

## INSPECTION REPORT

### HEXTON JMI SCHOOL

Hitchin, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117112

Headteacher: Mrs K Ireland

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Tusha Chakraborti  
12603

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 March 2003

Inspection number: 247721

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hexton Hitchin
Postcode:	SG5 3JL
Telephone number:	01582 881248
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. J. Austwick
Date of previous inspection:	17 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12603	Tusha Chakraborti	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History Information and communication technology Foundation stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23886	Declan McCarthy	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Religious education Special educational needs Education inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a small, mixed, community primary school for pupils aged 4-11. There are 61 full-time pupils, 33 boys and 28 girls. The school is situated in a small village in Hertfordshire close to the county border with Bedfordshire. The pupils come mainly from advantaged backgrounds in the village of Hexton and from other nearby villages. Over half of the pupils live in Bedfordshire. The vast majority of the pupils are from a White-British heritage. Only a very small proportion is from Asian British-Indian backgrounds and they are fluent in English. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is a very small number of pupils in each year group and, therefore, they are taught in three mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly average and there are no children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry to Reception is average. The school experiences a high rate of pupil mobility, particularly at the end of Year 4. This is because many pupils leave at this stage to go to the nearby middle schools in Bedfordshire. Parents would like their children to continue in this school but are apprehensive of the possibility that their children may not obtain places in the middle school, if they were to leave at the end of Year 6. In addition, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to whether their children would obtain places in the schools in the nearby town of Hitchin.

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

Hexton JMI is a good school with many strengths, and provides good value for money. The staff ensure that all pupils, whatever their background, specific needs or time spent in the school, benefit from the educational opportunities provided. Strong leadership and effective teamwork strive successfully to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. Standards are above average and compare favourably with those of similar schools. Teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils achieve well by the time they leave.

#### **What the school does well**

- The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction and manages changes and improvement very effectively. The governors play a very strong role in managing the school and support the headteacher and staff very well in moving the school forward.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Consequently, pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in many subjects.
- The school promotes its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively and this supports pupils' personal development very well.
- The school's ethos reflects its aims and values very effectively. It permeates through the school's welcoming environment, stimulating displays and its warm relationships with parents and the community.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their work, enjoy school and behave very well. Relationships between everyone at the school, including pupils, teachers, assistants and dinner supervisors, are very good: this has a strong impact on pupils' achievements.
- The school works very well in close partnership with its parents, involving them fully in their children's education.

#### **What could be improved**

- There are no features that that require significant improvement.

*As there are no areas for improvement, there is no requirement for specific issues to be covered in a governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Good improvement has been secured since the last inspection in 1997. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher and the governors and the effective roles played by the co-ordinators and other staff place the school in a strong position to maintain this progress. Test results have improved and weaknesses highlighted by the last inspection report have been fully eliminated. The provision for children in Reception has improved and is now very good. Teaching has improved significantly from satisfactory to good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Curricular planning is very good and ensures that the learning needs of pupils of all ages are met effectively. As a result, pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding in all subjects progressively as they move through the year groups. Very good assessment procedures are used in English and mathematics. There have been significant improvements to accommodation and resources and this contributes very well to the school's positive learning environment.

## STANDARDS

The number of pupils in Year 6 varies from year to year and is always below ten as many pupils move out at the end of Year 4 to go to the nearby middle schools. In 2002 significantly fewer than ten pupils took the national tests. This makes statistical comparison of pupils' performance in national tests with other schools unreliable. For this reason tables of performance data are not included in this report. The percentage figures of test results vary from year to year due to the small numbers of pupils in each year group.

In reading and mathematics in the Year 2 national tests in 2002, the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was in line with the national average but very few attained Level 3. Therefore, the overall standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 were below average in comparison with all schools nationally and well below average in comparison to schools that have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, in writing, standards were above the national average as the number of pupils attaining Level 3 was higher than that in reading and mathematics. Compared to similar schools, standards were average. In teacher assessments for science, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average. Standards of attainment in Year 6 were high in English and science and above average in mathematics, indicating very good achievement. In comparison to similar schools, standards were well above average in English and science but average in mathematics. The school exceeded its own targets in English and mathematics. Over the past years the school's results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend.

Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well during their time at the school. Attainment on entry to school is broadly average. In Reception, most pupils are achieving well and are likely to reach beyond the early learning goals, in all areas of learning, by the time they enter Year 1. In Year 2, standards are above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, indicating an improvement in reading and mathematics over the 2002 test results. This is because the school, following a thorough analysis of the test results, has prioritised these areas for improvement and is monitoring pupils' progress more rigorously. There are only three pupils in Year 6 and they are attaining standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 5 are reaching standards much higher than the levels expected for their age in most subjects and their achievement is very good. Pupils achieve particularly well in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and apply their computer skills effectively in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology, music and physical education are above the expected levels in Years 2 and 6. In all other subjects standards are average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils concentrate very well and put much effort into their work. They are keen to contribute in lessons and are eager for the opportunities to share their experiences.



Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well in and out of classrooms. They are courteous and co-operate with their teachers to establish a positive learning environment.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships within the school are particularly strong and have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils take responsibilities seriously and carry them out sensibly.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance continues to be well above the average for similar schools. Parents are very co-operative in bringing their children to school on time for the start of the day.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are strengths of the school and have a very positive impact on the quality of their learning and the progress they make. There was no evidence of any poor behaviour or bullying during the inspection. Pupils respect each other's feelings and beliefs. This makes a strong contribution to the school's positive ethos.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Over half the lessons seen were good or better, and over one third were very good. Teaching is particularly good in English, mathematics and science, with most lessons being good or very good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively and the good teaching of literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Information and communication technology skills are taught well; as a result, pupils across the school achieve well in this subject and produce some high quality work. Teachers make good use of ICT in other subjects. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum are very good and teachers' planning meets the individual needs of their pupils very well in the mixed-age classes throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which promote very good behaviour and effective learning. Class discussions are stimulating and lessons are consistently of a good pace. Questions are well focused and designed to involve all pupils in discussions. A wide variety of teaching methods are employed to make lessons interesting and challenging. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they are to learn. In a very small minority of lessons, where teaching was not so good, tasks were not sufficiently challenging to match the learning needs of all pupils. This meant that pupils did not make as much progress in these lessons. The needs of the small number of gifted and talented pupils are being met well. Teaching assistants are very effective in their support of teachers and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and benefit from well-planned, high quality individual support from the teaching assistants.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school offers pupils a very good range of interesting and stimulating opportunities for learning. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The curriculum and work matched effectively to their needs provide very good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to benefit from all the school provides.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school promotes each aspect of its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' personal development very effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Teachers know pupils well and monitor their academic and personal development effectively. There are very good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' attendance and behaviour and these are implemented very well.

All National Curriculum requirements are met and the curriculum in Reception is planned very effectively according to the national guidance. Pupils' progress is assessed very well in English and mathematics. Child protection procedures are very good. The school has very effective links with parents, which make a positive contribution to children's learning at school and at home.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership and has managed very well the progress made in recent years. This has a significant impact on pupils' achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The strategic role of the governors is well developed. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and support the headteacher and staff very well in taking the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The wealth of data available is used well to track the impact and effectiveness of actions taken to improve standards. The systematic and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching has been instrumental in improvements in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of its staff and resources. The accommodation is used creatively to enhance pupils' learning. Grants and other funds are used very effectively to meet the school's priorities.

The school has a very good number of well-trained teaching and non-teaching staff. The subject coordinators and other staff with management responsibilities have clearly defined roles, which they are fulfilling effectively. The adequate accommodation has been much improved in recent years and learning resources are now good. The school applies the principles of best value well in all spending decisions and monitors its impact on financial planning closely.

