the rest of the working day. Most pupils take books home regularly. Pupils know how to find books in the school libraries but have insufficient access to these libraries for research. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are very keen readers and know several favourite contemporary authors. Better readers effectively use expression and skim the text, scanning to find words and phrases.
94. Writing standards are well above national averages across the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are using suitably structured sentences and they produce sensitive and imaginative stories. Their handwriting is well formed. Higher attainers use good phrases and a variety of punctuation to enhance their writing. Across the school pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses well for spellings and words. At Key Stage 2 pupils' good learning is promoted where greater attention is given to marking and the drafting and development of pupils' work. Pupils are encouraged to word process their finished work and good examples of well-developed stories are seen. The school gives sufficient attention to drama and there are many opportunities for older pupils to be involved in developing drama scripts. Despite the very clear focus on developing the National Literacy Strategy, there are sufficient opportunities for the writing of poetry.
95. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Progress is well aided by the detailed individual education plans and with teachers and support staff planning and working well together. On most occasions pupils are very well included in the main work of the class. When working in withdrawal groups they have modified tasks to meet their needs very well. Here they make good progress which

leads to them being successfully included back in their main classes with carefully modified tasks to meet their needs.

96. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and create a positive working atmosphere to which pupils respond well. Class management is very good and pupils need few reminders to get down to their work and to give of their best. When asked to work in pairs and groups, pupils are enthusiastic, sensible and relate very well to each other. Pupils show very good attitudes to their work. The high quality of teaching clearly motivates pupils. They behave very well and work at a very good rate, showing high levels of enthusiasm for their tasks. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, where teaching was excellent, pupils showed very good attitudes, working at a very good rate when planning a formal letter. Here, the pupils showed a very good awareness of the differences between an informal and formal letter. They very well organised and developed its content. They organised the letter effectively, choosing words adventurously, with a very good awareness of the content and structure of a formal letter.
97. Teachers use their good termly and half-termly curriculum outlines to develop effective weekly plans. These very effectively implement the National Literacy Strategy and support standards. The evaluation of each lesson by the teacher represents very good practice. Where these are used well, teachers use their evaluations to modify their lessons further to meet the individual needs of their pupils better. Planning is influenced by the good procedures for assessments, the very good target setting and the use of resources matched to the pupils' needs.
98. Support staff are used well. For example, pupils are either supported in groups by withdrawal, where the teaching is carefully matched to their assessed needs, or in class. Here a very good recording system is used for each pupil to show how they have or have not achieved the planned objective. Teaching and support staff work and plan very well together. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology. The practice of pupils word processing their finished drafts can be further extended across the school with a greater use of their computers in their classrooms.
99. The management and co-ordination of the subject is good. The school has to be congratulated on further raising standards from above average to well above average levels, at both key stages, seen at the last inspection in 1996. The good teaching, the careful purchase and selection of resources to meet pupils' needs, together with the realistic targets shared with the parents and pupils, are significant contributory factors. These, together with a very good teaching of basic skills and the very good management and implementation of their National Literacy Strategy across the well-planned weekly input, leave the school in a situation where high standards can be maintained.

MATHEMATICS

100. Pupils are making good progress throughout the school and achieve standards that are well above national averages by the time they leave the school. Although standards fell slightly following the last inspection, this trend has been reversed and standards are now higher than they were then. The results of the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 showed that results were above those achieved nationally. The results of the 2000 tests confirm there has been an improvement on the 1999 results and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils of seven years of age are doing equally well and the results of the 2000 tests for pupils aged seven also show

improvement. The work seen in school shows that standards are above those found in other schools. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in school and achieve standards that are in line with their abilities. The work of the teachers in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy, together with the very strong leadership of the co-ordinator, has significantly contributed to the raising of standards.

