

INSPECTION REPORT

WIDFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Widford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117176

Headteacher: Mrs A. Geller

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth
2700

Dates of inspection: June 3rd – 5th, 2003

Inspection number: 247738

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ware Rd., Widford, Hertfordshire.
Postcode:	SG12 8RE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mary Byrne
Date of previous inspection:	January, 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2700	Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Foundation stage; Educational Inclusion; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology; Geography ; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13481	Doug Binfield	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 its parents?
6436	Alan Andrews	Team inspector	English; Religious education; History; Music; Design and technology; Art and design; Special educational needs.	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Widford Primary School is situated in the village of Widford about five miles from Ware. It has 52 boys and girls on roll in roughly equal proportions. Most pupils live in the village. They are aged from four to eleven years and are educated in two classes. Children, known as 'other fours' begin school at Christmas or Easter two terms before that in which they will become five and they begin the reception class at this point. All pupils are of a white British or mixed-race background. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Six pupils have special educational needs. No parents claim an entitlement to free school meals. Attainment on entry is average overall, although there is wide range of ability in the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. The teaching is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes very good in English and mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The headteacher is hardworking and leads and manages the school well. There is a broad curriculum, including very good provision for extra-curricular activities, but some improvements are needed in science, information and communication technology and physical education. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above average by ages 7 and 11 and they make good progress in these subjects;
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in Years 5 and 6;
- The headteacher leads and manages the school well, has a clear sense of direction and forms an effective partnership with the governing body;
- Pupils enjoy school, have very good attitudes to their work and very good relationships with one another;
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good;
- The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance and behaviour and very good arrangements for pupils' personal development, general welfare and protection;
- There are excellent links with parents and they demonstrate very good support for the work of the school.

What could be improved

- There are some inadequacies in the curriculum provision for science, information and communication technology and physical education;
- Teachers do not always ensure that the work is suitably matched to the pupils' ages and abilities in subjects other than English and mathematics;
- Too many poor quality worksheets are used that do not require the pupils to think deeply enough, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics;
- There are no well established systems to track pupils' progress in key skills in some subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Widford Primary School has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in January 1998. Pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved by ages 7 and 11. Their reference skills have improved when using books. Pupils are now making good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school. Their attainment in physical education remains depressed because of the accommodation difficulties. Though some very good teaching was observed, there is not as much high quality teaching as reported previously. Curriculum provision for personal, social and health education has improved, but in lessons other than numeracy and literacy, the work given to pupils is still sometimes too similar given the difference in ages and abilities in the class. The range of extra-curricular activities has increased. Some improvements have been made in tracking pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, but further development is needed in the Foundation Stage and in subjects other than English and mathematics. Health and safety and child protection arrangements have improved. The governing body is more actively involved in understanding and monitoring the school but there are still some omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus. The school has sound potential to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	*	*	*	*	well above average A
Mathematics	*	*	*	*	above average B
Science	*	*	*	*	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

**Comparative grades have not been included in the table above because the small cohort of pupils does not make comparisons statistically valid.*

The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year. Their attainment in this aspect of their learning is above expectations. They make satisfactory progress in other areas of their work and meet national expectations. The school met its Local Education Authority targets for the two pupils in Year 6 in 2002 in mathematics and English. Results over time suggest that Years 2 and 6 pupils have been making good progress in English and mathematics, although less emphatically in science. Currently, pupils' level of attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above that expected for their age. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in these two subjects. They acquire a good factual knowledge in science, but do not do as well in investigative science. Pupils make satisfactory progress in some aspects of information and communication technology, but not all National Curriculum expectations are fulfilled and they do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in physical education, except in swimming in which they do well, mainly due to the unsatisfactory accommodation. In all other subjects including religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 and they make satisfactory progress and achieve soundly. Good arrangements are made to bring on able pupils in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to attend school and have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy the full range of activities, including extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are well mannered and courteous to others in lessons and when outside. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school provides many opportunities to develop skills across a wide range of interests and pupils take full advantage of these. Pupils also appreciate the needs of others and make good efforts to meet them.
Attendance	Excellent. There are high levels of attendance and no unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good when the upper juniors are taught as a separate class in the mornings for English and mathematics and the pupils make very good progress. In the rest of the school, English and mathematics teaching is sometimes good with an appropriate match of work to pupils' abilities. Literacy and numeracy lessons are generally taught effectively. Particularly good use is made of the teaching assistants in these sessions, which allows the pupils more individual attention. Pupils often make good progress in their numeracy and literacy lessons as a result of the small group sizes. Teachers are calm, have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. The pupils try hard as a result and answer well in lessons. In subjects other than English and mathematics, when the pupils of different ages are taught together, not enough attention is paid to pupils' previous knowledge and to their level of understanding. Teachers usually show good subject knowledge enabling them to deal with pupils' questions as they arise. They often make good use of resources which helps pupils' understanding. Lesson planning is satisfactory. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound overall. Teachers use literacy and mathematics to satisfactory effect across the curriculum. However, too often teachers make use of undemanding worksheets for pupils to record their activities, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and these do not allow the pupils to think deeply enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. National Curriculum requirements are met in most subjects. Some improvements are needed in science, information and communication technology and physical education. There is good provision for religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual education plans are of good quality and clearly set out how learning difficulties are to be tackled. Sometimes the pupils struggle when they do the same work as others.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. It is very good for pupils' social development and good for their moral and cultural development. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils clearly understand right and wrong. They appreciate how others live and that people hold different beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision for pupils' welfare and guidance is very good. Pupils receive high quality personal support. There are satisfactory arrangements for tracking pupils' progress.

The school enjoys an excellent partnership with its parents. They are very interested in what their children do and support them very well. Communication with them is of a very good quality. Parents are kept very well informed about school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and purpose and a very good example by her own teaching. She manages the school well and, as a result, the small staff works harmoniously together.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body meets regularly, is well organised and has clear plans to keep abreast of the school's work. There are some omissions in the prospectus and annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Results in national tests are analysed carefully to inform decisions about improvements in standards. The progress of the school development plan is reviewed regularly.
The strategic use of resources	Specific grants are used for their intended purpose. Due regard is given to obtaining best value. Finance is monitored regularly and administered well on a day-to-day basis. The staff is deployed effectively and good use is made of learning equipment.

There is an adequate number of staff given the number of pupils on roll. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The lack of a school hall affects the physical education curriculum and causes routine difficulties. There is satisfactory provision of books and equipment. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, behave well, are making good progress and work hard; • The teaching is good and there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons; • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible; • Their children get the right amount of homework; • They are kept well informed about their children's progress and feel comfortable about approaching the school; • The school is led and managed well. 	<p>There was a very positive response to the questionnaire and at the meeting for parents. The very occasional disagreement was not statistically significant against the positive views expressed.</p>

The inspection team agrees with many of the parents' positive views. Pupils' progress is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in other subjects. Their behaviour is very good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some that is good and very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Overall, the children's attainment on entry to the school is average. The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in communication, language and literacy and by the end of the reception year, their attainment in this aspect of their learning is above national expectations. They make good progress in reading and most pupils are reading simple books by age five. The children enjoy stories and listen well to their teachers. The children show good levels of confidence in speech. They talk confidently in front of others, with a good flow of sentences, as when they talk about objects they have brought into school to discuss. In their mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, their personal and social development and their creative and physical development, they meet expectations for pupils at the end of the reception year and make satisfactory progress.

2 The number of pupils who take part in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 is small because of the low number of pupils in each cohort. The statistical evidence therefore has to be treated with considerable caution. However, the school met its Local Education Authority targets for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 in mathematics and English. In 2001 and 2002, there were only two pupils in the Year 6 cohort, although there were 12 pupils in Year 2 in 2002. Valid comparisons of the respective performance of boys and girls in the school are not possible therefore. Results over time for the few pupils indicate that Year 2 pupils have been doing better than boys and girls nationally in all aspects of their work. The few Year 6 pupils have been doing better than boys and girls nationally in all subjects, though less emphatically so in science.