## 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>• Parents feel that their children like school and make good progress.</li><li>• They feel that behaviour and teaching is good and that homework is appropriate.</li><li>• The school expects the children to work hard and is well led and managed.</li><li>• They feel that the school works closely with them and that the governors, headteacher and staff are approachable.</li><li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A small minority of parents feel that the school does not provide them with sufficient information about their children's progress.</li></ul>

An overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the school and they acknowledge the improvements made in recent years. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. The team judges that the school provides the parents with very good quality information about their children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. The overall standards of work are above average and all pupils, including the higher attaining ones as well as those with special educational needs, achieve well. This is mainly because teaching is good and teachers plan challenging work that meets the needs of all pupils. Over the last two years standards of attainment have improved owing to the effective implementation of a coherent system to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics across the school as the pupils move up the year groups.
2. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. In Reception, pupils are achieving well and by the time that they enter Year 1, almost all of them are likely to exceed national expectations in all areas of learning.
3. Standards are generally above average and achievement is good in Years 1 to 6. With the very small numbers taking the national tests, an analysis of the results, or comparisons with similar schools, is unhelpful because they do not paint a reliable picture of standards and achievement. For example, each pupil constitutes 10 to 17 per cent of the 2002 Year 6 test results. Over the past four years, national test results have fluctuated owing to high pupil mobility. For example, three pupils left in Years 5 and 6, leaving six pupils in 2002 Year 6 group. However, the school's results in English, mathematics and science are rising at a similar rate to all other schools. The school's own data shows that pupils have achieved well over the last four years as they moved up the school. Early indications of the 2003 tests suggest that the school is maintaining its performance.
4. The current inspection confirms that pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well and that standards are improving steadily over time. In English, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average in reading, writing, speaking and listening. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in English were average across the school. Teachers' skilful questioning promotes speaking and listening effectively, and in Year 2, pupils speak clearly using a good range of vocabulary and listen attentively. In Year 6, pupils are beginning to use standard English when they speak, adapt their speech for different purposes and make good contributions to discussions. Pupils' reading skills are well developed and they enjoy reading a range of authors from different genres. They have good knowledge of a range of texts and are secure in locating and using information from the library, the Internet and CD-ROMs. The basic skills of literacy are taught well throughout the school and standards, particularly in writing, are good. This improvement in writing is due to good teaching, the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and detailed and consistent attention to planning. Pupils write for different purposes using correct punctuation. The use and development of literacy in subjects other than English are good. Science, history and geography, for example, make a good contribution to improving literacy skills through recording experiments and writing factual accounts. By the end of Year 6, pupils use words and phrases to capture the reader's interest. Handwriting and presentation are of a good standard.
5. Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is because of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, have a good understanding of place value, and can work out simple mathematical problems. They can tell the time accurately using half past and a quarter to the hour. They are secure in using different methods for calculating decimal sums and have a good understanding of estimating and rounding up numbers. The good achievement continues and pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on what they have learned. Pupils have a wide range of strategies for making written, mental and oral calculations. They work accurately with decimal fractions and can translate them into percentages. They are confident at measuring shapes using degrees, but data handling is not as well developed as the other areas of mathematics. They can draw and explain graphs or pie charts from the data they have collected.

6. Standards are also above average in science, both in Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils investigate materials and learn to plan experiments and make predictions. They classify various plants and animals into different groups and have a good understanding of the characteristics of living things. They have developed confidence in devising a fair test and understand the importance of variables in investigations. They know that some changes in materials are reversible and some are not. Pupils' achievement in scientific enquiry is good because teachers plan challenging tasks that help pupils to progressively develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific principles.
7. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils achieve well and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards are now above those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make good progress with their learning. Pupils have opportunities to do research work and homework using encyclopaedias on CD ROMs and the Internet. The improved provision of an adequate number of computers in classrooms, increased teacher expertise in teaching ICT skills and good curricular development have enabled pupils to exceed the national average by the time they leave.
8. In religious education (RE), standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By Year 6 pupils develop a broader understanding of key features of the world's leading faiths and learn about symbolism in religions.
9. Standards in music and physical education (PE) are above the expected levels in Years 2 and 6. They are average in art, design and technology (DT), geography, history and religious education (RE). All pupils achieve well because of the good quality of teaching across the school.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans. This is because the teaching they receive in lessons is well matched to their needs and they have high quality additional help from support staff. Pupils with difficulties in literacy and numeracy make good progress in their reading writing, spelling, and mathematics when withdrawn for support by specialist trained assistants. Pupils' work is thoroughly planned and each lesson is delivered in a highly structured way, which takes full account of the nature of their learning difficulties.
11. There is no significant difference between the performances of boys and girls.

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

12. As was reported in the previous inspection, pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take part enthusiastically in the broad opportunities the school provides. They show exceptionally high levels of initiative and take their responsibilities very seriously. This fosters a very good working atmosphere throughout the school.
13. The attitudes of the children in the Reception class are very good. They soon become independent, getting to know the school routines and coping with them confidently. For instance, they know exactly whose turn it is to take responsibilities for the day. They are confident to offer suggestions and to express an opinion. Children persevere and are proud of their achievements, as was seen as they improved their throwing and catching in a games lesson. They share materials and take turns in lessons and at play. The very good relationships they have with each other and with their teacher mean that they can work well together. This in turn has a real effect on the rapid progress they make at this early stage. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well in lessons, particularly when support is provided for their learning.
14. Throughout the school, pupils are very interested in their work and are often seen to be fully absorbed in what they are doing. Their enthusiasm is demonstrated as they develop imaginative ideas and they are confident in expressing and in sharing their ideas with the whole class. Pupils thrive on the challenges set to them. They are able to learn very well independently and are successful at solving problems and at planning what they need to do. They form good

working relationships with each other, with younger and older pupils working well together. They work equally well in groups or on their own.

15. Behaviour in class and about the school is very good. Pupils are considerate of each other and no antagonistic or thoughtless behaviour was seen during the inspection. From their early years in school, pupils display an understanding of right and wrong. They have respect for their teachers and the school staff, responding well to the high standards of behaviour expected. Pupils are polite to visitors and are keen to talk about their work and events in their lives. This results in a very pleasant and friendly atmosphere in the school. Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour and the way pupils are encouraged to develop their own self-discipline within the school community. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
16. At all ages, there is a marked sense of belonging and a knowledge of how to foster friendly attitudes. Older pupils mix freely with younger children as all ages use the same playground. Pupils take good care of their belongings and respect the school's resources. There is very good collaboration as pupils work in groups. Lively discussions result from such topics as how they could improve their learning by eliminating distractions. Class representatives plan ways in which they could improve the school with funds they have raised themselves. Pupils benefit from the wide range of after-school activities and organised visits, to learn about the village community and the wider environment. As this so often involves volunteer parents and members of the community, pupils regularly see how adults respond to each other and they learn to value the life of a community.
17. Since the previous inspection, attendance continues to be very good. It is well above the average for similar schools. Almost all absences are accounted for and parents are very co-operative in bringing their children to school on time for the start of the day.

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

18. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory with 90 per cent being good or better. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen throughout the school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when eight per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is particularly good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' standards of attainment in these subjects.
19. Teaching in Reception is consistently good. A particular strength is the very good assessment of how well the children are learning on a day-to-day basis and the teacher's use of this information to lead them on to the next step in their learning. The teaching of basic skills is also very good.
20. In Years 1 to 6 the teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good in most subjects. As a result, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate and make good progress. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 English lesson where the teacher ensured that all pupils made good progress in developing their phonic skills so that they were able to read well. Here, the very effective selection of tasks and skilful exposition meant that pupils were able to use their developing phonic skills very well to read new vocabularies and texts. The basic skills are taught well so that pupils build effectively on what they already know, understand and can do. Most lessons are well planned and help pupils to be productive and to work at a good pace.
21. Teachers are very skilful in planning for their mixed-age classes. This includes very effective planning for enhancing pupils' learning in all subjects through cross-curricular links. For example, in a Years 4/5/6 lesson, while teaching pupils at varying levels, the teacher planned very effective links between DT and literacy. In this lesson, pupils had to devise a mechanism to make models that would demonstrate the contents of poems they wrote or read. Most pupils successfully designed and then made good quality models to represent their poems, such as 'A Windy Day.'

