

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **MAPLE SCHOOL**

St Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117298

Headteacher: Mr T Bowen

Reporting inspector: Ian Knight  
23031

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 July 2002

Inspection number: 230895

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hall Place Gardens St Albans Herts
Postcode:	AL1 3SW
Telephone number:	01727 859053
Fax number:	01727 859053
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Crabtree
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23031	Ian Knight	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communication technology.	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13762	Norman Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22092	Derek Watts	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Design and technology; Geography; History; Physical education; Equal opportunities; Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22831	Clive Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	The foundation stage; Science; Art; Music; Religious education.	
21713	Chris Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	The work of the Hearing Impaired Unit.	

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants  
Old Garden House  
The Lanterns  
Bridge Lane  
London  
SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
 <b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>6</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 <b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>9</b>
 <b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>11</b>
 <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
 <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>15</b>
 <b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>16</b>
 <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
 <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
 <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Maple School is an average sized primary school for boys and girls aged from four to eleven serving the city of St Albans in Hertfordshire. There are 217 pupils on roll. The majority is white with a very small number (less than 10 per cent) from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language or are in the early stages of language acquisition. In the main school, 61 pupils are on the special needs register, which is about average. Seven pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above average. Types of special need include moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication difficulties, visual impairment and autism. The school also has a specialist unit for pupils with impaired hearing that currently caters for five statemented pupils full-time. The children currently in Reception entered the school with broadly average attainment for their age; however, previous intakes have had attainment that was above average overall.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above those expected nationally, and pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils in the unit for hearing-impaired children make very good progress because of carefully focused provision. These high standards come about because of very good teaching based on a very good curriculum, including very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher, in partnership with the very effective governing body and staff with management responsibilities, provides very good leadership and excellent management. These high quality outcomes and provision are achieved at a unit cost which is towards the top of the average range. The school provides very good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils achieve very well in the school, particularly by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave very well; relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Teaching is very good; lessons are very well planned to be challenging to all in the class.
- Support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All aspects of leadership in the school, including governors, headteacher, deputy headteacher and leaders of areas are very good.
- The work of the Hearing Impaired Unit is very good.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

*This is a very effective school which, unusually, has no key issues for action. The following minor weakness is already included in the school's development plan.*

- Standards in information and communication technology, whilst satisfactory, are below the high level found elsewhere in 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 November 1997. Since then, standards have been maintained at a high level, or improved, in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Teaching is now very good with unsatisfactory teaching eliminated and the proportion of very good or better teaching increased from a fifth to well over a third. The key issues from the last inspection have been thoroughly dealt with; lessons are well planned and challenge all groups in the class well, including the more able; assessment, both formal and informal, is used very well to inform planning and raise standards; senior managers and co-ordinators monitor the curriculum and teaching closely and effectively; the library and school grounds have been improved. These judgements, taken together, indicate that the school has made very good progress since its last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	A	B	C
Mathematics	A*	A	B	C
Science	A	A	C	D

**Key**

Very high A\*

Well above average A

Above average B

Average C

Below average D

Well below average E

A grade of A\* means that the school was in the top 5 per cent nationally. These results are now over a year old. The unvalidated results from the 2002 tests for 11 year olds show a significant improvement over those for 2001, especially in the proportions of pupils gaining the higher Level 5. The trend in results had been disappointing until 2001 but standards are now rising. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in English and mathematics are now well above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Science standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Standards in design and technology and history are above expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. In art and design, music and religious education, standards are above expectations in Year 2 and well above expectations in Year 6. Physical education standards are above expectations in Year 6. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Children in Reception are attaining average standards as measured against the Early Learning Goals. The school has set challenging targets for its future performance and is making good progress towards meeting them. When the progress individual children make is considered, then pupils achieve very well in the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and eager to come to school. They show very high levels of interest and involvement in their activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions upon others. Oppressive behaviour is notable by its absence.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show very good levels of initiative and responsibility. Relationships between all pupils, or between adults and pupils, are very good.
Attendance	Very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

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

The teaching of both English and mathematics is very good, leading to very good teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The use of other subjects to promote literacy skills is very good. The school meets the needs of individuals very well, by carefully matching the level of challenge in activities to pupils' needs. The most effective teaching uses rigorous time limits to maintain a lesson's pace and is well planned and evaluated. The most helpful marking sets precise targets for improvement that are then reviewed. In the most successful lessons, pupils make great strides in their knowledge and understanding, making huge efforts, working very hard and at a cracking pace. They produce large quantities of good quality work, sometimes working independently or collaboratively with peers. Pupils with a special need, or in the hearing impaired unit, have their needs met very well and so learn at the same rapid pace as their peers. In lessons judged to be satisfactory, the pace is slower or the management of pupils is less secure.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very well balanced and broad curriculum, enhanced by good levels of extra-curricular activities. The provision of personal, social and health education is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, both in the main school and in the hearing impaired unit. This enables these pupils to make the same very good progress as their peers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good: the few such pupils make the same very good progress as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures to ensure the safety and well being of its pupils. Very good informal and formal assessment procedures are very well used to inform future planning at every level, especially in the core subjects.

The school maintains a very good partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, supported by his deputy, has a powerful vision of excellence for the school. This vision is shared throughout the school, and is partly responsible for the rise in National Curriculum test results this year.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is very effective in discharging its statutory duties and is fully involved in the strategic management of the school. It is very effective as a critical friend to the school, having a first-rate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Test results have been closely analysed and areas of weakness addressed. Teaching is closely monitored by senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators. The information gained is used very well in improving teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school uses grants extremely well to support learning, closely monitoring the effectiveness of spending decisions and making adjustments as necessary.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school and make good progress there, becoming more mature and responsible.</li><li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• They are comfortable in their dealings with the school.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents felt that homework was not set and used consistently.</li><li>• A few parents felt that more able pupils were not challenged enough.</li><li>• Some parents commented that they believed the school was too forceful in the way it promoted Christian ideals.</li></ul>

The team agreed with parents' positive views. An analysis of pupils' books showed that homework is regularly set and marked. The team found that all pupils, regardless of ability, were challenged very well in lessons and this enabled all to make great strides in learning. The team found that the school meets statutory requirements in terms of providing a daily act of collective worship that should be mainly Christian in character, and that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively in the school; there was no evidence that any pupils from other backgrounds or religious persuasions are disadvantaged in the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils at Maple School achieve very well over their time in the school. This is because of the very good teaching they receive, based on a very good curriculum.
2. The latest National Curriculum test results for which a national comparison can be made are those undertaken in 2001. These results were disappointing in some areas. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading were well above the national average, standards in writing were above that average and standards in mathematics were about average. If the comparison is restricted to those schools with a similar intake, then the picture is slightly less rosy: reading is above average, writing average and mathematics below average. A glance at the distribution of levels attained shows high numbers of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 in both reading and writing, contributing to the comparisons above. Whilst the trend in recent results in reading and mathematics is broadly similar to that nationally, there was no secure trend of improvement in writing up to 2001. There are no tests for these pupils in the other core subject of science, but teachers' assessments show that standards were about average here, too.
3. Although standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were also average or better, they were disappointing set in the context of the school's previous performance. Standards in English and mathematics were above the national average and science was about average. Again, if the comparison is restricted only to those schools with a similar intake, then the picture is less bright: English and mathematics, overall, were about average, but science was below average. Results had been declining since 1999.
4. The school has well founded reasons for the relatively disappointing showing in 2001. Firstly, the Year 6 group had been identified as one that required further support, which the school provided in the form of a part-time teacher taking focused booster classes. However, this provision had to be curtailed as staffing problems in Year 2 meant that staff had to be reorganised. In the spring and summer terms, the Year 6 group suffered considerable disruption as their teacher left the school and a replacement proved difficult to find. This was a time of considerable difficulty for the school and results were adversely affected by the difficulties in recruiting staff; in the circumstances, the situation was managed as well as it could be. New appointments were possible from September. This has meant that this year, pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 have had a much more settled time and Year 6 have had the added provision of the booster groups planned for last year. Even so, the school noted the relative weakness in writing and set strategies in place to improve this. Whilst the provisional results for the 2002 tests cannot be compared to national figures, they are significantly improved over those in 2001.
5. Of course, test results cannot tell the whole story. They refer to only a few subjects and only to two year groups. In particular, they cannot give any clues about pupils' *achievement*, that is, how well pupils have done compared with how well they can reasonably be expected to do. Inspection evidence, including observations of pupils at work in lessons and elsewhere, an analysis of their completed work and discussions with staff and pupils can fill some of the gaps.

6. Children currently at the end of their Reception Year entered the school with attainment that was broadly average, based on the results of the school's baseline testing and an analysis of work and records. Following sound teaching and learning, they have achieved the recommended Early Learning Goals in all areas: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development. This year group, too, has been affected by staffing difficulties, including a period when the Reception teacher was absent. Due to recruitment difficulties, the class was taught by a number of temporary staff. Nevertheless, these children began their school career with average attainment and have made the expected gains; they have achieved satisfactorily.

7. Standards of work in Years 1 and 2 are well above average overall, especially in the key areas of English and mathematics. In the other subjects, standards are above expectations except in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. Standards in ICT, whilst improving apace now that teething problems with the new network have been resolved, still lag behind the high standards elsewhere, although they remain entirely satisfactory. The school recognises that this subject requires further development, as is clear from the importance placed on it in the school development plan. It was not possible to form a view on standards in physical education at the end of Year 2 as inspection priorities meant that a lesson could not be observed. These pupils entered the school with attainment that was above average. Through good teaching, their attainment in all subjects has been lifted further; the school's detailed assessment records show that most have made better progress than might be expected. Their achievement overall is good.

8. Pupils make very good progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards remain high, being well above expectations in English, mathematics, science, art and design, music and religious education by the end of Year 6. Standards in the other subjects are above expectations, with the sole exception of ICT, which is in line with expectations. Standards are improving in ICT, and the new network has allowed it to be used as an effective tool for learning in a number of subjects. However, the full potential of the network has not yet been realised, and is a significant feature of the school development plan for improvement. The school's records show that these pupils entered Year 3 with standards that were above average, and that they have made very good progress to maintain and improve upon this position four years later. This has come about by very good, enthusiastic teaching. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well.

9. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress overall. They make good progress towards the targets set for them in individual education plans (IEPs). This is due to the very good teaching and the very good support they receive. Pupils with SEN, of whatever nature or difficulty, are well integrated into the school. This ensures that they have full access to the curriculum and learning opportunities. The few pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported and make the same progress as their peers. Pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit make the same very good progress as their peers through highly effective teaching, whether on a one-to-one basis, or supported in mainstream lessons, or in mixed hearing and non-hearing groups of similar attainment taught within the unit.

10. The school has set challenging targets for its future performance, and is making good progress towards meeting them.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and attendance are very good. They have improved upon the good standards reported during the previous inspection. Parents are very pleased with present standards.

