

INSPECTION REPORT

Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117368

Headteacher: Martin Lynch

Reporting inspector: Michael J Cahill
19623

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 October 2000

Inspection number: 225271

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Peascroft Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
Postcode:	HP3 8ER
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Nigel Brown
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Michael Cahill 19623	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Alan Dobson 9928	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
David Fisher 17520	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Janet Gill 18706	Team inspector	Special educational needs Religious education Geography History	The school's results and pupils' achievements
Margaret Owen 20417	Team inspector	Under-fives Information and communication technology Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
Beryl Rimmer 20655	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Art	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 423 full-time pupils (229 boys and 194 girls) taught in 14 classes. In addition 54 children aged three and over attend either the morning or the afternoon session in the nursery. Almost all of the children in the two reception classes were under five years of age at the time of the inspection. There are 119 pupils on the school's register of special educational need, including five with full statements; these proportions are above the national average. Fifteen pupils speak English as an additional language. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is below national expectations. Thirty-seven pupils take a free school meal. During the week of the inspection staff absence meant that one class was taught by a temporary teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is a very important part of the community that it serves. Outstanding leadership and high quality teaching have created a very pleasant and stimulating working atmosphere in which children learn to behave very well and develop very good attitudes to learning and interest in their work. The school is very effective at improving pupils' achievements to the extent that many meet or exceed national expectations by the time they leave. **Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School provides very good value for money.**

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership directed at improving the quality of education provided and raising levels of achievement.
- In the Foundation Stage, the school gives children a good start to their education. By the time they leave at age 11, teaching of an overall high standard leads pupils to make good progress and achieve good national test results.
- The school is very successful at promoting very good behaviour, very good relationships and very positive attitudes towards school and learning.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to make good progress.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal growth, particularly their moral development.
- There is a very good range of out of school activities and there are very good links with partner schools.
- The school, parents and the local community maintain a strong partnership.

What could be improved

In the context of its many strengths and its current priorities for development the school recognises the need to deal with the following matters:

- raising levels of achievement and improving national test results in Key Stage 1;
- the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning by subject managers;
- the use of assessment information alongside schemes of work to make sure that work is well matched to pupils' learning needs and builds on what they already know as they move up the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997, some 18 months after it was created by the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools. Since that time there has been considerable improvement in the overall quality of teaching and in national test results at Key Stage 2. There has also been improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. There are now systems for monitoring teaching and learning, although these need further development, as does the collection and use of assessment information to guide subsequent planning. The school now meets all statutory requirements and the overall quality of improvement has been good. The shared vision and strong partnership between the headteacher, staff, governors and parents provides a very good foundation for further development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

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

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

Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band for free school meals, in this case between 8 and 20 per cent (the current figure is 9 per cent). The trend over the last four years has been upwards, in line with the national pattern at the end of Key Stage 2.

Inspection evidence based on the work of last year's Year 2 as well as the present one shows that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards in English, mathematics and science are below national averages. Attainment in reading has been fairly constant at just below the national average over the last four years. The trend in mathematics and science has been a downward one over the same period.

By the end of Key Stage 2 inspection evidence shows that overall standards in English and science are in line with national averages. In mathematics, standards are above the national average, most notably in numeracy.

In both key stages attainment is in line with national expectations in religious education, information technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In design and technology attainment is in line with national expectations in Key Stage 1 and exceeds it in Key Stage 2. Attainment in art is good in both key stages.

The school sets appropriate targets for pupils based on what they can already do and provides good extra support such as booster classes to improve their performance in national tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are enthusiastic learners who are keen to participate in lessons and generally work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons is almost always very good or good. The atmosphere in all three playgrounds is very friendly and pupils have no concerns regarding bullying.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils mature well as they move up the school and are keen to accept responsibilities but there are few opportunities other than for Year 6.
Attendance	Good; attendance is above the average for primary schools and punctuality is very good. Pupils know that they come to school to learn and appear to enjoy it.

Relationships are a great strength of the school. Pupils' very good attitudes to each other and to their work owe much to the high expectations of the staff and the good example they provide.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The standard of teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of the lessons observed and less than satisfactory in only 4 per cent. More than three-quarters of lessons were good or better, including more than one-quarter which were very good or excellent. This is high quality teaching and is one of the main reasons for pupils' very good attitudes to their learning and the overall good progress that they make as they move through the school. The teaching of mathematics, including the skills of numeracy, was good or very good in 11 out of the 13 lessons observed. The teaching of English, including literacy, is also good overall, with more than 80 per cent of lessons judged to be good or very good.

Particular strengths of the teaching throughout the school include the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and the good use that teachers make of questions to help pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding. Teachers also have good knowledge of the curriculum and employ a good mixture of whole class, group and individual work to keep pupils interested and involved in their learning.

From the time they enter the school, children are very effectively encouraged to work together and, where appropriate, to work independently. Because of this all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are confident that they can learn. The quality of learning for all pupils is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides an appropriate curriculum with an emphasis on English and mathematics. All the subjects of the National Curriculum as well as health and sex education are included. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; the provision is targeted well and so pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and very good provision for their moral development. The headteacher and staff are particularly good role models for the pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring and friendly community in which pupils are looked after well. Their attainment and progress are monitored systematically.

The school maintains a strong partnership with parents and the local community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives outstanding leadership to the work and development of the school. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and, increasingly, by other senior staff. However, most curriculum managers do not lead the development of their subjects through monitoring planning, teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors know the school well and are committed to its further development. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is committed to self-evaluation and conducts a rigorous and regular review of all aspects of its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good; specific grants are used well to improve attainment. The school uses its existing resources well to provide a good quality education.

The school building is well designed and has been very well developed so that it now represents outstanding accommodation, ideally suited to meeting the educational needs of pupils in the early years of the 21st century. The school makes excellent use of the facilities, including the grounds. Plans for a further extension to the existing provision in order to raise pupils' levels of attainment in information and communication technology are very well considered and appropriate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The inspection team took into account the views of the 267 parents who returned completed questionnaires and of the 20 parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Their children like school and make good progress. The quality of teaching and the amount of homework set.</p> <p>They find the school very approachable and are well informed about their children's work.</p> <p>The staff have high expectations of children and help them to become mature and responsible.</p> <p>The school is well run and works closely with them.</p>	<p>No areas of concern were raised by a significant number of parents, although a few had different anxieties about homework.</p>

The inspection team fully endorses the many positive views of the parents. However, although progress is good in Key Stage 2, it is only satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Parents rightly hold the school in extremely high regard.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children start in the nursery at the age of three with attainment that is below national expectations, particularly in language and social skills. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was judged to be around average. Children make good progress, but by the time they transfer to the reception classes their attainment is still below that expected in all areas, although in personal and social development it is close to national expectations. This is due to the effective promotion of personal and social development by the staff in the nursery, which helps children quickly become independent and behave well.
2. Attainment on entry over the last few years has declined; this has been identified through the school tracking data and a good knowledge of the local area and its families. Now there are more children entering the nursery with special educational needs or speaking English as an additional language. However, children's needs are assessed and identified well and with early intervention by skilled staff, children make good progress. Children continue to make good progress in the reception classes, and by the time children reach the end of the Foundation Stage it is likely that many children will reach the expected levels in physical, creative and personal and social development. However, in language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world standards are still just below that expected.
3. In 1999, in National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was below average in reading, average in writing and well below average in mathematics. In reading and mathematics, the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was close to the average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. When compared to schools nationally with pupils from similar circumstances, results are average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicated that the overall levels for both the expected average Level 2 and the higher Level 3 were below average. Results for 2000 show a similar picture for reading, but a decline in standards in writing and mathematics.
4. Since the last inspection standards in the National Curriculum tests, including those for 2000, at the end of Key Stage 1 have declined. This is against the national trend. Reading has remained just below average, but writing has now dropped to below average and mathematics is considerably lower. After making good progress in the nursery and reception classes, pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 but this is not sufficient to ensure that they reach national expectations by seven. The school puts this trend down to lower attainment on entry and the higher number of pupils with special educational needs now in the key stage. In an attempt to improve attainment, the school put experienced teachers into Year 2, but this was too late to have the desired effect. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average in English, mathematics and science.
5. Standards of attainment when pupils left the school in July 1999, at the end of Year 6, were average for English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. In comparison with similar schools, results were similar. This represents overall good progress. In English the number of pupils achieving Level 4 was average, but below average for the higher Level 5. In mathematics, the proportion reaching both Level 4 and Level 5 was well above average and in science well above average numbers reached Level 4, with above average achieving Level 5. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