3 Currently, pupils' levels of attainment in English at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above that expected for their age and this represents an improvement at age 11 since the last inspection. They make good progress in English and achieve well. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good throughout the school. They speak confidently. By age seven, they use a wide range of vocabulary to good effect in expressing opinion and preferences. By age 11, they express themselves very well in a reasoned way as when weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of particular situations. They listen attentively to their teachers' instructions and to each other throughout the school and this assists their learning.

4 Pupils enjoy reading. They read aloud with an increasing use of expression. By age 11, pupils reason their choice of favourite authors. They show a good understanding of the content. Their research skills develop well. Pupils make good use of dictionaries to check spellings and to obtain definitions. Their writing demonstrates an increasing awareness of audience as they move up through the school.

5 Pupils' attainment in mathematics is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, particularly in Years 5 and 6 when the pupils are taught as a separate group. By age seven, the pupils have a good understanding of the value of different combinations of coins. They handle problem-solving situations well and are acquiring good strategies to work things out mentally. Eleven-year-olds have a good understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They show a good knowledge of metric equivalence and the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.

6 Pupils acquire a solid basis of factual knowledge in science, as in their knowledge of simple electric circuitry in Year 2 and the rotation of the earth, sun and moon at age 11. They do not have enough opportunities to undertake and organise science investigations and, as a result, their understanding of the scientific process is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Too many poor quality worksheets take away the excitement of science and the opportunity to think of their own ways for recording results and communicating their findings, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of factual knowledge throughout the school and in line with expectations. Their communication skills in science are unsatisfactory.

7 Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in information and communication technology in those aspects of work undertaken, but they do not meet all requirements for pupils by ages seven and 11. In general class work pupils' typing skills are slow and many only type with one hand. They do not have enough opportunities for control and monitoring, such as sensing temperature in Years 5 and 6. Pupils do not work in depth to combine and refine information and to amend work through evaluation of what they have done. Pupils throughout the school do not use information and communication technology across the curriculum sufficiently well and this restricts the development of their skills. Older pupils are gaining in some extra skills and extend some aspects of their knowledge in extra-curricular work by creating a school web-site. Satisfactory use is made of literacy and numeracy in different subjects but the over-use of worksheets is an impediment to better progress.

8 Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in physical education, except in swimming, an aspect of physical education in which the pupils have good opportunities. Pupils often exceed the minimum expectations in swimming at age 11. The unsatisfactory accommodation does not allow pupils to experience the full range of activities in other aspects of physical education and their attainment is below expectations as a result. In other subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the expectations set out by the National Curriculum for ages seven and 11. They achieve soundly in these subjects. Pupils reach the expected standard set out in the locally agreed syllabus for the pupils' ages in religious education and make satisfactory progress.

9 Good arrangements are made to stretch able pupils in Key Stage 2 by putting them in the same class as older pupils in English and mathematics. These arrangements work well and facilitate their good progress in these two subjects. In other aspects of work, able pupils are not always challenged well and too frequently the same task is set for different ages and abilities. Boys and girls are given equal opportunities and this ensures that they can make the same rates of progress in different aspects of their work.

10 The percentage of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs is lower than in most schools. The system of support relies heavily on the programme of work provided by the class teachers, one of whom is the special needs coordinator. Pupils' learning difficulties are identified carefully and targets within their individual education plans are matched precisely to their needs. However, in some lessons, with the exception of English and mathematics, they do the same work as other pupils and need much adult help in order to complete the tasks. Overall, these pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their ability.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils are keen to attend school and enjoy taking part in the full range of activities available. They listen attentively and contribute with confidence in lessons when answering questions or explaining views. Written and practical tasks are undertaken in a conscientious manner and pupils show very good co-operation when working in pairs or small groups. They respond well to advice from teachers and learning support assistants. Such positive features contribute significantly to the standards of achievement.

12 Pupils' behaviour is very good and this maintains the position seen at the previous inspection. They work purposefully throughout the school day. Pupils are well mannered and courteous to others. High standards of behaviour are a consistent feature of lessons and this contributes well to their learning. Their behaviour is very good during assemblies and in the playgrounds. The wide range of playground equipment and games resources is a particularly helpful feature that helps to keep pupils engaged. Incidents of serious misbehaviour, including bullying, very rarely occur. Any such issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. There have been no exclusions in the last three years. Pupils from all age-groups and different backgrounds mix happily together.

13 The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop social skills and to understand the needs of others. They are involved with fund-raising activities for charities such as 'Save the Children Fund' and sing carols at a nursing home for the elderly. Pupils take part in educational visits, such as those to Hatfield Forest and Rochester and also residential visits. Other activities include participation in a music festival, a swimming gala and a carol concert at the village church. The many lunch-time and after school clubs enable pupils to develop skills across a wide range of interests. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Teachers and other staff are friendly and supportive. They set a very good example that enables pupils to develop good personal relationships and helps to promote self-esteem.

14 Attendance is excellent. In the current school year, attendance levels are 96.6% and there has been no unauthorised absence. This represents an improvement from the last inspection and on the already high levels of last year. The school's attendance level is well above the national average in recent years for all primary schools. Punctuality is very good. Lessons and other activities start and finish on time. These positive factors make a significant contribution to learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 Eighteen lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these, two were very good, five were good, ten satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is strongest in the morning sessions with the upper juniors when the Years 5 and 6 pupils, together with very able Year 4 pupils, are taught as a separate class for mathematics and English. These particular lessons are taught briskly and pupils make very good progress in them. In the rest of the school, English and mathematics teaching is sometimes good with usually a good match of work to pupils' abilities. This ensures that the pupils are being fully stretched in these subjects. In other subjects, including the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is usually satisfactory. In general, there is not as much high quality teaching as that reported at the previous inspection. Boys and girls have equal opportunities and are taught equally well.

16 Literacy and numeracy activities are generally taught effectively and particularly good use is made of the teaching assistants in these sessions. The teaching assistants take groups of pupils and this enables the work to be matched more appropriately to pupils' different needs, given the wide spread of ages in the different classes. Pupils often make good progress in their numeracy and literacy activities as a result of these arrangements and the small group sizes. Teachers do not always ensure, however, that pupils hold their writing tools correctly and they sometimes get into bad habits from an early age.

17 Good use is made of big books in literacy lessons so that the pupils can share the text. In so doing, they learn about the features of text and grammatical structures, such as commas and exclamation marks. Teachers read stories aloud well and set a good example to the pupils in how to read a story. They make the text interesting to the pupils in this way. The choice of texts appeals to the pupils and encourages their interest in reading.

18 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and they make sound progress. The teachers and teaching assistants adopt a sensitive and caring approach and create a supportive learning atmosphere. This helps build their confidence and they willingly work hard as a result. They are keen to please and to do their best. Their self-esteem is maintained and they are enabled to experience success. This has much to do with the sensitive and caring approach adopted by teachers and support staff.

19 Teachers have very good relationships with all pupils and they manage them well. They undertake their lessons in a calm and pleasant manner. They know well the children they teach and this helps them in their individual responses to each child. They answer pupils' queries and also encourage them to ask one another if they are stuck with their work and this develops their confidence in one another.

20 In lessons that do not focus on English and mathematics, when the pupils of different ages are taught together, not enough attention is paid to pupils' previous knowledge and to their level of understanding. Often they do the same task irrespective of ability. In a geography lesson for the older pupils, the whole class of juniors undertook the same task at the same level of challenge, as they plotted different routes from an Ordnance Survey map. By contrast, the good planning for an infants lesson on bouncing and catching skills required older pupils to work with tennis balls whilst the youngest practised with large sized balls.

21 Teachers usually show good subject knowledge and research the content of lessons effectively beforehand enabling them to deal with pupils' questions as they arise. Teachers make effective use of correct vocabulary in different subjects so that pupils can understand the terms and then use them. In mathematics, teachers use such words such as 'vertices', 'regular' and 'irregular' when referring to the properties of shape. In English when discussing books, they refer to 'illustrator', 'author' and 'narrator' and refer to 'characters' and the 'setting'. In a mathematics lesson about right angles, the teacher ensured the pupils understood that the rounded corners of their desks could not be right angles as they searched around the classroom for practical examples of them.