12. Pupils are right to be very enthusiastic about the school. They say that they enjoy all their lessons and believe that they do their best. They enjoy the very well supported extra-curricular clubs and sports activities but would like a drama club. When describing what they think is best about the school, older pupils say that it is a happy and clean school and their teachers are very kind. They particularly appreciate the range of responsibilities offered to them in Year 6.

13. Pupils' attitudes towards school, learning, adults and peers are very positive and contribute very well to the standards they achieve. They work conscientiously, respect their teachers and co-operate very well with them. They develop a sense of satisfaction and pride about their work and achievements and a desire to improve because the directions, praise, encouragement, and expectations of their teachers motivate them effectively. When asked why she was so carefully and neatly writing her first draft of a piece of work in a literacy lesson, a Year 5 pupil said that she always wrote in her best handwriting.

14. Pupils behave very well in lessons and about the school. With very few exceptions, they conduct themselves in an orderly and responsible manner. They are polite, for example, saying thank you when a door is held open for them. They speak respectfully to adults and are tolerant towards each other. There have not been any recent exclusions. Incidents of any kind of oppressive behaviour are extremely rare. In the very few lessons where behaviour is only satisfactory, it is usually because of the immaturity of younger pupils or when classroom management is not as effective as it might be.

15. Pupils understand very well the effect of their actions on others because of the consistency with which teachers and teaching assistants counsel them and guide them to reflect on their actions and how they might improve. They show growing respect for the feelings of others. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils described the feelings provoked by special places that they had visited or that they go to when, for example, they are upset or desire solitude. The pupils reflected on their own and others' feelings. During assemblies, circle time and religious education, pupils learn about the faiths and lifestyles of other peoples and develop respect for moral and social values such as the rights of others and the spiritual value of forgiveness.

16. Relationships between pupils are very good. Pupils get on very well together in lessons and at play. They are mutually supportive, listen to others' contributions with interest and take their place in a group or team with an appropriate attitude.

17. Pupils make very good progress towards becoming mature and responsible. By the time they leave school they are confident and able to express themselves very well. In a school council meeting, pupils formally conducted the proceedings with their own chairperson and secretary. Class representatives put forward differing views that all respected. Proposals were made and voted upon.

18. Pupils accept responsibility very well. A playground squad organises games and competitions to make playtimes happy and busy. Members of Year 6 link pupils with others when they have no one to play with. Older pupils help younger ones with their reading. They also teach basic computer skills to members of the local community who attend a six-week course at the school during lunchtimes. Pupils' personal development also benefits from involvement in charity support work and out-of-school experiences, for example, a residential visit to places of interest on the Isle of Wight.

19. Attendance is very good and is well above the average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is extremely low. Some absence is attributable to family holidays that are taken during term time. Punctuality is very good. Parents say that pupils are keen to arrive on time for the start of the school day because they enjoy school so much.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. Teaching in the school is very good. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, with a fifth that was very good or better and 6 per cent of lessons judged to have unsatisfactory teaching. Of the lessons observed during this inspection, well over a third were very good or excellent, with no teaching judged unsatisfactory. When this evidence is combined with that from the analysis of completed work, then it is clear that teaching is very good overall. This represents very good improvement over the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching in the school leads to the very good learning observed and is the main reason why achievement in the school is also very good.

21. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, that is, in the Reception class, are satisfactory. This class achieves satisfactorily overall. Their long-term progress has been adversely affected by factors outside anyone's control. The lengthy absence with back pain of the regular, well-experienced teacher was covered by a number of supply teachers as a result of local recruitment difficulties. In addition, an unusually large number of the class are very young and did not reach the age of five until just before entering Year 1; as a result they had less time to reach the Early Learning Goals. The teacher and her assistants have a good knowledge of the needs of young learners and of the Early Learning Goals. This allows them to plan soundly to meet the class' needs, using a satisfactory range of methods. The teacher and her assistant work very well together to plan the work presented. However, time is not always used to its best effect in the organisation of the tasks throughout the day. Informal, day-to-day assessment, based largely on the staff's good knowledge of the children, is used effectively in forward planning. The result of this sound start is that children make satisfactory progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills, making appropriate levels of effort in class. They work at a sound pace with some degree of independence. Children who have been identified as having a special need in Reception make the same progress as their peers.

22. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall, with significant amounts of very good teaching, especially in Year 2. This leads to the good learning observed. Again, the teaching staff understand the requirements both of the National Curriculum and the needs of their pupils, knowing them well. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught, enabling pupils to make very good progress in these areas, as is shown in the most recent National Curriculum test results. Planning is meticulous, detailed and very effective in meeting the needs of all pupils in the class. Expectations are high, both of behaviour and work rate, so that pupils try very hard in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Lessons are crisp, no time is wasted, and support staff work very well alongside teachers. The pupils in the Hearing-Impaired Unit who are in Years 1 and 2 are seamlessly integrated

into the activities there. All pupils with a special need are supported effectively within teachers' planning and through effective classroom support and are thus enabled to make the same good progress as the other pupils. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are well known to staff, who ensure they also make good progress.

23. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, leading to the very good learning, progress and achievement observed. Teaching methods are very well chosen to maximise pupils' progress. These very good methods, combined with very good planning and management of pupils, lead to lessons that move at a cracking pace, so that pupils take on new knowledge and skills very well. They are challenged and inspired by the teaching they receive and concentrate very well, spending little time not on the task. Lessons often include opportunities for independent research, so that pupils develop these skills very well. Planning clearly identifies all groups within the class, including pupils with a special educational need (SEN) or with EAL, so that all pupils make the same very good progress. Marking, especially in Year 6, is very good, setting targets for pupils to aim for and reviewing their progress later.

24. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good overall and leads to very good learning. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed. Language and tasks are generally well matched to their abilities and needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning by providing very effective support. Very good relationships between pupils and staff are evident. As a consequence, pupils have very positive attitudes and behave very well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used more effectively to support the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN.

25. Teaching in the Hearing Impaired Unit is consistently very good. Whether the teacher takes a pupil in a one-to-one session to improve skills, or supports pupils in a group situation, teaching and learning are very good. All sessions show very high expectations of what pupils will achieve, supported through the very effective planning in which work is very well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils from the unit are very well integrated into lessons with their peers; sometimes sound amplification is used effectively so that they are able to take a full part in the lesson.

26. Throughout the school, the most effective teaching is characterised by the quality of relationships in the classroom, and the use of time, homework, and plenary sessions to reinforce and extend learning.

27. In an effective lesson in Reception, focusing on the Jewish religion, good relationships and rapport with the children were evident. Children were given clear time targets for their work as they moved around activities. The lesson included well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The different activities allowed children to work together in a variety of ways and deepen their understanding of, in particular, The Torah. In a very good science lesson in Year 2, there was a real buzz of industry as pupils learned about different environments. Information and communication technology (ICT) was used well in this lesson as pupils used a webpage to answer questions about the conditions preferred by various animals. Other groups decided on their own reasons for sorting different environments according to their similar features. The teaching assistant was very effective in helping a group of lower-attaining pupils who looked in the school grounds for different environments. She used questioning well, so that, for example, pupils understood

that one wooded area was sheltered because, 'there's millions of leaves there protecting it.' This lesson was very well planned to include all pupils at the right level, with the effect that all progressed very well. The very good relationships in the class meant that pupils wanted to please their teacher and they worked hard. Pupils' independent work in groups promoted their social skills very well as they negotiated together in a good humoured way.

28. An excellent geography lesson for Year 5 also promoted independence in learning exceptionally well. Pupils in this lesson researched the features of different mountainous areas. They worked very well together in mixed ability groups to research from books and the Internet. The teacher and her assistants used the minimum of time initially to introduce the lesson, so that pupils could spend the maximum amount of time working independently. This led to a room that was a hive of activity as groups organised their new learning into a presentation for the rest of the class. The presentations were imaginative and entertaining, and reinforced pupils' social, and speaking and listening skills very well.

29. A very good lesson for Year 6 concentrated on the use of clay to create a scene with a foreground, middle and background. This lesson was well planned and organised so that the tools required were easily to hand. The teacher made very good use of previously made clay tiles to demonstrate the desired three dimensional effect, and the techniques to be used. As a result, the pupils acquired new skills quickly, producing pieces that were imaginative and delicately detailed. The teacher maintained a brisk pace and high level of challenge for all, partly through the very positive relationships in the class. The result was that pupils worked hard to produce high quality pieces of three dimensional art.

30. Not all teaching was of this very high standard. In lessons that were satisfactory, the pace was steadier or class management was less effective. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were producing and interpreting pictograms. However, one group worked at a steady pace when they were asked to draw their favourite fruit prior to placing it on a graph. This meant that they spent more time perfecting their drawing than on constructing and interpreting the graph they made.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Reception class are satisfactory and all recommended areas of learning for the Foundation Stage curriculum are taught. Children are soundly prepared for their National Curriculum studies.

32. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities provided for Years 1 to 6 are very good. The curriculum for these pupils is broad, balanced and relevant. Statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects, and the requirements for religious education and collective worship are met. Curricular planning for English and mathematics is firmly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. For most other subjects, the school has adopted the national schemes published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. In some cases, these schemes have been appropriately modified in order to suit the needs of the school. Schemes are well used and help to ensure that pupils learn in a steady and systematic way as they move through the school. They provide a clear framework for teachers to plan their lessons.

33. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very well and, as a consequence, strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are very good. These skills are reinforced not only in English and mathematics but through all the subjects of the curriculum.



34. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 that enrich the pupils' learning opportunities and contribute well to their social and cultural development. These include athletics, a choir, football, netball and recorders, as well as residential visits in Years 5 and 6. Most of these activities take place at lunchtime. Extra-curricular opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are more limited, though similar to provision in other schools.

35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. They receive very good support from teachers and teacher assistants. Pupils are organised in a variety of ways, including support in the classroom and group or individual teaching. These organisational arrangements promote very good learning. Effective assessment and planning helps to ensure that pupils with SEN are provided with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Individual education plans (IEPs) have targets that are specific, relevant and sufficiently challenging to pupils' level of need.

36. The school's approaches and strategies for promoting equal opportunities are very good. All pupils in the school regardless of their ability, gender or nature of SEN are provided with a very good learning experience.

37. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good and the programme is well planned. The school is successful in developing pupils' confidence and responsibility. Health and safety issues are dealt with effectively, particularly in science, design and technology and physical education. The curriculum includes a sensitive approach to growing, sex education and drugs awareness. The personal development of pupils is considered very important in the school. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and consider many issues, such as their fears and friendships, at special times during the week when they sit quietly in a circle.

38. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were sharing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills with senior citizens. Local retired engineers made a valuable contribution to a Year 6 design and technology project where pupils designed and made fairground rides. In history, members of the community talked to pupils about their childhood experiences during World War II.

39. The school has established a good partnership with the local secondary schools and this helps to ensure that pupils have a smooth transition from primary to secondary schools. All Year 6 pupils spend a day in their chosen secondary school prior to entry. Year 8 students from one of the partner secondary schools are involved with Year 1 pupils in promoting reading and making books.

40. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

41. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Through the religious education programme, the school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their own and others' experiences. There is a daily act of collective worship and a well-planned rolling programme of weekly assembly themes which embody clear, consistent values, such as 'Forgiveness', the theme during the week of inspection. These include well-told stories and a well-planned period for reflection on their messages. In a number of lessons, whole-class sessions at the end provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own learning. Spiritual development is further encouraged through cross-curricular links and the well-defined PSHE curriculum.

42. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a strong, positive, whole-school ethos and a clear moral code for good behaviour, which is promoted consistently throughout the school by all school staff who provide very good role models. The programme of themes for assemblies and the sensitive discussion of issues allow pupils time to reflect and consider their behaviour. Through 'Circle Time' activities and the PSHE scheme of work, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the consequences of actions beyond the confines of the school, such as recent international breaches of the moral code. Year 6 pupils are given an opportunity to join the 'Playground Squad', which is responsible for looking after younger or less confident children at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and for organising games for the younger pupils.

43. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. From the time they enter the school, pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, take responsibility for their work and for others and be as independent as possible. Responsibilities increase significantly as pupils get older; for example, in the recent past, Year 6 pupils have gone on school trips with Reception pupils and all Reception children have their own 'special friends' in Year 6. Pupils engage in the democratic process through the school council which has a very high prominence in the school. Such issues as 'How much football should be played on the school field at playtimes?' are discussed at the school council's meetings. Representatives discuss the issues with their class who then vote and decisions are made. Pupils regularly support charities, focusing on at least one per term.

44. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions, taking part in a range of local events and visiting local historical and cultural sites. Pupils are given regular opportunities to develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures through stories read in literacy lessons, studies of art from other cultures and the study of other religions in religious education lessons. During the school year a good range of visitors talk to, perform for and work with the pupils, for example, an Indian Dance Workshop visited the school and worked with Year 5 pupils. Music is very highly valued in the school: the school choir and orchestra regularly perform in the community and in local music festivals, and musicians visit the school and perform for and work with the pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

45. The school provides a very good standard of care for pupils. The procedures for monitoring and supporting attendance, behaviour, academic and personal development are very effective and reflect significant improvements since the previous inspection. Parents are very pleased with the overall quality of care and support.

46. Child protection procedures are in place. Health and safety arrangements are very good overall. Several extra features are impressive, for example, when pupils are out of school on trips, they wear badges that have the school's mobile telephone number on them. Although lesson plans include relevant safety precautions if applicable, a central file of risk assessments relating to curricular activities is not held as an extra insurance and measure of control. First aid provision is adequate. All non-teaching staff have received emergency first aid training and similar training for all teachers is planned. There is adequate provision for pupils who are unwell. Relevant specialist health and education agencies provide a service to the school. The premises and facilities are checked regularly and are very well maintained in a clean and hygienic manner by the caretaker.

47. Relationships between all adults in the school and pupils are constructive, caring, mutually trusting and respectful, and contribute considerably to an environment that is conducive to learning and in which pupils feel safe, wanted and valued. Adults help and guide pupils in numerous ways and are quick to seek out the most appropriate form of support and to contact parents and specialists whenever needed.

48. Attendance and punctuality are fully recorded and the school ensures that it knows the whereabouts of pupils at all times. The school employs the best method of promoting high attendance: that is by providing teaching that is challenging and activities that are stimulating, so that pupils want to come to school because they enjoy and value it. Nevertheless, when, by its monitoring, the school noticed a growing trend for families to take holidays during term time, it took effective steps to discourage the practice and has successfully won the understanding and co-operation of many of the parents concerned.

49. The very good quality of teaching is also the main reason for the very good standard of pupils' behaviour. Teachers consistently apply discipline and effective routines in lessons and have high expectations of pupils. The isolation of a pupil is rarely needed and a minute or two to cool off is usually all that is required. Teachers and other adults help pupils to understand the effects of their actions and how they could improve. The very good relationships that exist and pupils' understanding of the relevant moral and social issues lead to a school community in which any form of oppressive behaviour is highly unusual.

50. The expectations of the school and pupils' very good responses are such that the school has seen less need to formally recognise and celebrate good behaviour and achievement, although there are forms of recognition and celebration such as the Maple tree and Golden Book. A varied system of individual merits has been introduced into a number of classes and it is successfully motivating the pupils. However, the school recognises that some pupils may not be quite as well motivated as they might be because of the limited amount of more overt recognition and is currently reviewing its practices.

51. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning, working methods and many aspects of their personal development are closely monitored and graded and included in the annual reports to parents. Pupils are given opportunities to use their initiative and be responsible for their own work and materials. They are expected, for example, to make choices about font sizes and layout when word-processing and to look after their books and tidy up after lessons. They are offered a wide range of routine classroom tasks and, when older, more important and demanding roles such as organising playground games for younger pupils. Pupils are given the opportunity to represent others, take part in competitive sport, visit places of interest, interact with members of the community and devise ways of supporting charities. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education, assemblies and circle time all contribute very well to pupils' personal development.

52. The school has very good systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the data obtained is used very well to guide planning. This constitutes good progress since the previous OFSTED inspection. The school provides very good, effective support and advice for its pupils, informed by the monitoring of their academic progress and personal development.

53. Much useful assessment is done on a short-term, day-to-day basis, by teachers and, in the best cases, also by teaching assistants, who make notes on pupils' responses during lessons. Teachers complete detailed 'outcomes sheets' following each week's lessons and information from these is used to inform future planning. The school undertakes all statutory formal assessments of its pupils. It uses a local education authority (LEA) baseline assessment to screen pupils on entry to the school and the statutory National Curriculum

tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science are undertaken at the age of seven and eleven. In addition to this statutory testing, the school uses optional national tests at the end of each year in the junior department, and regular assessments in the core subjects throughout the year. At the end of each school year, teachers make forecasts of pupils' likely levels at the end of the following year - a tracking sheet is kept for each pupil which monitors progress in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics, and includes forecasts of attainment, actual attainment and further projections as the pupil moves through the school. Although assessment of the foundation subjects is largely informal, teachers have a very good understanding of the abilities of their pupils and use this knowledge well to provide suitable - and suitably challenging - work for different groups within their classes.

54. The significant amount of information now gained from testing is used well to identify and support pupils with special educational needs (SEN). All pupils are provided with individual termly targets for mathematics and English, and for science in Years 5 and 6, based on the assessment data obtained. The school analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests, with subject co-ordinators looking at pupils' responses to test questions carefully to identify common errors and weaknesses, and to identify trends. Among the practical, and successful, results of this analysis has been the very well-targeted provision of booster groups for pupils in Year 6 needing further support to help them reach Level 4 and for more able pupils to achieve Level 5 in the core subjects. An additional part-time teacher has been appointed to support these additional groups.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

55. Parents express a great deal of confidence in the school and are very supportive. The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents and this has continued since the previous inspection. The amount of parental support that the school receives contributes considerably to the quality of education provided and the standards that pupils achieve.

56. Parents are right to be very pleased with the quality of education and care that the school provides. They say that the school is very approachable and teaching is good. Their children like school and make good progress. Pupils are given many opportunities to become mature and responsible. Overall, parents describe it as a listening and improving school.

57. Inspectors do not fully agree with the small minority of parents that is not entirely satisfied with the information provided about pupils' progress. Annual school reports do not clearly describe pupils' attainment, except in Years 2 and 6, with relation to national expectations for their age but, other than that, provide very good information about academic and personal progress. A few parents are unhappy about the amount of homework set but inspectors judge that the amount of homework set is satisfactory. Some parents would like a wider range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for younger pupils. Inspectors find that the opportunities provided compare well with what is available in other schools and it is not unusual for there to be only limited extra-curricular activities for younger pupils.

58. The quality of information for parents is good overall. The prospectus provides comprehensive details about the school. The governors' annual report omits authorised absence data, arrangements for disabled pupils and does not adequately describe the implementation of the governors' policy for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Newsletters are published regularly and teachers advise parents about what is to be taught each term. Almost all parents attend the autumn and spring consultation meetings during which their children's progress and their targets for improvement are discussed. Those

parents who have children with SEN are appropriately involved in the assessment and review process. Teachers are accessible at the start and end of each day. Reading records and, in some classes, home/school links books provide further means of informative contact. The school consults parents from time to time in order to survey their views and takes account of them for planning purposes.

59. Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is very good. Many provide assistance in school every day. They listen to pupils read and help in many practical ways, such as with the library and gardening. Some either run or help with sports and music clubs. Many respond to requests to accompany pupils on trips out of school. The school association organises numerous social and fund-raising events that produce very considerable financial benefits for the school. The recent 'Three Peaks Challenge' sponsorship received a huge response from parents and friends of the school.

60. Parents are very keen to support their children with their homework and in their public performances. They participate in the curriculum when requested by the school. During a special events week, many parents took part sharing their skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Curricular information meetings or workshops for parents are always very well attended.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

61. The headteacher and his team comprising the deputy headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and teachers-in-charge of the Hearing Impaired Unit together offer very good leadership and excellent management of the school. The governing body is a very effective one. The school monitors its performance very well, and takes appropriate and effective action as required. It uses resources, including specific grants, outstandingly well, and applies the principles of best value very well in its decision making.

62. The headteacher has been at the school a relatively short while, but he has already provided the vision and drive, shared by other members of staff, which has led to recent significant improvements in the school's work. All staff share the vision of excellence in the school in their high expectations of what pupils will achieve, and the work they set that is carefully matched to individuals' needs. This drive for excellence in all areas has been partly responsible for the improvement in National Curriculum test results in 2002. The school's aims and mission statement are due for review. At present, they focus on providing a secure environment in which pupils can thrive, although aims specifically seeking to enable each pupil to achieve their potential are implied at the moment. Nevertheless, the high standards indicated in this report regarding pupils' achievement, attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development, alongside the quality of the teaching and of other areas of the school's provision, clearly show that the school's aims, implicit and explicit, are very well met.

63. The governing body, and the way in which it works, are real strengths of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties very well, the only omission being small areas of the governors' annual report to parents. That aside, all statutory requirements are met, due in no small part to governors' diligence. The governing body has for many years placed great emphasis on monitoring the school's work and challenging it when necessary. Governors have close links with staff, regularly visiting classrooms and offices to obtain information at first hand. This is fed back to the full governing body so that, with reports from the headteacher and co-ordinators, the governing body has an excellent knowledge of school life and standards in the school. A number of governors have a special interest in one or more aspects of the school, some with professional experience, for example, the chair of the finance committee. They bring considerable expertise to bear and very effectively hold the

school to account. Governors are very effective in strategic management too. They are well involved in the prioritisation of the very good school development plan and in the monitoring of its effectiveness.