6. The standards have risen annually since 1996 in all core subjects in Key Stage 2. The trend is broadly in line with the national picture. Pupils' progress in the core subjects starts to accelerate in Key Stage 2 so that by 11, progress is good for many pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language. At least half of the pupils on the special educational needs register achieved a Level 4 in all three core subjects; this was not expected by their teachers. The school quite rightly takes into consideration the characteristics of particular cohorts when setting targets that are agreed with the local education authority each November. The school was delighted to have surpassed targets in 1999 and again in 2000 in all subjects bar English in 1999 where the target was, nevertheless, achieved.
7. The present Year 6 is not expected to reach such high levels, but the school has again set a target of 81 per cent of pupils achieving the national standard or better in all three subjects. The evidence from the inspection supports the view that standards in the present cohort are lower. English and science are judged to be in line with the national average and mathematics above it. Standards are higher in the number attainment target than in other areas of mathematics. The headteacher is determined to set challenging targets and with his staff is keen to meet them by continuing to group pupils by ability for mathematics, having booster classes again for all the pupils and providing extra help for lower attaining Year 6 pupils during the literacy hour.
8. Standards are in line with national expectations for information and communication technology at both key stages. Progress is good, and particularly rapid in skills acquisition, due to a greater emphasis now on the subject in the school. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with national expectations and although there has been rapid improvement in the subject in the school, national expectations are now far more challenging in terms of content than previously.
9. At the last inspection standards in religious education were below those expected with pupils making unsatisfactory progress in the subject. The school has addressed the issue and now allocates sufficient time to the subject and has implemented a scheme of work throughout the school. Teachers now have good subject knowledge and understanding and consequently pupils reach standards that would be expected at seven and 11 and make good progress in their understanding and knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths.
10. Pupils generally achieve at least satisfactory standards in other subjects except in art and design at both key stages and design and technology in Key Stage 2 where standards are higher. The satisfactory standards identified in the previous report have been maintained. In art, pupils use a wide range of media to good effect in both two- and three-dimensional work and develop their skills well, as they do in design and technology. Further information about pupils' attainment and progress can be found in the subject sections of this report in paragraphs 98 – 220.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress during their time in school. This is particularly evident in the core subjects by the time they leave the school at eleven. This good progress is associated with good provision and effective support provided both within the classroom and by small group withdrawal. Progress is also aided by the detailed literacy and numeracy targets on the individual education plans, where all staff work well towards meeting assessed needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to school life. They love going to school, a point confirmed overwhelmingly by their parents. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is apparent by their very good punctuality and the speed at which they settle down. They know they go there to learn and appear to enjoy it.
13. In lessons the pupils listen very attentively and are keen to join in. Most respond well to challenging questions. Throughout the school, pupils are well motivated and most work very hard when given an activity to do. They generally show good levels of perseverance. They positively enjoy those lessons that have a fast pace. Pupils are proud to talk about their work. Homework is taken seriously.
14. Behaviour is very good – a judgement that confirms completely the parents' view on the subject. The very positive working atmosphere in the school ensures that all pupils know what is expected of them. High standards are achieved without the need for strict discipline. Behaviour in lessons is nearly always very good or good. When it is below this high standard it is usually due to the teaching not engaging all the pupils. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school that is very conducive to learning. Movement around the school is very orderly without the need for constant direction.
15. Behaviour in assemblies is very good and at times exceptional, for instance when all pupils in Key Stage 2 listened for over five minutes to a piece of classical music with no hint of any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are respectful during prayers. Dining is a civilised social occasion helped by seating arrangements that ensure that pupils of different ages sit at the same table each day. Behaviour in the dining room is very good and noise levels are reasonable. Good table manners are more apparent with children having school dinners than those on packed lunches. The atmosphere in all three playgrounds is very friendly. Pupils are not concerned about bullying or racist behaviour and express complete confidence in the staff's ability to solve any problems. There have been two temporary exclusions in recent times.
16. Pupils are very polite and friendly. They get on very well with each other. Relationships between the pupils and adults in the school are very good and reflect friendship, trust and respect. Adults do not shout. Pupils are not cheeky. In the classroom, pupils co-operate well and know the importance of taking turns and sharing. They are happy to listen to each other's views. Pupils mature well as they move up the school and by Year 6 most are well rounded and confident, capable of expressing their views clearly and articulately. Pupils make good use of the opportunities for taking responsibility – although these tend to be concentrated in Year 6. Throughout the school equipment and books are handled with care and respect. Pupils keep their classrooms tidy and there is virtually no litter around the school or in the extensive grounds.
17. Collectively, the pupils' very positive attitudes, the very friendly atmosphere and very good behaviour are strengths of the school and provide a very firm foundation for their learning.
18. Attendance at the school (95.4 per cent) is better than the national average for primary schools. A significant number of absences are as a result of parents taking holidays in term time. Attendance registers are very well kept and meet statutory requirements. Registration is prompt and efficient and gives a positive start to the session.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. **The overall quality of teaching is high.** Of the lessons observed 27 per cent were judged to be very good or excellent, a further 51 per cent were good, 18 per cent were satisfactory and only 4 per cent were unsatisfactory. This represents an enormous improvement since the last inspection when only 7 per cent were very good and 13 per cent were unsatisfactory.
20. Examples of very good or excellent teaching were observed in all three key stages. In the Foundation Stage, teaching was never less than satisfactory and 88 per cent was good or very good. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the proportions of lessons that were judged to be at least good were 65 and 81 per cent respectively. This overall high quality of teaching makes a substantial contribution towards promoting the pupils' very good level of enthusiasm for school and their positive attitudes towards their work and learning. In Key Stage 2 it is also the most significant factor in raising the levels of achievement, most notably in English, mathematics and science, and in improving the quality of pupils' learning.
21. The teaching of the literacy hour is rarely less than satisfactory in either key stage. In Key Stage 1 over 70 per cent of lessons were good or better. In Key Stage 2, 86 per cent of lessons were good or better, including 36 per cent that were very good. In mathematics, including the National Numeracy Strategy, teaching is very rarely less than satisfactory. All of the lessons in Key Stage 1 and more than three-quarters of those seen in Key Stage 2 were good or very good.
22. **There are a number of features common to the good or better teaching seen during the inspection and these include:**
Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and teachers manage their classes well. Praise is given when it is earned and pupils are encouraged to give of their best. This approach, combined with thorough planning, underpins the overall high standard of teaching.
23. **There are two other elements that were very obvious in the best lessons observed, learning objectives and questioning:**
24. **Learning objectives**
In most lessons teachers had identified clearly what was going to be learned. In many of the better lessons the choice of teaching methods and activities followed directly from this. For example, the teacher of a Year 3 class intended pupils to learn that humans need an adequate and varied diet to keep healthy and that a healthy diet includes a variety of foods. In the third and final lesson of a series on this topic she effectively revised what they should already know through question and discussion. She then set a very relevant task of planning a balanced diet and continually moved round the class, checking on the progress of individual pupils and challenging them if, for example, their diet appeared to be too full of pasta, potatoes and bread! The end of lesson review with the whole class effectively helped pupils to consolidate their learning and provided the teacher with further evidence of how successful the teaching had been.
25. In this lesson, the pupils knew what they were intended to learn and also had time targets for the completion of tasks. Both of these factors helped to keep pupils motivated, well behaved and working. In many of the best lessons seen teachers made a point of sharing with the pupils what the plan was for the lesson and this undoubtedly made a major contribution to the quality of learning and pupils' progress. There was much good practice observed both in the clarity of identifying learning objectives and in sharing them with pupils. This is not yet an invariable part of all teachers' practice.

26. **Question and answer**

In many of the best lessons observed, teachers used questions very effectively throughout the lesson. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson the teacher's questions helped pupils to review and think about what they knew about the conditions of Victorian children and to link this with the assembly of the previous day about the work of Dr Barnado. In circulating round the class while pupils were working at their tasks the teacher with Year 2 pupils who were learning about common two-dimensional shapes continually checked up on progress and challenged understanding. As a result of her questions and observations she noticed that there was a misunderstanding in terms of recognising triangles that were 'upside-down'. She effectively used this information in the concluding part of the lesson to clear up this misunderstanding and to consolidate the pupils' learning about the correct names and properties of the shapes. Questioning which confirms, extends and challenges pupils' learning is an essential ingredient of successful teaching.

27. **Other features of the good teaching observed:**

- a good pace to the lessons, with a good mix of whole class and individual work that helps to keep pupils' interest and concentration;
- teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour;
- classroom organisation which gave pupils ready access to prompts and aids such as number lines and squares, punctuation and writing guidelines.

28. **Areas for further improvement**

Where teaching was less stimulating or successful the reason often was the absence of some of the above qualities. In a few lessons learning intentions were not specific enough and the methods chosen and tasks set did not adequately match the needs of the pupils. In addition, unlike the examples given above, teachers did not use what they knew about the previous learning of pupils when planning work. The overuse of worksheets which neither stimulated pupils' interest nor matched their learning needs was also a feature of some less successful lessons.

29. The school recognises the need to accelerate its programme of classroom observation by subject managers in order to promote the sharing of the elements of very good practice in planning and teaching which were observed in all classrooms.

30. **Learning and progress**

As a result of the high quality teaching pupils show a real interest and enthusiasm for learning and become confident in their own ability to learn. This is an essential basis for further learning and goes a long way towards explaining why achievement compared with national expectations at 11 is so much better than it was at three. Pupils' progress in individual lessons was good or better in 79 per cent of the lessons observed and this figure exactly matches the proportion of teaching that was judged to be good or better. These figures speak for themselves.

31. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are very well supported. Other pupils with special educational needs have good individual education plans and are generally taught alongside their peers. Good and well-organised provision enables these pupils to make good progress throughout the school.

32. **The quality of marking is variable.** At best there are examples of marking, particularly in Key Stage 2, that provide very good feedback to pupils. Some teachers take a lot of trouble to make sure that pupils understand why what they have done is good (or not) and what needs to be done to improve further, including doing corrections. These practices provide good support for further learning and progress. On the other hand there were examples in the work seen from previous years where the marking was restricted to ticks

and no direction was given to pupils in terms of improving the quality of their work. There is need for effective monitoring of this aspect of teaching by subject managers

33. **Homework** is regularly set and is making an important contribution to raising standards. Although a small number of parents expressed concerns about homework, the inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with parents who said that the quality of teaching is good and who are very happy with the quantity, quality and regularity of homework. Further information about teaching and the learning and progress of pupils can be found in each of the subject sections (paragraphs 98 – 220).

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

34. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and includes religious education and sex education. All subjects are taught and allocated time in line with national recommendations. Priority is given to English and mathematics, with the result that by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils achieve the standards expected of their age and approximately a quarter achieve above average standards.
35. **Improvements since the last inspection**
There have been improvements in the curriculum provision since the previous inspection. The key issues relating to the early years, religious education and planning have been successfully addressed. The transition from the early years to the National Curriculum is now better managed. Additional time has been allocated to religious education to enable pupils to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers with parallel classes plan together to ensure pupils receive a similar curriculum. A significant improvement has been the development of information technology. This subject is well resourced and pupils are being given increasing opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. However, there is a weakness in how the subject is organised. Pupils are taught a skill and allocated time during the week to use computers to extend their knowledge. The activities are not always related to the lessons they are missing.
36. **Curriculum planning**
The school has undergone a period of change in curriculum planning. Following the previous inspection, the school ensured that its own schemes of work became central to teachers' planning. This term, new schemes of work have been introduced in all subjects. They ensure coverage of the National Curriculum but the units of work do not successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are keeping rigidly to termly planning and not using day-to-day assessment of pupils to ensure work is matched to pupils' prior attainment. Too often group activities are not sufficiently targeted to meet the needs of individuals. For example, in Year 4 the unit of work on 'Living things in the environment' includes the study of feeding relationships and the importance of a food chain. The level of much of this work is beyond many pupils' understanding. Pupils spend time completing worksheets but are unable to explain *producer, consumer, predator and prey*.
37. **Literacy and Numeracy**
The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been introduced and are now central to teacher's planning. The school has recognised the need to develop pupils' writing skills and has adjusted the timetable accordingly. Lessons are planned according to the literacy framework on four days with time allocated to developing extended writing on the fifth day. This organisation has not been established long enough for a judgement to be made on the impact on standards.
38. Numeracy lessons are well planned and pupils show improving skills in mental computation and understanding of number. Skills in using and applying knowledge

are less well developed. Pupils have few planned opportunities to extend their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

39. **The Foundation Stage**

The school provides an appropriate curriculum for children less than five years of age. The well-planned programme covers all the recognised areas of learning that young children should experience. A broad range of imaginative activities is planned. The activities vary from day to day ensuring that children's interest and curiosity are constantly engaged. In developing literacy skills, the children respond positively to their teacher and the nursery nurse. Following a group activity involving recognising letter sounds, each child used their knowledge of initial sounds to identify an activity they would like to do.

40. A significant strength of the curriculum is the importance placed on the development of social skills. After less than half a term in school, all children show confidence in working and playing together. They relate well to adults and show enjoyment in learning. The curriculum effectively prepares children for starting on the National Curriculum whilst successfully retaining an emphasis on exploration and experience.

41. Since the previous inspection, an outdoor area has been created for children in the nursery and reception classes. This includes a sandpit; large play apparatus, a roadway with vehicles and an area for digging. All of these developments have made a positive contribution to the quality of education provided.

42. **Pupils with special educational needs**

The provision for, and support of, pupils with special educational needs are good. These pupils have full access to all strands of the National Curriculum. Their specific needs are recorded in detailed individual education plans and appropriate targets are set. Attainment and progress are systematically monitored and pupils make good progress.

43. **Pupils who are learning English as an additional language**

Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported. They are fully integrated in all lessons and make good progress (see paragraphs 91 – 93).

44. **Out of school activities**

A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. Over 230 pupils participate in these activities, which include competitive team games of football, netball and athletics. Opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in rugby, art, gymnastics, gardening and choir. These activities are organised by 11 members of the teaching staff. Extra-curricular activities in music are currently restricted to a newly formed and well-attended recorder club.