22. Literacy and numeracy lessons begin with whole-class sessions in which new ideas are introduced and basic skills practised orally. This part of the lesson is often brisk and actively involves all the pupils in their learning. By careful questioning of pupils, the teachers can then move on to the next stage, confident that all the pupils are attentive and understand the work. Next, pupils are involved in activities suited to their varying learning needs so that skills are enhanced and consolidated. In the last part of the lesson teachers usually review what has been done and learnt. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to share their ideas and findings.
23. Teachers manage pupils very well so that there is a sense of purpose in lessons. Pupils are interested, attentive and concentrate well. Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what is to be learnt in each lesson. These objectives are always written on the board for pupils to read and discuss at the start of the lesson. They are often reviewed at the end to help pupils judge if they have been met successfully and this gives them a greater knowledge of their own learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and constantly challenge them to improve in all aspects of their work. This was most apparent in a Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils were learning to write poems, with an imaginative use of a range of adjectives that they learnt during the lesson. All were totally engrossed in their work.
24. In a very small minority of lessons where teaching was not so good, tasks were not sufficiently challenging to match the learning needs of all pupils. This meant that pupils did not make as much progress.
25. Teachers give good support in class to those pupils who have special educational needs. Work is usually set at an appropriate level to enable pupils to make good progress. Teaching assistants contribute very well to the learning of these pupils. They are fully briefed about their role in each lesson and focus on a specific pupil or group of pupils, making useful observations during the lesson. These observations are later shared with the teacher to help assess the future needs of pupils and devise strategies to help them learn even more effectively.
26. Throughout the school relationships between staff and pupils are very good and the mutual respect has a very positive impact on learning. Marking of books is good as teachers add very useful comments to help pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work next time. Very good questioning of pupils and informal and formal assessments of their work help pupils of all abilities learn effectively as the teachers are able to tailor future work to meet their needs.
27. These many strengths in teaching make learning a pleasure for pupils and they respond by being interested in their work and determined to do well in all aspects of their education.

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

28. The curriculum is very good. A wide range of learning opportunities is offered to all pupils and the curriculum meets legal requirements. The curriculum in Reception is good and follows the national guidelines for the areas for learning. In Years 1 to 6, all subjects of the National Curriculum are included, with a good balance of teaching time allocated to each subject and a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Religious education meets the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Good provision is made for sex education and health education, which includes lessons on the dangers of drug abuse, through the PSHE (personal, social and health education) programme. A school governor takes an active part in the programme for drugs education. The curriculum is very relevant to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, with a good emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal development.
29. There has been very good improvement in the planning of the curriculum since the last inspection. Then it was judged to be unsatisfactory but now it is very good. Teachers plan for classes with mixed year groups, based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) schemes of work and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. They adapt their planning to accommodate the wide age ranges and abilities within classes. The school has worked closely with the Hertfordshire literacy and numeracy consultants for this purpose. Staff

meet regularly to review topics to be taught each term, for each subject, on a rolling programme covering a cycle of two years. Given the very small number of staff in the school and the relatively large numbers of subject areas they co-ordinate, this is a very effective method for reviewing planning. Teachers also plan much more systematically, so that skills build one upon the other and plans show what pupils in different year groups will learn. There is a good curricular framework, which mostly takes account of the needs of pupils with different abilities.

30. The school has very good strategies for teaching literacy skills and has adapted the National Literacy Strategy to accommodate the wide age range effectively. Numeracy skills are also well promoted, through the school's effective adaptation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Numeracy is well promoted in subjects such as science, art, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and music.
31. The provision for activities outside lessons is very good. Given the relatively small size of the school, there are numerous opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through lunchtime clubs and after-school activities. These include groups for recorders, guitar, and flute and a music club, organised exceptionally well by a very hard-working and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Such is the success of musical activities that pupils are due to sing at the Royal Albert Hall next year. There are also netball and football clubs, coached by experts in the field; a French club organised by a linguist; and a gardening club. There is also a very good range of visits to enrich learning within subjects, for example, to the Iron Age settlement at Ravensburgh and Kentwell Hall for the Victorians and Pizza Hut for food technology. A particular strength of the curriculum is the very good provision for residential trips. These include camping and visits to outdoor and adventurous activity centres and a forthcoming visit to Overstrand in Norfolk. The school also benefits from visitors such as storytellers, a professional dance teacher and the local vicar. Parents and governors also help out with activities and the school has very strong links with the local community. For example, parents and children painted the attractive mural in the playground and celebrated the Queen's Jubilee together. The school also uses the village cricket field for sporting and field events. There are equally strong links with local rural schools, through the small schools association, where rural sporting competitions are held. Not only do these activities enhance pupils' learning in subjects but they also greatly enhance their personal development: pupils develop a team spirit, taking more responsibility for themselves and each other.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils participate fully in the curriculum, joining in all lessons, and their progress is as good as that of other pupils. The school ensures that all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, have equal access to all activities through the effective support provided from classroom assistants who help them to access learning in lessons. Very good support is also provided for pupils with particular difficulties in reading, writing and spelling who are withdrawn for short periods of time from some lessons, for specialist teaching by qualified and experienced support assistants. These pupils make rapid progress and their withdrawal from class lessons does not unduly affect their access to learning.
33. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. Provision for spiritual development has now moved from good at the last inspection to very good. This is not only promoted through the very good ethos, but through the promotion of teaching strategies which value pupils' views and free expression. This is very evident in music, art, science, geography and history but was also seen in other subjects. For example, in Reception, children were encouraged to perform a variety of plays using their imaginations. They performed their own interpretation of 'The King and I' using imaginative puppets they created and generated a sense of awe in their young audience. Pupils are given greater opportunities to explore values and beliefs through assemblies and in RE lessons. Pupils are also given further opportunities; for example, during circle time they reflect on their own experiences. Assemblies promote the development of a caring community and consideration for others as well as providing opportunities for prayer and reflection through listening to music and singing hymns together.
34. Moral provision is now very good and much improved since the last inspection where it was judged to be good. This is because there is a much clearer framework to help pupils distinguish



right from wrong and all staff now provide very good role models to help pupils develop their own moral codes. All pupils are well aware of the school's high expectations of behaviour. The school has a strong ethos built upon developing responsibilities, and Year 6 pupils generally set a very good example as school monitors. Through circle time, Golden Time and PSHE, pupils are encouraged to understand and respect the needs, interests and feelings of others. The Friday Headteacher Award and the use of stickers for special purposes such as 'being kind to others' also promote pupils' awareness of right and wrong and pupils respond very positively to this thoughtful provision.

35. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and also much improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. Older pupils take increasing responsibility for younger pupils, as seen in many lessons with mixed-age classes. There are class representatives on the school committee, elected from their peers, who raise money to support their nominated charities, for example, to support cancer and the KISS project in Africa. Individual pupil monitors are nominated in classrooms to assist with small tasks. There are computer monitors to check that computers are switched on and off properly. There are opportunities for paired work and/or group work in nearly all lessons and pupils act as dinner monitors. There is a strong sense of corporate achievement and belonging by all pupils in the school and very good relationships. Provision for creative arts and sport as well as the residential trip and the very good school ethos also promote this sense of teamwork and belonging. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, take responsibility for their work, and to help others at all times in school. Relationships between pupils and the staff are very positive.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and has improved. This is because there is a stronger focus on developing common, inclusive values and helping pupils to develop the skills of honesty, independence and respect for others. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is promoted through religious education study and celebration of different world faiths, including visits to a mosque and during an assembly when Hindu pupils spoke about how they celebrated Diwali. An appreciation of the richness of other cultures is also very well promoted through music and different dance traditions, such as an occasion when pupils visited an Indonesian percussion orchestra and when they performed Aboriginal dance routines to the sound of a didgeridoo. Pupils then helped to produce a very attractive aboriginal display in their artwork. English promotes an understanding of pupils' own culture very well, through, for example, visits to the pantomime, the use of storytellers and a study of classical poetry such as 'The Highwayman'. In geography and history pupils learn about the main characteristics of their local environment and early settlements such as the Anglo-Saxons. Pupils also learn about the ancient Egyptians and ancient Greeks in history, make visits to art galleries and museums and celebrate main cultural events such as Maypole dancing, country dancing and the Queen's Jubilee.