64. Delegation in this school is real and very effective. The school has invested in extra teaching staff to allow curricular co-ordinators and other post-holders to have sufficient regular time to act as leaders in their area. This includes the redrafting of policies and schemes of work, monitoring of planning and pupils' work, and the direct monitoring of teaching and learning. Not all post-holders carry out all of these functions all of the time. The school prioritises areas very effectively within the school. Areas of focus, for example, information and communication technology (ICT), have a high priority to allow co-ordinators to have the maximum effect. The deputy headteacher has a number of whole-school roles devolved to her and overseen by the headteacher, and these are executed very effectively. Special educational needs provision is well led and managed by its co-ordinator (SENCO). She has attended recent training in order to keep abreast of the requirements of the new Code of Practice. She has also provided training for teaching assistants in order to develop their role in the classroom. Statutory requirements for pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully met. The Hearing Impaired Unit is a valuable resource for the whole school and is well managed by the teachers-in-charge. The net effect of this concentration on developing the skills of the staff in the school is that teaching has improved, and, with it, pupils' achievement. This is noticeable, for example, in the area of writing. Last year, following an exhaustive analysis of tests and assessments, the school noted that writing was an area of relative weakness. The range of strategies put in place has enabled writing standards to rise, as reported earlier.

65. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and part of the reason for this is the very effective way in which teaching is monitored and evaluated. The headteacher observes all teachers regularly, providing written and verbal feedback. He is supported in this by the deputy headteacher and curricular co-ordinators. Pupils' work is also evaluated to obtain information about long-term expectations, coverage and balance. The written evaluations are focused, evaluative and useful to staff, enabling them to celebrate and share good practice, whilst obtaining support to eliminate weak practice. One lesson, observed by the headteacher earlier in the year, was judged unsatisfactory. The teacher in question received advice and observed an exemplar lesson by another member of staff with the effect that when the observation was later repeated, the lesson was judged good. This is also a strand of the well-embedded and effective performance management strategy in the school.

66. The effect of the clarity of vision at all levels, together with the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work combine harmoniously to form priorities for development in the school that are highly appropriate. In addition, the school takes purposeful and very effective action to meet those priorities, both in the long and the short term. The long-term action is contained in the school development plan. The school recognises, for example, that standards and provision in ICT, whilst satisfactory, are not as well developed as other areas, and there is a comprehensive action plan in place to correct that. In the shorter term, the school has managed difficult staffing issues, when the recruitment of new staff to replace those leaving to retire or for promotion was difficult or impossible, so as to minimise the effect on pupils in the school. It is difficult to imagine how these issues could have been better handled in the circumstances prevailing.

67. The shared vision of excellence which is tangible in the school and the previous effective action taken to improve standards show that the school has a very good capacity to improve even further.

68. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good. There is a wide range of experience and subject-specialism amongst the teaching staff, and all staff, including support staff, are appropriately qualified. The school is in the process of applying for 'Investors in People' status, and its use of the principles of the scheme is already improving the effectiveness of its staff development arrangements.

69. The school's accommodation is good overall, classrooms are spacious and there are a number of specialist rooms which are used well, for example, for peripatetic music tuition and to house booster groups. Recent improvements made to the accommodation for the Reception class have provided a secure outdoor environment, which is used well. The school is very well maintained by the site manager who is a greatly valued and valuable member of the school staff.

70. Learning resources are good overall, are often well utilised in lessons and are stored appropriately.

71. The school makes very good use of the funds that are available to it. Financial planning and control are extremely good. The school provides very good value for money. Standards of financial management have improved since the previous inspection.

72. Financial planning closely supports the objectives and strategies of the school development plan and is directed primarily at raising or maintaining educational standards. The main priorities have been to provide a high level of teaching-assistant support in classrooms, promote the quality of teaching and improve resources. The school has used its financial resources very well to achieve these priorities. All interested parties are consulted in order to inform planning and, for example, to allocate funds to areas. Current practices are evaluated and in some instances the school has secured improved arrangements or reduced costs. Specific grants and government funds are used for their intended purposes. The school has successfully bid for further funds and enjoys extremely good financial support in the form of donations and income from fund-raising activities by the school association. A recent external auditor's report described the school's financial systems as excellent. The school's costs are higher than the average because of the extra funding that it is entitled to, for example, to support pupils with hearing impairment, but, on a like-with-like comparison, costs are only marginally higher than the average. In view of the educational results achieved, the very good standard of teaching, the academic and personal development of pupils and the average cost per pupil, the school is judged to give very good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

73. This highly effective school has no areas of significant weakness. Nevertheless, the governing body, headteacher and staff should implement the school development plan with respect to information and communication technology (ICT) to raise standards from their current satisfactory level to the level of the other subjects.

*(Paragraphs: 7, 8, 66, 73, 106, 135, 137).*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	16	10	0	0	0
Percentage	2	34	39	24	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	217
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	61

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.6

#### 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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	11	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	18
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	29	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	94 (87)	90 (84)	90 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	90 (84)	90 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	15	12	14
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	28	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	93 (94)	80 (91)	93 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	10
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	28	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	93 (94)	97 (84)	70 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	198
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes:**

##### **YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff:**

##### **YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff:**

##### **Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	<b>2001-2002</b>
----------------	------------------

	<b>£</b>
Total income	551993.00
Total expenditure	553813.00
Expenditure per pupil	2552.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	46432.00
Balance carried forward to next year	44342.00

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

217
93

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	61	35	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	53	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	44	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	50	11	2	4
The teaching is good.	49	48	1	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	41	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	34	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	38	10	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	51	8	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	34	3	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	2	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	45	16	2	3

### **Other issues raised by parents**

A few parents felt that behaviour in the school had deteriorated since the appointment of the new headteacher, that the school was overly religious and that higher-attaining pupils were not challenged. The inspection team investigated all of these concerns and found them not to be the case.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

74. Most children attend one of a number of pre-schools or Nurseries before they enter the Reception class in the term after their fourth birthday, joining the class in two stages during the year. They then attend school initially for morning sessions only. At the time of inspection, almost at the end of the school year, there were 31 children in the Reception class. A larger than normal group of summer-born children had only been attending the Reception class since the beginning of the spring term a few months previously. One child attends the Hearing Impaired Unit in the school.

75. Overall, children have made satisfactory progress during their time in school although progress has not been as rapid as in previous years, or as in the rest of the school, due to a number of factors. These are:

- \* the unavoidable absences from school of the Reception teacher during the year and her replacement by a series of supply teachers, thus depriving the children of continuity of teaching in their vital, initial school experience;
- \* the unusual number of summer-born children in the current cohort (a number of whom will not have attained their fifth birthday at the end of the current school year);
- \* the immature behaviour of a small minority of boys in the group.

76. The school undertakes local education authority (LEA) baseline assessments of basic skills within the first half term of children entering the school. Previous baseline data confirms that attainment on entry to the school varies year on year and has been, in recent years, above national averages. However, in the case of the current cohort of children, six of whom have individual education plans (IEPs) for a range of special educational needs (SEN), overall attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. At the time of inspection, although the majority of children were attaining the Early Learning Goals in most areas, a minority was still working within the Stepping Stones leading to full achievement of the Early Learning Goals. Attainment is broadly equivalent to expectations by the end of the Foundation Stage in all of the Early Learning Goals.

77. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of very young children and her planning and teaching is securely founded on the Early Learning Goals for these children. Teaching is characterised by good teamwork and liaison between the Foundation Stage co-ordinator and the hard-working and skilled teaching assistants. Together, they plan and resource an appropriate range of well supported, interesting and challenging activities, indoors and out. The teacher and teaching assistants demonstrate good behaviour and stress the development of speaking and listening, and personal and social skills. The teacher manages children satisfactorily, has realistic expectations of them, provides work well matched to children's abilities and, in the best cases, uses teaching methods that inspire curiosity and learning.

78. Activities are planned on an integrated day system, whereby children rotate around four or more activities during the day, with some class teaching for physical development, religious education and some English and mathematics activities. This has the advantage of providing all children with a well-planned and controlled series of experiences during each day. However, it does also result in some time loss as, several times each day, children

have to move to the next activity at the teacher's signal. Inevitably, some children complete the allotted activity quickly and start to lose interest and wander around the classroom and others have to leave work unfinished when they move on to the next activity. Typically, a Foundation Stage class at the end of the year would be learning to sit still for longer periods at their tables, in preparation for their Year 1 class. However, a significant number of the children in the current Reception class are rather immature and find it difficult to sit for longer periods and the class teacher has rightly made the decision not to change the routines significantly in the last few weeks of this year, unlike previous years.

79. The identification of and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they are included in every aspect of the work within the class. Relationships with parents are good; the teacher meets parents on three occasions prior to their children entering the school and a number of parents visit the school regularly to hear readers. Accommodation is good and the newly installed awning over the secure outdoor area proved its worth several times during the inspection when children were able to continue with their outdoor activities despite intermittent showers.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

80. Children's development in this area is satisfactory overall. Most children are confident in their surroundings, moving to their chosen task or activity independently. Although the majority is able to concentrate for lengthening periods, sitting quietly and alertly on the carpet and in whole-school assemblies, in introductions to lessons, and when involved in a task, a small minority finds it difficult to concentrate and sit still for longer than a few minutes. Most acknowledge the need for help and seek it appropriately when needed and understand the need for agreed values and codes of behaviour. Most children respond positively and confidently to a range of experiences, forming relationships, taking turns, sharing and co-operating well, and paying an appropriate amount of attention to the task given to them. They become involved in the classroom routines and develop satisfactory relationships with their peers and with adults. In most instances they approach activities enthusiastically and positively and behave appropriately both within the classroom and around the school. The teacher and support assistants work together well and organise an interesting and exciting variety of activities with a clear purpose that leads to a growing level of confidence and independence.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

81. In this area, children's attainment is satisfactory overall. The youngest children are beginning to understand that words and pictures carry meaning and are aware that print is read from left to right, and from top to bottom. They are beginning to associate sounds with patterns, words and letters. They recognise initial sounds and rhymes and enjoy listening to a story, joining in with the rhymes with gusto. They are able to recognise some letters, pointing to simple CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words and sounding them out. They enjoy marking and basic writing experiences, using a range of marking implements for drawing, scribbling and writing. They write over the teacher's writing, beginning correct letter formation and copy their names under the adult's examples and recognise their own names. Most are able to write simple regular words and are attaining the appropriate Early Learning Goal for writing, although a number of younger children are functioning within the Stepping Stones leading up to the Early Learning Goal. In one activity, a group of children were playing 'I spy with my little eye' with words ending in 'p'; some managed to write words such as 'sheep' or 'cap', although not all could read the words they had written. A more able group of children engaged in a guided writing activity about hands and were completing the sentence:

'With my hands I can ...'. Words written include 'klap', 'wak', 'crall' and 'tutch', indicating that children are attaining the Early Learning Goal for linking sounds and letters and are using their phonetic knowledge to write simple words and making phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. Although several instances of minor squabbling over resources were observed during the inspection, most children are attaining the Early Learning Goal for 'Language for Communication' and are interacting with others, negotiating plans and taking part in conversation at the expected level. Most communicate their likes and dislikes in clear and easily understandable speech although the speaking skills of a small minority of children is below expectations for their age. They read regularly to the class teacher and other adults and listen to a story attentively and respond appropriately, sitting still and looking at the storyteller. They listen with enjoyment and respond well to songs and stories. The class teacher has appropriate expectations, satisfactory classroom management skills and a positive rapport with the children leading to an appropriate level of motivation.