101. The teaching in the younger classes is good with some very good features. Teachers build successfully on the firm foundations that are laid in the nursery and reception classes. This means that by the time pupils are seven they have a very firm foundation in number. They know the difference between odd and even numbers, can count in twos, fives and tens and recognise patterns in numbers. They understand the concept of division by 'sharing equally' and can use their knowledge about patterns of numbers to find out that if a number ends in a five or a zero, then it can be shared into five parts. They work confidently with numbers of more than 100 and those pupils who learn more easily apply their knowledge to numbers into the thousands. Some pupils work with numbers of less than 100 but still tackle problems involving the addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers. All pupils are beginning to understand place value.
102. The quality of teaching is good across the school. Pupils' confidence in the handling of number is due to the very thorough teaching in whole class sessions and to the reinforcement of numeracy skills in the mental arithmetic session. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been effective in supporting teachers planning. Teachers are becoming skilful at managing whole class sessions and adapting questions so that all pupils are fully involved. Although the mental sessions challenge the pupils and provide valuable practice some are dull and do not motivate or excite the pupils sufficiently. However, in the main part of a lesson in Year 2, the teacher was very clear in introducing work on place value. All pupils were fully involved in the main teaching session. Concentration was good and all pupils understood that 34 was made from $30 + 4$. About half of the pupils were also able to tackle numbers greater than 100, for example being able to split 627 into $600 + 20 + 7$. Sessions at the end of lessons are used effectively to reinforce the learning that has taken place and to build pupils confidence in mathematics. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher very effectively used the errors made by one pupil, working on the board filling unknown numbers on a grid, to challenge other pupils to help put it right. The questioning was such that the grid was completed successfully and the pupil concerned felt a sense of achievement.
103. Pupils use both non-standard and standard units of measurement, for example when higher attaining pupils use a tape measure to take body measurements. When working with money some pupils are able to tackle problems involving both pounds and pence while other pupils who learn more slowly work with amounts up to a pound. All pupils recognise intervals of time in hours, half-hours and quarter-hours while some are ready to work out minutes past the hour.
104. Pupils collect data on favourite things and record their results on bar charts. Most pupils know the names and some properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Teachers carefully introduce correct mathematical language and therefore pupils are increasingly using it with an appropriate level of accuracy.
105. Good teaching continues throughout the rest of the school with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Pupils therefore continue to make good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. By the time pupils leave the school the majority of pupils have a good basic knowledge of number and a good recall of facts

including multiplication tables. The four basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are secure and they can apply these to work with decimals, for example, in solving problems involving money. Through continued practise in numeracy lessons, pupils can manipulate numbers mentally and use mental methods for working out more complex calculations.

106. Pupils progress to working out areas of complex shapes using addition and subtraction. Their work on shapes extends to the properties of both two- and three-dimensional shapes including the number of lines of symmetry. Work on data handling is very well developed through the use of information technology. Pupils collect and record data in the form of graphs and pie charts.
107. In a Year 6 lesson on percentages the teacher challenged pupils well in asking them to explain methods for changing actions into percentages using mainly mental strategies. The tasks set were effectively matched to pupils' level of achievement. The whole class session at the end was used effectively to review and reinforce learning. Pupils felt that they had achieved success and therefore were well prepared for the next lesson.
108. In a very good lesson in Year 4 pupils were very well prepared for work on area. Relationships were very warm and the teacher motivated pupils with very good questioning skills. Tasks set were challenging and some suitably open ended to extend the pupils who learnt easily. Very good lessons in Year 5 extend pupils thinking about probability and encourage them to predict the outcome of throwing two dice. Good practical activities both challenge and support their thinking as well as creating interest. Following the practical work, higher attaining pupils used a grid to work out the frequency of obtaining different totals. The work of this group was then very effectively used in the whole class session when pupils explained to others why 6, 7, and 8 were 'winning' on their frequency graphs.
109. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and consequently the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well. Good links have been established with work undertaken in other subjects such as information and communication technology and the mathematics club is a good feature of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

110. The overall standards of attainment in science are well above average at the age of 11. By the age of seven a significant proportion of pupils has an above average knowledge and understanding. This is partly aided by their experiments; for example, they learn how exercise keeps bodies healthy through measuring increases in pulse rate. They have an early knowledge of the necessity for fair tests when, for example, investigating what plants need in order to grow. They set up experiments methodically, although their recording is not always carefully presented. These very high standards are confirmed by the most recent national tests in 2000.
111. By the age of 11, many pupils are attaining very high standards. Early in their final year, pupils understand the difference between thermal and electrical conductivity. They can identify where they occur in everyday items like irons. They have a very strong grasp of what is involved in filtration and how evaporation and condensation are part of the 'water cycle' and identify changes which are reversible or irreversible. Some pupils are able to suggest evaporation as a way of retrieving dissolved salt. They have an equally good understanding of balanced forces but their knowledge of living processes is not as well developed. Pupils continue to be methodical in their

experiments but do not gain independence in developing their own ideas on the basis of their understanding. Recording is inconsistent in its quality, partly because of differences in teachers' expectations.