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

37. The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is very good. There has been an improvement since the time of the last inspection, particularly in the school's monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress, which are now particularly good in the key subjects of English and mathematics. Teachers know their pupils very well and guide them very effectively in developing their skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Behaviour is discreetly and effectively managed, as is attendance. Parents find it very easy to approach the school if they have a concern about their children's welfare or progress. The school has a clear policy on race equality and staff are well aware of this area. This makes a positive contribution to the harmonious learning environment of the school.
38. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are very good. Attendance is carefully monitored with the full co-operation of parents. Most parents ring the school on the first day of absence and rarely need a reminder by letter or telephone call to confirm the reason for absence. Parents are regularly advised that taking holidays during the term time can upset their children's education. Not all parents choose to take this advice.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Pupils are expected to be orderly in class and as they move about the school. There are clear procedures to combat

bullying and to eliminate inconsiderate behaviour. Staff are encouraged to foster good manners and a sense of self-discipline amongst pupils. Class discussions are well led and teachers promote the values of the close school community. As a result, pupils feel secure and valued as individuals while respecting the needs of their friends. Teachers' high expectations of good behaviour mean that lessons proceed with purpose and at a good pace. On the rare occasions when there is unsatisfactory behaviour, staff deal with it fairly and effectively.

40. Procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' well being are very good. The health and safety procedures are thorough. Routine checks of premises and equipment are regularly carried out by staff and governors, who bring their professional expertise to the process. Any defects are dealt with swiftly and efficiently. All staff are aware of their duties towards child protection. Trained members of staff deal with accidents and injuries promptly. Records of such accidents are kept and parents are informed.
41. Pupils are expected to be able to take on more responsibility as they grow older. They need very little supervision as they work together or tidy up after lunch. Such tasks they do willingly and efficiently. Staff appreciate the help given and praise pupils for a job well done. As a result, there is no shortage of volunteers. Age groups mix freely in school activities. Older children are responsible in caring for the younger ones. An older pupil takes charge of each table at lunch. Pupils are encouraged through their class representatives to consider ways to improve the school environment. All pupils take an active part in raising funds to achieve this. This makes a considerable contribution to their personal development.
42. The arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection and are effective and well established. This allows teachers to build up a picture of individual attainment and to plan more effectively for groups within their classes. The school analyses assessment data from the statutory tests in the core subjects thoroughly to monitor both the performance of the school and that of different groups of pupils to identify any patterns of underachievement. This analysis is being extended to the annual tests so that individuals and groups of pupils can be tracked in greater details, and are beginning to develop in science and ICT. However, assessment in other subjects is not fully developed yet. It is just beginning to develop in ICT and teachers are beginning to put together portfolios in some subjects, but a consistent and manageable system is yet to be established. Assessment procedures in Reception are very good, and the information gained is used appropriately to move the children's learning forward.

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

43. The school's partnership with parents is extremely effective and is a strength of the school. This aspect has strengthened even further since the time of the previous inspection. Parents have very favourable views of the school, its leadership, the teaching and the co-operative approach the school has towards parents.
44. The quality of information for parents is very good. The governors' annual report to parents is interesting and readable and parents find the newsletters and school communications extremely useful. They know what is going on in the school and the events where they can give assistance. The rather more formal routines introduced at the end of the school day have been criticised by a minority of parents as they reduce the chance to speak with class teachers. The majority of parents understand the need for security at all times and find there are adequate opportunities to discuss welfare concerns or to review their children's progress with the teachers.
45. Pupils' annual reports are personal and give details of what pupils know and can do, particularly in the main subjects of English and mathematics. More information could be included about pupils' progress in science and information and communication technology, and their personal achievements in the arts. In response to a school questionnaire, most parents are satisfied with the reports. The termly review meetings with teachers give parents useful predictions of the standards their children are likely to achieve and the help parents can give to overcome weaknesses.

46. Parents are kept very well informed of the targets within individual education plans that have been set for pupils with special educational needs and there are very good opportunities for parents to participate in reviews of these plans. There is also very good liaison and support from outside agencies, which ensures these pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
47. Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They give a considerable amount of help with homework, particularly with reading and project work. They are invited to offer their talents and support in school. They do this in a number of ways, helping in the classrooms, with after-school activities and with school projects to enhance the facilities and the environment. In addition to the school's provision, most pupils learn to swim at home and many parents help to increase their children's knowledge of information technology and confidence in the use of computers at home. Parents regularly come to talk to the headteacher and staff. Their suggestions for school improvements are always welcome and their concerns about their children are taken seriously. Parents give valuable help in school, on projects and in raising more general funds.

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

48. The school is led and managed very well. Strong leadership and very effective management processes have led to the good progress made by the school in recent years. The headteacher provides the school with a clear direction based on improving teaching and raising standards. The school is successful in its main aims of meeting the individual needs of all pupils and providing a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment. The governing body contributes very well to this process by offering practical support as well as by questioning, challenging and influencing what is happening and being planned.
49. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are well developed. They have made a significant impact on the implementation of national strategies and improving standards. Staff, including the class assistants, work particularly well as a team, enabling expertise to be shared. Teachers and other staff are well qualified, experienced and trained for the work they carry out in the school. There are clear procedures for members of staff to be supported through advice and guidance, both formally through an individual mentor and informally by all staff.
50. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and has implemented the new revised Code of Practice effectively. Classroom assistants and the specialist assistants work very effectively with teachers to ensure all pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lesson activities. This ensures that these pupils have equal access to learning and make equally good progress as other pupils. The school has good relationships with visiting professionals and the use of their specialist support is effectively managed.
51. One significant factor in the progress made has been the introduction of thorough and rigorous procedures to monitor the work of staff and evaluate the effectiveness of action taken by the school. The systematic monitoring of the work of teachers, coupled with support, advice and further training has brought about significant improvements in teaching and learning. Lesson observations, the scrutiny of planning and the regular analysis of pupils' work have all played an important part in this process. The procedures for managing the performance of teachers have also been effectively introduced and used to support the school's established processes. The main priorities and the action plans associated with them are appropriate and are based clearly on raising standards.
52. The governing body is successful in ensuring that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities. It is very efficient in checking the progress of planned action through its committee structure. Governors are very effectively involved in planning for the school's improvement and in supporting action taken. They have a very secure understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved further. The school improvement plan involves the ideas and priorities of staff and governors and is used well to target, time, money and resources towards the most important areas of development.

53. Financial management is very good. The finance committee and the headteacher check spending carefully every month. Financial planning has been used particularly well to meet the school's priorities and to extend computer facilities. Best value is an important principle for the school and it seeks to challenge and compare when buying and comes up with creative solutions to ensure they get the most from their spending. The funds that the school receives for pupils with special educational needs are appropriately targeted and efficiently managed.
54. The accommodation is good overall. It has been improved, providing much-needed space for teaching, although the school still does not have sufficient space for teaching part of the PE curriculum. However, a plan is in place for securing some accommodation for this in the church next to the school. There is no computer suite because of the shortage of space but the school has successfully provided each class with a satisfactory number of computers to teach ICT. The school building is set in a beautiful village with a large field. It is a small but pleasant building and classrooms provide a good learning environment for pupils, with good displays of pupils' work and educational posters. Learning resources are good overall and have improved significantly since the last inspection.
55. The deployment of teaching and support staff is effective and ensures efficient management of the school. Resources are used well to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. Good use is also made of visitors and outside visits to enhance pupils' learning. The school provides good value for money.

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

56. There are no significant features that require improvement. The governors may wish to include the following minor point if they decide to write an action plan:

- Establish a consistent and manageable system for assessment that includes all subjects of the curriculum.  
(See paragraphs 42, 90, 94, 101, 105, 111 & 115)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	11	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	35	55	10	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 five 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)		61
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		5

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	55	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9
Average class size	20.3

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	222,421
Total expenditure	217,125
Expenditure per pupil	3,559
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,929
Balance carried forward to next year	13,224



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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	61
Number of questionnaires returned	33

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	18	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	24	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	45	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	39	6	3	0
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	45	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	6	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	36	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	97	3	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	21	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	48	0	0	0

## **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**

58. The Foundation Stage includes the Reception class of 11 full-time children and they are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1. When children enter the school their knowledge, skills and understanding vary, but are generally in line with what are expected for their age. They make a good start to their education in Reception and all children, including those with special educational needs, benefit from the good teaching and make good progress. By the end of the Reception year children exceed the early learning goals set for them in all areas of learning.
59. The teacher, the nursery nurse and the teaching assistants have a very good knowledge of the needs of the children and plan very effectively for all the areas of learning. They provide activities that are challenging for children and enable them to use all of their senses when exploring their environment. Very good use is made of assessment to ensure that work is appropriately planned to meet their needs. Resources are good and used well. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good with the result that there are high expectations of what the children can achieve by all adults.