### **Mathematical development**

82. Children's attainment is satisfactory overall. The youngest children are able to count from one to five and beyond and most recognise the numerals and are able to sequence these correctly. Although one child correctly worked out, during registration, that, 'If there are two children away, there must be 29 in today', the majority are only beginning to use their developing mathematical understanding to solve real-life practical problems and recognise and confidently use the sequence of numbers one to ten as, for example, when counting and recording scores for a target-throwing activity. Although most children are beginning to use the correct names for solid and flat shapes and use language such as 'end', 'face', 'circle' to describe shape and size, a minority was working at a much lower level and showing curiosity by talking about shapes and how they are the same and why some are different. Teaching of mathematical development is satisfactory; the teacher plans activities well; activities are matched appropriately to children's abilities and a satisfactory pace is maintained throughout the day. The teacher uses appropriate mathematical vocabulary and makes good use of questioning, with the result that most children remain interested and attentive. Planning adheres closely to the National Numeracy Strategy programme of study and, as the year progresses, higher-ability children are provided with suitably challenging activities from the Year 1 programme of study.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

83. In this area of learning, children's attainment is satisfactory overall. Most children talk readily to adults and other children about day-to-day life and about events important to them. The teacher provides an interesting and well-supported range of activities that increase children's understanding. When a visitor told them about the Jewish religion, most were attentive and confidently asked and answered questions. Children working at the class computers approach them confidently. They indulge in role-play activities with gusto and during the year, the role-play corner has been The Giant's Castle from 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and, at the time of the inspection, was a TV Studio, following a visit from a parent who works in the industry. During a whole day of activities around the theme of 'The Eye', the class were taught how to sign, 'Happy Birthday to you', each child was given his/her name embossed in Braille, and during the day all were blindfolded for a few moments and led around the class in order to gain an understanding of what being blind was like. Children's understanding of chronology is developed effectively through classroom displays such as 'When I was a baby/toddler/at school' with the child's own photographs. Their knowledge of the world is developed through activities such as a 'Sound Walk' around the school, visits to Whipsnade Wild Animal Park and Rickmansworth Canal Centre. With Year 6 pupils, children



visited Buckingham Palace and The Victoria and Albert Museum to see an exhibition of royal jewels, following which the children made union flags and tiaras and attended the school Jubilee party dressed as people from the future. Teaching in this area of learning is good; the teacher organises and resources a good range of interesting and exciting activities for the children which develop their understanding well.

## **Physical development**

84. Children's physical development is satisfactory overall. A range of role-play activities and indoor- and outdoor-activities with large play equipment are provided. In an outdoor lesson, a practice for the forthcoming annual Sports Day, most children moved with confidence and safety, demonstrating an appropriate awareness of the space of themselves and others. Children's physical development is also regularly developed in daily activities designed to improve small motor skills – activities such as transferring spaghetti from one bowl to another using chopsticks, and water and sand play. Teaching in the area of physical development is satisfactory; the teacher demonstrates satisfactory management skills, organises resources and plans lessons well, with specific learning targets for each activity and moves the lesson along at a satisfactory pace with an appropriate blend of praise and direction.

## **Creative development**

85. Children's attainment in this area of learning is satisfactory overall. Children join in with simple songs and respond to the moods and tempo of the music. They use their voices expressively, singing songs from memory with enthusiasm. Children are given opportunities to work with a wide range of media and materials and produce artwork of a satisfactory standard. They select appropriate materials and develop building, constructing and joining skills through such activities as model building with large construction kits, working with play dough making animal noses, and sticking and gluing paper and paper rolls to make a Torah, following a visitor and their learning about Judaism. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory; creative activities are included in a range of activities with all resources readily at hand and available for the children to use.

## **ENGLISH**

86. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 results were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing. When compared with similar schools, reading results were above average and writing was average. Results had been above or well above average during the previous three years. In the 2001 English tests for Year 6, results were above the national average, and average when compared to similar schools. Results dipped in 2001 as they were well above average in 2000 and 1999. In 1999, the school's English results at Year 6 were among the highest 5 per cent of schools in the nation. The 2002 Year 6 results indicate a significant improvement over 2001 with more pupils attaining the higher Level 5.

87. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and most pupils including higher attainers and those with special educational needs (SEN) are achieving well in all areas of English. Pupils in the current Year 6 attain standards well above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. All

pupils in Year 6 are achieving very well. High quality teaching and a very well planned curriculum are the main reasons for the high standards. The teaching is consistently very good in Years 3 to 6 and accounts for the better achievement here than in Years 1 and 2.

88. Pupils in Year 2 speak and listen with assurance and they are given opportunities to develop speaking and listening skill across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 2 design and technology lesson, pupils were making a winding mechanism. They were given good opportunities to express their ideas. Pupils spoke confidently in sharing their designs and construction ideas. They used vocabulary such as 'axle' and 'cotton reel' in describing the best way to secure string to the cotton reel. The teacher's instructions were very clear and informative and pupils listened attentively and with interest. In Year 4, pupils talk confidently about the poems they have heard. They express opinions and most express a liking for poems with humour. Higher-attaining pupils refer to the poem in justifying their views. They identify words and phrases which give meaning and effect. For example, in studying a poem called 'The Quarrel', pupils explained the meaning of 'the afternoon turned black'. By the end of Year 6, speaking and listening skills are very well developed. Pupils talk confidently, listen attentively and ask questions in a range of subjects. The school council provides pupils with the opportunities for debate and gives pupils a voice on school matters.

89. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading are high and continue to be high through to the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy books and have established good reading habits. Strategies for the teaching of reading are very good. A number of parents assist its development on a regular basis. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read simple passages of text and show a clear understanding. Higher-attaining pupils read accurately and fluently. They read independently with confidence and expression. Higher-attaining pupils are able to scan a large non-fiction book to find information. They confidently use the contents, index or glossary to find information. In the current Year 6, nearly three quarters of the class should attain the higher Level 5 in reading. Most pupils show understanding of a range of texts using higher-order skills of inference and deduction. They describe crucial features and characters. Reading and research skills are used very well in other subjects. Pupils retrieve useful information from a variety of texts and other sources to find out, for example, about the Isle of Wight in geography, or people and events during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

90. Standards in writing are high and these have improved recently. This is because school has made writing a focus for development. All teachers and teaching assistants have been involved in training in this area. The school has used local education authority advisers effectively for this purpose. Pupils in Year 2 write clear detailed answers to questions. For example when they are presented with the question, 'Do all caterpillars turn into butterflies?' Some written responses included: 'Not all caterpillars turn into butterflies, some turn into moths'. 'Caterpillars can turn into moths as well as butterflies'.

91. In Year 4, pupils write endearing odes about their favourite foods. As one pupil wrote:

'Pizza, oh pizza, I love you a lot,  
Pizza, oh pizza how much have I got.  
Covered with tomato and splattered with cheese,  
Sometimes pepperoni, give me some please.  
Spicy and peppery, lovely and soft, smothered with peppers,  
How much have I scoffed'.

92. In Year 4, pupils produced diaries for the month of June. These are well made personalised books. The writing is structured, imaginative and clear as pupils wrote about holidays during the half term, World cup football matches, Father's day celebrations and a school trip to Whipsnade Wildlife Park. Pupils demonstrate sustained personal writing.

Higher-attaining pupils' writing is lively and thoughtful. Words are chosen adventurously. Word processing is used well to enhance presentation and editing text. In the current Year 6, half the class attained the higher Level 5 in writing. Pupils' writing is clear, interesting and often imaginative. Simple and complex sentences are structured into paragraphs. Spelling is of a high standard, and commas, speech marks and other punctuation are employed correctly. Handwriting is fluent, joined and well presented. For example, pupils produced interesting profiles of special book characters like 'Gandalf the Grey', a powerful wizard from 'Lord of the Rings', or 'Mr Twit', from Roald Dahl's 'The Twits'.

93. The school has been particularly successful in using other subjects for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills. For example, pupils rewrite the story of 'The Two Brothers' in religious education. Pupils in Year 6 produce clear and detailed written reports in geography and history.

94. The quality of teaching is very good overall. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is good, ranging from satisfactory to very good. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is very good ranging from good to very good. The high quality teaching contributes to the high standards attained. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of English, and literacy skills are very well promoted across the curriculum. Lessons are well planned and structured in accordance with the National Literacy Strategy. Clear learning objectives are identified and shared effectively with the class so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn.

95. Teachers' instructions and questioning are very effective in promoting learning. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher demonstrated how to answer questions in sentences very well. The teacher used questioning very effectively to extract ideas from the pupils and to check that they understood. Using individual white boards and felt pens, pupils were given opportunities to practise answering questions. The pupils made very good gains in their skills of sentence writing. Pupils' attainment is assessed effectively and this information is used well to inform planning and teaching. Activities and tasks are very well matched to the different levels of attainment within a class. This helps to ensure that all pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs (SEN), are appropriately challenged and are able to make very good gains in their learning. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and provide very good support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs. This enables these pupils to make very good progress in lessons, based on the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs).

96. Teachers use attractive learning resources to inspire and to stimulate pupils. For example, in Year 2, the teacher used a large and attractive book to illustrate the life cycle of a butterfly or moth. In a very good Year 4 poetry lesson, the teacher showed the pupils a video presented by Roger McGough on family poetry. The range of poems presented inspired the pupils to write similar pieces of their own. There were also plenty of opportunities for pupils to review the poems and express their views. In the very good lessons, levels of challenge are high and the pace is brisk. Pupils are kept on task, and the best use is made of the time available. Teachers manage their classes very well and create a positive climate for learning. As a consequence, pupils show very positive attitudes, relate very well to others and behave very well.

97. The standard of marking is high. Teachers are regular in their marking; they praise good work, offer suggestions for improvement and set individual targets for improvement. Marking indicates when these targets have been achieved.

98. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good, the pace and levels of challenge are lower. As a consequence, pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning.

99. The subject is very well led and managed by two experienced teachers who work very well in partnership. They monitor the subject very well, with the result that standards in English, especially writing, have improved. Very good assessment procedures are well used to plan ahead. The National Literacy Strategy is used very well to plan the English curriculum, together with strategies like the Additional Literacy Strategy to target pupils who are in danger of missing the expected levels. Teachers have implemented the strategy very well. The governor responsible for literacy is extremely well informed about the National Literacy Strategy and the standards the school achieves. She is supportive and has made a significant contribution to the improved reorganisation of the library. Overall, the school has made very good improvements in English since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

100. Pupils achieve much better than expected in mathematics because of the very good teaching they receive, based on a good curriculum. This represents a very good improvement over the situation at the last inspection.