112. Pupils enjoy science throughout the school and behave very well in lessons. Some pupils lose their attention during class discussions but this does not reflect on the quality of teaching. As they pass through the school, pupils increasingly develop self-discipline, which enables teachers to concentrate some of their time on those with particular needs.
113. Science teaching is good in both key stages. Consequently, pupils make good progress. Teachers plan very well. Lessons have a good structure and the different needs of pupils are met through the way groups are organised. Teachers follow a time for revision with a clear introduction to the main activity. For example, teachers carefully explain the need for a fair test when pupils investigate the effects on the brightness of a bulb of adding batteries. Following the experiment, pupils have the opportunity to discuss and compare their findings in order to consolidate what they have learnt. Teachers' preparation always includes having good quality resources available so that no time is wasted. During lessons, teachers have high expectations that pupils be precise both in what to do and in the words they use. Consequently, they work at a good pace and develop good scientific understanding. Pupils with special educational needs work confidently alongside their friends and are well supported by classroom learning assistants. However, the quality of marking is sometimes variable, particularly with regard to presentation. Inaccurate written statements sometimes pass unnoticed. Teachers encourage pupils to co-operate; in one Key Stage 1 class, pupils were given good guidance with a list of very simple but effective ways of working together.
114. The school has maintained the high standards seen at the previous inspection and the most recent tests show further progress. A long-term curriculum plan has now been drawn up and this ensures that pupils cover the entire programme of study. This includes experiments and interesting class investigations. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils discuss the reasons why their bird table has not attracted any birds at all and are taught to make sensible suggestions about re-siting it. In Key Stage 2, teachers develop pupils' investigative skills very well at a level appropriate to them. When, for example, pupils look at the effects of gravity on different objects, they are taught to make predictions and records which match their capabilities. The use of computers to support learning in science is under-developed. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership and has a clear overview of teaching and learning in the school. She ensures that the necessary quantity of good quality resources is readily accessible for teachers and pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

115. Attainment of pupils in Year 2, at the end of Key Stage 1, is above national expectations. For pupils in Year 6, at the end of Key Stage 2, it is also well above expectations. From the start of the children's education in the nursery, where the subject co-ordinator is based, there is a firm focus on the development of key artwork skills and techniques. For example, there is a thoughtful and professional approach to the display of children's artwork, which is used positively to enhance the learning environment, and high standards are set. By the time pupils enter the main school, and begin work from the National Curriculum, they have developed a positive approach to the subject and show good development in respect of their creative, artistic imagination. The above average numbers of teachers with art specialist

qualifications and understanding enhances pupils' development in the subject throughout the school.