22 In the best lessons, teachers make good use of resources to help pupils' understanding. In a follow-up lesson about right angles, Years 3 and 4 pupils used boards made by the teacher that contained compass directions and a rotating arrow. This equipment helped the pupils to understand the combined concept of clockwise and anti-clockwise and to predict where the arrow would point given a certain directional turn through a given number of right angles. In a science lesson, the teacher taught pupils how to use a pooter, a device for sucking up small mini-beasts. The pupils first practised in the classroom by sucking up lentils into pots through a plastic straw. This helped the pupils when they later went outside into the grounds. They managed to catch several varieties of creatures by sucking them up into containers for examination.

23 Teachers' planning of lessons is satisfactory. They revise effectively on previous learning at the start of the lesson. They usually have clear learning intentions and these are often written up on the board. However, they are not consistently shared with the pupils nor are they always referred to at the end of a lesson when evaluating how well the pupils have done. Teachers monitor pupils well as they work, assist them when they have difficulties and ensure they remain on task. This contributes to the good amount of work that they complete during lessons and to their keenness and levels of concentration.

24 Teachers' explanations of tasks are usually satisfactory and enable the pupils to get down to work quickly. However, sometimes they are not precise and clear enough in their explanations of what the pupils have to do. As a result, pupils do not always undertake what the teacher had intended. In one such lesson, Year 1 pupils were unsure about their particular written task because of unclear explanation.

25 In the unsatisfactory lesson, there was a lack of teaching of specific skills as pupils bounced and caught balls. There were no demonstrations of how to bounce a ball to a partner and pupils did not develop this skill sufficiently well.

26 Teachers use literacy and mathematics to satisfactory effect across the curriculum but insufficient use is made of information and communication technology, except in art. Good use is often made of literacy in religious education work. However, too often teachers make use of undemanding worksheets for pupils to record their activities, particularly in Years 1 and 2. These do not allow them to think deeply enough or to develop skills in recording statistical information as in science work. In general, teachers do not give enough attention to science investigation throughout the school. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework and parents are satisfied with the amounts that their children do. Homework particularly contributes to the pupils' good progress in reading.

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

27 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils overall, which is a similar judgement to that at the previous inspection. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements well in most subjects. There is good attention to meeting the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage follows and meets the national suggestions for children by the end of the reception year. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good with a wide range of opportunities afforded to pupils. These include music, sport, gardening and the creation of a web-site. Pupils have equal opportunities to participate in the activities provided and through literature and the general ethos of the school, a good emphasis is placed on the importance of racial harmony within society.

28 There are some strengths in the curriculum provision for English and mathematics and to meeting pupils' prior attainment because of the arrangements made for the teaching of these subjects. These include the use of teaching assistants and facilitate smaller groups and a narrower spread of ages. There is a satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs overall. The individual education plans are well written and define the way in which their different difficulties are to be tackled. Whilst these facilitate work in English and mathematics, these pupils are frequently given the same work as the rest of the pupils in other lessons.

29 The work in science, information and communication technology and physical education is lacking in some important respects. Insufficient attention is given to investigation in science and the work is too focused on factual knowledge. In Years 1 and 2 in particular, the work is too much directed by unchallenging worksheets. In information and communication technology, pupils do not engage in control and monitoring activities in Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school insufficient use is made of computers across the curriculum, except in art, and pupils do not evaluate their work sufficiently. Whilst good attention is given to the broader aspects of technology, such as the use of video cameras, sometimes the work in information and communication technology is too theoretical. The unsatisfactory accommodation affects the physical education curriculum adversely. The lack of a hall and, until recently, of a suitable hard surface area, affects pupils' attainment and the range of curriculum that can be provided.

30 The school makes good use of people in the community and local expertise. Elderly villagers have spoken to the pupils about their own schooldays and of life in the World War Two. An artist in residence has worked to good effect with pupils in the creation of delicate clay flowers, which have been assembled together in a combined work of art.

31 Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the curriculum provision for personal, social and health education. This is planned well and includes recognising pupils' own capabilities, facing changes and new challenges and expressing and respecting opinions. This subject contributes to the very good standard in speaking and listening. It also includes aspects of citizenship, such as why rules and laws are needed, individual and community responsibilities and personal safety. Appropriate attention is given to sex education and the safe use of drugs and medicines.

32 The school has close links with other local schools and the Local Education Authority and this supports in-service training and school curriculum development.

33 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and this is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Evidence of this was seen in some lessons. For example, junior pupils were enthralled when watching a video about Sikhism and a real sense of wonder was engendered. Assemblies are thoughtfully presented, have a sense of occasion, engage the pupils' interests and fulfil requirements in terms of acts of worship. Opportunities are provided for reflection and assembly themes relate well to pupils' own experiences. In religious education, pupils study world faiths and this enables them to begin to think about different beliefs and life's meaning and purpose.

34 The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. They are given opportunities to consider environmental issues. For example, a literacy text for older junior pupils raised the problem of global warming. Pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong and they behave really well. There is a strong sense of community and pupils show care and concern for one another. For example, they sensitively looked after a new child on her first day at the school. In personal, social and health education lessons, pupils consider the importance of relationships. In one lesson, they put forward sensible suggestions as to how disagreements should be settled.

35 The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils work and play together well, sharing ideas and resources. They raise money for charity and show concern for people who are disadvantaged. They undertake simple responsibilities reliably and are polite and helpful to visitors. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that are supported well. Pupils have the opportunity to go on residential visits and they take part enthusiastically in local festivals.

36 Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils are enabled to develop a sound appreciation of their own culture. They also gain an insight into other traditions and lifestyles. They take part in a range of activities linked to music and art. Literature plays an important part in the life of the school and is used successfully to broaden pupils' cultural understanding. There are no productions, but role-play exercises are used successfully in lessons and pupils participate keenly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37 The provision for pupils' welfare and guidance is very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The high level of pastoral care contributes significantly to the harmonious learning environment provided. This is much appreciated by parents and pupils.

38 Effective arrangements are in place for health, safety and child protection. Action has been taken to deal with criticisms in the previous report relating to car parking in the playground, record keeping and staff training. Health and safety aspects are reviewed regularly by the governors' premises committee. A governor and the headteacher undertake regular inspections of buildings and equipment. Accidents and illness are dealt with in a competent manner and all staff have undertaken training in first-aid. Appropriate arrangements are in place for dealing with child protection.

39 High quality personal support is given to each pupil by teachers and support staff. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to play a full part in the life of the school. The well planned personal, social and health education programme makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. This is supplemented by special themes and visiting speakers at assemblies. Good advice is given on health matters, such as personal hygiene and appropriate emphasis is given to safety considerations. For example, in an infant lesson, pupils contributed well to a discussion about their experiences in meeting other people and, in particular, recognised the need to take care if approached by strangers. There is an appropriate sex education programme.

40 Very good systems are in place for promoting high standards of behaviour. Parents are very supportive of the school's high expectations. There is a strong emphasis on rewarding good behaviour by praise, behaviour cards and certificates. Pupils indicate that they are very pleased with these arrangements and that behaviour problems rarely arise. Appropriate sanctions are in place for dealing with misbehaviour, including bullying. Parents are consulted about any serious issues that occur. Care is taken to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted irrespective of age, sex or race.

41 Procedures for promoting high attendance and punctuality are excellent and have improved since the last inspection. The school's expectations are clearly explained at induction meetings and in written documents, such as the school prospectus. Work on recording attendance and in following up occasional issues that arise is undertaken efficiently. The education welfare officer undertakes a monitoring role and visits the school each term. The school's success in this area is helped because all parents are extremely co-operative as they recognise that high attendance contributes to learning. Another factor is that pupils are keen to come as they enjoy school.