45. Many day and residential visits are arranged to broaden the curriculum. These contribute significantly to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit to places such as Sheringham, Pendine and the Isle of Wight. Day visits are made to the National History, British and Imperial War Museums as part of science and history units of work. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visits to the Millennium Dome and to see Starlight Express. Year 6 pupils visit Osborne House as part of a Victorian project. They confidently describe the lives of the rich and poor during this period.

46. **Homework**

The school has successfully established homework agreements with parents and pupils. Parents are informed of termly curriculum plans and encouraged to support their children's learning. Pupils have regular homework that includes spellings, multiplication tables, worksheets and reading. Each pupil has a homework diary and diligently completes tasks.

During the inspection, Year 6 pupils watched an episode of *Oliver* and for homework planned to write their own account of the story. All pupils completed the task and took pride in the presentation of their work. Approximately a third of the pupils used word processing skills to present typed copies of their story. They showed enthusiasm for the topic and valued their teacher's comments and advice.

47. Personal, social and health education

The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils are valued and during assemblies and lessons are continually reminded of the importance of respecting each other. They are asked to reflect on how their actions could improve the school. There is no written whole school policy for this area of the curriculum although good practice permeates the day. Sex education and the dangers of drug misuse are taught sensitively as part of the science curriculum. Pupils discuss both of these aspects confidently.

48. Links

Very good links are maintained with local schools. Pupils' participate in a wide range of activities and teachers are involved in in-service training and moderation of pupils' work. Last year the school joined with neighbouring schools to produce a CD in aid of the Children's Charity. This proved extremely popular and over £900 was raised to support the charity. Links with the secondary schools are very good. Teachers liaise effectively with secondary colleagues when producing curriculum policies and pupils are very well prepared for secondary education. The school has established good links with colleges of further education and effectively supports teacher training.

49. There are good links with the community and local industry. The school has benefited by receiving donations of furniture and reprographic equipment. Liaison is particularly good with British Telecom, Fuji Film and the Yorkshire Bank. Members of staff of British Telecom and of the University of the Third Age regularly visit the school to help pupils with reading. The headteacher and staff are highly regarded by members of the local and wider community who recognise the very efficient way the school is led and managed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

50. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, social and cultural development of its pupils. Through the good examples set by the headteacher and staff, in all aspects of school life, there is very good provision for their moral development.

51. Pupils benefit from the school's pleasant and attractive surroundings. The well planned provision of trees, flowers, water features and quiet areas develops pupils' aesthetic awareness and encourages calm and reflective thought. School assemblies make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The headteacher successfully creates a calm, thoughtful atmosphere through his quiet manner, the lighting of candles and the playing of music as pupils enter and leave the hall. Pupils understand the meaning of prayer and show respect for special moments of reflection on every occasion. Assemblies fulfil the requirements for collective worship well. Through well-told stories pupils gain insights into the lives of famous people, such as Gladys Aylward and Elizabeth Fry. They are encouraged to think deeply about how much difference they made to the lives of others.

52. During lessons, the youngest pupils are provided with planned opportunities to consider their feelings when, during milk time, they talk about how they know if people are feeling sad. They reflect upon fundamental questions of life in an excellent history lesson in Year 2, when the teacher lights a candle to help pupils to remember people who may have died. She guides their reflections with sensitivity and feeling. In most cases, however, adults

guide pupils' thinking and there are few opportunities for pupils to share or contribute their own thoughts and ideas sufficiently.

53. Provision for moral development is very good. The school sets very high standards of behaviour and conduct for both pupils and adults, which are clearly described in its policies and documentation. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong, based on principles and values rather than sanctions and rewards. These principles are clearly communicated at every opportunity to parents and pupils to good effect and behaviour is very good. There are good relationships between pupils and adults and headteacher and staff provide very good role models. Assembly themes are carefully chosen to reinforce moral principles, such as the importance of telling the truth, in Key Stage 1. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities for discussion about their own ideas of moral issues in Key Stage 2.
54. There is a strong link between the provision for pupils' social and moral development. Teachers know pupils well. Adults' high expectations, the good relationships and good examples set encourage good manners and polite behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtimes. Pupils are given opportunities to take on a wide variety of responsibilities in Year 6, such as register collection, tidying resource areas and lost property, contributing to the organisation of their school community. Monitors are voted for by class members and carry out their responsibilities seriously and sensibly. Pupils take part in team activities, encouraging co-operation and a sense of pride in their school. They have many opportunities to relate to one another in different environments when they go on visits, including residential trips to South Wales, Sheringham and the Isle of Wight. These contribute well to their personal and social development. However, pupils remain in their ability groupings for all subjects in many classes and this reduces their opportunities to relate to pupils with a variety of interests and aptitudes. There is also a risk of groups being stereotyped in some classes.
55. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. In art lessons, pupils develop an appreciation of the work of famous artists, such as Monet, Van Gogh and Jackson Pollock. Their efforts, based on artists' different styles, are prominently displayed along with prints of famous works around the school. Pupils have visited galleries, museums and a sculpture park to develop their cultural awareness. In literacy lessons pupils are introduced to a good range of classical authors and they benefit from visits from writers and poets. Pupils learn to value and respect the customs and practices of other cultures when they listen to music in assemblies from, for example, China. A visit from a steel band contributed suitably to pupils' knowledge of Afro-Caribbean culture. Since the last inspection, the school has broadened pupils' limited experience of ethnic minority groups with visits to a mosque and a day visit from a school with a high percentage of pupils from different ethnic groups to their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The level of care taken over the pupils' welfare is very good. This is a very friendly, caring community where pupils are highly valued as individuals and treated at all times with respect. The tone is set by the headteacher who has a very high profile in the school. He knows each child individually and throughout the school pupils look upon him as a friend they can talk to. He provides an excellent role model. This very positive approach to care and consideration set by the headteacher permeates the whole school resulting in a close bond between children and adults. The pupils are well looked after at all times. They are right to feel safe and secure.
57. Health and safety is taken seriously – safety is stressed in lessons, any accidents are correctly recorded, equipment is checked and the premises are formally inspected on a

regular basis. Child protection procedures are sound. The responsible persons have been trained and staff are familiar with the school's procedures. Relationships with the outside agencies are effective.

58. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and these are effective. Although the attendance rate is good, the school is not complacent. Improving the attendance figures is considered important. Very good records are kept with a regular analysis of each class's performance. Pupils with poor attendance are monitored closely. The school tries hard to bring home to parents the implications of taking holidays in term time although holidays still represent a significant proportion of absences. The school has very few pupils with a record of consistently poor attendance.
59. The school's policy for encouraging good behaviour is very effective and is based on high expectations. Pupils fully understand the consequences of any inappropriate behaviour. Very good systems exist for recording any serious cases of bad behaviour including bullying and racism. Bullying is not a problem in the school, but if it occurs the procedures are clear. Pupils express confidence in the staff's ability to sort out any problems. There are no issues of racism in the school.
60. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is just about satisfactory. The headteacher knows the pupils well as do the individual class teachers. However, records are generally informal and would be more secure with a standardised whole school approach to the subject involving a written record.
61. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. A wide range of tests, including reading and standard assessment tests, is used to measure attainment. Results are very effectively monitored and analysed by the headteacher and assessment manager. This year a number of areas for discussion and development have been agreed. For example, the school recognised that in Key Stage 1, pupils' progress in spelling is inconsistent and needs to be more structured. The literacy sessions have resulted in an improvement in reading but are not helping to improve writing. The school timetable has been adjusted to give more time to writing in order to raise standards.
62. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported. Their progress and attainment are effectively monitored and individual education plans contain clear learning targets that are regularly reviewed. Individual record cards are used to track all pupils' progress through the National Curriculum.
63. The recent introduction of national guidelines has ensured that teachers plan units of work to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, assessment has not yet been effectively built into the planning process and this is unsatisfactory. The units of work are planned in detail but teachers are not assessing pupils before the next unit of work is introduced. This sometimes results in work not being matched to individual needs. The result is that pupils find the work either too easy or too difficult. The school recognises the need to revise its curriculum planning to make sure that it fully meets the needs of pupils and national requirements.
64. Effective use is made of mathematics assessment to place pupils in appropriate groups in Key Stage 2. This has contributed to an improvement in standards, particularly in mental computation and number. Most pupils are now achieving the standard expected of their age and two-fifths achieve above average standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

65. The partnership between parents and the school is very effective. It is formed on the one side by the extremely high regard the parents have for the school and the headteacher, and on the other side by a very approachable school with a strong commitment to informing and involving parents.
66. Parents like the school very much. It has a good reputation and is over-subscribed. The pre-inspection questionnaire (of which a high number were returned) revealed an outstanding level of approval for what the school is doing. Parents commented favourably on every aspect covered, but 99 per cent or over consider behaviour is good, that the school has high expectations of the children, that it helps their children to become responsible and is well led. All these positive points are confirmed by the inspection.
67. The quality of information provided to parents is very good. The prospectus, the governors' annual report and the weekly newsletter (now also published on the internet) are all well written, easy to understand and informative. Parents are kept well informed on their children's future work and this, together with detailed information on homework, very effectively enables them to be involved in their children's learning. The home-school record book is used very effectively as a two-way means of communicating concerns or other points to note. Each year there are two formal opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress and the timings of these meetings are sufficiently flexible to cater conveniently for most parents.
68. The pupils' annual reports meet statutory regulations but are not ideal. They are computer produced – and it shows. Sections covering the core subjects in particular are heavy on words and thin on useful information. The sections on personal development on some reports have a repetitive feel and do not adequately reflect the individuality of each child. Also by giving no indication of what a child needs to do to improve, the school is missing a useful opportunity to involve parents in their child's learning.
69. Parents make a very good contribution to the work of the school. Many very useful resources in the school have been purchased as a result of hard work by parents and the school association. A core of committed parents regularly helps in the classroom. This help is well organised and appreciated by the staff. It makes a useful contribution to the pupils' learning. The annual review, when every parent is expected to complete a return on the school's performance, allows the school to monitor very effectively what parents think of the school, and act on any concerns.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. At the time of the last inspection in February 1997, the school had recently been amalgamated from the existing infant and junior schools. The leadership was mainly concerned with creating a unified primary school with policies, schemes of work and procedures to support its development. It was judged that the educational direction was sometimes overwhelmed by the need to get systems and documentation into place.
71. This has now been addressed and the school is led and managed by an outstanding headteacher, very well supported by the new deputy headteacher and, increasingly, by other key staff. His strong, inspirational leadership gives clear direction for the work of the school and high standards are promoted. The school's policies and efficient organisation are supported by excellent documents. These include a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all.