116. Pupils' artwork is used very positively to enhance display work in all subjects throughout the school. For example, in English work illustrating the characters of Dickens or class collages arising out of work on the environment. Display is consistently of high quality and attracts and engages pupils' interest. For example, one lunchtime, a group of junior pupils were actively discussing shape, form and texture, using appropriate artistic vocabulary, when gathered around a display of clay models, including representations of human hands. This also illustrates a strength of the school in developing pupils' observational, critical and analytical skills.
117. The work of pupils in Key Stage 1 shows good levels of experimentation in their work and coverage of an appropriate range of media and styles. For example, Year 2 pupils were developing a good understanding of the range of images used by Clarice Cliffe in her ceramics work. This was being applied well to their personal designs. By the end of the key stage, pupils have also developed a good understanding of colour and can mix colours with confidence.
118. In Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in their exploration of visual information and can communicate well through the imagery they produce, for example the 'Dream Landscapes' produced by art club members. The range of work also emphasises the good coverage of differing styles of major artists, for example Year 5 studies of the Art Nouveau movement and the work of the American artist Tiffany, involving stained glass. However, the school needs to develop its multi-cultural art resources as the main emphasis is currently on Western art.
119. Teaching and learning are consistently good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. The use of sketchbooks is encouraged to enable the pupils to experiment and develop ideas. Art teaching also reinforces literacy work as teachers encourage pupils to explain words, meanings and personal interpretations. Numeracy work is also supported well through, for example, the study of pattern and symmetry. Art lessons are made exciting and interesting through a variety of teaching styles and approaches. Pupils of all abilities consequently become self-motivated to learn, make good progress and value the experiences offered by the subject. Their response to art is consistently good throughout the school.
120. The subject is being expertly led and managed and the chosen curriculum offers a broad range of opportunities for the pupils. Art also makes a considerable contribution to their spiritual, aesthetic and cultural development and in raising their self-esteem. In one lesson, for example, there was genuine wonder at the structure, shape and colour of vine and other leaves, and genuine appreciation of the quality of glazed patterns on a ceramic vase. This also illustrated the responsible attitudes pupils have towards the subject and acceptance of each individual's personal reactions to, and interpretation of artwork.
121. The subject has shown good improvement since the last inspection. The use of information technology resources to enable pupils to acquire and enhance skills in image manipulation is, however, under-developed and there are no portfolios of pupils' work that can be assessed against the new National Curriculum 2000 levels.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. No design and technology lessons were being taught at the time of the inspection. The subject is delivered in units alternating with art, which is the focus for the autumn

term. Judgements are therefore made on the limited evidence of a scrutiny of work, interviews with teachers and discussions with small groups of pupils. It is not, therefore, possible to make judgements on the quality of teaching or on the design and technology experiences pupils receive in lessons. Neither was there sufficient evidence to make proper comparisons with the above average standards being achieved at the time of the last inspection and the attainment of pupils currently at the school.

123. Some satisfactory design and theory work, particularly from Key Stage 2, is to be found in pupils' workbooks for the subject. However, the use of design and technology workbooks is not consistent with the result that some work is included in topic and English books. There was little or no practical design and technology work to be seen around the school as the pupils have taken most of it home. However, two models of vehicles, made by infants, in connection with a project on the postal service, were of a good quality. Unfortunately, the school does not retain an adequate photographic record or sample portfolio of pupils' work and models for assessment purposes, use as good examples or for demonstrations. These are issues which the school needs to address in order to improve the quality of its provision for the subject, and the way in which it records and assesses pupil attainment and progress. Discussions with the subject co-ordinator indicated that the school is considering digital photography to overcome some of these problems and to extend the contribution of the subject to information technology work.
124. Discussion with pupils in Year 3 about their work in Key Stage 1 indicates that their quality of learning and response to the subject is satisfactory and their attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils have sound recall of their work, for example in food technology. They can name the ingredients used in making scones and confidently describe each step in the process. They show proper awareness concerning matters of hygiene. They can talk about the tools and materials used to make frames for their textile work describing, for example, the joining processes, problems encountered and method used for reinforcing corners. Two good quality examples were seen as part of the scrutiny of work.
125. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 showed sound evidence of learning in retaining information connected with the subject. However, they show good levels of enthusiasm, especially when describing the powered vehicles they made for "The Great Egg Race" as part of the school's design and technology 'challenge' day. There was satisfactory use of technical language when explaining their research and development work. However, there was little evidence for the use of information technology, evaluations in their workbooks were limited and work on structures restricted. Although attainment appears mainly in line with expectations, there was no significant evidence of finished products to properly judge the actual standards being achieved by the pupils.
126. There have been some difficulties in the co-ordination and staffing of design and technology over recent years, and there has been a loss of expertise in the subject. Consequently, planning for the subject has been under-developed. A new co-ordinator was appointed at the beginning of term who is starting to address these problems. The school now has sufficient resources overall to support the teaching of design and technology across the whole school. However, priorities for curriculum development include the provision of additional construction kits to support, for example, work on structures. There is also a shortage of equipment to develop control technology work, linking with both science and information technology. The school has a good facility in its workshop area but this is designed for group work rather than whole class use.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Few lessons were seen, therefore evidence is taken from a scrutiny of pupils' work, planning documents and from discussions with pupils. Pupils develop good geographical skills throughout the school and by the time they leave the school they reach standards that are at least equal to those expected nationally. The structure of the curriculum is good and subject leadership is satisfactory. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, successfully build skills progressively as they move through the school. Much of the work in developing skills is based on the study of the local environment and is strongly linked with history, therefore pupils have a good understanding of the development of the area in which they live. Very good use is made of visits into the locality to collect first hand information. The youngest pupils consider the school and its grounds and older pupils consider Welwyn Garden City and its place within the United Kingdom and within the world.
128. Pupils in Year 2 have some understanding of locations beyond their immediate environment. For example, they know that they live in Welwyn Garden City and that Plymouth is 'another place'. In an observed lesson pupils discovered that Plymouth was near the sea by looking at aerial photographs. The teacher then successfully lead the pupils to identify a river flowing into the sea and established features, such as banks on either side that distinguished it from the sea. Pupils know that some features are man-made and others are natural and mixtures of these are found in both Welwyn Garden City and Plymouth.
129. Pupils are given a good introduction to maps by creating their own maps of the area around the school using simple map symbols. They are able to use their knowledge imaginatively by creating 'holiday islands' and drawing maps of the features they would like to find. They know the four main parts of the compass and know the names and positions of the countries that make up the British Isles.
130. Pupils in Year 3 were thoroughly prepared for a walk around the local area in a well-planned lesson. Having first identified the key features that they will find, they then decided what information they needed to collect in the form of questions using the headings Appearance, Facilities, Transport, Employment and Housing. Good links are made with mathematics through such things as shopping surveys. Any information collected is recorded in the form of graphs and charts.
131. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in their use of maps. They know what information can be extracted from them and understand different scale maps are used for different purposes. They can identify different size roads, railways, rivers and buildings of various types. They use four-figure grid references to locate positions on maps.
132. Through studying St Lucia they make comparisons of geographical features that make life different. They identify different physical features such as St Lucia being a small volcanic island and having different climatic conditions. They linked this knowledge with the effect of the employment and housing in the island. Pupils know that different climatic conditions affect the vegetation and crops that can be grown. In discussing places round the world that were familiar to them they described different styles or buildings linked to the climate of that country.
133. The management of the subject is satisfactory and geography makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of their own locality and other locations around the world. The quality of the resources is very good and they are stored effectively for staff to use.