42 Very good procedures are in place for monitoring pupils' personal development. A detailed record is maintained about pupils' characteristics, such as attitudes to learning, relationships and self-esteem. This enables helpful reports to be made to parents about their child's development and social skills.

43 The school has satisfactory arrangements for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up to date. They show appreciation of what the pupils' have written in their books by their comments and often these include praise. Teachers sometimes make useful suggestions about how the work could be improved. There is some useful assessment of pupils' current attainment in information and communication technology, and these records are maintained to give a useful profile of what the pupils can do. Termly assessments are made of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and these are supported by weekly evaluations of pupils' progress against the weekly learning targets. These arrangements help to keep track of the progress that the pupils are making. Some useful on-going records are maintained of pupils' work in art and design and technology. The record keeping of the children's work in the Foundation Stage is at an early stage of development. In other subjects there is not yet any consistent recording of key skills and concepts. Overall, teachers make good use of assessments when planning new work in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, but there are not yet adequate systems in place to make this possible in other subjects. The use of assessment in other subjects is as yet undeveloped.

44 The school evaluates the results of its performance in national tests effectively. It analyses pupils' answers to the questions. In this way it discovered that pupils' needed more help in understanding and recording their work in probability. It has also analysed its results by gender. A successful initiative related to assessment is the setting of short-term targets with individual pupils for mathematics and English. These are shared and set with the pupils. Teachers and pupils evaluate the progress that has been made at regular intervals through an examination of work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47 The school has an excellent partnership with parents. This is an outstanding feature of the school and represents an improvement since the last inspection. The high level of interest and support provided by parents contributes well to the provision the school offers and to the pupils' achievements.

48 Several parents help in classes with reading, mathematics and computers. Others assist with swimming, school clubs and help to maintain and improve the grounds. Parents provide very good support for homework and make good use of the homework diary system. School concerts and other events are well attended. The many fund-raising and other functions organised by The Friends of Widford School are supported well. This thriving organisation is able to donate a large sum of money each year to provide improved facilities, such as outdoor play equipment and learning resources. The high degree of parental interest and co-operation have an extremely positive impact on the life and work of the school. Their views are carefully considered by the school, for example, in consultations about major developments and from views expressed in response to questionnaires.

49 Parents indicate that their children like school, behave well, work hard and make good progress. They feel that teaching is good and that the school is led and managed well. Parents state that helpful information is supplied on their child's progress and about school activities. They find it easy to approach the school with any concern. Inspection evidence supports most of the positive views expressed by parents. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although several good and very good lessons were observed. A particularly strong feature is the teaching of English and mathematics to Years 5 and 6 pupils.

50 The quality of information provided to parents is very good. The prospectus has a very attractive format and gives much helpful information about the school. Regular newsletters are issued about forthcoming events and school activities. External notice boards give reminders about topical items and are a popular source of information. Parents are especially well advised in separate pamphlets, such as those on parental support for homework and guidance for helping in school. They are informed to good effect about the initiatives on the school development plan. Parents are well advised about their children's progress at consultation meetings with teachers and in the high quality annual written reports. The work of the governing body and the school's achievements are described well in the governors' annual report.

51 The previous report indicated that the prospectus and annual governors' report did not fully meet legal requirements. This is still an issue as the following items are not included in the prospectus: information about admission arrangements and absence levels for the previous year. In the governors' annual report, information is missing about the implementation of the policy for children with special educational needs, information relating to children with disabilities, namely admission arrangements; fair treatment; existing facilities and the accessibility plan detailing the school's future policies.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52 The present headteacher took up post some two years ago. She gives a clear sense of educational direction and forms an effective partnership with the governing body and the staff. The leadership and management of the school are good. The interests of the children are put first and the school's ethos of a caring community is reflected successfully in its daily life. Day-to-day management enables staff to get on with their jobs. Strengths in leadership stem from a positive approach to the raising of standards and a determination to improve the quality of all pupils' work, including those with special educational needs. Year groups are small, often below ten, and this means that the analysis of test results needs to be treated with caution. That said, the school analyses its results in national tests carefully to identify the progress of various groups of pupils as well as individuals so as to inform decision making about how to improve standards.

53 The governing body is almost completely new since the last inspection. It meets regularly and appropriate committees are in place. It is now more actively involved in understanding and monitoring the work of the school and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Governors have produced a plan for the next eighteen months for governor visits. There is to be a focus for each visit agreed with the headteacher. This is good practice because it helps build a clear understanding between the governors and staff. Some good progress has been made in tackling issues identified in the last inspection report. However, governors do not fulfil all their statutory duties in terms of the information provided in the school prospectus and their annual report to parents, details of which were given in the previous section.

54 Governors have been involved in the formulation of the school development plan. It sets out realistic priorities for the future. Progress in achieving these priorities is reviewed carefully at governors' meetings. As from this year, parents are informed about the contents of the development plan. This is a good initiative because it reinforces a positive home-school partnership.

55 The headteacher rightly places emphasis on the importance of monitoring, evaluating and developing further the quality of teaching. As part of performance management, she has put in place a programme of formal lesson observations that include written feedback and areas for development. This is particularly important because it helps staff to identify issues for discussion.

56 All teachers carry more than one responsibility for a subject, including those who are part-time. To assist them in this role, they have one day each term away from class responsibility. They also monitor work informally on a daily basis. This helps ensure that they keep abreast of work that is taking place across the school and in links between subjects.

57 The school's arrangements, for the management and organisation of the special educational needs provision, are satisfactory overall and national requirements are met. The co-coordinator liaises informally with staff across the school to ensure that children's needs are met. She also liaises with outside agencies and the pupils benefit from these arrangements.

58 The school has an appropriate complement of teachers and together they have sufficient experience and expertise to teach all areas of the curriculum satisfactorily, though there are some deficiencies in the curriculum organisation for science, information and communication technology and physical education. Appropriate emphasis is given to in-service training linked to priorities in the school development plan. Opportunities are provided for feedback to staff and this is good practice because it assists the sharing of new ideas and thinking. All members of staff have job descriptions that are reviewed each year. An effective system of performance management is in place for teachers and cleaning staff. Plans are in hand to extend this to teaching assistants.

59 Since the previous inspection, the number of hours for teaching assistants has been increased. They are shared across the classes and make a valuable contribution to the general life of the school as well as to pupils' attainment and progress. The secretary welcomes visitors in a friendly manner and helps to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a daily basis. The lunchtime staff also make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school during lunch-breaks.

60 The accommodation is clean, bright and cared for. Displays of work are often of a good quality and this enhances the pupils' learning environment. However, the quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Space is limited, but used effectively. A small temporary building at the back of the school is used as a changing room and for some lessons. There are difficulties with storage in the main building and the absence of a hall means that much of the National Curriculum for physical education cannot be delivered satisfactorily. The Foundation Stage pupils have access to a small, but discrete outside play area. The general site of the school is pleasant and includes an adventure area with climbing frames as well as an environmental studies area with a pond.

61 Resources for all subjects, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. They are organised well, given the limitations of space, and are readily available. Good use is made of additional resources from a small schools cluster group.