72. The governing body is well informed about what is going on in the school and fulfils all its statutory duties. Many governors are involved in the daily routines and support the school well.
73. The school is committed to self-evaluation and carefully analyses its strengths and weaknesses in the document, *Keeping the School Under Review*. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning well and advises staff of any areas for development. This skill and responsibility now needs to be extended to other members of the senior management team and curriculum managers to further develop their roles.
74. The current school improvement plan identifies targets to move the school forward and gives details of how they will be achieved. It includes the ambitious intention to be a centre of excellence in the field of information and communication technology and the school is making good progress towards achieving this. One target, to improve the percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving Level 5 in mathematics and English, has already been exceeded. Now, a target to address the fall in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 would be highly appropriate.
75. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified staff many of whom have a very good level of experience. There is a good match between teachers' skills and experience and their curriculum responsibilities. The level of support staffing is good. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to raising pupils' levels of attainment. Throughout the whole staff there is a strong commitment to continue to develop the ethos of the school and to raise standards.
76. Induction procedures for new staff are good. Mentors are allocated and regular meetings timetabled. The staff handbook is impressive in its comprehensiveness and layout. Good clear guidance is given to support staff and mid-day supervisors. Everybody knows what is expected of them. All staff are appraised once a year. Teachers have agreed targets, progress towards which is monitored by the headteacher. Professional development for staff is effective as it is clearly seen as partnership between serving the school's needs and what is best for the individual's career plans. The school is well prepared for performance management.
77. The accommodation is outstanding. Classrooms are large, light and airy and make a positive contribution to learning and behaviour management. The teachers have the space to allow easy flexibility in their teaching methods. Two halls and a separate dining room enable sensible timetable planning. The wider sections of corridors are used well as libraries or reading areas. The building is in good condition, clean and well maintained. All the space in the school is fully utilised and makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning. The building is set in attractive parkland. Good use has been made of the grounds. There are three playgrounds all with good surfaces and markings with benches around the perimeter. Children in the Foundation Stage have a secure play area. Unfortunately, the school suffers from occasional acts of vandalism.
78. The provision of learning resources is good overall. The level of computers is very good, as are the range and quality of physical education equipment, the range of materials for art and equipment and general resources for the Foundation Stage. The only blot is the quality of some of the general fiction books, particularly in the Key Stage 1 library, which are tatty.
79. This is a highly organised and efficient school with very good systems and controls in place; the quality of financial planning is very good. It is linked closely to the school's clear educational priorities, identified in the school's improvement plan. The school benefits from the services of two financial advisers in the preparation of its budget, which is carefully

balanced to meet the needs of pupils in the school. The school produces an impressive range of data to analyse its performance in many areas of school life. It adopts a number of different criteria to compare its performance with that of others. Priorities are carefully costed in terms of human and financial resources and are pursued with determination and resolve. As a result of additional funding for English, the school has successfully improved its results at Key Stage 2. However, national test results at the end of Key Stage 1 are unsatisfactory and the school needs to examine its priorities, in particular the more efficient implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

80. Specific grants from local and national initiatives are used effectively for their designated purposes. Pupils with statements for special educational needs receive good support from assistants who make judicious use of their time to benefit the supported pupil and others in the class where appropriate.
81. The headteacher has formed excellent relationships with industry and commerce, leading to considerable benefits for the school in terms of resources and ongoing repairs. An appreciative supplier, in recognition of the headteacher's prompt and efficient payment of accounts, donated a photocopier with collating facilities. This enables the impressive documentation produced by the headteacher to be presented to an exceptionally high standard and made readily available for staff, parents and pupils.
82. As a result of the most recent audit, the school has introduced more formal systems for recording income from parents. A school fund account, containing money from parents, is carefully managed and accounted for. It is used efficiently, with the agreement of parents, to supplement specific projects such as the improvement of the grounds, nursery provision and the development of information and communications technology.
83. Particularly good use is being made of new technology in both classrooms and in administration and office procedures. The experienced and efficient office staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities as office manager and finance secretary. They have received additional training in the areas of databases, e-mails and the management of school meals money and are confident and competent in their use. There are efficient procedures in place for the safe and secure collection of money and management of sensitive information and records. Office procedures run smoothly and efficiently, leaving teachers free to teach.
84. As a result of the school's effectiveness in communicating its vision for the future to parents, it successfully generates additional funds through a flourishing school association, resulting in excellent accommodation and a good level of resources.
85. The school seeks best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition in all its work. These principles are applied consistently and with very good effect in the school's management, procurement and use of services and resources. The school provides very good value for money.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

86. At the time of the previous inspection pupils with special educational needs were making sound progress throughout the school, with appropriate support being given. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils were making good progress. Now provision is good and pupils make good progress throughout the school. This is due to effective co-ordination and well-deployed staff who ensure support is well targeted through detailed relevant individual education plans. The budget for special educational needs is spent efficiently and the school obtains effective support from outside agencies which is used to support the pupil's assessed needs well.

87. Around 24 per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs; this is above the national average for a primary school. Five pupils currently have statements of special educational needs. One of the reasons for the pupils' good progress is the early identification of specific needs. Children are identified and assessed through baseline assessment shortly after they enter the nursery and again in reception. This is effective; for example, one child in nursery has been sensitively integrated into small group sessions and during an observation he was seen to make good progress with his letters and remain on task with the support of the nursery nurse.
88. Individual education plans were reviewed early this year. They are now much more specific to the pupil's needs and targets are broken down into small achievable steps. The plans are shared between all staff working with the pupils and are frequently reviewed within school and with parents. Two pupils working in different Year 2 classes received work that was well matched to their abilities and, with effective support, were able to access much of the work that other pupils in the class were carrying out. This is the case throughout the school.
89. In Key Stage 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6 are grouped by ability for mathematics. Years 4 and 6 benefit from extra support in literacy. This is effective, as was observed in a lesson when a small group of Year 6 pupils made good progress as they carried out similar literacy work with a learning support teacher, but at a slower pace with work well matched to their needs. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the school was delighted when at least half of the pupils with special educational needs gained a Level 4 in English, mathematics and science, although the predictions suggested that none of these pupils would gain the national average levels. Their success was due to effective teaching and the provision of booster classes.
90. The governing body is particularly well informed by the school about pupils' progress and the specialist support that may be required. This means they are effective at helping to secure the necessary support from the external agencies, for example the advisory teacher for autism. The specific funds for special educational needs are supplemented from the school budget in order to have sufficient support for all pupils with special educational needs and not just those identified as having a statement. The school ensures 'best value' and carefully assesses the effectiveness of the support, both within the school and through the work of outside agencies, by reviewing and monitoring pupils' progress and provision.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WHO SPEAK ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

91. The attainment of bilingual learners is sound overall. Pupils make good progress and are confident in their learning. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked throughout the school and targets are set. At the time of the inspection, all pupils speaking English as an additional language showed satisfactory command of English, understanding instructions and using spoken English well in their interactions with others. As a consequence they have equal access to the curriculum and soon have no need for the additional support provided.
92. Teachers are aware of pupils' particular needs and include them in their written plans appropriately. In most cases teachers support them well. In a Year 2 class, however, the teacher had too low expectations of a particular pupil and did not provide sufficient opportunities for him to contribute during discussions. The language needs are diverse, making it difficult for the school to make particular arrangements to provide speakers in pupils' first language. The school has adequate resources, including a suitable range of books.

93. The specific grant is used efficiently to provide an additional appropriately qualified teacher and a learning support assistant who give good levels of support on a part-time basis. They are well deployed to support class teachers and make best use of their time and skills. In the Foundation Stage good use was made of resources when a teacher provided a sari, following a child's remark that showed a lack of understanding and respect for the customs of other cultures.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

94. The overall provision for equal opportunities is good. The school has an excellent policy with its aims and principles stated clearly. These are made explicit through other policies and documents and are evident in many aspects of the life of the school. The policy is regularly and frequently reviewed and amended. There is good provision for pupils of all levels of ability, including those of outstanding ability. One boy, for example, was able to complete national tests for 11 year olds at the age of seven, joining older classes for their literacy and numeracy lessons. There is good support from classroom assistants and specialists for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Effective language support during the literacy hour ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
95. The school organises pupils, appropriately, into ability groups for literacy and numeracy. In most lessons they remain in these groupings for all other subjects. Different compositions would improve their opportunities to broaden both their own and their teacher's perception and understanding of one another. There are isolated examples of lessons in both key stages where expectations of certain groups of pupils are not the same as for others and pupils are treated differently because of their background or their gender.
96. Extra-curricular activities are available to boys and girls equally. The staff and governors provide good role models in support of the policy, reflecting a suitable gender balance. The school carries out extensive analysis of pupils' performance to identify any anomalies between groups. It complies fully with legislation for equal opportunities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

97. **To further improve the quality of education and raise standards of achievement, the governing body, with the headteacher and staff, should:**

improve levels of achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 by:

- making sure that teachers throughout the key stage build progressively on what pupils know, understand and can do when they move from the Foundation Stage;
- improving the overall use of day-to-day assessment and its use in planning subsequent work;
- arranging appropriate training and support so that teachers set their expectations at the right level;
- increasing the amount and effectiveness of monitoring of planning, teaching and learning by subject managers;
- making sure that teachers have a clear understanding of the standard of work required to achieve Levels 2 and 3 in the national assessment programme in English, mathematics and science;

(see paragraphs 28-29, 32, 36, 131-132, 148-149, 153, 158)

improve the effectiveness of the monitoring role of subject managers by:

- providing training in focused classroom observation;
- formalising a programme of regular monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work;
- formalising a programme of regular lesson observations throughout the school;

(see paragraphs 29, 32, 149, 159, 203, 210)

improve the use made of assessment information and national guidelines by:

- reviewing whole school schemes of work to ensure that they meet the particular needs of the pupils as well as satisfying national requirements;
- making sure that day-to-day assessment is securely based on the lesson objectives;
- ensuring that simple, manageable and useful records are kept of assessment information;
- using the assessment information to improve the match of tasks to pupils and progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school.

(see paragraphs 28, 36, 63, 148, 169)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	95
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	70

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	25	51	18	4	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)	27	387
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	108

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	32	22	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	24	20	25
	Girls	19	15	18
	Total	43	35	43
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (78)	65 (77)	79 (85)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	19
	Girls	15	17	14
	Total	37	40	33
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	69 (80)	74 (86)	61 (86)
	National	83 (82)	87 (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	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	27	29	29
	Girls	27	28	27
	Total	54	57	56
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85 (78)	90 (93)	89 (93)
	National	74 (70)	73 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	24	26	24
	Girls	23	26	24
	Total	47	52	48
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (78)	83 (88)	77 (88)
	National	72 (68)	73 (69)	82 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	7
Indian	13
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	3
White	322
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)	16.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	209

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information¹

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	823,649
Total expenditure	815,045
Expenditure per pupil	1,750
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,296
Balance carried forward to next year	56,900

¹ These figures are distorted by the inclusion of monies from fundraising and donations, totalling in excess of £50,000. By the time of the inspection the actual balance carried forward was around £27,000 (3 per cent).

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 60%

Number of questionnaires sent out	445
Number of questionnaires returned	267

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	22	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	26	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	38	5	2	4
The teaching is good.	74	23	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	35	4	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	17	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	37	2	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	81	18	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	28	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	27	4	0	11

Most entries in the 'don't know' column came from parents whose children had only recently joined the school.

Other issues raised by parents

Praise for the level of extra-curricular activity and for staff and others who spend a week of the Easter holidays taking children to South Wales.

Parents were pleased with the continuing development of the provision for information and communication technology.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

98. At the time of the last inspection children were judged to reach the desirable learning outcomes in all six areas of learning by the time they were five. Evidence from assessments made when children enter the nursery indicates that attainment on entry has been falling over the past few years. The judgement of the inspection team is that many children now reach the expected levels in physical, creative and personal and social development by the time they are five. However, in language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world standards are just below that expected.
99. Children attend the nursery part-time. Twenty-eight attend in the mornings and 26 in the afternoons. Twice a year, in September and January, children transfer from the nursery to one of the two reception classes. At the time of this inspection, early in the school year, most of the children in the nursery were still aged three and most of those in the reception classes were still four.
100. Assessment in the nursery is mainly by observation and it is continuous. When the children first enter, staff make an initial assessment of their development and this includes their speaking and listening skills and level of independence. The school uses materials supplied by the local education authority in order to assess children's knowledge and skills when they start in the reception classes. This shows that children in the school score marginally below the average both for the county and nationally.