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

60. Children achieve well in this area of learning. Staff have high expectations and are skilful at working with young children, recognising their individual personalities. Children are happy and secure, and they respond well to all activities with interest and enjoyment. Through well-planned activities and effective support, children learn to listen to each other, share and play well together. They develop independence and are encouraged to initiate their own ideas and to select activities and resources. Their attitudes to learning are very good and they respond very well to tasks. They take responsibility for tidying up and move in a disciplined way from one activity to another. They learn to appreciate how others feel, and in their celebration of important festivals from a range of cultural backgrounds, develop knowledge of their own and others' beliefs.
61. Children know the class routines well and are aware of the school's expectations with regard to behaviour. They are learning to understand that there are rules and they obey them, at the same time understanding right from wrong. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Children co-operate well with each other and relate confidently to adults. Staff plan very good opportunities for children to think about their own experiences and encourage them to become independent. For example, children take off their own shoes, socks and jumpers ready for physical activity and lay them neatly in place. They select outdoor equipment and readily change from bikes to smaller equipment when asked. Adults promote children's personal development and independence by ensuring that equipment and resources are easily accessible to them. By being aware of individual needs and supporting children effectively, staff build very good relationships so that by the time the children leave Reception their attainment is above the level expected for children of their age.

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

62. Children make good progress across all the aspects including reading, writing and speaking and listening. Staff plan a wide range of activities to develop children's experiences and vocabulary. They are skilful in asking questions which help children to develop their thinking. Children with special educational needs receive very good support from all members of staff. Their learning needs are identified early and tackled quickly, enabling them to make good progress.
63. During group sessions, children share books and enjoy rhymes and songs. The quality of interaction between all the adults and children has a significant impact on the progress children make. The role-play areas provide good opportunities for speaking and listening. Useful opportunities to work and play together are planned by the teacher. Staff provide good role models, talking with children about their play and telling them stories in which the children can join in with some of the phrases and rhymes.

64. The children enjoy listening to stories and share books together. The teacher makes flexible use of the planning format from the National Literacy Strategy. The classroom is rich in print and this teaches children that print has meaning. They know the difference between text and pictures, and are able to recall and re-tell well-known stories. They are developing a knowledge of phonics, and some children use this effectively to spell their names and write simple sentences, which they confidently re-read to the teacher, about the stories they have heard. Staff plan valuable activities to encourage children to write and to develop the link between reading and writing. The children are encouraged to learn about these new experiences and then to record them in different ways. This good progress means that the majority of children exceed the expected level in communication, language and literacy by the time they leave Reception.

### **Mathematical Development**

65. Children make good progress and most can count and recognise numbers up to ten, count backwards and forwards, count in twos, predict outcomes to simple problems and are moving on to record their answers. A wide range of activities is provided to help children acquire the skills necessary for mathematical development. Numbers are clearly displayed throughout the class with opportunities for counting, sorting, matching, adding and subtracting. As they take part in activities they show confidence in using mathematical language such as 'the same' or 'too small'. They often learn these skills through everyday experiences such as counting how many numbers are missing from the number line.
66. The quality of teaching is good. Activities are planned and taught well to develop children's number skills well. Staff use good questioning techniques to develop children's skills in prediction and problem solving. Children sing number songs and rhymes and use a wide variety of toys and objects to learn about addition and subtraction in practical ways. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are introduced over the year. This prepares the children for their transition into Year 1. Higher attaining children can count in tens up to one hundred. Children learn how to measure objects around the room using non-standard measures, such as multi-links. Classrooms are used effectively to display numbers and other aspects of mathematics such as a number line, different sizes and colours of shapes.

### **Knowledge And Understanding Of The World**

67. Children make good progress and are likely to reach above the standards expected for this age. The quality of teaching for this area is good; activities are appropriately planned and questions from staff develop children's knowledge and understanding. Staff plan a range of interesting activities and use the outdoor environment well to reinforce the activities inside the classrooms. As a result, children show an interest in their surroundings and are confident in exploring and investigating for themselves. Staff provide good opportunities and interesting resources through which the children develop these skills. For instance, they develop an understanding of technology as they learn how to operate tape-recorders. Children have good opportunities to use computers and most can operate the computers independently. They are confident in using the mouse and the majority can click on an object and drag it across the screen. This creates a great deal of excitement and the children are very motivated to learn.
68. Staff use everyday events to further children's understanding. Children learn to grow plants and care for them. An interest in the world around them is encouraged; children learn about nocturnal animals while studying 'Light and Dark.' They carry out some investigations; for example they listen to the sounds of musical instruments and record the differences. They explore the local area and prepare a map of the village for display. They are developing a good awareness of past and present and differentiate between old and new toys. They build with a range of construction toys and through these activities select the pieces they want to use.

### **Physical development**

69. Children make good progress in physical development because of the good and often very good teaching that recognises the importance of healthy physical development. As a result of this, most children reach above the expected standards by the end of the Reception year.

70. Staff plan well to give children every opportunity to go outside and to experience outdoor play. They supervise children very well and join in with the children's play so that children learn to move with increasing confidence, balance and control. Children have access to a good range of equipment which enables the physical skills of running, jumping and climbing to develop. They show an awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. In PE lessons children learn to use all the space around them as they learn to move confidently, with appropriate control and co-ordination, following their teacher's instructions carefully. Throughout the Reception year children have many opportunities to improve their manipulative skills by cutting, sticking, threading and sewing or fitting jigsaws together to develop hand and eye co-ordination. Attention to health and safety issues is appropriate at all times, including the careful use of scissors and other tools to help children gain safe control of these finer movements.

### **Creative development**

71. Good provision of a wide range of experiences in this area ensures that children make good progress and, therefore, by the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to exceed the levels expected. Staff prioritise and encourage children's own ideas and expression. Children use their imaginations in role-play. They enjoy role-play where they create stories and express their ideas, such as choosing puppets to play different imaginative characters. Adults join in and this develops children's confidence. Children use paint and other media imaginatively. They enjoy painting, printing and drawing and make good progress as they work with different media to explore colour and texture effectively. They mix colours and make their own observations; for example, that yellow and blue make green. They sing well and explore rhythm and beat with a variety of musical instruments. Most use computers very effectively to draw a variety of pictures using a wide range of colours and shapes. Children are given many opportunities to make their own discoveries and develop their creativity well by exploring different activities and experimenting with a range of materials. Resources are accessible and this encourages children's exploration.

### **ENGLISH**

72. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are above average. The 2002 national test results at the end of Year 2 have shown good improvement in writing, where pupils' performance was above average. In reading, standards were below average in 2002 and were lower than that in 2001. The national test results in 2002 for Year 6 pupils in English show significant improvement, where pupils' performance was well above the national average. They also made exceptional progress from their Year 2 tests. The findings of this inspection are that standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. However, it must be said that in making these judgements there are only three pupils in the current Year 6.
73. Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school and pupils' achievements are good. Most pupils become confident and effective communicators. They listen attentively and respond well to the teacher and to the ideas of other pupils. They express their views clearly and thoughtfully, using a good range of vocabulary and adapting their speech very well to the listener. In class discussion, pupils are lively and imaginative in their response to questioning and in discussion. Pupils' high standards in speaking and listening make a positive contribution to learning within other subjects throughout the school.
74. Pupils' standards in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Pupils throughout the school become confident readers of fiction and non-fiction. They enjoy reading and discuss with enthusiasm their favourite authors and types of books, showing a good understanding of events and characters. Higher and average attaining pupils in particular were confident and demonstrated a very good understanding of complex text. Lower attaining pupils worked at a slower rate but made good use of their knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. Confident use is made of dictionaries and pupils make good use of thesauri to support work in both reading and writing.

75. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6, which is good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils also learn to communicate well through writing. Handwriting skills develop well from Year 1 onwards with letters becoming joined up and increasingly well formed. Pupils in Year 1 are learning to write for a range of purposes, for example, 'Get Well' cards, and use computers effectively to make interesting books. Year 2 pupils are increasing their knowledge of letter sounds and spelling patterns, and derive colourful adjectives to enliven their descriptive writing. They write interesting book reviews describing characters and plots in the stories they have read and expressing their feelings and preferences about books. Pupils increase their knowledge and use of punctuation, using question marks and speech marks in their writing. As they move through the school, pupils learn to write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. They develop significant strengths in mastering the structure of words, sentences and paragraphs. In sentence work, they write complex sentences with more than one clause and use punctuation accurately and to good effect in enhancing meaning. They make particularly good progress overall in learning how words can be used to best effect in description and communication. For example, Year 4 pupils made good progress in learning to use alliteration, metaphors and similes in creative and imaginative writing. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced well-structured writing, which was varied and interesting, using a wide range of vocabulary to communicate imaginative and creative ideas clearly. This was seen in a range of interesting poetry. Average attaining pupils also produced good creative work, especially in imaginative story telling, although their paragraph structure is sometimes weaker. Spelling and use of punctuation is less accurate for lower attaining pupils.
76. Teaching and learning are mainly good and this is reflected in pupils' good achievement and positive attitudes to the subject. The scrutiny of pupils' work, hearing them read and discussions all reflect a pattern of good practice. The major strengths in English teaching lie in detailed planning for mixed-age groups and for different abilities, consistently high expectations for learning, very good relationships and skilled management of behaviour. Pupils' work is always marked and there were many examples of good marking with errors corrected and clear guidance given on how to improve so pupils had a good knowledge of the progress they were making.
77. Lessons are well organised and structured, reflecting high levels of expectation. This enables pupils to work with confidence, building on their knowledge and skills, and consolidate their previous learning. Pupils usually work productively in lessons because lessons are mostly lively. Staff have very positive relationships with pupils, who show respect to adults and to one another. Pupils also listen to their teachers, follow instructions immediately, and when the whole class are questioned they typically wait for their turn before answering. Very good teamwork with support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is highly skilled in ensuring that they work well. Any loss of concentration is dealt with unobtrusively. Good learning is facilitated by support that is clearly targeted at pupils' learning needs. Pupils are also encouraged to work well within groups so they learn from each other. The very strong focus in most lessons on three levels of structure analysis, 'word, sentence and text', provides powerful support for pupils in learning to understand and apply language effectively in their speech, writing and reading. Good use is made of individual whiteboards to enable pupils to experiment with the use of words and teachers make good use of computers to enhance pupils' learning. There were many examples of word-processed pupils' writing, which included the use of a variety of fonts and styles.
78. Provision for English is good overall. The English co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject. She has ensured that staff are well trained in the National Literacy Strategy, which has been very well adapted to accommodate the needs of a wide age range in lessons. She also monitors planning on a regular basis and carries out a detailed analysis of pupils' performance in tests, using the outcomes very effectively to improve provision. The curriculum is fully inclusive, and provides a breadth of clearly focused learning opportunities, and effective support for pupils' personal development. The support for their moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong through the exploration of ideas, opportunities for group work, sharing and respecting other's opinions. This has a good impact on pupils' attitudes to learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection and they are now above average in Years 2 and 6. There are very small numbers in each year group and comparisons with national statistics and similar schools are not secure. The work seen shows that all groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is supported by the national test results, although the results of one pupil are 10-17 per cent of the results. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
82. Progress during Years 1 and 2 is good. This is the result of consistently good teaching. Most pupils in Year 1 add up to four single-digit numbers confidently, and only a few need to count on their fingers. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of place value, and can work out simple problems in mental arithmetic such as 'ten more than' a given number and '20 less than' a given number. Pupils in Year 2 make a good start on learning their multiplication tables, and their knowledge of number facts is good. In one well-planned Year 2 lesson, pupils consolidated their learning by adding and subtracting multiples of ten and sorting various number statements, confidently identifying and correcting those which were wrong. Most understand the link between multiplication and division and know the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes such as squares and rectangles, cubes and cuboids. Pupils can draw simple graphs to show data collected and they understand what the graphs represent.
83. By the end of Year 6, pupils show confidence in a range of mathematical strategies to work out answers in their heads. They have a very good understanding of place value and this enables them to work confidently and accurately with decimal fractions. They can write equivalent fractions as decimals and vulgar fractions, and translate them into percentages. Pupils are able to work out the area of regular shapes and use the formula to work out the area of triangles, as was seen in a Year 6 lesson. They are confident in working with angles and most can use and interpret coordinates in the first quadrant. Pupils are less confident in solving word problems, and attainment in data handling is average. The highest attainers solve problems involving ratios and proportion, and draw graphs in all four quadrants.
84. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school. Teachers demonstrate methods such as 'counting on' clearly, and pupils begin to develop a good range of strategies for calculating mentally. The good quality support from teaching assistants enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Lessons build effectively on previous learning, and work is pitched at a variety of levels to match the pupils' differing needs. Introductory mental sessions are brisk and purposeful, and pupils are keen to answer. The challenge is increased so that all pupils are involved and the skills, knowledge and understanding of the most capable are extended. The organisation and planning show clearly what each group will learn and, where appropriate, younger high attainers work with the older pupils so that the work is sufficiently challenging. Teachers' very good relationships and skilful questioning of individuals as well as high expectations of behaviour and effort are reflected in the pupils' levels of concentration shown in lessons. A good range of methods were used in most lessons. The school's focus on using and applying mathematics means that all lessons are closely linked with practical and relevant activities, and pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss their work with others.
85. The management of mathematics is very good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully. This has provided a clear framework to ensure that pupils cover all aspects of mathematics, however, currently there is insufficient emphasis on data handling. Numeracy skills are used well across the curriculum, in subjects such as science and information and communication technology, to support learning. Assessment is being used very well to track pupils' progress, to group pupils and to tackle weaker aspects in provision.

## **SCIENCE**

86. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one science lesson. However, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, and an analysis of pupils' work and assessment records, show

that standards are above average in both Years 2 and 6. In the 2002 teacher assessments all Year 2 pupils attained above the expected levels for their age, which is good improvement since the last inspection when only two thirds of pupils did so. However, only a small minority of pupils gained the higher levels. In the 2002 national tests the performance of all Year 6 pupils exceeded the national average for their age group and over the last few years standards in science have been rising. Pupils achieve well because the curriculum has improved, with a much greater emphasis on investigation work. Teaching is at least good; pupils enjoy science and they behave very well. There are no significant differences between the attainments and achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving well in science because they receive very good support from support assistants. Evidence from pupils' work shows that teachers also make very good use of their knowledge of pupils' particular learning difficulties to provide different tasks or use different resources to ensure these pupils are fully included in the lesson and make the same progress as other pupils.

87. With greater emphasis on practical investigations in science, by the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress in observation using skills of scientific enquiry. They investigate materials and record silly and sensible materials for everyday objects such as doors, windows and books giving clear justifications for their choices. They learn to plan experiments and make predictions through, for example, their investigations of absorbent materials and which forces are used to make various toys work properly. Pupils classify various plants and animals into different groups and have a good understanding of the characteristics of living things. By the end of Year 6, pupils make more accurate predictions in their practical investigations and improve their skills in writing up experiments and recording and interpreting their results. For example, in their investigations for dissolving sugar with different particle sizes, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of fair testing. They knew, for example, that the same volume of water and amount of sugar was needed to ensure fair testing and they accurately predicted that icing sugar would dissolve faster than sugar crystals. They accurately recorded their findings in a results table and plotted them on a bar chart, interpreting the information accurately. Finally they drew accurate conclusions that particle size affects the rate of dissolving. Pupils also demonstrate a clear understanding of the concepts of reversible and irreversible changes, and the techniques for the separation of mixtures using the terms evaporation, condensation and filtration accurately. In their topic on electricity, pupils investigate circuits and demonstrate a good knowledge of safety when handling electrical appliances. They also have a good understanding of the functions of the skeleton, muscles and the major organs in the human body.
88. In the one science lesson observed during the inspection, where pupils in Years 2 and 3 were investigating rocks, teaching was very good. Staff promoted very good relationships with pupils, which resulted in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour. Pupils learned very well in the lesson and they worked very well together in classifying rocks according to their physical properties. They followed instructions immediately, paying very good attention in handling rock specimens safely.
89. Inspection evidence shows that teaching is at least good in science. Good attention is paid to the development of literacy and numeracy skills through the use of technical vocabulary and measuring and recording results accurately. Good use was also evident in the use of computers for recording results on charts. However, more use could be made of data logging. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to present their work neatly; they have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour.
90. The curriculum is good, meeting legal requirements. Science is well led by the co-ordinator, who has reviewed the curriculum to ensure that more opportunities are provided for investigative work and has monitored teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has also recently developed effective systems for assessing pupils' scientific skills, but these need to be more closely related to National Curriculum levels. Very good use is made of visits and the local wildlife areas, such as the pond, to extend pupils' learning in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one art lesson. However, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, and an analysis of pupils' work and assessment records enable

secure judgements to be made. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations throughout the school and pupils are achieving well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when their progress over time was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school now ensures that pupils in all year groups use sketchbooks, paint and use textiles. There was ample evidence for this in the attractive displays of pupils' artwork in classrooms. Improvements in pupils' achievements are due to the good quality of teaching. All pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and behave very well in art.