62 The school buys in, and makes good use of, professional expertise from the local authority to help monitor and manage its budget. There is efficient day-to-day management of finance. All grants are spent according to their specified purpose. Governors ensure that spending is linked to priorities in the school development plan and that due regard is given to obtaining the best value for money spent. Recent expenditure has included an increase in the hours for teaching assistants, the upgrading of the provision for information and communication technology and the purchase of small equipment for outdoor games. Taking into account the standards achieved, the quality of education provided and the school's costs, it provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63 The school has made sound progress since its last inspection in 1998. In order to improve the curriculum and pupils' levels of attainment further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- **Ensure that the curriculum provides a better balance of activities for its pupils and in so doing:**
 - a) provide more curriculum time for science in Years 3 to 6 and a greater emphasis on investigational science throughout the school;
(Paras 2, 6, 26, 29, 86, 87, 88, 91)
 - b) use information and communication technology to a greater extent across the curriculum and undertake National Curriculum Programmes of Study in this subject more fully;
(Paras 7, 29, 103, 106, 107)
 - c) increase the range of activities in physical education.
(Paras 8, 29, 113, 115)

- **Match the work more adequately to the pupils' ages and abilities in subjects other than English and mathematics.**
(Paras 9, 10, 20, 28)

- **Reduce the reliance on poor quality worksheets, particularly in Years 1 and 2 which are not requiring the pupils to think deeply enough.**
(Paras 6, 26, 75, 90, 101)

- **Develop manageable systems that help to track pupils' progress in key skills in the foundation subjects.**
(Para 43)

Additionally the following minor issues should be addressed:

- **Ensure that the annual meeting for parents and the prospectus contain all statutory information for the parents.**
(Paras 51, 53)

- **Ensure pupils learn to hold their writing tools correctly from an early stage.**
(Paras 16, 69, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	5	10	1	0	0
Percentage	0	11	28	56	5	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)		52
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Year 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		6

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	02 (01)	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 [89]	92 [89]	100 [100]
	National	84 [84]	86 [86]	90 [91]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 [89]	100 [100]	100 [100]
	National	85 [85]	89 [89]	89 [89]

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

** Figures not included because they are statistically not valid.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	02 [01]	1	1	2

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	*	*	*
	National	75 [75]	73 [71]	86 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	*	*	*
	National	73 [72]	74 [74]	82 [82]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	50	0	0
White – Irish		0	0
White – any other White background		0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean		0	0
Mixed – White and Black African		0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi		0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background		0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean		0	0
Black or Black British – African		0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background		0	0
Chinese		0	0
Any other ethnic group		0	0
No ethnic group recorded		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)	2.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	01/02
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	£
Total income	177,534
Total expenditure	179,624
Expenditure per pupil	3,592
Balance brought forward from previous year	7369
Balance carried forward to next year	5279

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.4
<hr/>	
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	52
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	42	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	39	7	3	3
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	19	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	10	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	20	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	74	23	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	29	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	36	6	0	3

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

64 The children in the Foundation Stage begin school part-time when they are four and are known as 'other fours' before they join the reception class. The 'other fours' join the school in two batches at the start of the spring and summer terms and transfer to the reception class after two terms at either September or January, depending on their birthday.

65 At the time of the inspection there were five children known as 'other fours' and 11 reception children. Attainment on entry is average. The majority of the children receive some form of pre-school experience that helps their early learning development. The satisfactory quality of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is similar to the judgements made at the previous report.

66 The Foundation Stage is well staffed. A full-time teacher and a teaching assistant share the teaching responsibility. The 'other fours' are taught as a group for most of their morning session by a nursery nurse who then works with the reception children in the afternoon in conjunction with the class teacher in the one class for pupils aged five to seven. There is no difference in quality in the provision for the 'other fours' and the reception children. These arrangements work well and ensure that the pupils get good adult attention. There are good induction procedures. Parents are fully involved in the transition from home to school and are invited in to school to meet with the class teacher and Nursery Nurse prior to their child attending.

67 Children are making good progress in the Foundation Stage in their communication, language and literacy work, particularly in reading and speaking and listening skills. They exceed national expectations in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year. The children make sound progress and reach the national expectations for the end of the reception year in other areas of their learning. These areas are personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. This is a similar judgement to that at the time of the last inspection. The teaching in the Foundation Stage, both for the 'other fours' and for the reception children, is satisfactory in most areas of their learning and it is good in communication, language and literacy, a similar judgement to that at the time of the last inspection. Teaching provides a satisfactory blend of formal whole group work and more informal work in which the children make their own choices. The staff work together well on curriculum planning. The curriculum fully meets the national guidance for children aged up to five known as the Early Learning Goals that includes targets for children at the end of their reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

68 The relationships that the staff have with the children enable them to know how to behave appropriately. The children relate well to one another as a result. They are taught to take turns when using the equipment and listen to others when they are speaking. The children play sociably together when working in the role-play area. They take care of the goldfish and treat mini-beasts with care when they study them. The children wash their hands independently after completing messy activities and take off and put away their aprons. They hang up their own coats and are well established into the routine of the school. Younger children quickly become familiar with the school's routines and adjust to working with older children.

Communication, language and literacy

69 This aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum is taught well and a good deal of attention is given to it. The children make good progress as a result in this area of learning. Letter sounds are taught systematically. Teachers use actions to promote effectively the children's learning of letter names and sounds and teach this aspect in a lively, interesting way. The combination of actions and sounds helps the children to remember them and make good progress in learning the sounds made by different letters as a result. They know that 'Maria' and 'match' begin with an 'm' sound and the initial sound of their own name. They know that prints convey meaning and by the end of the reception year, most have made a good start to their reading. The children make their own 'car' service sheets and take their bikes to the garage to be serviced. They learn to recognise and write their own names. Some can write in recognisable simple sentences. However, they sometimes form letters incorrectly and some do not have a correct pencil grip. The teachers are not sufficiently alert to this particular failing. Their speaking and listening skills are good. Most listen very well, focus on their teachers and other adults and carry out instructions correctly. The children are confident in talking in front of others and most put a number of sentences together. One child spoke to the whole class about her doll Rapunzel. Another child spoke about a toy he had brought in, told the others how the trailer could hold packages and suitcases and proceeded to give a demonstration. The children are confident in talking to adults. They listen to, and enjoy, stories. They talk about what they have heard with enthusiasm.

Mathematical development

70 The children show good skill when making repeating patterns as they print with different colours and shapes. They are acquiring a suitable sense of the order of number through counting activities and through making their own simple number lines on sheets. They count to ten and beyond and recognise and write numbers to ten. All sort accurately by colour and shape and know comparative terms, such as big and biggest, long and longest. All children enjoy number games and take part appropriately for their age in these. Most can count a small number of objects accurately. By the end of the reception year, the majority know the names of common shapes, for example, 'triangle', 'square', 'circle' and 'rectangle' and also some of the more common three-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71 The children have a good understanding of the objects in daily life that can be controlled by machines. They know that the car wash and the petrol pumps can be programmed. The children understand that several kitchen appliances respond to human commands and that some are programmed to undertake particular functions and work in a particular order. All know that you put in the dirty laundry before pushing the button for the washing machine to operate. All can name several kitchen appliances and know their functions. They come to a good understanding of life through their role-play experiences in the cave, the garden centre and the dentist's surgery. These imaginary experiences help them to come to terms with daily life and the purpose of such establishments. The children know that you should wear protective clothing and headwear before going into a cave. They go outside into the school grounds and gather insects from the leaves and from under logs and appreciate that different animals prefer different habitats. By planting sunflowers, the children realise that slugs can be pests when their plants get eaten and have to re-plant them. There is a good appreciation of some important festivals from world faiths through making lamps and barfi sweets to celebrate the Hindu festival of Divali. The children know about the life cycle of the frog and that tadpoles become young frogs. They understand that different types of weather are important and they put materials outside to test the strength of the wind.

Physical development

72 The children make expected progress in their physical development and attain the expected level by the end of the reception year. The children manoeuvre their tricycles and other large wheeled toys with appropriate skill around the outside hard surfaced area and can direct them around a marked track with acute bends successfully, avoiding children and obstacles in their way. They develop suitably developed ball handling skills when they bounce and try to catch large sized balls on the return. Their use of scissors is well developed and they cut with good skill as they cut out materials and around drawings, turning the paper round with the other hand to aid the cutting process. However, their pencil grips are often faulty and this inhibits careful colouring-in accuracy in some cases.

Creative development

73 The children have a good knowledge of colour. They know that red and yellow make orange and they mix paint to obtain the colour orange. They know that to lighten the orange they need to add more yellow. They cut, glue and arrange collage materials independently in their abstract creations using a range of material such as felt, lace and ribbon. They make their own vehicle creations from construction equipment and make identifiable replicas of, for example, racing cars. The staff provide a range of interesting resources that are well directed to extend the children's creative development. All children have good opportunities to develop their use of colour through painting, collage and modelling, for example, observational drawings of the mini-beasts they collect. They weave fabrics and make bracelets by painting pasta and stringing them together.