Personal, social and emotional development

101. Although most of the children in the nursery have only been attending for a few weeks, they have become familiar with their surroundings and many confidently choose an activity and settle to it for at least 15 minutes.
102. In both the nursery and reception classes, milk time is very well used to encourage good table manners and social skills. Children mop up their own small spills and know they should only touch one slice of apple when they are offered a plateful. They sit at tables in small groups, try different tastes such as sugar and sherbet, and say which one is their favourite. Over time they make good progress in this aspect of their curriculum and their achievement by the age of five is in line with national expectations.

Language and Literacy

103. In circle time in the nursery children enjoy 'show and tell' and sit quietly and listen as others describe a toy they have brought from home. The teacher corrects immature language in a sensitive way and explains that the grown-up word for tick-tock is clock.
104. Children take turns to have a telephone conversation with their teacher, telling her clearly where they live and choosing their next group activity. At the end of each 'plan, do, review' lesson, children are expected to help to tidy up materials and take turns to tell the rest of their group about the activities they have completed.
105. Children enjoy role-play in the home corner and are particularly interested in the week's theme of 'Babies'. They listen very carefully when a visiting baby's diet is described and they want to know how old it is. They show photographs of when they were babies and compare them with more recent photographs.

106. In the reception classes children learn the sound of the week, S, and suggest words that begin with this letter. Many children remember the key words they have learned and identify them on flash cards. They enjoy reading simple books together with their teacher and are keen to write on the large white-board. The staff use a multi-media approach that is proving successful in helping the children to make satisfactory progress. However, the achievement of most children by the time that they are five still falls a little below what is expected.

Mathematical development

107. Over time, records indicate most children make sound progress in mathematical development although their attainment when they are five is still below national expectations. Children who have special educational needs and receive extra support make good progress. The small number of pupils in the reception classes in the autumn term and the favourable ratio of adults to children result in good progress early in the academic year. In the nursery and both reception classes all children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and are familiar with number action songs such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'.
108. Children regularly count objects up to 10 and beyond, including the number of children in a line. Children in the reception classes know which number comes before and which comes after five. Many recognise numerals from 1 to 9 and beyond. They rearrange number tiles and move them to their correct place in a number line. Children learn to write numerals correctly and practise them in the air or in a sand tray. They learn basic ideas related to simple addition, size and recognising shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

109. Children make good progress over time in learning about their world through a number of themes. They explore the properties of compost when planting bulbs. They learn how a bulb grows and some associated vocabulary, *stalk*, *roots* and *flower*.
110. When children in the reception classes learn how Jewish people celebrate harvest, they collect leaves, twigs, berries and other natural materials and use them to decorate a *sukkah*. They enjoy playing under the tent-like structure and learn about the properties of the materials.

Physical development

111. The children develop physical skills that are in line with those expected for their age. They can take off their shoes and socks and stand in a line ready for a movement lesson in the hall. They are aware of the space around them and move about without bumping into others. They travel at different speeds, in different directions, in time to the music. Most children hop, jump, and move about on various parts of the body. They all stop quickly in response to the beat of a drum.
112. The school has a suitable safe play area outside with grass and a hard surface. There is an impressive twin towered climbing frame, large covered sandpit and an artificial hill. A locked store contains suitable tricycles, scooters and toy vehicles. Unfortunately, wet weather limited their use during the inspection. The children used the colourful parachute outside and understood instructions relating to position such as *up*, *down*, *under* and *change places with*.
113. The children are aware of hygiene rules and know they need to wash their hands after using the toilet. They use tools such as scissors safely and have increasing control of pencils, pens, paintbrushes and the mouse on the computer.

Creative development

114. Children make good progress in creative development and their attainment at the age of five is in line with national expectations. They concentrate well and select from a range of materials when making a collage. Some children cut paper well and stick accurately with glue but find using the sellotape dispenser more challenging. They enjoy the colour, form and texture of natural materials such as clematis seed heads and small pieces of bark, which they incorporate into their pictures.
115. Children make patterns with carrot pieces when printing and model, roll and cut malleable materials such as play-dough. They sing rhymes, play and correctly name percussion instruments such as the lollipop drum, jingle bells and maracas.

Teaching and provision

116. The quality of teaching is good overall with a third of lessons judged to be very good. Planning is good and staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of young children and of the curriculum that is appropriate for them. The atmosphere in the nursery and reception rooms is relaxed and the availability of knowledgeable classroom assistants ensures there is good support for all activities.
117. Planning for the school year matches the Early Learning Goals that are defined in government guidelines and the daily plans show what children are expected to learn and the activities available for them.
118. The classrooms are all very well organised to help children in their early years become responsible and develop increasing independence.

ENGLISH

Standards and progress

119. Standards in English are below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1 but average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils enter the school with below average ability and although they make good progress in the Foundation Stage, standards still remain below average for the age group. Progress is steady during Key Stage 1 and accelerates in Key Stage 2 because of very good teaching. Booster classes for Year 6 pupils and the withdrawal of the less able pupils for specialist help in Year 4 and Year 6 have helped these groups to make significant gains in learning.
120. Compared with the time of the last inspection, an increasing number of pupils reach the higher levels in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, however, standards continue to fall, particularly in writing. Test results show below average results in reading and well below in writing when compared with schools nationally and with schools with pupils from a similar background.

Speaking and listening

121. **By the end of Key Stage 1**, pupils reach standards in speaking and listening below those expected for the age group. In most classes, however, they listen well to instructions from adults and, largely as a result of well-organised classrooms and established routines, they know what they have to do. They respond appropriately to adults' questions and understand and are interested in the main points. In one Year 2 lesson, where teaching is good, pupils enjoy listening to story tapes and use spoken language in an imaginative way. Prompted by a mystery object in a 'magic' box, they invent ideas based on a ring, for example, and in a small group begin to tell a story for others to listen to. They make good progress in their speaking and listening skills as they concentrate carefully in order to continue the story. Although at times pupils speak indistinctly, they make their meaning

clear and speak with growing confidence. In another class in Year 2 pupils need much encouragement and make only limited contributions when talking about their feelings about moving house. Pupils in Year 1 have difficulty in identifying rhyming sounds or keeping together when reading aloud as a class.

122. **Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2** and by the end of the key stage their standards of speaking are satisfactory and listening skills are good. They express their views clearly and confidently in a variety of different contexts and the most able are articulate, with clear diction and a good command of language. Many, however, do not use Standard English correctly and there are many examples of non-standard use of tenses and parts of speech, such as when pupils say “he writ the Just So stories” and “I done it for homework”. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to talk in front of the class and in pairs and small groups. They listen very carefully to extracts from films of their chosen texts, such as ‘Oliver’ and ‘Babe’ and recall and re-present the most important features very well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy listening to a variety of poems and where teaching is good, in both year groups, they show good levels of listening when they concentrate on identifying the number of syllables in a word and invent their own lines to match the rhythm.

Reading

123. There is a good emphasis on reading and pupils regularly read to teachers and to learning support assistants during group reading time. Pupils are strongly encouraged to read to adults at home. Teachers use the homework books variably, however, and comments are often limited to the title of the book being read and do not show how parents can help. Books sometimes are not challenging enough. Teachers in Key Stage 2 effectively encourage a love of books and language. In the best lessons, they provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about books and stories, read aloud and add to their vocabulary and understanding of grammar. In a very good lesson at the end of the key stage, the teacher links all these strands when comparing the speech of characters from ‘The Sheep Pig’. He involves pupils expertly in their own learning.
124. **At the end of Key Stage 1** standards in reading are below average. Pupils enjoy books and reading and talk with interest and enthusiasm about their favourite books, which include stories, information books and poetry. The majority of pupils recognise familiar words from their reading scheme and their spelling lists. Although pupils have a secure knowledge of initial sounds, they have few strategies for deciphering unknown words. The most able pupils use their knowledge of sounds to identify words such as ‘brook’ but most pupils have difficulty putting the sounds together and are unable to read words such as ‘back’ and ‘street’. Pupils read their chosen reading books easily.
125. **By the end of Key Stage 2**, pupils have made good progress and reach appropriate standards in reading. They examine a variety of well-known texts, such as ‘Railway Children’, ‘Babe’ and ‘Goodnight Mr. Tom’, during lessons and enjoy discussing and comparing the motives and feelings of the characters. Pupils of all abilities read a wide range of short novels for pleasure and enjoyment and talk about the characters in books such as ‘The Hobbit’. They take good account of punctuation when reading aloud. They read fluently with good expression and understanding, readily assuming the roles of different characters. Pupils know a reasonable range of authors. They use the well-organised reference library competently and quickly find the information books they need to help them with their topics. They have a secure knowledge of library terms such as *contents*, *index* and *glossary*.

Writing

126. **Standards of writing are below average at the end of Key Stage 1.** The majority of pupils re-write stories confidently and communicate their thoughts and ideas in narrative writing using simple sentences. However, their writing is not always logically sequenced and pupils' grasp of sentence construction is poor at times. Whilst they are taught to use speech marks and other forms of punctuation, such as exclamation and question marks, they need frequent reminders to use full stops and capital letters. The work is not sufficiently matched to their levels of understanding and, as a result, they make inconsistent gains in their learning. Spelling and handwriting are taught together with increasing success in Year 1. There is regular handwriting practice but teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and mediocre or poor standards of work are praised. Letters are often uneven and incorrectly formed, lacking in fluency. Pupils frequently mix small and capital letters and some of the resources used in Year 1, such as an inappropriate variety of magnetic letters, add to the confusion.
127. **Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 as a result of very good teaching.** In a Year 3 class, for example, they continue to gain in confidence and enthusiasm for language and add to their knowledge of parts of speech when they write their own poems about dragons using repetitive words. Pupils cover a wide and interesting range of work relevant to their experience and understanding and acquire grammatical skills in logical progression. In Year 5, for example, pupils write their own play scripts and read and understand the genre well. They begin to find out about synonyms. By the time pupils leave the school they reach standards in writing that are average for their age group. They make good use of chosen texts to develop comprehension, parts of speech and punctuation and they write for genuine purposes using a range of forms. With adult help, they produce letters to the council on a variety of different issues, of a good standard. Their writing is often imaginative with rich use of adventurous vocabulary, but contains many basic errors in sentence construction. Spelling is still below average but pupils usually write fluently with joined, even script. The presentation of their work is variable. Whilst there are examples of pupils taking pride in well-organised work, illustrated with vigour and imagination, in other classes work is unfinished and pages are missed out.