101. The most recent National Curriculum test results that can be compared to national figures are those for 2001, a year ago. At that time, standards at the end of Year 2 were about average when compared to all schools, but below average when compared to schools of a similar intake. Standards at the end of Year 6 were a little better: they were above average when compared to all schools nationally, and average when compared to similar schools. There was no secure trend of improvement in test results. The school explains that results were lower than might be expected because of difficulties in recruiting new staff during the year, which caused the extra Year 6 booster classes to end and disrupted the experience of pupils in Years 2 and 6 especially. Since September, staffing has been stable, booster classes have run as planned and results in National Curriculum tests have improved significantly, especially in terms of pupils gaining the higher levels. In 2001, 32 per cent of seven year olds gained the higher Level 3; in 2002, this increased to 42 per cent. For pupils in Year 6, the improvement is even more marked: in 2001, 80 per cent of pupils gained at least the expected Level 4, including 30 per cent who gained the higher Level 5. In 2002, the proportion gaining at least the expected level rose to 90 per cent, including 57 per cent who gained Level 5. The school just failed to achieve its target for mathematics performance in Year 6 in 2001; it exceeded it in 2002.

102. Inspection evidence confirms a picture of high standards. Pupils' completed work was analysed and, in Year 2, almost no work was seen below the expected level. Tasks were carefully matched to individual pupils, so that it is clear pupils have made good progress over the year. High expectations of what these young learners can achieve were apparent, as they solved problems like, 'If a stool has three legs, how many stools can you make with 5 legs, 9 legs, 13 legs?' Whilst the lowest-attaining pupils learn to tell the time in whole hours, their quicker peers can read and understand quarter-to and quarter-past. The lowest-attaining pupils know about the symmetry of simple shapes; their higher-attaining peers know shapes by name and several facts about them, including the number of faces and edges in a three dimensional shape. All have a clear understanding of place value in numbers, counting on in tens, with the higher attainers also counting on in threes and fours.

103. In Year 6, all work seen was aimed at least Level 4. Again, the tasks given were graded to suit individuals impressively well. Pupils made very good progress, aided in no small part by the excellent marking of their work and the setting of challenging targets that were later reviewed. Higher-attaining pupils came to grips with some very sophisticated concepts, like converting area in square metres into square centimetres. Place value is extended to very large numbers as well as decimal fractions. Transformations of shapes on a grid, like rotations and translations are well understood. Data handling is extended from the collection and representation of information to handling simple probabilities confidently.

104. This evidence of high standards from the direct analysis of work and the evidence of the latest test results shows that all pupils, including those with a special need, are doing much better than would normally be expected given their starting points. Their *attainment*, based on the expectations of the National Curriculum, is well above expectations; their *achievement*, based on how well these pupils would be expected to do in an average school, the progress they make and the level of challenge in lessons, is very good.

105. This very good achievement is a product of the quality of teaching and of pupils' eagerness to learn. The former ensures that appropriately challenging work is presented in ways that inspire pupils; the latter ensures that lessons have a brisk pace and that teachers do not use valuable time maintaining order. Nine lessons were observed, including a booster lesson in Year 5 and a session in which pupils from Year 2 joined the Hearing Impaired Unit. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in one lesson, good in four lessons and very good in four lessons. When the evidence of these observations is combined with that from the analysis of work, then it is clear that teaching and learning overall in Years 1 and 2 are good, and very good in Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school, the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy is very good, contributing to the very good progress made. Planning is very effective, so that all pupils, including those with a special need or the small number with English as an additional language (EAL), are challenged beyond their comfort zone. Teachers exhibit high expectations of how hard pupils will work and of their behaviour. These are amply rewarded in the volume of work completed by pupils, who make great efforts and work at a good pace. These features came together harmoniously in a very good revision lesson for Year 6. Pupils enjoyed a challenging, quick-fire opening session converting percentages to fractions and decimals. The questions given were carefully graded and included follow-up questions: 'How did you work that out?' In a carefully cultivated atmosphere of mutual support, pupils were not afraid to make mistakes, and the teacher's encouraging manner supported them when they did: 'Check your denominator... Can you reduce it more?' This was followed with a challenging exercise using co-ordinates involving negative numbers. The level of challenge for individuals was again well judged so that pupils' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary and they made large strides in understanding. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils rose to the challenge as they tested hypotheses about how dice act when rolled, or whether there are too many of one particular sweet in bags. The teaching assistant was very effective in this lesson. She led her group well, and had a useful sheet on which to record observations to assist the teacher in future planning. Again, tasks were very well matched to individuals' needs. The teacher took this one step further through the use of very good questioning, both to the whole class in the introduction, and to groups as she challenged their thinking.

106. When teaching, whilst still satisfactory, lacks this sparkle, the pace is less snappy and pupils more restless. This happened in a Year 1 lesson about graphs. Pupils made a pictogram of their favourite fruit, but spent too much time drawing and colouring the fruit and not enough in the construction and use of the pictogram, so that their progress was slower. One general weakness, acknowledged by the school, is the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The co-ordinator is carrying out an audit of software available with a view to improving this state of affairs.

107. The co-ordinator is recently appointed. Nevertheless, she has already pinpointed areas for development, like the availability of more software to support teaching, and is providing good leadership. There has been a long history of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the subject's work, also involving the governing body in the person of the numeracy governor. Analyses of test results have been used effectively to improve teaching quality. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above expectations throughout the school, and progress was satisfactory. Teaching was described as generally either satisfactory or good. The judgements here show that a very good level of improvement has taken place.

## SCIENCE

108. One science lesson was observed in the infant department and five lessons in the junior department. Based on these lesson observations, a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, attainment in science is above national expectations overall at the age of seven and well above national expectations at the age of 11. Provisional results for the 2002 national tests taken shortly before the inspection indicate that all of the current Year 6 pupils are attaining at or above national expectations for their age and well over half are attaining above national expectations, showing that attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above average. A scrutiny of work produced during the current school year indicates that pupils undertake a very good range of appropriate science activities covering all attainment targets, studying life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Provision for Science Attainment Target 1 – 'Science Enquiry' - is particularly good throughout the school. From the start, pupils are expected to use simple apparatus and equipment correctly, ask questions about their science work, use focused exploration and investigation to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and attempt to explain their discoveries and draw conclusions using scientific understanding and scientific vocabulary.

109. During the year, Year 1 pupils have studied 'Sound' – listening carefully and listing loud and quiet noises, 'Forces' – distinguishing between pushes and pulls, 'Materials' – distinguishing between wood, glass, metal and considering such questions as 'What do pets need to be healthy?' Year 2 pupils investigated different environments both in the 'field' – working outside and recording their findings - and inside the classroom using information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet to discover facts about woodland and field environments. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils tested types of insulation to keep a drink warm, insulating a plastic cup with bubble wrap, polystyrene, cotton wool and foil and comparing the temperature with that of a 'control' cup with no added insulation. They understand that polystyrene is 'a good insulator' and that the outside of the cup is cooler because 'it keeps all the heat inside'. Year 4 pupils setting up experiments to find out more about plants and animals collected plant and soil samples and devised experiments to determine answers to such questions as 'Can plants that live in water live out of water?', 'Do woodlice prefer to hide under black, white or see-through plastic?', 'Do snails prefer dry or wet soil?' and 'Does the number of mini-beasts under a log change at different times during the day?' Pupils understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence; they make predictions where appropriate and select and use appropriate equipment for their observations. In Year 5 during the year, pupils have studied the Solar system, light and sources of light, magnetism and gravity, healthy diets and have undertaken a pond study. In a Year 6 lesson observed, pupils understood that drugs can damage your body but that 'some drugs are legal and help you get better'. They know that smoking damages your lungs, 'cigarettes contain nicotine, which is a drug', 'is addictive' and 'can give you emphysema'. These examples show that attainment in science are better than expected in the infant department, and well above expectations in the juniors.

110. The quality of learning is very good throughout the school and very clear progress is made in the great majority of lessons due to the very good classroom management and subject knowledge of the teachers and the high level of pupil-motivation generated. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress overall in their science lessons. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons observed ranged from good to very good and were very good overall. In the best cases, pupils show great interest in the activities and are very keen to answer the teacher's questions, replying with enthusiasm and confidence and working quietly, independently and conscientiously, clearly enjoying their science lessons.

111. The quality of teaching in lessons observed was very good in the one infant lesson observed and ranged from very good to good in the junior department where it was similarly very good overall. Teachers give very clear explanations and are confident in their subject knowledge. They maintain a brisk pace throughout lessons, have a good rapport with their pupils and appropriately high expectations of work and behaviour. They use questioning very well to probe and direct pupils' learning, make very good use of scientific vocabulary, and motivate pupils very well so that very good progress is made.

112. The subject is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She monitors and evaluates the school's work very well. The school has successfully adopted and adapted the government recommended scheme of work for the subject. Although general resources for the subject are satisfactory, they are utilised well, and the school grounds – the pond and the wild area – are very good additional resources which are utilised particularly well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

113. Only one (Year 6) art lesson was observed during the inspection. However a scrutiny of work on display around the school confirms that pupils have a wide range of opportunities to undertake a variety of art activities in two and three dimensions, printing repeated patterns, making collages, drawing in a variety of materials including chalk and charcoal and making pencil studies of their friends and inanimate objects. Their work is of a good and, at times, very good quality. They have opportunities to study the work of a range of international artists and designers such as Picasso, Claris Cliffe, Gaudi, Escher, Hockney, Warhol and Mondrian. Pupils at the age of seven are attaining standards in art above those expected of their age group and pupils by the age of 11 are attaining standards well above those expected nationally for their age. Pupils make very good progress in the skills and knowledge of the subject as they move through the school. Standards have improved throughout the school since the previous OFSTED inspection.

114. In Year 1, pupils have made drawings of houses of a good standard. Year 2 pupils have designed patterns, made felt, woven fabric and undertaken observational drawings of a good standard. Year 3 pupils have produced observational drawings of a very good standard of horse chestnut leaves and made collage Viking longboats of a good standard. In Year 4, pupils have designed posters for their school production of 'Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat' and made soup can and photographic prints in the style of Andy Warhol. Pupils in Year 5 have studied the 'natural sculpture' of Andy Goldsworthy and studied Indian textile designs. They have made detailed observational drawings, made thumb, coil and slab pots and undertaken colour-matching exercises using photographs of the work of Georgia O'Keefe. Year 6 pupils have made watercolour studies of a very good

quality and drawn and designed chalk and pastel faces in the style of Picasso. In the one art lesson observed during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were exploring ideas and creating clay images in three dimensions – using clay to create a scene with a foreground, middle and background and using tools skilfully to produce detailed textured effects.

115. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during the art lesson seen were very good. They demonstrated great pride in their work and worked very well together, sharing materials and clearly enjoying their work. The quality of teaching in this lesson was very good. The teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge, prepared the lesson very well, with relevant resources and artefacts for the pupils to study. She made good reference to the aspects she wanted the pupils to be particularly aware of, and provided purposeful first-hand experiences for the pupils. These factors together led to very good progress in their learning and a high level of interest and response.