ENGLISH

74 Attainment in English overall at the end of the infant stage is above that of most schools nationally. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. Attainment overall at the end of the junior stage is also above most schools, but this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Currently, pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good at the end of both the infant and junior stages. Reading and writing skills are not as high, but are still good. The school's results in national tests need to be treated with caution because the small numbers of pupils in each year group make them statistically unreliable. That said, results since 1999 show an upward trend. The school has worked hard with some success to raise standards, particularly in writing.

75 Scrutiny of work and lesson observations together shows most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress over time. Individual targets are set and used effectively to help pupils' learning move forward. The national initiative on literacy has been introduced satisfactorily and is helping to raise standards. Texts are chosen with care and generally appeal to the pupils' interest. Literacy skills are reinforced effectively in some other subjects, although there is often an over reliance on worksheets. Its use overall is satisfactory. Appropriate efforts are made to use homework, including research, as a means to enhance the work covered in lessons.

76 Most pupils are articulate. They listen attentively to teachers and to one another. They answer questions sensibly and contribute well to class discussions, communicating meaning clearly. An example of this was seen when younger junior children were considering the structure of a story and the use of chapters. Pupils' very good listening skills do much to enhance their learning in all subjects. They listen carefully to explanations and instructions so that they know what they have to do. This means time is used productively and that work often moves forward at a good pace. Pupils are polite and respectful to visitors. They are keen to talk about their interests and what they are doing at school. They show pride in their own achievements and those of others. By the age of seven, most use a wide range of vocabulary effectively. They offer opinions and preferences, as when explaining why they like particular kinds of stories. By age 11, pupils' confidence has grown further. They speak very clearly, share ideas and are beginning to draw upon their own experiences to develop what they have to say.

77 Pupils enjoy reading and listening to class texts. They read regularly at home and at school. There is a good system of home-school reading records that often include parental comments. The records are up to date and are an effective means of dialogue between parent, teacher and child. They encourage pupils to read and help them know how to improve. Teachers give appropriate emphasis to the use of letter sounds and the context of the story to work out new or irregular words. They ensure that reading books are appropriate to pupils' age and ability. This is clearly paying dividends because pupils make good progress. By the age of seven, most pupils read fluently and with growing use of expression. They often have favourite stories and authors and they show good understanding of main characters and story lines. Junior pupils read with increased fluency. Brighter pupils use expression really well. By age eleven, pupils are able to predict story outcomes and sometimes to suggest reasonable alternatives. Most can identify a range of well-known authors and stories they have written. Their research skills are developing to good effect and many use the internet successfully to find information.

78 The school has worked hard effectively to raise standards in writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes and often show good skills when doing so, although not all pupils hold their writing tools correctly and this causes untidy writing in some instances. They use special books for handwriting practice, but do not always transfer their skills successfully to other written work. Infant pupils know how to sequence events in the right order and, by age seven, their understanding of basic sentence structure, including the use of capital letters and full stops, is developing well. Simple words are mostly spelt correctly and more difficult words are often phonetically correct. There are examples of creative thinking and imaginative use of vocabulary in some written work, for example the use of the words 'scuffling', 'creeping' and 'swishing'. Junior pupils are beginning to think more carefully about the use of language and its meaning. Ideas are sometimes developed in an interesting way and there is a growing awareness of audience. Comprehension tasks are usually completed well and there is good use of dictionaries to check spellings and definitions. They are becoming increasingly skilled at expressing a view, for example whether television is a blessing or a curse.

79 The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory overall. However, some good and very good teaching was seen. The very good teaching was with the older junior pupils. The structure provided by the literacy hour has given teachers clear guidelines about the organisation of lessons and this is proving beneficial. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are clear about what pupils are to learn. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils have very good attitudes towards the subject and behave really well. This helps their progress. The very good teaching stems from:

- very positive relationships and good use of praise and encouragement so that pupils work really hard;
- high expectations of what pupils can achieve in the time available;
- reminders about previous work and how it links to what is to be done next. This helps ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are built up in a systematic way;
- very good class control and management;
- well organised group work that takes account of different year groups and abilities;
- effective questioning that assesses what pupils know and challenges them all to think hard;
- a sense of purpose and pace that encourages pupils to develop their skills effectively.

80 The senior management team monitors pupils' progress carefully. This helps them identify areas for development. Good quality displays of work around the school celebrate pupils' efforts and enrich their learning experiences.

MATHEMATICS

81 Pupils' attainment is above average in mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in mathematics overall, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching is very good. Good attention is given to the different aspects of mathematics throughout the school. Problem solving work through mathematics games is effective.

82 By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of two-digit place value in their work in tens and units. They understand the value of coins and can provide the correct ones to make a given sum of money up to and beyond a pound. They have a good understanding of odd and even numbers. They add two numbers, such as 11 and 12 mentally using their own strategies. They take away 10 from a given number mentally, but have more difficulty when taking away 20 and 30. They do well when solving problems such as calculating the final number on a bus when some of the original passengers get off at a bus stop and others get on. They are beginning to understand the concept of dividing, such as sharing a number of items amongst four people, and work with accuracy on such tasks, some being able to calculate the answer mentally.

83 By age 11, pupils round numbers to the nearest thousand with ease. They show a good understanding of decimals and round to the nearest unit. They demonstrate good skill when dividing decimals by 100. They apply their mathematics work to probability and in drawing and interpreting line graphs as when converting euros to pounds. Pupils equate fractions, percentages and decimals well and when comparing imperial and metric measures. They calculate the difference accurately between negative numbers. They have a good appreciation of the properties of two-dimensional shapes. In one lesson observed, they showed a good understanding of parallel lines and could give practical examples in real life, such as railway lines. They also indicated them in regular shapes, such as in a hexagon and rectangle. They can identify the properties that are similar and different when a square is transformed into a rhombus.

84 Pupils show very good levels of interest in mathematics and behave well in lessons. They contribute well in discussion and during mental sessions. They quickly settle to their activities, set out their work neatly and show a good sense of responsibility towards their work. They complete good amounts of work during lessons. Pupils are keen and hard working. Pupils' good attitudes and progress in mathematics are a result of the overall good quality of teaching in the subject. It is good overall in both key stages but particularly so in upper Key Stage 2 where the quality of teaching is very good and progress accelerates. In this class, the pace is brisk. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support groups of pupils. Particularly good use is made of learning resources to help the pupils acquire understanding, as in Years 3 and 4 when pupils were learning about right angles and direction and used a board with compass directions and a rotating arrow. In the Years 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher made very good use of equipment to further pupils' understanding of shape and their properties and pupils were able to state similar and different properties within various quadrilaterals. Good attention is paid to the different needs of pupils in mathematics through the provision of work they do. Pupils who show particularly good skill are challenged well and this is effected in the juniors by pupils working with older pupils.

85 Resources for mathematics are satisfactory. They are maintained well and easily available. The subject is managed effectively by a knowledgeable co-ordinator whose own teaching of the subject sets a very good example for others.

SCIENCE

86 Pupils' attainment in science is in line with expectations in their factual knowledge, similar to the last inspection, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to experiment and investigate for themselves. This aspect of the subject is under developed throughout the school.

87 By the end of Year 2, pupils name several appliances that operate by electricity. They test materials that will conduct electricity in a simple circuit. They predict which materials might be waterproof from a given selection and then test them out, although not enough attention is given to fair testing. They test for magnetism on a range of objects in the classroom. The pupils are aware that some foods are healthy and some can be damaging to health and show in their own drawings of healthy meals and unhealthy meals that they know the difference. They understand the concept of alive and not alive. They know that push and pull are forces and know the difference between them. They record the distances traveled by a car down a ramp over different surfaces, but do not always draw conclusions from their investigations.