HISTORY

134. As a result of the school's timetable and arrangements for teaching the subject together with geography as part of topic work, no history lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Judgements are therefore made on the limited evidence of a scrutiny of work, interviews with teachers and discussions with small groups of pupils. It is not, therefore, possible to make judgements on the quality of teaching or on the history experiences pupils receive in lessons in the infants' classes.
135. Discussion with pupils in Year 3 about their work in the infants indicates that their quality of learning and response to the subject is satisfactory and their attainment is in line with national expectations. Work in their topic books, for example, shows a sound, developing sense of chronology. They are able to make simple observations and raise questions about the past. When talking about their Victorian project, pupils make satisfactory comparisons between, for example, fashion, transport and schools in the late 19th century and their own, personal experiences.
136. Attainment of pupils in Year 6, at the end of Key Stage 2, is mainly above national expectations. For example, pupils make good use of first-hand source material, such as local census data from 1851. In discussion, they confidently identify key features of family and working lives, and subsequently create their own spider diagrams illustrating and analysing extended family structures. In their local history study of Welwyn Garden City, pupils make proper comparisons between life in 1899 and today. They describe things they expected and those which surprised them, for example, in connection with the water supply, public health and mortality rates. Their subsequent, imaginative, written work, for example 'personal diary' entries for 1899, is often of good quality.
137. Teaching and learning for the pupils in Key Stage 2 is good. The teaching approach encourages historical thinking. For example, pupils are enabled to distinguish things they definitely 'know' from source material and information they can 'deduce' or about which they can make an educated guess. Pupils are encouraged to think things through and consequently their explanations are well reasoned. Lessons are well organised and managed and good quality resources provided to support learning. Where the teaching is very good, this is further enhanced by the quality of questions posed to the pupils which also helps teachers assess their level of understanding. Learning is also enhanced by good links with their geography work, for example, when comparing features of historical change using 19th and 20th century maps. Across the key stage, there is good monitoring of classes and support, by teachers, for individuals. Pupils from all ability groups are encouraged to contribute and share their thoughts and information. They consequently achieve well and make good progress. In all but one class where the teaching style, although satisfactory, was less inspiring, pupils are well motivated and their approach to the subject is positive. Pupils take a proper pride in their history work.
138. The leadership of the subject is sound and the curriculum well planned using a thematic approach to topic work across the school. However, although assessment of pupil work is mainly satisfactory and often good, the quality of marking can be inconsistent. For instance, some teachers, whilst properly praising pupils for their efforts, give insufficient emphasis in their written comments as to how pupils can improve. The subject makes a good contribution to provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly in their appreciation of their local cultural heritage. There is good evidence for the subject's involvement in school 're-enactment' days, such as