92. In the Year 1 lesson seen, pupils used different natural materials and media to explore and develop a good understanding of form and shape in creating a three-dimensional display of fish for a mobile and raffia and twigs to make a warp for weaving. In Year 2, pupils sketch and paint their own self-portraits and those of their friends. They explore the use of colours for creating imaginative pictures such as a mermaid scene. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 demonstrate a good understanding of portrait and landscape layouts; they develop skills for charcoal rubbing and increasingly use perspective in their drawings. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 further develop their skills of using different media such as pastel, paint, wool and plastic to produce attractive displays. They make good use of watercolour techniques to illustrate the effects of the setting sun on water and their still life drawings of a flower pot show an increasing use of perspective. Pupils also produce art in the style of other artists. For example, a higher attaining pupil drew pictures of a Japanese tea set in the style of traditional Japanese art. Display is very attractive around the school with examples of very good work produced by pupils. For example, the whole school were involved in researching the Willow Pattern design and replicated this in various forms on paper plates. Every pupil produced their own self-portrait for display by the school entrance and some included their pet dogs, cats and a hamster. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 also produced an attractive three-dimensional display of Aboriginal art, which made a very good contribution to their cultural development. A parent also worked closely with pupils throughout the school to produce very attractive murals in the playground.
93. Inspection evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge so that pupils develop artistic skills effectively; they set high expectations for learning so pupils always respond very well, try hard, reflect on their performance and are motivated to improve their work. Teachers provide good feedback, encouraging pupils to evaluate their own work so that they know how well they are achieving. Overall, teachers make satisfactory use of computers to support teaching and learning. Teachers use pupils' artistic skills very well to enhance learning in other subjects.
94. Art is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic and hardworking co-ordinator who has significantly improved planning for the subject to ensure wide coverage of topics and the systematic building of skills as pupils move through the school. She has also promoted the use of sketchbooks throughout the school and looks carefully at pupils' work, in order to help other teachers improve their teaching skills. However, assessment procedures are not developed yet and, as a result, teachers are not able to track the progress made by all pupils in order to challenge those who are capable of much greater achievement. Resources are now good in range and quality and plentiful in number and are used well to promote pupils' learning and achievement. There are good opportunities to extend pupils' learning through visits to places of interest such as a local art gallery.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. Pupils attain average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6, which are similar to those reported in the last inspection, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
96. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to use the design process as soon as they enter the school. By the end of Year 2, they produce simple labelled drawings of what they intend to make and write lists of the materials they intend to use. Pupils develop an appropriate range of practical skills. They learn to work safely and with an appropriate level of skill using a good range of materials, including wood, fabrics and junk materials. Pupils have explored the features of small creatures, such as woodlice and ladybirds, to generate ideas for making monsters. They show that they have thought about how they will join their materials together and how they will apply a good finish so that they look attractive. Most can write a simple description of how they made their



product and evaluate their finished product making suggestions of how it might be improved. They have also investigated designs for the production of free-standing photographic frames, and tested their products to determine the ease of insertion of photographs. Pupils have also designed, made and evaluated their own moving pictures of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

97. Pupils develop their designing and making skills satisfactorily as they move through the school. A good range of focused practical skills are planned each year, so that pupils learn a broad range of practical skills, which they can incorporate into their designing and making work. They learn to try out their ideas using different strategies, before making the final product. They know that this will help them to iron out any potential problems. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils were working on different designs; Year 4 pupils used a poem about a stormy day to create designs of the trees blowing in the wind using a range of materials such as cardboard, paper, split pins and pastels. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 made models of moving cars using wood and handling tools safely. Other pupils were making containers using designs downloaded from the Internet. They evaluated a design for a purse using needle and thread to produce different stitches, they designed and made a moving story book about ghosts and made hats out of sugar paper, tissue paper, crepe paper and sellotape. Pupils also designed, made and evaluated an electrical light box.
98. The subject makes a very good contribution to cultural development. In food technology older pupils made a Sikh dessert using semolina and sugar, they made Jewish bread and they also investigated different sounds to design and make an Indian prayer drum, using leather, wood, string, a hole punch, scissors and glue.
99. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively integrated into lessons. They receive extra help from learning support assistants and benefit from working in groups of pupils of different ages and abilities and, as a result, they make good progress.
100. Teaching of design and technology throughout the school is at least satisfactory and in the one lesson observed it was very good. Teachers clearly understand the design process and plan an interesting range of activities. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and try to do well. Teachers base their planning on recent national guidance and this ensures that National Curriculum requirements are fully met. Whenever possible, activities are linked to ongoing work in other subjects. Teachers' lessons are well planned and have appropriate learning objectives. These are always shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them.
101. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection, particularly in planning. The scheme of work has been updated to take account of recent national guidance. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Assessment procedures are yet to develop adequately to track pupils' progress effectively and thereby raise standards. Resources are satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

102. Attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with the nationally expected levels in both subjects – a similar position to the last inspection. No lessons were seen in history as, owing to the school's rolling programme, history was not taught during the inspection. In geography, only two lessons were seen. The judgements on the attainment in both subjects, therefore, are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils as well as the two lessons observed in geography. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, make good progress in history and geography.
103. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are gaining a sound understanding of the past and present time in history lessons. Pupils in Year 1 look at a range of different toys and identify and compare old toys with their own new toys. In Year 2, pupils extend their understanding of chronology through the study of events and famous people from the past. For example, they learn about the Great Fire of London and listen to the story of Florence Nightingale. In Years 3-6, pupils can use a time-line to sequence events in the Tudor period. They gain an understanding of why the Anglo-Saxons settled in Britain and how their settlement changed British society. They understand that there was a difference in the lives of the rich and the poor in Tudor England and study the events and people of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. Pupils in Year 6 gather information

successfully from the findings of a famous archaeologist, Howard Carter, and explore the life style and beliefs of the Egyptian people, such as the belief in life after death and the burial system. They collect evidence from Britain since 1930 and evaluate effectively the changes that have taken place since that period.

104. In geography, Year 2, pupils show satisfactory knowledge of the immediate locality of the school, identifying the changes needed to make the local area safer. They learn to use compasses well to find out the north, south, east and west parts of the village and recognise its human and physical features. For example, in the Year 2 lesson, pupils successfully recognised the adjacent church as a human feature and the woodland at the back of the school as a natural one. They study the different homes people live in, the transport system available in their locality and evaluate their effectiveness appropriately. By Year 6, pupils study the local area in more detail and compare some of its features with a village in St Lucia. They study the course of a river and successfully identify the main features, such as rapids, tributary, source and mouth of a river. They also examine the effects of climate on a river, such as the River Nile, and on farming.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in both subjects. Teachers have good relationship with their pupils and this enables them to set high expectations of behaviour. This helps pupils to be confident in their learning. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and plan well to ensure that all pupils take part in lessons. For example, in the geography lesson for Years 4, 5 and 6, the teacher skillfully used the experiences of a Year 5 girl, who had just come back from a holiday in Egypt, to describe her perceptions of the country including the climatic conditions for crops grown along the river banks. Resources are used well and links with other subjects such as art and literacy are good. Teachers use questioning techniques well to test pupils' understanding. Appropriate formal assessment procedures are in the process of development. They will help teachers to track pupils' progress more systematically. Pupils' learning in history and geography is enhanced appropriately by visits to places of interest, such as the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral and Woburn Safari Park.
106. Management of the subjects is satisfactory. Teaching in history and geography is making a good contribution to promoting literacy. The co-ordinator is clear about what needs to be done and is developing her role effectively. The curriculum, based on national guidance schemes, has been introduced effectively and ensures consistency in what is to be taught. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good in history and satisfactory in geography.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards in information and communication technology for Year 2 and 6 are above average. This is a good improvement from the position at the last inspection when standards were in line with the nationally expected levels in both years. The provision for information and communication technology has improved over the last two years and, as a result of this and good teaching, all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, are achieving well. All aspects of ICT are taught over time effectively. The school also has Internet access for pupils to conduct research work and to communicate electronically. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls.
108. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to use computers to support their learning in other subjects. They are able to word-process and edit work successfully. For example, Year 1 pupils arrange pictures in the correct sequence to tell a story and then describe the pictures using appropriate fonts. Most pupils draw a variety of pictures well using the program 'Colour Magic' and learn how to use the flow fill function. Pupils in Year 2 successfully use a computer for word processing and know how to change the size, style and colour of the text. They are able to edit their work using a range of keyboard functions such as the delete, backspace, shift and arrow keys. In data handling they present their work, such as the data collected in class, in graphs clearly. For example, they asked classmates about their favourite fruit and used the information to make a bar chart. They are good at using the chosen words in a word bank to write stories and control the mouse appropriately to select words. Pupils are able to program a simple robot to move backwards and forwards. Few pupils recalled using programs that explore real and imaginary situations.

109. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of the use and impact of ICT on their lives and in the wider world and are very capable users of modern technology. They use their computer skills well to enhance their learning in other subjects. For example, in their science work, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils presented their findings about the links between sound, light and time by an appropriate graph. They also have published a double-sided flyer with safety instructions on the use of electricity. In English, pupils added images from the Internet effectively to their stories and word-processed them, with a particular focus on presentation. Numeracy work also links well with information and communication technology projects. For instance, pupils in Year 5 and 6 utilised mathematical data effectively to create pie charts presenting the proportion of time each pupil spends in different work during the day. They use their skills very successfully in a multimedia presentation to produce a birthday card with a musical theme. They successfully write procedures for moving a screen turtle to make a specific shape such as a hexagon. Using control technology to operate other equipment is an area yet to be fully developed although the school has firm plans to introduce this soon. Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers as they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.
110. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and their own skills are well developed. This enables them to teach ICT confidently and demonstrate the correct procedures to pupils. Teachers employ very good skills in managing behaviour, which mean that pupils behave well, concentrate on tasks and enjoy using the computers. Pupils handle equipment with care and share it sensibly when working with a partner. Teaching assistants are well trained to help individual pupils who need extra help in their work. Teachers plan work very carefully to help pupils develop their skills in a systematic way, enabling them to take turn to use the computers in classes. They have high expectations and the pupils rise to the challenges set so that they make good progress in their learning of ICT skills.
111. The management of ICT is good and the school has worked hard to improve the provision for pupils. Assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently developed to monitor the attainment and progress of each pupil. Resources are satisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

112. Attainment in music has improved since the last inspection where it was judged to be satisfactory. Now pupils' attainments by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above expectations for their ages. Pupils are therefore achieving well against their prior attainment. This is mainly due to good teaching, pupils' positive attitudes to the subject, and extra opportunities for pupils to develop skills of playing musical instruments. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
113. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a good understanding of pitch and sing a range of nursery rhymes, folk songs and hymns with confidence. Their achievements are considerably enhanced by the very good opportunities for singing in assemblies. This contributes well to their spiritual development. In lessons, pupils compose and play percussion instruments with increasing confidence. Pupils also listen to and respond to a wide range of music, from classical to popular music. By the end of Year 6, pupils perform and dance to music, making changes in lyrics to express their own ideas. They know how to clap time in different metres and enjoy music making. They have participated in the Hitchin Music Festival and perform in religious festivals in the local church to celebrate Christmas, Harvest and Easter. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by listening to music from other countries, such as visiting an Indonesian percussion band.
114. The co-ordinator teaches music throughout the school and teaching is good. She challenges pupils to perform together and express their musical ideas. The very good relationships between the co-ordinator and pupils considerably enhance pupils' learning and progress. The very good use of resources, such as tuned and untuned percussion instruments, also promotes good achievement. Lunchtime and after school activities greatly enhance pupils' attainment and achievement. These include three groups for recorder, guitar and flute and a music club. Pupils' personal development is therefore very well promoted through music with opportunities created

for pupils to perform together, take turns and celebrate the success of others. Pupils' self-esteem, particularly for those with special educational needs, is considerably enhanced as they have very good opportunities to build their confidence in performing.

115. The subject is well led by the music co-ordinator, who has already significantly improved planning to follow the national guidelines closely. Formal procedures for assessment are beginning to develop. The music co-ordinator has greatly improved opportunities for pupils to perform and play, through, for example, a planned visit to sing in the Royal Albert Hall.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

116. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainments in physical education are above average. Since the last inspection standards have improved and pupils of all abilities are achieving well against their prior attainment. Teaching is good and the school provides good opportunities for pupils to build a range of skills systematically year on year. Pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour also contribute to good achievement. These are well promoted by the co-ordinator through the very good relationships and strong teamwork with support assistants. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls or of different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well because they are encouraged by teachers and support assistants to create their own movements independently.
117. By the end of Year 2, pupils perform a variety of gymnastic movements, linking two or three movements together and making good use of available space. In dance, pupils carefully sequence movements to reflect the mood of the music. They show increasing confidence in games lessons, warming up appropriately and developing skills of catching and throwing a ball. Pupils build up their awareness of space and work safely in pairs and groups. By the end of Year 6, pupils abide by clear rules and have developed their skills of travelling and controlling a ball in competitive team games, such as football and netball. They concentrate well and develop skills of attack and defence. Pupils also perform a variety of dances, ranging from traditional Maypole dancing to African and Asian dances. A visiting dance specialist promotes further opportunities for dance.
118. Pupils' physical development is positively enhanced by their enthusiastic use of the high quality facilities in the adventure playground during break-times and lunchtimes, which were not in place at the time of the last inspection. This effectively promotes pupils' physical development, positive attitudes, good behaviour and consideration for others as well as improving their play activities. Pupils also learn to play competitively through such events as the annual sports day in the village cricket ground where parents also compete with their children in fun races. The subject is greatly enhanced by the netball and football clubs, coached by experts in the field, and the strong links with local rural schools. There are also good opportunities for pupils to gain certificates in swimming.
119. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who has reviewed the curriculum and monitored planning to ensure pupils develop an appropriate range of skills over time. There are at present no indoor hall facilities for physical education but the school has entered into a partnership arrangement with the local church to develop the nave as a sports hall and for performing arts, which will greatly enhance provision for physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

120. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, based on the analysis of pupils' work and assessment records, discussions with staff and pupils, standards are in line with those expected of pupils of this age. Standards have been maintained at the same level since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good, staff have very good relationships with pupils, their personal development is very well promoted and the curriculum is very relevant to their needs within a multicultural society. They learn right from wrong. Assemblies also enhance pupils' achievements in religious education, particularly in developing a good understanding of feelings and relationships. Through the celebration of festivals in assemblies, pupils acquire a good knowledge of Christianity and other religions such as Hinduism, and Islam. This enhances their cultural development effectively. For example, two pupils explained

how they celebrated Diwali to other pupils during an assembly. Pupils also learned the meaning of Shrove Tuesday and reflected on ways they could prepare for Easter.

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of the main Christian festivals. They know main stories in the Bible, such as the New Testament story of The Prodigal Son, and they sequence events accurately. They also develop their understanding of Islam, drawing prayer mats and writing about the five pillars of Islam. Higher attainers know that the Ka'bah is an important place of pilgrimage for Muslims. By the end of Year 6, pupils compare different stories of the creation from world faiths, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, and they identify the signs and symbols of Christianity and Buddhism.
122. Teaching of religious education is good. Lessons are well planned to accommodate different age groups in the class and good use is made of religious artefacts so that pupils learn more effectively. Teachers also promote pupils' literacy well through opportunities for extended writing.
123. The curriculum meets legal requirements and follows the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership and ensures that there are sufficient opportunities to visit different places of worship, such as the mosque. This improves their knowledge of different religions.