116. The art co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about the subject and the important part art can play in the primary school curriculum. The school follows the government-recommended scheme of work for the subject. This scheme of work provides clear guidance to teachers and ensures continuity and progression in the key skills of the subject as the pupils move through the school. Teachers know their pupils well through the use of the sound procedures for assessment. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

117. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen. Judgements about standards and provision are made on the basis of this lesson, assessment of the quality of pupils' past work and discussions with staff.

118. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were reported to be average. Most pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are achieving well. The good range of learning opportunities provided contribute to the above average standards and good achievement. In Year 2, pupils have designed and made car or bus type vehicles from reclaimed materials. They made decisions about the wheels and the length and position of the axles. They used tools to assemble their model. The finished vehicles move freely as they are pushed or pulled. In another Year 2 project, pupils designed and assembled Joseph's Dream Coat. They drew and cut out a template of the coat in linen or cotton. Pupils used information and communication technology (ICT) well to help design colour patterns. They selected a range of fabrics of different colours. These were cut into small squares and fixed to the coat to create an individual and colourful coat. In the Year 2 lesson seen, pupils were making a winding mechanism. Pupils had produced labelled drawings of their designs. Higher-attaining pupils produced detailed, labelled sketches to communicate their ideas. Pupils used tools and materials correctly in assembling the winding mechanism. Higher-attaining pupils used tools and materials confidently and independently. They assembled the components without help. Pupils identified construction problems and sought to solve them.

119. In Year 4, design and technology is effectively linked with work in science. In pairs or small groups, pupils designed and constructed a model digestive system. They used reclaimed cardboard boxes for the head and body. A range of plastic hose, piping and tubes were used to represent the gullet, small and large intestines. A plastic bottle was used for the stomach and ICT was used to make clear labels for the parts. These well-constructed models illustrate very well what happens to the food we eat and form impressive hanging displays. In Year 6, pupils designed and made models of fairground rides. Some used



different construction kits to help generate ideas. They gained a knowledge and understanding of rotating mechanisms and applied this by employing belts, pulleys and an electric motor to their model. Pupils worked with considerable precision when working with different materials and tools as they assembled their model. They tested, evaluated and modified their design during construction. They paid careful attention to the finish. The attractive models form an effective display in the classroom and front entrance to the school.

120. The quality of pupils' work on display and the curricular planning indicate that the teaching is at least good. Pupils are provided with a good range of learning opportunities and work with different tools, materials and techniques. They make good gains in acquiring the skills of designing, making and evaluating. The quality of teaching in the Year 2 lesson seen was very good. The lesson was well planned and clear learning objectives had been identified, which the teacher effectively shared with the class. This ensured that pupils were clear about what they were supposed to learn. Pupils were given good opportunities to express their ideas and they spoke confidently in sharing their designs and ideas. They used vocabulary such as 'axle' and 'cotton reel' in describing the best way to fix string to a cotton reel. The teacher's instructions and demonstrations were very clear and informative. Pupils listened and watched with great interest. Pupils applied concentration and effort to their work in constructing the mechanism. They worked well together. The teaching assistant and voluntary helpers were very well deployed and very effective in supporting pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils were very well managed and so pupils displayed positive attitudes and behaved very well.

121. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership. The school has adopted the national exemplar scheme of work. This is used well and helps to ensure that pupils learn in a steady and systematic way as they move through the school and provides a good basis for teachers to plan their lessons. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but opportunities to observe and support teaching are limited. The school does not have a consistent system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. Learning resources for the subject are good. Overall, the school has made good improvements in design and technology since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

122. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average and most pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), are achieving well. These standards are similar to those reported during the last inspection. Standards are above average because of the good teaching pupils receive and the high quality learning opportunities provided.

123. In Year 2, pupils study the imaginary Scottish island of Struay. They show an awareness of the nature and character of the island by identifying the main features and places of interest. Pupils produce a map of the island showing physical and human features including the river, the sea, Boggy loch, mountains, farms, villages and shops. Pupils acquire a geographical vocabulary and use it confidently. Higher-attaining pupils use their writing skills well in describing the different forms of transport found on the island. Pupils use clear sentences with capital letters and full stops to describe the use of boats, ferries, vans, tractors and bicycles. Higher and middle-attaining pupils follow a route map. They identify the main features of a map by using the key.

124. Pupils in Year 4, design an island settlement. Working in pairs, they consider the services needed for a given population. Collaborative working is well developed. Pupils listen with concentration and question others' ideas and opinions. Pupils decide on the position of

shops, leisure centres and schools for the island. Vocabulary such as settlement, service, site, and deciduous woodland is used to good effect. Pupils justify the decisions made for the location of different services. One pair decided together that their island would be free from cars in order to reduce pollution. Horses and cycles were the chosen forms of transport.

125. In Year 6, pupils make a detailed study of the Isle of Wight. The study is enriched by a week's residential visit in May. Pupils use a variety of sources to gather information about the island. Mapping skills are well developed by Year 6 and pupils produce attractive maps showing the main physical features and settlements. Some pupils produce impressive maps of the island's geology. Pupils use a search engine well to find information about the 'Cowes Round the World Yacht Race'. Most pupils produce clear reports of their findings. Writing is interesting and structured into paragraphs.

126. The quality of teaching is good with examples of excellent teaching. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. The pupils are keen and enthusiastic about learning. They listen well to the teacher and gain new knowledge. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop pupils speaking and listening skills. During the main tasks, teaching assistants are very well deployed and provide very good support to pupils with SEN. A good range of learning resources are selected and used. These stimulate interest and pupils apply their literacy skills well in extracting information from a range of sources such as books, maps and the Internet. Pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. This they do very well and collaborative working is well developed. Pupils show very good levels of concentration and make good gains in acquiring geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. When teaching is excellent, pupils are given very good opportunities to carry out individual research and present their findings.

127. The policy and schemes of work have been reviewed but opportunities to observe and support teaching are limited. The school has adopted the national exemplar schemes of work. These have been modified appropriately to suit the needs of the school. The schemes provide a secure basis for teachers to plan their lessons and help to ensure that pupils' learn in a steady and systematic way as they move through the school. The school does not have an effective system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment.

## **HISTORY**

128. During the inspection, no history lessons were seen. Judgements are based on the study of pupils' work and discussions with staff. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs are achieving well in this subject. Standards are similar to those reported during the last inspection.

129. In Year 2, pupils study the Victorians. They show a good knowledge and understanding of life and times during Queen Victoria's reign. Pupils compare the lives of a poor Victorian child with a wealthy one. They also compare their own lives with those of Victorian children. Pupils compare Victorian toys and games with those of today. They show a good understanding of chronology. Pupils gain knowledge of schooling in Victorian times from a visit to Stevenage museum. They dress up in Victorian costume and are taken through a typical Victorian lesson. Higher-attaining pupils produce clear written accounts of the visit. Writing is structured into sentences, using capital letters and full stops.

130. In Year 4, pupils study Ancient Egypt and show a clear knowledge and understanding of gods and goddesses, food and farming, embalming, mummies and tombs. They describe

Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills as they produce clear written accounts and research from a range of books. Work is well presented, with care and pride shown by pupils of all abilities. In Year 6, pupils study Britain since 1930. Much of their work, including homework, is research based. They examine artefacts such as a sewing machine, an iron, a wireless and a gramophone from the 1930s. They compare these with household appliances of today and make fine pencil sketches of the original items. Pupils use research skills well to find out about the preparation for World War II, the manufacturing of weapons, German propaganda and the home front. This is enhanced by a visit to Duxford RAF museum. Pupils also research the main events of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Factual accounts and reports are detailed and clearly written.

131. The school recently held a special activity week to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Each year group studied a decade from the last 50 years. Pupils acquired a good knowledge and understanding of the main events, people and human achievement using a range of books, posters, newspaper cuttings and interesting artefacts.

132. Although no teaching of history was seen, the quality of planning, the standards the pupils attain and the good quality of work produce indicate that teaching is good. Pupils are provided with interesting and varied learning opportunities and have good opportunities for independent research using a range of learning resources. Pupils are productive and produce written and illustrative work of good quality. Their knowledge and understanding of historical units are enhanced by well planned visits and visiting speakers. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and constructive. Good work is praised and comments are made to guide improvement. The study of pupils' work shows that they make good gains in acquiring historical knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils use CD ROMs well in finding information for history topics.

133. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides effective leadership. Schemes of work are good and help to ensure that pupils learn in a steady and systematic way as they move through the school. They form a secure basis for teachers to plan their lessons. The co-ordinator views samples of pupils' work throughout the school and this provides an effective overview about standards and coverage. The co-ordinator does not however observe or support teaching in the classroom. At present, the school does not have a formal system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

134. Due to timetabling restrictions, it was not possible to observe any lessons directly aimed at ICT. Judgements are therefore made on the basis of an analysis of completed work and display, observations of the use of ICT in other lessons, and discussions with staff and pupils.

135. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 2 controlled the computer through the use of the keyboard and mouse as they used a webpage to answer questions about different environments in a geography lesson. They were confident users of the computer, and were able to use the hyperlinks well to home in on the required information. Pupils in Year 6 have produced multimedia presentations using 'PowerPoint'. They have mixed text and graphics in desktop publishing tasks. Evidence on display shows they have made effective use of spreadsheets and the computer language, LOGO. Pupils in other years have also used spreadsheets and presented work using word-processing with a variety of fonts and other effects. Pupils in Year 1 were observed producing pictures using predefined objects. They could navigate the software, selecting

elements from menus and pasting them into their pictures. Pupils in Year 5 used the Internet to research weather conditions in mountainous regions. An interesting community link has Year 6 pupils acting as tutors to local adults. This contributes very well to pupils' personal development, literacy and ICT skills. For example, one pupil was observed giving instruction in PowerPoint, others taught e-mail. As they left the school, one such student spontaneously praised her Year 6 tutor. Pupils who have a special educational need (SEN) are supported well through the use of specialist software, and consequently make the same progress as their peers.

136. Pupils invariably treat the computers with respect. They share sensibly and work well collaboratively, when researching together. Their behaviour is very good. This accelerates their learning. As no lessons were observed, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching; however, observations of pupils at work indicate that learning is at least satisfactory. Pupils concentrate hard and work well independently.

137. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has, in consultation with the headteacher and governors' ICT committee, produced a comprehensive action plan for the development of the subject. Provision has recently improved markedly with the advent of new machines that are networked, and the acceleration in pupils' learning as a result is already apparent. Of particular note is the cross-curricular use made of ICT to support learning in other subjects. The subject is supported by the use of a nationally recommended scheme of work, but the co-ordinator hopes to improve on this in the coming year. There is a computer club for pupils and the school website is an effective vehicle for pupils' work. All aspects of the subject are now included in the planning. However, there is not yet a consistent format in use to track pupils' progress in the subject, matched against National Curriculum Levels. Actions to improve standards and assessment procedures are well documented in the subject action plan within the school development plan. This contains well-thought out priorities for improvement, based on first hand knowledge of pupils' experiences of ICT. The careful budgeting and implementation of the first phase of this plan have already been effective in the recent improvements noted, and has the potential to drive standards even higher now that the school has a good number of modern machines.