for the V.E. Day celebrations. The subject also contributes well to pupils' spiritual development when considering the quality of life for people in the past and considering the implications when imagining themselves in the place of others. History is firmly seen as a living subject in which all pupils are actively involved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

139. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. All pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall in their skill development and consequently overall levels of achievement are high. Further evidence from teachers' planning, photographs, analysis of pupils' past work and discussions with staff and pupils, indicates that standards have significantly improved across the school since the previous inspection. The school has placed a strong emphasis on developing the computer suite and as a result all pupils now receive regular teaching in this dedicated area.
140. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils use the correct vocabulary to talk about computers. These pupils are confident with the network and are able to log on very efficiently. As a result of good teaching of skills, many are able to manipulate the mouse well and navigate their way around the screen with confidence. Keyboard skills are generally satisfactory. Pupils' competencies in a range of word processing activities and in their ability to handle data are good. The pupils' skills in control technology are effectively developed across the key stage through the use of the simple computer language, LOGO. For example, many pupils in Year 5 can successfully write a set of commands to direct an animated turtle to follow a pre-determined path on screen. These pupils are able to confidently describe the programming details to the rest of the class and teachers use this opportunity to further develop pupils' skills. Although pupils have had little experience of using computers to monitor physical data, activities are planned later in the year for pupils in Year 6.
141. Regular and effective teaching is ensuring all pupils in Key Stage 1 make equally good progress in a wide range of skills. A good feature is the use of information technology lessons to support the teaching of literacy skills. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson the teacher used the large screen to illustrate the key teaching points to the lesson. The pupils were able to respond well to this and drafted some text about Welwyn Garden City with the word processor, as part of their local study. The teacher provided good levels of support and reviewed the pupils' learning on the large screen to illustrate the use of capital letters and full stops.
142. All pupils respond very well to opportunities for using computers. They are very enthusiastic and show enjoyment while they work at the computer and share ideas with their partner. Their level of co-operation with others is good. All pupils are keen to learn new skills and are eager to show their results to others.
143. The quality of teaching is good across the school and teachers are developing their own expertise with the regular use of the computer suite. The continued teaching of skills in the classrooms is less consistent and often opportunities are missed to support other subjects. This is partly due to a lack of certain software and a suitable range of teaching methods to ensure equality of access for all pupils. There were no examples of teaching observed within the classrooms during the inspection. The best teaching in the computer suite is characterised by good subject knowledge coupled with detailed planning. This was clearly demonstrated in a control technology lesson for a class of Year 5 pupils. The teacher managed the pupils very well and all clearly understood the expectations of the investigative activity. Very

good levels of support were provided for pupils at workstations and the session at the end of the lesson to share the work of pupils and support further learning was managed effectively.

144. Management of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator has made a good start in developing resources and in monitoring standards across the school. Although the policy is in need of review, the quality of the written guidance for staff is good. This is enabling them to plan effectively for the systematic development of pupils' skills over time. Procedures for the recording of pupils' progress are good and pupils are fully involved in recording their work in their books to form a permanent record of their progress. This is a very good feature but due to a current technical problem, pupils are not able to save their work electronically. The school is making very good use of parental expertise to work alongside pupils and support the development of the subject throughout the school. Resources are now good and the ratio of computers to pupils is high.