88 By the end of Year 6, pupils understand that seeds are dispersed by different methods, such as by the wind and by animals. They show a good understanding of the movements of the earth, the sun and the moon and draw diagrams to show the positions at different times of the year. They record 'The earth circulates the sun. The earth takes one day to spin round and a year to go round the sun. The moon reflects the sun'. They too show a good understanding of healthy eating and in far more detail than younger pupils. They discuss this aspect of work in terms of types of food, such as carbohydrates, proteins, fibre and vitamins. They know about simple circuitry and draw diagrams with good use of symbols to show the effect of adding pieces of equipment to a circuit, including a resistor. The pupils know the function of the heart and lungs in the circulation system. They show some understanding of fair tests when they do investigations for themselves, but they do not employ such skills enough. Pupils consider the dangers of smoking and the proper use of drugs and medicine.

89 It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Only one infant lesson could be observed during the inspection. This was organised well and involved the pupils going out into the school grounds to catch and examine mini-beasts. Before they went outside, the teacher demonstrated to the pupils how to use a pooter to suck up the creature into a container through sucking up lentils. This was a useful tactic and helped the pupils with this skill when they went outside. They treated the creatures with care as the teacher had asked them. They searched under logs and knocked insects off tree leaves putting them back when their inquiries were completed. The lesson was successful because of the plentiful supply of equipment that enabled all the pupils to be kept fully active and involved. The pupils showed keen interest and worked together well on the task. Their behaviour was very good.

90 In general classroom work, too many poorly produced worksheets are used in science that do little to develop pupils' own research and recording skills. Many of these require the pupils only to colour in. Some of these worksheets are unscientific. One of these asked the pupils to colour in red the things that they could see through and to colour in blue if they could not. Two of the items on the worksheet were plastic and paper and clearly open to different interpretation. The concept of translucence was not developed. In another worksheet, pupils had to colour in the items blue if they would bend and red if not. The given labels on the sheet were metal, wood, plastic, paper and rock. Use of such poor quality worksheets is preventing pupils from developing a better understanding in the subject. Furthermore, the pupils are not being enabled to think of ways of recording their thinking for themselves. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in their factual knowledge, but unsatisfactory progress in investigational techniques and in communicating their results.

91 Resources for the subject are satisfactory, of good quality and well stored. The co-ordinator acknowledges that not enough time is currently being given to the subject in Years 3 to 6 and that more work is required in the investigative element throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92 These subjects were not taught during the period of the inspection and no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching. However, an interview with the co-ordinator and an examination of teachers' records indicate that there is an interesting and varied programme of activities. It provides a range of opportunities for pupils' creative development and ensures skills, knowledge and understanding are built up in a systematic way. Interviews with pupils' and scrutiny of work show attainment at age seven and eleven to be in line with most other schools nationally, although there are examples of good quality work. This is a similar finding to the last inspection. Pupils really enjoy the tasks set. They have very good attitudes towards the subjects and are proud of their achievements.

93 Pupils' learning over time, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory at both the infant and junior stages. Their work shows increasing confidence in handling equipment and choosing different materials. Pupils generate a range of ideas and plan the design and making of various products. For example, infant pupils have made model trucks with moving wheels and junior pupils have investigated the design of animal shelters and then designed and made shelters of their own. Their manipulative and control skills are sometimes good. When making the shelters, pupils successfully joined straws at different angles and also joined thin pieces of sectioned wood. In food technology, infant pupils are making and tasting fruit salads. Many pupils are beginning to understand the importance of refining what they make in order to bring about improvements. They are evaluating their efforts, for example by deciding which salads they like best.

94 Pupils show satisfactory skills in drawing, painting and colouring. This helps them to illustrate work in other subjects, for example in science and history. Pupils' use of colour is sometimes good and records of their work show growing awareness of pattern, texture, shape and size. Examples of this was seen in the use of paint, print and collage by junior children to depict shapes and symbols they found on a journey around the school grounds. Helpful links are made with information and communication technology and pupils have produced a range of pleasing computerised patterns. Appropriate attention is given to the work of well-known artists. Pupils study and use their styles well as when junior pupils considered the work of William Morris when producing repeat patterns. These studies help pupils' spiritual development because it assists them to begin to appreciate the wide variety of ways different artists represent their feelings and experiences.

95 The coordinator is a part-time teacher and relatively new to the school. She is very enthusiastic and is already having a positive impact on pupils' work. She runs a popular pottery club for older juniors. Displays of work around the school are often of a good standard and the school regularly provides displays of work for the nearby church. This helps to celebrate pupils' achievements and contributes effectively to the development of their visual awareness.

GEOGRAPHY

96 Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to fulfil the National Curriculum requirements for geography in both key stages. Pupils meet the National Curriculum expectations for ages seven and 11, a judgement similar to that at the previous inspection. It is not possible to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching because only one lesson could be observed during the inspection period. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in the subject and achieving soundly.

97 By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the concept of an island. They recount some of the advantages of living of an island, such as the peace and tranquility, but also recognise the difficulties, such as having to rely on ships to bring in some of their daily needs and luxuries. They are able to state the difference between natural and man made features. They can put the location of England, Scotland and Wales on a map of the United Kingdom.

98 By the end of Year 6, pupils identify the position of India on a map. They study life in an Indian village and compare this with their own village. They are able to think of questions to research to compare their own village with that in India, such as the type of schooling, the sources of their water supply, the type of crops that are grown, the form of fuel used and the kind of facilities they have. They research these effectively and come up with answers to satisfy their curiosity. Pupils' work demonstrates that they can interpret the Indian village map and understand its setting. They interpret the difference between the life of an Indian woman in the village with the life of their own mothers. In other work, pupils show that they understand four figure grid references on maps. They give precise instructions using directional terms, such as right and left to get from point A to point B on a map. They understand the terms human and physical features and can give examples of these. Pupils interpret aerial photographs of their village to good effect and note the differences in the settlement over time.

99 In the one lesson observed, the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils behaved well and showed good interest. They enjoyed thinking of questions for a survey about their parents' work place, the time taken to get to work and a survey of the services obtainable in nearby settlements. They listened politely to what others had to say. Pupils showed a good understanding of local settlements and where they might obtain particular goods. Insufficient account was taken, however, of different ages in the Ordnance Survey work that followed and pupils of different ages did the same work. The brighter pupils' work was only different by its quality rather than by its content. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The subject is soundly led by a part-time teacher/co-ordinator.

HISTORY

100 No teaching of history took place during the period of the inspection. However, interviews with pupils show they are enthusiastic about the subject and have very good attitudes towards tasks set. Judgements were also based on an interview with the co-ordinator, scrutiny of pupils' previous work and an examination of teachers' records and planning. This shows attainment is in line with most schools at the end of both the infant and junior stages. A similar judgement was made at the last inspection.

101 Pupils' previous work shows they make satisfactory progress over time, including those with special educational needs. Studies have included famous people and particular periods in history, such as Ancient Egypt, the Tudors and the Victorians. Infant pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the passage of time. For example, they recognise there have been changes to the way of life in Britain since 1900, especially in relation to homes and holidays. In particular, they have considered seaside holidays of the past and how they compare with modern day. Pupils are given opportunities to act as historical detectives when examining artefacts and researching books. However, an over reliance on worksheets and the colouring of outline pictures impedes their progress and does not provide enough challenge, particularly for brighter pupils. Junior pupils have studied people and changes in relation to Widford during the past one hundred years. They have given particular attention to their school. Some tasks have caught the imagination of the pupils, for example, an interview with a village resident to find out about her life.

102 The coordinator is a part-time teacher. She is a long standing member of staff, but has only held the responsibility for the past year. Most monitoring is of an informal nature, but she is available to give guidance to colleagues if required.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology meets National Curriculum expectations by ages seven and 11 in some respects. However, there is a limited amount of use of information and communication technology in work across the curriculum, except in art and design and for research, especially in Years 1 and 2. The attainment of Year 2 pupils is supported strongly by the good start that the pupils receive in the Foundation Stage. Pupils' skills in Year 6 are supported by the good work in the extra-curricular club in which the pupils are devising a web-site for the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in those aspects of the curriculum that the school fulfils.