Teaching

128. Teaching is good overall. The majority of lessons are good, with some very good examples in Key Stage 2. A few lessons are unsatisfactory, in both key stages. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and provide very good models for spoken English. Most teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can do and this promotes good progress. They motivate pupils well by interesting and varied introductions that provide a clear focus for the lesson so pupils know what it is they are learning. Teachers use good questioning skills, listening carefully and valuing the spoken contributions from pupils of all levels of ability, developing their confidence to speak in front of others. They challenge pupils to think carefully and extend their thoughts and ideas into words.
129. Teachers have well organised classrooms and in the best lessons they make good use of resources and displays to reinforce learning of vocabulary and sounds. A teacher in a Year 2 class, for example, models good handwriting well when she records words to show the passing of time.
130. Some teachers make good use of learning support assistants when they make useful observations during introductions to lessons. They provide effective support for those with special educational needs in Year 2, where teamwork is well established.
131. There is systematic teaching of spelling and handwriting with weekly lists of words of graded difficulty. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm for their tasks including word

searches and putting words into sentences. They are keen to carry on with homework tasks in their break times.

What can be improved

132. **In Key Stage 1**, there are not enough opportunities for the systematic development of writing skills based on teacher assessments and the teaching of writing, as distinct from handwriting, is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not build sufficiently on what pupils can already do.
133. Teachers sometimes have unrealistic expectations of the least able pupils. Tasks are not always matched sufficiently to their stage of learning and, as a result, pupils are too dependent upon adult help and they make little progress. In Year 1, for example, pupils who do not know initial sounds are expected to select words containing the 'ar' blend to put into sentences. Although teachers plan in some instances an interesting variety of activities, such as playing a word game to reinforce spelling patterns in a Year 2 class, they provide too few strategies for pupils to develop independent learning skills. The excessive use of unsuitable worksheets in Year 1 does little to motivate or interest pupils and there is too little guidance in the basic skills.
134. **Throughout the school**, information technology is not used effectively to promote pupils' English skills. There are examples of literacy being promoted appropriately, although mainly incidentally and unplanned for, through work in other subjects. Pupils write imaginative stories based on the 'Good Samaritan' in religious education, for example, and elaborate on the scientific facts of a tadpole turning into a frog in science. There is a need for more deliberate planning in this respect.

MATHEMATICS

National test results

135. The results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that attainment was below the national average for all schools and well below the national average for similar schools. Over the last four years, results have fluctuated, but the overall trend has been downwards in comparison with the national average which has improved over that time. Results for the 2000 national tests show a further decline.
136. The national test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that attainment was well above the national average for all schools and for similar schools. The overall upward trend of the school's results over the last four years has been continued in 2000.

Standards and progress

137. At the time of the last inspection standards of attainment were judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and *only just in line* with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2. On the basis of the work seen from the present and last school years, the inspection judgement is that overall standards of attainment are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above it at the end of Key Stage 2. Work from pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 last year includes well above average attainment in number work.
138. In the past many pupils have not made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. However, in the lessons observed during the inspection progress was usually good. In Key Stage 2 progress has been, and continues to be, mostly good, particularly in the development of number skills. Pupils with special educational needs make generally satisfactory progress. Their progress is considerably enhanced when work is prepared specifically for them. The practice of the co-ordinator for special educational needs in preparing work at many different levels for her group of older pupils is highly commendable.

Mathematics in Key Stage 1

139. When most pupils reach the age of five their attainment is below but close to what is expected for their age. In the lessons seen during the inspection progress in both Year 1 and Year 2 was at least good. Pupils in Year 1 classes, for example, in two very well taught lessons, benefited from brisk mental arithmetic sessions and learned about time. In one case pupils demonstrated sound counting skills to and from 20. They used *zero* correctly and later made good progress in working out ways of making six. The teacher gave a strong lead in this and questioned all pupils, including those who were not volunteering answers! In the main part of the lesson the teacher set appropriate practical tasks designed to help pupils to know both the names and the order of the seasons. She used the final part of the lesson very well to consolidate the progress made.
140. In the other lesson in Year 1 the teacher told the pupils what the targets for the lesson were and ran a very brisk and effective mental session, setting exacting time limits for answers. Pupils responded well to the challenge and most answers were correct. In the main part of this lesson the teacher clearly taught *o'clock*, *hour*, *hand* and *minute hand*. The tasks that pupils had to do varied according to their ability, with the more able having to write the time beneath the clock face as well as show, for example, 8 o'clock. Thorough preparation based on clear learning objectives enabled pupils to make very good progress. In the final part of the lesson the teacher reviewed progress in the light of what they had set out to learn and both pupils and teacher were well pleased with the result.
141. Pupils in the two Year 2 classes were at different stages of learning about shapes. In one class pupils made good progress in learning about common two-dimensional shapes. The lesson was well structured and the teacher was careful at the beginning to establish that the focus was on *flat* or two-dimensional shapes and not *sticky-uppy* or three-dimensional shapes. She helped the pupils to revise what they already knew by asking well-chosen and directed questions and getting pupils to describe shapes using correct language. This insistence on correctness was evident at a later stage in the lesson when the teacher had reason to draw a three-dimensional shape on the board. She made very sure that the pupils understood that the drawing itself was two-dimensional. This emphasis on *understanding* as well as *knowing* was a vital ingredient of most of the better lessons observed.
142. Other pupils in Year 2 were set the demanding but highly appropriate task of deducing what shape a pupil was holding in the feely bag through the answers to questions such as 'how many curved sides has it got?' Pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the names and properties of shapes, including octagonal prism, cone and cylinder. Most pupils recognised a coin as a cylinder but some insisted that it was a circle, indicating some remaining confusion between two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Overall, however, pupils made good progress as a result of the teacher's imaginative planning, very good choice of practical activities and very good questioning skills.

Mathematics in Key Stage 2

143. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are grouped by ability for mathematics, as are those in Years 5 and 6. The school has identified clear benefits of this way of working. However, teachers have recognised that they do not always know enough about what pupils from the two different age groups have covered in mathematics. The school has therefore sensibly decided that as part of its plans for gathering and using assessment information, it must create appropriate records of what pupils have covered in mathematics and what they know, understand and can do.
144. The use of the correct vocabulary when naming types of triangles was a good feature of the work of the teacher of the second Years 3/4 set, as was her insistence that the pupils

do likewise. Pupils made good progress in learning about triangle names and properties, discovering, for example, how to test for a right angle and that right-angled triangles can also be isosceles. The same task was set to all members of the class and the teacher circulated well giving support and encouragement.

145. Pupils in the third Years 3/4 set benefited from a very effective and well planned lesson in which the mental and main activity parts were chosen to support each other. In the introductory mental session pupils revised doubling and halving whole numbers through responding to the teacher's well-chosen and directed questions. In the main part of the lesson they made good progress in measuring lines in centimetres and in understanding which metric measure would be most appropriate for particular lengths. Marking of work is particularly conscientiously done in this set and comments are helpful, corrections are required. The response of one pupil to this was "I didn't get that before but now I do". This is good practice.
146. Pupils in the lowest Years 3/4 set made good progress in learning about isosceles and equilateral triangles as a result of the teacher's skilful questioning, sharp focus and good use of practical methods. The teacher of the top set of pupils in Years 3 and 4 was absent during the inspection. Examination of a sample of their exercises indicates that their attainment is in line with expectations and that they are making at least satisfactory progress.
147. Pupils in the lowest of the four sets into which pupils in Years 5 and 6 are organised benefit from the very focused and well-planned work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Although their attainment is, inevitably, below national expectations they make good progress in doubling and halving numbers to 50 and in learning what a pictogram is, how to draw one and the idea of a key.
148. Pupils in the third set make good progress in learning how to draw a bar graph correctly. In particular some pupils learn that they must place the numbers in the correct place, label axes and give the graph a title. This progress results from the teacher's very good planning and preparation of resources and the clarity with which she makes her expectations known.
149. Pupils in the top set respond well to the enthusiasm of their teacher and the brisk pace at which he moves lessons forward. He has high expectations of their performance in next year's national tests and makes them well aware of this. Pupils make very good progress in their understanding of how to calculate or identify the mean, mode and median of a set of numbers.

Pupils and mathematics

150. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes towards their work in mathematics. They give every sign of enjoying the challenge of brisk mental sessions where the demands are well matched to their present attainment. Because the work set is generally stimulating and teachers are well organised there is not much inclination or opportunity to misbehave. These factors have an obvious positive benefit on their progress and the quality of their learning.

The teaching of mathematics

151. Overall, mathematics, particularly numeracy, is taught well. All of the mathematics teaching observed in Key Stage 1 was of at least a good standard and more than three-quarters of lessons were good or very good in Key Stage 2.

Important features of most of the better teaching, some of which have already been mentioned, which led to good learning and progress by the pupils, included:

- very good questioning to find out what pupils already know and to consolidate and extend their learning;
- high expectations of work and behaviour;
- good use of the beginning and end of lessons for mental work and to revise and consolidate learning;
- the use of appropriate practical activities to support conceptual development;
- good classroom organisation;
- a good brisk pace to lessons with time targets set;
- very good use of homework.

Where mathematics teaching can be further improved:

- raising the overall standard of marking to that of the best;
- ensuring that if worksheets are used they are stimulating and directly related to the learning objectives of the lesson;
- making sure that there are regular opportunities for work of an investigative nature and for applying mathematical knowledge;
- collecting and using assessment information to support planning for mixed-age groups.

152. No one person has both the responsibility and the opportunity for monitoring planning, teaching and learning in mathematics throughout the school. Action taken over the last few years to raise standards in Key Stage 1 has been ineffective.

SCIENCE

National test results

153. The 1999 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show attainment to be below that of pupils in similar schools. The 2000 results show a further decline in standards. The decline has been consistent since the previous inspection. The school has not taken effective measures to raise standards in this key stage. The scrutiny of previous work and inspection evidence confirms that pupils do not receive sufficient challenge to enable them to do better.

154. Pupils' results in the 1999 statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average. Results and inspection evidence confirm that most pupils achieve the standards expected of their age across the science curriculum and not merely in those areas that form part of the national testing programme. Standards since the previous inspection have improved and more pupils now achieve above average standards.

Standards and progress

Key Stage 1

155. Pupils do not achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 1, although most do begin to acquire a body of scientific knowledge. By the age of seven, pupils recognise that living things grow and reproduce. They describe how babies grow into children and then into adults. They realise that there are different rates of human growth by comparing pictures of themselves, their families and their teachers. Most pupils successfully group materials according to their properties. They explain how materials are used for different purposes in the building of a school. When making chocolate crunch, they explain how heating and cooling can change materials. They develop an understanding of predicting by estimating how long the mixture will take to set.

156. Previous work and discussion with pupils show that they have a clear understanding of the use of electricity in the home and school. Pupils recognise the dangers of electricity and know how to make a simple electric circuit. They use a battery, wires

and bulbs to make a circuit and realise that the bulb will not light if the circuit is broken. They are unable to describe how to make the bulb become brighter or dimmer. Towards the end of Year 2, pupils develop their knowledge of light. They identify that light comes from a source and explain how shadows are formed. Progress through Key Stage 1 is, however, inconsistent and unsatisfactory. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to participate in experiments and investigations.