MUSIC

145. Music is one of the school's major strengths. Standards of attainment are well above expectations. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. Before Key Stage 1, children use their voices expressively to make the sounds of animals and select appropriate instruments for themselves to create particular effects. Their singing is already becoming good, well pitched and kept in time. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils' attainment is above expectations. They are developing a good vocabulary to support their musical knowledge, such as 'dynamics', 'crescendo' and 'diminuendo'. This enables them to discuss recorded music and their own compositions and performance in a mature fashion. Consequently, for example, they learn to think about how they sing particular phrases. Pupils can independently create sequences of sound patterns and effects in order to contribute to a class composition, such as a 'storm'. They work confidently making sounds both with their bodies and with instruments.
146. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils' attainment is well above expectations. This represents good progress. Pupils learn to listen in total silence to a variety of music from different countries. They are then able, for example, to identify 'flutter-tonguing' on wind instruments in Webern's Five Pieces, and pick out the trumpet and celeste from what they hear. This demonstrates sophisticated appreciation of music. They can use what they learn from recorded music to produce and perform their own compositions. They contribute imaginative sequences of sound to a class score which records them pictorially. They then demonstrate exceptional control in performing the class composition, adding and subtracting their group's part as the score dictates. They confidently but sensitively discuss the qualities of one another's work and make constructive suggestions for improvement.
147. Music teaching is very good. Four in five lessons are very good or excellent. A music specialist has joined the staff since the previous inspection and is making a major contribution to the development of standards. She is one of a number of staff with very good musical knowledge which enables them to teach the subtleties as well as the basics of music. Music lessons are interesting and fun. Consequently, pupils thoroughly enjoy them and listen exceptionally well. Their self-control when performing is excellent. They learn both to play very quietly, but also with gusto when the occasion demands it. Pupils as early as Year 1 can sustain a regular rhythm against a song because of good teaching of the basic skills. Music lessons are very well planned indeed. Enough time is given to pupils to experiment while

teachers move about giving appropriate advice. In addition pupils have the opportunity to discuss their work so that they can refine it. Many lessons are excellent in blending all four elements of the National Curriculum programme of study: listening and appraising, followed by composing and performing. A very good sense of occasion is given to performance, not least by its being recorded.

148. Music benefits from an excellent special room as well as very good resources. The music co-ordinator has only been very recently appointed, but she is already working hard with the music specialist to develop the strengths in the subject. Singing has been targeted and is already showing further improvement. There is a good range of opportunities for learning orchestral instruments. Assemblies begin and end appropriately with music to listen to, further enhancing pupils' appreciation. Although pupils have referred to African drumming patterns, for example, more consideration needs to be given to using music in the curriculum to broaden pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149. Standards are in line with national expectations at both key stages. Good standards have been maintained in gymnastics across the school since the previous inspection. Swimming continues to be a strength and nearly all pupils achieve the standard expected nationally at the end of Year 6.
150. At the end Key Stage 2, pupils respond quickly to their teacher's instructions and show confidence and enthusiasm for physical activity. Teachers set a positive example, standards of dress are good and consequently pupils take a pride in their work. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 6 move around the hall gracefully to the music and guidance of the teacher. Most of these pupils can hold a controlled balance using small body parts. They can link these to make a sequence using a range of movements. Many pupils select and use skills, actions and ideas appropriately, applying them with co-ordination and control. They can see how their work is similar to and different from others' work, and use this understanding to improve their own performance. Movements are finished well. Pupils' standards are not as high in games skills. Progress is satisfactory and appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills. The limited amount of vigorous small team competitive activity in lessons for Year 6 pupils, however, limits the overall development of games skills. All pupils have an opportunity to swim at the local secondary pool during the year. The standard of coaching is high and as a result many pupils are swimming at a level above national expectations. For instance, the application of swimming strokes by many Year 5 pupils is good and arms are used forcefully to propel them in the water. These pupils listen attentively and persevere with their stroke skills during these teaching sessions.
151. Gymnastics is taught well in Key Stage 1 and as a result the youngest pupils display satisfactory levels of control when running and jumping and in balancing on the floor and mats. Pupils in Year 2 can stretch and move with control to prepare themselves for physical activity. They display an awareness of safety issues and carry the mats around the hall with care. Most pupils can perform a forward roll across the mat with control. They demonstrate a clear beginning and end to their movements. As a result of good teaching, the attainment of these pupils is above national expectations for those of a similar age. These pupils work well together in small groups. The behaviour of these pupils is very good when watching the performance of others and they respond by clapping spontaneously at the good work seen.

152. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and best in Key Stage 1. Planning is detailed and clearly linked to the schemes of work. Teachers dress very appropriately for physical education. They provide very good opportunities for warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of lessons. All teachers demonstrate exercises effectively to the pupils during these warm up sessions, and consequently, pupils are able to improve their own skills. Teachers are aware of pupils' abilities and monitor their progress accordingly. This is especially so at swimming lessons. Good use is made of pupils to demonstrate skills learnt and for them to assess their own progress in gymnastics. These lessons move at a good pace but sometimes teachers devote too much time for pupils to perform to the rest of the class. Consequently other pupils are observing for too long and therefore their bodies are cooling down. The teaching of games is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 with a wide range of games catered for in the planning. The limited time devoted for small group competitive activity in these lessons is limiting the opportunity for pupils to apply their skills in games situations. The involvement of a professional football coach for the teaching of Year 5 pupils is providing a good role model for the boys who respond positively to this provision.
153. The subject is led well by the new co-ordinator who is beginning to have an impact on raising standards in the school to the levels previously achieved. The quality and range of resources is good, and effective use is made of outside agencies and resources. There is good provision for competitive sport between other schools and there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Pupils' attainment in both key stages matches the expectations in what has been agreed locally for religious education. By the age of seven, pupils know the importance of the Bible in the life of Christians and how parts of it recount stories about Jesus. They know some of the most important Christian Festivals. These include Easter, where they are beginning to understand the symbolic significance of bread and wine. Some pupils already appreciate why the Romans disliked Jesus. They also explain well what Jesus taught. Pupils' knowledge of what is to be found in Christian churches is satisfactorily detailed, and they are also aware that other faiths have special buildings with different names. However, most of their religious knowledge is limited to the Christian faith. Pupils at this stage speak in detail about what they feel thankful for. They can make sensible suggestions about what they would change in the world if they could, such as ensuring people took care of each other and of wild-life. An interview with younger pupils indicates that they could attain above expectations by the end of the key stage.
155. By the age of 11, pupils' knowledge of Jesus' teachings has developed satisfactorily. They can recount some of the parables and explain their significance. They are aware that the Bible contains details of other religious leaders such as Moses. However, they find it difficult to give examples of people in recent history who have provided leadership on the basis of their faith. Pupils' knowledge of Christian churches has developed satisfactorily. They understand the symbolism of the cross and the different purposes of prayer. However, pupils' awareness of what is important to people of other faiths is under-developed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy discussing deep questions about life and death, and are prepared to make statements about their own personal beliefs.
156. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. This judgement is made on the basis of lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils. Class teaching ranges

from unsatisfactory to very good, with four in five being good or better. Where teaching is strong, the subject is enlivened with very interesting resources such as a Buddhist shrine. This stimulates pupils' interest in comparing Buddha Day with Christmas Day. Teachers encourage pupils to choose from a number of ways to write about a celebration, which produces a good response. Pupils' understanding of other faiths is well developed in some lessons. For example, in Key Stage 2, the story of Durgapuja is recounted in a way which interested the pupils, again with very good resources. The teacher then encouraged them to talk about how the characters must feel. In Key Stage 1, the teacher taught about breaking the fast at the end of Ramadan imaginatively through pupils sampling Muslim food. The rare instances of unsatisfactory teaching lead to inappropriate behaviour and the frequent necessity to interrupt the lesson in order to maintain good discipline. Teaching has led to most pupils reaching the level of attainment expected for their age. However, not all teachers give enough consideration to the purpose of writing and drawing in recording their thoughts and feelings. With the exception of one year group, recording is very often too brief to reinforce learning and unsatisfactorily presented.

157. Since the previous inspection, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith has been maintained. However, their awareness and ability to recall some knowledge and understanding of other major faiths is not as strong. Although this is not entirely the result of curriculum provision, some faiths are not revisited. The school has held a number of events to recognise some of the major festivals in different faiths, including interesting assemblies and some exciting art. Moreover, the co-ordinator has organised in-service training and information documents to support teachers. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are still good, and they show an ability to sense how other people feel. The co-ordinator has recognised the need to increase resources, including those connected with faiths other than Christianity. The developing portfolio of pupils' recorded work will help teachers both to assess and develop its quality. It will also support the hard work which has been carried out to interpret what has been agreed locally.