104 By the end of Year 2, pupils can select different fonts and colours. They can enter information into a table and make a graph on the computer of favourite things and explain what the graph shows. They know how to use a camcorder and film aspects of their school. They understand how different items in daily life are controlled by programs, such as the washing machine.

105 By the end of Year 6, pupils have good skills in using the tool bar. Most use two hands when typing, although their typing skills are still slow. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 still type with only one hand and this slows down their speed of working. Pupils occasionally compose plays directly onto the computer and word-process their own work. They use the computer to research their studies, such as those connected to geography and history. The pupils design posters of good quality to advertise the school fete.

106 Only one lesson could be observed in information and communication technology. The pupils were engaged in on-going work and there was no direct teaching of skills. Pupils were largely having turns as they were withdrawn from a geography lesson to participate. They behaved well and showed good levels of interest in their tasks. They were largely supervised informally. There is not yet an established structure for the teaching of skills in information and communication technology that facilitates instruction in key skills and informed discussion. Overall, not enough time is devoted to the subject. Most pupils do not have enough time to practise their skills nor to do so on a regular enough basis. Many of the pupils' skills have been learned on their personal computers at home.

107 Whilst the pupils meet several of the National Curriculum expectations for ages seven and 11, overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in information and communication technology in class lessons. They do not have enough opportunities for control and monitoring, such as sensing data. They do not yet work in depth to combine and refine information and to generate and amend work. Nevertheless, the additional skills some pupils gain in their extra-curricular activity as they work to set up a web-site is a positive feature.

108 Resources are satisfactory. All but one of the computers in the school are set to the same desk top and are accessed with identical commands. The headteacher has just assumed responsibility for the subject because the previous part-time co-coordinator, who also has other responsibilities, found herself over-burdened. There has been some progress since the last inspection. An appropriate policy is now in place and also a scheme of work, but there is still not a portfolio of work to help teachers understand the competencies expected and what can be achieved. The methods to fulfil the scheme of work have not yet been fully worked out.

MUSIC

109 No lessons were seen during the period of the inspection and it is, therefore, not possible to make judgement about the quality of teaching. Evidence was obtained from interviews with the headteacher who is the co-ordinator, an examination of teachers' planning and records, interviews with pupils and scrutiny of their work. This shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time. Attainment is in line with that of most schools at the end of both the infant and junior stages. A similar judgement was found at the time of the last inspection.

110 The school's agreed programme of work has been adapted from national guidelines and provides pupils with a satisfactory range of musical experiences. They benefit from the coordinator's expertise in the subject because she plays a number of musical instruments, including the piano. Pupils listen to music and identify instruments being played. They interpret the mood of what they hear and express likes and dislikes. Opportunities are provided for them to experiment with a range of percussion instruments. Infant pupils learn about pitch and rhythm and can distinguish between high and low sounds. They are beginning to know the difference between tuned and untuned instruments. They learn a number of songs and can add appropriate actions, such as clapping and tapping, whilst singing. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 learn the recorder. Junior pupils have composed their own music in groups. Through composition, they successfully represent pictures, such as a garden with sunflowers. They design their own means of recording, for example the use of colour and shapes to represent particular instruments.

111 There are no school productions, but pupils take part in a carol service and junior pupils form a choir to sing in the Hertford church. The school has recently taken part in a local music festival. These activities provide enriching opportunities for pupils to perform for others. At an end of year assembly, the older pupils contribute a number of musical items, such as solo singing and musical melodramas. Currently, three children receive violin tuition from a visiting specialist. Usually there is a well attended after school music club for junior pupils, but this is not in operation this term whilst the headteacher sets up a website as an extra-curricular activity with the pupils. There are no school productions, but pupils take part in a carol service and junior pupils form a choir to sing in the Hertford church. The school has recently taken part in a local music festival. These activities provide enriching opportunities for pupils to perform for others. At the end-of-term assemblies children from all classes contribute a number of musical items, including solo singing, instrumental pieces and musical melodramas. Contributions from after school clubs, for example The French Club, are also featured. Currently, three children receive violin tuition from a visiting specialist. Usually there is a well attended after school music club for junior pupils, but this is not in operation this term whilst the headteacher sets up a website as an extra-curricular activity with the pupils.

112 Pupils show good attitudes towards the subject and enjoy the activities. They are proud of their achievements and pleased to talk to visitors about what they do. The coordinator's subject knowledge and enthusiasm are significant factors in helping to raise standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113 The school's facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory and, as at the time of the last inspection, do not allow the school to fulfil National Curriculum requirements in the subject. Pupils' skills in physical education are depressed as a result and cannot meet all the expectations by ages seven and 11. They do not make enough progress, except in swimming in which they do well. The school does not have a hall and until recently the only external hard surface play area was also the car park. Conditions have been improved to some extent with the addition of a new hard surfaced area to the rear, but this slopes and it makes it difficult for pupils to learn new skills, such as bouncing and catching balls. Pupils have insufficient opportunities in dance and gymnastics and are limited to suitable weather to practise games skills. The provision for this aspect of the curriculum is unsatisfactory and National Curriculum Programmes of Study are not adequately fulfilled.

114 Insufficient work could be observed to make judgements about the quality of teaching. Only one lesson could be seen and this was unsatisfactory. The pupils did not make enough progress in catching and bouncing. This was partly because some of the balls had not been blown up hard enough. It was also because of a lack of demonstration about how to bounce and catch correctly. Furthermore, the sloping playground did not always enable the balls to bounce back truly and they often flew off at an angle.

115 The provision of small resources in physical education is satisfactory for practising games skills, but there is an unsatisfactory provision of large and wall mounted equipment because of the lack of facilities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116 Pupils' attainment at ages seven and 11 in religious education is similar to the time of the last inspection and in accord with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The programmes of work help pupils to begin to understand that religious faith can be a common feature of different communities and that people who share a faith express it in their values, behaviour, attitudes and religious observance. In the main, the programmes are based on Christianity, but appropriate account is also taken of the teaching and practices of other principle religions represented in this country. Scrutiny of work and an examination of teachers' records show pupils make satisfactory progress over time, including those with special educational needs. Their very good speaking and listening skills help them to put forward views and to communicate what they know to others.

117 Infant pupils have studied the creation and given thought to the purpose of prayer. They have successfully written simple prayers of their own. By age seven, they have an increasing awareness of the importance of religious festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Divali. They can explain, in simple terms, the meaning behind such occasions. They are also beginning to appreciate that there are special times in peoples' lives, such as the birth of a baby and how it is celebrated. Pupils have looked at the use of signs and symbols in religion and have started to understand the messages expressed through them. They have written satisfactory accounts of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand and considered the story of The Three Wise Men in a study about giving and receiving.

118 At the end of the junior stage, pupils have a wider factual knowledge of religious education issues. They have studied aspects of a number of religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism and are beginning to understand something about the practices and lifestyles of the people who belong to them. Pupils know that religions have special books, such as the Bible and the Guru, Granth Sahib. They have written about the story of Rama and Sita and have made Rangoli patterns for Divali. Pupils have studied the life of Jesus and successfully identified important people, places and events. They have written imaginatively about some of Jesus' miracles, for example newspaper reports and diaries from the point of view of Zacchaeus. They have also studied religious art and designed their own stained glass windows. Both infant and junior pupils have considered relationships and the importance of care and concern for others, particularly for those less fortunate than themselves.

119 In the one lesson seen during the period of the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. During the lesson, junior pupils considered what it means to be a Sikh. Their attitudes and behaviour were very good. They were motivated well by the tasks and many were enthralled when watching a video about Sikhism. The teacher ensured that appropriate resources were to hand and opportunities were provided for both oral and practical work. As a result pupils' knowledge and understanding grew satisfactorily.

120 The coordinator is a part-time teacher. Overall, arrangements for monitoring and supporting the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator monitors mainly on an informal basis, but is available to give general support to colleagues when asked.