## **MUSIC**

138. There is a very strong tradition of high-quality music in the school. Music consequently has a very high status in the school and pupils are provided with a very good and regular range of opportunities to develop their musical skills. Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection although further valuable evidence of pupils' attainment in the singing aspect of the music curriculum was obtained in the daily school assemblies and in an evening presentation of the Year 5/6 musical performance. Lunchtime and after school instrumental group rehearsals provided evidence of pupils' attainment in the performing aspect of the curriculum. Based on this evidence, pupils' attainment in music is above expectations at the age of seven and well above expectations by the age of 11 and pupils make very good progress in music as they move through the school.

139. Pupils in Year 1 have been listening to 'Peter and the Wolf' and 'Carnival of the Animals' and, when listening to Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue', responded to different moods in music and defined changes in sounds. They can identify simple patterns and identify and describe the sound of different instruments. In Year 2, pupils have sung a wide variety of songs, accompanying them with a steady pulse and trying out their performances on small audiences. In Year 3, pupils have worked with tuned percussion instruments, sung a variety of songs, including a number of rounds, identified instruments and voices playing as solos and duets and listened to music that tells a story. In Year 4, pupils performed in a production

of 'Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat' at Christmas. During the year they have made new melodies to the words of a well-known song, identified instruments characteristic of the British Isles and other areas of the world, and compared British folk music with that of other countries. Year 5 pupils have improvised melodies, made a round using a set of chord notes and listened to Indian music. In Year 6, pupils have responded to a variety of 20<sup>th</sup> century music through dance, drama and art, and developed a basic knowledge of the western classical tradition and its main forms. These examples illustrate that standards at the end of Year 2 are above expectations, and are well above expectations at the end of Year 6.

140. In a weekly wind band rehearsal, twelve pupils rehearsing for an assembly performance played 'Tequila!' and 'Blues Band' very skilfully and maturely. A very good range of music groups led by skilled peripatetic music teachers is held during the week. These include 'cello lessons during the day for individual pupils and for groups at lunchtime, the aforementioned Wind Band rehearsal at lunchtime, an orchestra rehearsal on another lunchtime and violin, bassoon and double bass lessons for individual pupils during the week.

141. Pupils' singing in the school assemblies observed during the inspection was of a high standard, tuneful, rhythmic and very enthusiastic. The school choir includes over half of all junior pupils. In the past, some have sung in the Albert Hall. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils take part in a Combined St Albans Schools concert every year with some pupils playing in the orchestra there. They also play in the school musical productions that are a regular part of the school year.

142. The quality of pupils' learning in the two lessons observed was satisfactory. No overall judgement can be made on pupils' behaviour and attitudes although pupils' attitudes when singing in assemblies are very good. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and most respond very well to their teacher's instructions. The quality of teaching in both lessons observed was satisfactory although the quality of specialist teaching in the individual and small group lessons is frequently very good.

143. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and offers good leadership of the subject, supporting colleagues effectively. Standards are effectively monitored. Teachers use informal assessment effectively in planning. There is a good range of resources for the subject, although a number of instruments need replacing due to frequent use.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

144. During the inspection, no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 so it is not possible to make judgements about standards and teaching in these years. However, an analysis of planning and discussions with staff indicate that the school is providing an appropriate range of activities in this subject.

145. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average and pupils are achieving well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. In Year 4, pupils practise and hone their performance in skipping, shuttle running and step-ups. They measure and record their own performance and use this effectively to see how well they are improving. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate control and fluency in practising and refining their performance in long jump, throwing and sprinting. Pupils discuss different skills and techniques in evaluating their own and others' work.

146. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. Lessons are well planned and structured, including clear instructions and demonstrations from teachers. Pupils listen and follow instructions well, are appropriately organised for activities and are interested, showing

good participation. Pupils are productive and apply physical effort to their tasks, making good gains in their developing skills. Teachers' manage their pupils very well; they have established very good work routines and relationships; they promote teamwork and good sporting attitudes effectively. Pupils show initiative and responsibility when setting up equipment. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in physical education are very good. There is little evidence of information and communication technology (ICT) being used to support teaching and learning in physical education.

147. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. Curricular planning is based on the Hertfordshire local education authority (LEA) schemes and these provide a good range of activities. Recent in-service training has improved teachers' confidence and expertise in dance. The school does not have a system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in physical education. The hall is not ideal for indoor physical education and some space is lost with furniture and equipment. The school physical education programme is enriched by extra curricular activities and residential visits. Extra curricular activities include football, athletics and netball. Parent helpers assist with football and netball clubs. Adventure activities such as orienteering and mountain biking are undertaken at Cuffley Camp for Year 5, and sporting activities are a focus on a residential visit to the Isle of Wight for Year 6.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

148. Only three religious education lessons were observed during the inspection and samples of work in books and on display around the school were scrutinised. These provided sufficient evidence to show that pupils' attainment in religious education at the age of seven is above expectations and is well above expectations by the age of 11. However, the one lesson observed in Key Stage 1 provided insufficient evidence on which to make secure judgements about the overall quality of teaching in the Infant department. Pupils make very good progress in the subject as they move through the school. The teaching is particularly effective in reinforcing and extending pupils' literacy skills.

149. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils listened to and acted out the story of 'The Two Brothers' from the Muslim world. They retold the story in their own words and understood the moral of the story – the importance of sharing - and that giving to charities is one of the five basic duties of every Muslim. During the year, Year 2 pupils have studied the story of Easter, visited a local church and made a glossary of church vocabulary. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils know about pilgrimages to Mecca and why the pilgrimage, though difficult, is so important, 'because it's where the faith started'. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils considering, 'What makes a good leader?' responded thoughtfully, respecting similarities and differences in points of view and showed a good understanding of what is involved in belonging to a faith community. One group searched the Internet confidently for information about their chosen leader. These examples illustrate that standards in Year 2 are above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and well above those expectations by the end of Year 6.

150. The quality of teaching was good in all the lessons seen. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use questioning well to test pupils' understanding and recollection, sensitively encouraging all pupils to offer their own ideas and contributions to discussions. The quality of learning in all lessons was good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in their religious education lessons range from very good to good and are very good at the age of 11.

151. The co-ordinator for religious education is enthusiastic, well informed and supportive of teachers, and provides good leadership and management. The school follows the newly revised Locally-Agreed Syllabus for religious education and the linked scheme of work. Informal assessment of pupils is used effectively in planning future work and ensuring pupils are challenged. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. A good range of visits and visitors are organised which successfully broaden the curriculum.

### **The work of the unit for hearing impaired children**

152. The Hearing Impaired Unit was established in the school at its opening and has places for six pupils. The pupils are taught principally in mainstream classes, with appropriate support, but are also taught regularly in small reverse integration groups of four or five children as well as being taught individually.

153. The achievement of the pupils is good compared to that of other pupils of similar age and hearing loss. However, there is a range of ability in the pupils with hearing impairment. Some pupils achieve standards that are the same as other hearing pupils in their year group. Some are operating a year behind their year group and others reach attainment levels which are higher than those of their hearing peer group and national expectations.

154. Pupils from the unit, whatever their ability, make very good progress during their time in school despite the speed at which they are able to absorb and understand language. Over time, pupils develop clear and well-articulated speech. They learn to read fluently. All pupils have a clear understanding of the meaning of read and spoken language appropriate to their age and ability. More able pupils have an extended vocabulary and the ability to spell accurately taking into account the phonological rules of English. All pupils write clearly in sentences that are correctly punctuated. More able pupils write complex sentences using adjectives, pronouns and connectives.

155. Pupils make good progress in numeracy although their rate of progress differs. The pupil in Year 2 is able to make and interpret the data from graphs and set out the calculations, understand fractions up to a half and tell the time using digital and analogue clocks. The pupil in Year 4 has knowledge of the four rules of number, can tell the time and can calculate the perimeter of an object. Pupils from the different year groups also operate the computer programmes skilfully. They are knowledgeable about the use of the programmes and print their work. The pupil in Year 4 is now able to operate the Internet. Pupils enjoy using the computer in individual lessons, which motivates their learning.

156. The curriculum offered to these pupils is broadly based but also provides for specialist auditory training. The curriculum, whether delivered in the mainstream class, in reverse integration groups, or individually, meets National Curriculum requirements and the specialist needs of the hearing-impaired pupils.

157. Teaching is very good across the age range and in different groupings. Lessons are well planned and prepared and pupils' equipment checked punctiliously before every teaching session. Individual lessons focus on improving spoken language skills, listening skills, writing and reading. Lessons in the mainstream classes and the reverse integration groups focus

on literacy and numeracy. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in their academic work and of their behaviour. The pace and planning in lessons motivates pupils and leads to their good progress and achievement.

158. Pupils are assessed carefully on their entry to the unit. This assessment comprises a baseline review of their National Curriculum skills as well as a detailed analysis of their speech and hearing abilities. Accurate and relevant records are kept of pupils' progress. Individual education plans with long and short-term targets are produced for each pupil, which clearly inform the teaching programmes that they follow in mainstream or individual lessons. This is very good practice and contributes to pupils' achievement. Good record keeping and regular termly reviews of the individual education plans complement this accurate planning. Annual reports to parents are of a good quality and the pupils' statements are reviewed annually in accord with legal requirements. These reviews contain precise education targets in the core subjects and report in detail on the pupils' progress in all areas of language, understanding and auditory training.

159. Provision for the hearing impaired pupils is good overall. The resource unit room allows for all the assessment of speech and individual language work to take place efficiently. The reverse integration groups meet in the resource unit as well as individual pupil teaching sessions. The remainder of the school is being modified by a Soundfield system to enhance speech and hearing. This system is being extended, year-by-year to all the classrooms, but is not yet available throughout the junior section. The quality of lighting in the school is satisfactory and the hearing impaired pupils are able to see the teacher clearly in all lessons observed.

160. Overall, levels of resourcing are satisfactory with good support received from the area health authorities regarding hearing aids, an audiologist and the services of a speech therapist. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has remained very good but the curricular demands on hearing-impaired pupils have increased with the more challenging areas of work required by the National Numeracy Strategy. This has resulted in the unit being understaffed with welfare support assistants to meet these needs in mainstream lessons, although the school does spend all of the allocated funds directly to fund the unit's work.

161. The unit is well managed by the teachers in charge who also share responsibilities with the senior management group in the school. The unit is a valuable resource that meets successfully the needs of hearing-impaired pupils in Hertfordshire and beyond. It enables pupils to have maximum opportunities for social and functional integration. It complements the very good work evident in the rest of the school and provides very good value for money.