Key Stage 2

157. By the age of 11, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of each strand of the curriculum. Through the *Ourselves* topic, pupils develop a good knowledge of the human body. They correctly describe the function of major organs. They describe the heart as a pump that circulates blood around the body via arteries and veins. When describing the digestive system, they explain the function of the stomach, colon and oesophagus. They recognise the importance of a healthy diet and keep a record of food eaten during a week. They correctly classify food in terms of carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Pupils are taught sex education as a part of the project and show a clear understanding of puberty and reproduction.
158. Pupils further develop an understanding of light. They describe how light can be reflected from mirrors or polished surfaces. They understand how the Sun is the major source of light and can explain how day and night are related to the Earth spinning on its own axis as it orbits the Sun.
159. Progress through Key Stage 2 is good and is accelerated in Year 6 where pupils benefit from additional 'booster' classes. In Year 3, pupils develop their knowledge of life processes. They provide simple explanations for changes in living things. They explain that without food, light and water, plants and humans would die. In Year 4, pupils identify animals and their habitat. They recognise the relationship between plants and animals and describe a food chain. Few pupils, however, are able to describe these in terms of producer, consumer, predator and prey.

Teaching

160. During the inspection, teaching varied between very good and satisfactory with the best teaching being in Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 1

161. The scrutiny of previous work clearly indicates that teachers have not had high enough expectations of pupils. Too much time has been spent with pupils completing worksheets and not having sufficient opportunities to investigate and experiment. Lessons during the inspection were well planned and teachers constantly challenged pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary. In a good lesson, the teacher successfully used photographs of himself to stimulate discussion on change. Pupils recognised changes in size and appearance. The teacher introduced a real baby to the pupils and by the end of the lesson pupils had developed a good understanding of different rates of human growth.

Key Stage 2

162. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and in Year 6 it is very good. All teachers plan their lessons well and make good use of resources. In the best lessons, teachers ensure a good balance between questions, explanations and practical activity. This was evident in a lesson on forces in Year 6. Pupils recognised how forces can be measured and they recorded their findings as a line graph. The teacher skilfully challenged pupils to identify any pattern in their results. Pupils who were having difficulty reading measurements were given individual help to draw a graph. In a lesson with a Year 5 class, the teacher used pupils to represent the Moon, Earth and Sun to demonstrate how the Earth orbits the Sun

and the Moon orbits the Earth. By the end of the lesson pupils had a clear understanding of this process and could explain that the Earth orbits the Sun in approximately 365 days and the Moon orbits the Earth every 28 days.

Pupils and science

163. Pupils throughout the school have a very positive attitude towards learning. They are very well behaved in lessons and eager to complete their task. In some lessons, however, work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' prior attainment and this results in pupils losing interest during whole class explanations and discussions.
164. There is no effective co-ordination of science throughout the school. The role of the curriculum manager has not been developed to include the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN

165. By the time pupils leave the school, their achievements in art are above those expected for their age. From the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils experience a rich and varied range of materials and media through which they explore and develop technical skills, creativity and imagination to a good extent. The high quality of resources available has a positive effect on standards.
166. Pupils in Year 6 successfully combine skills and techniques of cutting, drawing and painting in their compositions linked with movement. They create an impression of people in action by their arrangements of athletes and sporting figures, which they paint with meticulous brush strokes. Most pupils achieve the particular shade they need through careful application of learned techniques, knowing that they need to add small amounts of a primary colour to white. They work with concentration and care when mixing colours and show good control.
167. Examination of pupils' work in portfolios and on display shows they are confident in their use of pastels and shading techniques when, for example, they sketch animals and birds. Pictures of landscapes using torn paper and colour wash techniques demonstrate pupils' understanding of perspective. There are outstanding individual examples from pupils showing flair and talent.
168. The oldest pupils used their imaginations well to produce paintings based on work by Monet and Van Gogh. They talk about Van Gogh, whose prints are displayed in the dining hall, and are keen to show visitors the patterns they have made as a result of looking at the work of William Morris. One boy had been clearly impressed by a particular painting by Edvard Munch and recalls the artist's name, describing his impressions with considerable feeling and imagination. In three-dimensional work, pupils effectively use rolling and cutting techniques to form pictures on clay tiles.
169. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the expertise and enthusiasm of individual teachers in both key stages. Artwork is valued and displayed effectively in the school's public areas to celebrate creativity and imagination. Stimulating and bright collage work, based on ideas by Jackson Pollock, demonstrates the rich and varied resources available to the pupils. In Year 1, pupils approach their art with obvious vigour and enthusiasm, as evident from a display of striking self-portraits, full of character and expression. The work, based on portraits of famous artists, shows a good understanding of the use of colour, proportion and size.
170. Pupils' understanding of shape and pattern is developed well. For example, they make simple tiles representing houses and repeating patterns in Year 1. Pupils in Year 6 create

exploding shapes, providing good links with mathematics. In a Year 2 class, the teacher developed pupils' imagination well by encouraging them to make collections of natural materials and match them with pastel colours. Pupils produced 'memory cards', investigating a variety of textures to provide a tactile piece of work that reminded them of their experiences of natural elements such as the sun, sea and sky. In Year 3, pupils extended their experiences of three-dimensional work to good effect when they produced Greek theatre masks. They combined paper-sculpting skills with imaginative design to produce collage pictures of a satisfactory standard based on the work of Matisse.

171. Pupils begin to use sketchbooks in Year 3 and collect visual ideas and information to help enrich their compositions. Sketchbooks are used particularly well in Year 5, where pupils practise and develop skills of shading and line drawing to good effect. The books do not, however, move with the pupils from year to year in order to provide an ongoing record and reference of the development of their skills and ideas. Pupils used their observational drawing skills very well in Year 5 when they worked co-operatively in pairs and groups to assemble compositions of autumn fruits. They used pastels to further develop techniques such as blending, smudging and layering to very good effect, making conkers look shiny and plums look ripe. Work was of a high standard and pupils communicated their ideas with feeling and imagination. They were completely absorbed in their sketching. Pupils approach their art lessons with enjoyment and interest.
172. From the few lessons observed, comprehensive examples of photographic evidence, displays and past work, painstakingly presented by the co-ordinator, and through discussions with pupils and staff, the overall quality of teaching is judged to be good. Teachers are well organised and plan lessons effectively to provide a variety of methods and approaches to enable pupils to produce pleasing images and artefacts. Teaching was very good in Year 5, where the provision of high quality resources fires pupils' interest and imagination. Good questioning and discussion involves pupils well and encourages them to think carefully about shapes, sizes, colours and textures whilst providing ample opportunity for independence and creativity.
173. There is an art club and pupils benefit from occasional visits to galleries and museums and visiting artists. The school has made significant progress in its use of technology to support art since the last inspection. Pupils use a wide range of computer programs to create digital pictures of a good standard and to illustrate their written work. They use the Internet to access paintings by famous artists and use CD-ROM to find out about artists' lives and their work. A selection of pupils' work has been transferred to the school's own web site and a fine example of a pastel drawing of a chicken during a Year 1 project on *Pets* found its way to the local press, creating excitement and interest.
174. The school produced a scheme of work following the last inspection, which gave detailed guidance to non-specialist teachers and successfully combined techniques to be developed with opportunities for creativity. It has since adopted the new national guidelines and could usefully incorporate its own, to improve the systematic progression of skills. The school has made little progress in the use of pupils' portfolios or sketchbooks to assess pupils' work and plan accordingly. The subject makes a suitable contribution to pupils' literacy skills when they write captions to accompany their displayed work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

175. At the time of the last inspection the standards attained in design and technology were judged to be above national expectations in Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in Years 3 and 4 was unsatisfactory, with a slow pace to lessons and pupils not allowed to make significant design choices. The

situation improved in the top two years when older pupils were introduced to hydraulics and explored the strength of their designs when testing bridges.

176. During this inspection, only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 so it is not possible to comment on the overall quality of teaching. However, evidence of work completed earlier shows that pupils reach a satisfactory standard. Children in Year 1 enjoyed designing and making pictures with a sliding mechanism such as a cat emerging from a cat flap. They showed their designs to their friends and explained how they will work.
177. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in the subject and younger pupils in the key stage designed 'weather' pictures on the computer before embroidering them onto hessian. These individual sewing pictures, which include snowmen and colourful rainbows, were made as gifts for Mother's Day.
178. Evidence from a range of work from pupils in the first two years of Key Stage 2, including papier-mâché Greek masks, indicates that attainment and progress are now good. The standards achieved by the end of the key stage are also good overall with some excellent examples.
179. Pupils in Year 5 work on a challenging assignment to design and make a musical instrument. They enjoyed testing drums, wind chimes, shakers, horns, a trumpet and a xylophone. The quality of the finished product was high and pupils have worked hard to achieve this, both at school and at home. Pupils take pride in their instruments and enthusiastically discuss the problems they have encountered when making them.
180. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good. Lessons are well planned, interesting and proceed at a good pace. Pupils at the end of the key stage go to look at the construction of local bus shelters and have fun erecting a gazebo in the classroom. When investigating how structures fail when loaded, and techniques for reinforcing and strengthening, some pupils are surprised at the strength of rolled paper.
181. In addition to the usual resources, the school has a useful contact with a recycling depot and receives a range of valuable materials at no cost.

GEOGRAPHY

182. Standards of achievement remain similar to those noted at the last inspection. They are broadly what would be expected at the end of both key stages. Pupils' progress and their learning are good. At the time of the last inspection the school had recently completed schemes of work which were considered to be thorough. Teachers now follow the nationally provided schemes of work. Units are planned for each term and some units continue through the year, such as the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', who sends postcards to the pupils in Year 2, to help extend their knowledge of the world. The newly appointed co-ordinator intends to review this scheme later this year to ensure that the content of the curriculum is suitable for the pupils in the school.
183. The work in geography helps pupils develop literacy and oracy skills, when they are required to make a poster which is aimed at persuading people to recycle in Year 4 and give and respond to directions in Year 3. Numeracy skills are developed when using co-ordinates in map work and the collection of data in Year 5, when pupils had to keep a diary of how much water they had used at home in the week.
184. The school uses information and communication technology effectively to help pupils' understanding; the Internet and CD-ROMs are used well to investigate physical geography and mapping. In Year 1 children use a computer program to make up a town upon which

they place a variety of features and Year 3 pupils used a programmable toy to develop instructions for following a route. In Year 6 pupils use the computer to find information about rivers and make graphs of the longest rivers in the United Kingdom. The subject makes a strong contribution to social and cultural provision by introducing pupils to the local area and other places in Great Britain and the wider world.

185. At Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils record a map of the route they take to school with reasonable accuracy, and gain knowledge of their own locality when they walk to the shops. Older pupils draw and cut out a map of an imaginary island, based on the story of Katie Morag. From this they understand that there are places beyond where they live and talk about the similarities and differences of a town in England and island life in Scotland.
186. At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in gaining and applying geographical skills and increasing their knowledge. They use a variety of sources to gain information including maps, photographs, videos and the information from the Internet. Older pupils understand the characteristics of river systems and how they change landscapes. A good emphasis by the teacher ensures that pupils use geographical vocabulary well, for example, they are able to describe clearly what 'erosion' and 'meander' are. Pupils study ways of improving their environment in Year 4 when they discuss recycling and the disposal of waste. In a particularly successful lesson on 'water' children were encouraged to keep a diary of water used in a week. Effective questioning from the teacher helped the children to think carefully about ways they would be able to save water in the future.
187. The overall quality of teaching has remained good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and understanding which they share with the pupils well, encouraging them to use geographical vocabulary accurately. Suitable planning ensures a progression of skills and introduces pupils to features such as map work, weather, comparing localities and the environment. Pupils have good attitudes to learning in geography and these are encouraged effectively by teachers in lessons and when giving very appropriate homework, such as the water diary. Teachers use resources such as the locality, videos and computer programs well to interest and motivate pupils.

HISTORY

188. Standards of achievement remain similar to those noted at the last inspection. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain average standards in both historical knowledge and skills. Throughout the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least sound progress and some make good progress, particularly at the end of each key stage. Only four lessons were observed during the inspection. Additional evidence was taken from the scrutiny of work, displays and discussions with staff.
189. History makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development through focusing on art and literature, and considering the life and times of people in different eras. The subject causes pupils to reflect on past events and to find out more about the past of their own and others' cultures. Moral development is enhanced when pupils write and discuss with empathy, life and working conditions of Victorian children. Assemblies make a contribution to social history when teachers use stories about famous people in the past to illustrate living conditions and how people such as Dr Barnardo and Florence Nightingale helped make life better for the sick and poor. Teachers now follow the national guidance and schemes of work.
190. The curriculum is enriched greatly by well-chosen visits to places such as The British Museum, Hever Castle, St Albans and Osborne House in Key Stage 2. These experiences encourage pupils to use their literacy skills to write detailed accounts and diaries about their visits in which they use a great deal of factual information. They hear poems, stories

and accounts from various periods including work from war poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. By the age of 11 pupils are good at communicating their knowledge and thoughts in writing and through discussion, and know about the range of sources available to the historian. Pupils develop their numeracy skills through time lines and knowledge of key dates in history. Pupils use information technology to find out information and to produce word-processed work.

191. Key Stage 1 pupils develop a sense of the passing of time when they compare events in the past with that experienced today, for example seaside holidays. They learn about people in the past, such as Guy Fawkes. Pupils learn about the past in relation to their own experiences and study changes in their lives from birth to the present and on to old age. In a Year 2 lesson pupils were helped to understand remembrance through very skilful use of the teacher's personal family photograph album and a visit to the local war memorial. This helped them make good progress in increasing their knowledge of the past and how things have changed over time.
192. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on their understanding of different eras, for example, the way of life in Ancient Egypt, the Romans, the Tudor monarchs and the Victorians. They make good gains in their understanding and use of secondary sources, including the use of reference books, pictures from the National Portrait Gallery, videos, photographs and diary entries. Particularly good use is made of photographs belonging to the teacher and pupils in Year 6 in creating time lines and family trees going back to Victorian times.
193. Pupils show an interest in historical topics and are keen to display their knowledge of the past. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher's quick fire questioning techniques encouraged pupils to recall their knowledge about Egyptians, gained from a trip to the British Museum. Discussions are well managed which means pupils give their opinions confidently and build effectively on each other's contributions when issues, such as homelessness in Victorian times, are discussed.
194. Teaching is good overall; teachers are enthusiastic about history and have good subject knowledge. They ask questions effectively to help pupils understand the different periods and encourage use of historical vocabulary. The one area of weakness is the amount of worksheets used, which limit children's literacy, oracy and numeracy skills. The co-ordinator is new; she is enthusiastic and keen to encourage different ways of showing and recording historical knowledge and understanding, such as through drama. As yet she has not had any opportunities to visit her colleagues' classrooms to observe teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

195. At the time of the last inspection attainment in information technology was judged to be above the national expectation at the end of both key stages. Since that time, the skills and standards expected of pupils have risen and funds have been made available nationally to help raise achievement in information and communication technology. The school now has a network of 50 computers, linked to the Internet and to the county intranet.
196. The school is currently involved in information and communication technology training for staff through the New Opportunities Fund. The school is fortunate that their enthusiastic and committed curriculum manager for the subject is a qualified mentor. This has resulted in rapid improvement in the skill level throughout the school during the past year. Pupils achieve in line with the new, higher, national expectations at both key stages.
197. Skills are taught to class groups for at least half an hour each week and pupils are also given the opportunity to practise the new skills individually. However, this practice often

has to take place when pupils should be learning other subjects. The school is rightly keen to establish a computer suite so that all pupils can rapidly have a chance to practise the skill they have just been taught. The quality of teaching in both key stages is never less than good and in most lessons it is very good.

198. Throughout the school, there are examples of information and communication technology being used to support learning in other subjects. Programs are used, for example, in Key Stage 1 to practise subtraction skills in numeracy lessons. However, this aspect is relatively under-developed. Pupils with special educational needs and others are also given good support by classroom assistants when working with computers.
199. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils navigate a website using hyperlinks and understand the rules of copyright when they import pictures and text into a document. Older pupils confidently use simple control language to activate multiple devices, concurrently. They understand that instructions have to be carefully sequenced and that timing is important.
200. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are familiar with cut and paste techniques and know when these skills would be useful. They make shaped poems on the computer in literacy lessons. In design and technology, pupils decide on an appropriate font for the names of their favourite sweets or breakfast cereals. They select the size, type and colour of the letters and distort them for emphasis and effect.
201. Pupils are enthusiastic and well behaved in all lessons in the subject. A weekly after-school club is very well attended and pupils enjoy discussing the merits of web sites designed by other schools and compare them with their own. The Hobbs Hill Wood website is refreshed regularly with new items of work including pictures made with pasta by the youngest children.

MUSIC

202. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress through both key stages to achieve the standards expected of their age. The standards from the previous inspection have been maintained.
203. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on these lessons, recorded singing and composition, and discussion with pupils.
204. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing simple songs in tune and with understanding of the words. They describe how sounds can accompany a story. They recognise how sounds can be played together and separately to create an effect. During the inspection there was no evidence of pupils using percussion to accompany singing or using symbols to represent sounds.
205. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing with confidence and feeling. This was evident in an assembly when they sang 'Make me a channel of your peace'. During assemblies pupils are encouraged to listen and appraise a wide range of music. Following the story of Gladys Aylward, pupils were fascinated by Chinese music. In an assembly about Neil Armstrong's journey to the Moon, pupils listened to Holst's Planet Suite. They were held spellbound by an extract from 'Jupiter'.
206. A Christmas tape of assembly songs shows that pupils have a clear understanding of dynamics and tempo. The school and other local schools produced a professional quality CD and the proceeds from its sale were donated to the Children's Charity. Pupils of this school contributed an excellent recording of 'The Winters Tale'. A choir

is formed to perform at concerts and community events. There is no evidence of pupils exploring, selecting and combining sounds to form a musical structure.

207. In the three lessons observed, teaching was sound but uninspirational. Teachers showed good class management skills and retained pupils' attention. They are reliant on a commercial scheme of work that ensures coverage of each strand of the National Curriculum. They use the tape recorder and have access to a good range of percussion instruments. However, there is a lack of subject expertise and as a result pupils do not experience the range of activities seen in many schools. The only extra-curricular activity is a recently formed recorder club in which over 25 pupils are learning to read music and play the recorder.
208. The role of the curriculum manager has not been developed to include supporting colleagues and monitoring planning, teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

209. Pupils achieve the standards expected for their age at the end of both key stages. Inspection evidence confirms that the standards from the previous inspection have been maintained. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have equal opportunity to participate and make satisfactory progress.
210. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show confidence in dance. They plan and perform simple movements. They link these together and show confidence in performance. Pupils listen attentively to music and create movements to express ideas and feelings. They describe the changes that occur to their bodies as they exercise. In gymnastics, pupils perform different ways of travelling using hands, feet and other body parts. Most pupils successfully link a series of actions on the floor and using apparatus.
211. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils experience all strands of the National Curriculum. They have opportunity to participate in competitive team and individual games. They play football, netball, rugby and participate in dancing, swimming, gymnastics and athletics. Pupils show satisfactory skills in sending, receiving and travelling with a ball. In gymnastics, they develop skills in practising and refining a sequence of movements, using the floor and apparatus. Most pupils can swim at least 25 metres and many can swim much further. They learn to swim and develop stroke technique in Year 5 by visiting the local leisure centre each week where instructors teach them. Pupils show confidence in deep water and recognise how correct leg and arm actions will improve speed.
212. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers show good class management skills and have high expectations of pupils. In all classes, teachers and pupils change appropriately for lessons and recognise the need to have regard for health and safety.
213. Pupils respond positively and with enthusiasm to each strand of the lesson. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher planned a very effective warm-up session where pupils 'followed the leader', the leaders being the teacher and classroom support assistant. After a few minutes the pupils rested and one pupil could not help but exclaim "I'm puffed". In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher effectively used music for the warm-up session. Pupils responded and kept in time with the beat as they got progressively more active.
214. In most lessons, teachers use the warm-up session effectively but do not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to cool-down at the end of lessons. In some lessons,

teachers do not maintain a sufficient balance of activities. Pupils are rightly asked to demonstrate and evaluate each other's performance but many spend too long being inactive.

215. The curriculum manager has a clear vision of how the subject should be developed but has not had the opportunity to develop his role by sharing expertise or by monitoring planning, teaching and learning in other classes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

216. The school has improved the provision of religious education and allocation of time to the subject since the last inspection. The curriculum is now satisfactorily planned through a published scheme of work to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. At present there is no formal assessment, although the school plans to develop a standard religious education assessment sheet and a portfolio of children's work in the subject across the year groups. However, the use of a published scheme ensures that learning builds effectively on what pupils already know and can do.
217. At both key stages all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress with good progress being made in particularly effective lessons and at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is now satisfactory and broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Good links are made with religious education, particularly learning through religion, in the daily act of worship. Religious education clearly supports the provision for pupils' personal development and makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, through the study of religious beliefs, values and festivals.
218. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about Sikhism, Islam and Judaism in addition to Christianity. In Year 1, children start to learn about symbolism and the idea of belonging, such as wearing particular clothes to show one is in a club and what identifies Sikhs. In Year 2, lessons are particularly effective when children go out into the locality and look at the war memorial. They are helped with great sensitivity to understand difficult concepts such as remembrance and learn about symbols used in Christianity.
219. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to gain further knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other three faiths studied. In Year 3, pupils learn the importance of story in religion told from different holy books, such as the deliverance of the Jews from slavery and the story of Noah. This is linked well to symbolism as pupils write their wishes for hope for the future in the acknowledgement that the rainbow is the sign of hope. Pupils in Year 4 learn about items that help Christians pray at home and by the end of the lesson know about the significance of icons, a rosary and a crucifix. In Year 5, pupils successfully recall their knowledge of different forms of Christianity and know that John Wesley founded the Methodist Church and know about Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. They have a good awareness about the work of the Salvation Army and can empathise with the plight of the homeless. It was evident from the work in Year 6 that pupils were building on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity when they could discuss the features of churches and components of a church service, linking it well to what happens in school assemblies.
220. The teaching of religious education is good. Teachers manage discussions effectively and are particularly skilled at posing questions and at prompting in order to elicit responses from the pupils. This helps pupils learn and to express their ideas in a caring environment where relationships are very positive. Teachers now have secure subject knowledge and confidently explain both the knowledge and meaning of religion to pupils. This helps pupils to have a positive attitude to religious education and to develop tolerance and respect for

faiths and cultures that are different from their own. Pupils are well motivated to learn and keen to contribute to discussions. However, teaching and learning are less effective when children are required to fill in worksheets, often provided with little regard for pupils' differing abilities. Teachers use the locality well to visit churches and memorials and in Year 4 when pupils visit St Albans cathedral in connection with their history studies, but opportunities to visit other places of worship are limited. The co-ordinator has been in post for a short time and considers the teachers have been supported well by the present scheme of work. He has had too little opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in the classroom.