

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Welwyn

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117261

Headteacher: Miss E Anderson

Reporting inspector: Mr D Shepherd
2905

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 March 2003

Inspection number: 247754

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Great North Road Welwyn Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL6 0PX
Telephone number:	01438 715278
Fax number:	01438 716155
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr C Shortland
Date of previous inspection:	20 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2905	Mr D Shepherd	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
1311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector	Education inclusion	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23009	Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Religious education Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
15028	Janet Dye	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oaklands is smaller than most other primary schools, with 165 pupils on roll. Most pupils are white; four are of African, four of Indian, three of Caribbean and three of Asian background. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. Twenty-two pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs [SEN]. Two of these have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is fewer than the national average. The range of SEN includes emotional and behavioural difficulties, autism and specific learning difficulties. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are above average. Attainment on entry is above average. There are more boys at the school than girls, especially in Year 2. Most pupils come from the immediate area of the school. Ten teachers have left the school and ten have joined during the past two years. This is high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oaklands is a good school. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. During the past year, most pupils have been making good progress throughout the school. This is because the teaching is good in the Reception class and in Years 1 to 5. Teaching in Year 6 is satisfactory overall. The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and teachers holding responsibilities are very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides pupils with a good start to their schooling in Reception.
- Achieves above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensures most pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well.
- Provides good teaching in the Reception class and in Years 1 to 5.
- Provides very good leadership by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators.
- Works very well in partnership with parents .

What could be improved

- The assessment of pupils' work in geography, history, art and design, design and technology [D&T], music, physical education [PE] and religious education [RE].
- The progression of skills in geography and history.
- The provision of adequate computers to reinforce the learning in information and communication technology [ICT] lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Since then, it has made significant improvements in the key issues that were identified at that time. Standards in ICT and music have risen considerably and programmes of work have been introduced for all subjects based on national and local guidance. The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluation is now a strength of the school. Inspectors were not able to judge if standards in D&T have improved because of lack of evidence from the previous inspection. Significant improvements have occurred since the appointment of the present headteacher in 2002. The provision of the curriculum is better than it was, the assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT is rigorous and systematic, and targets for improvement for all pupils are set in these subjects. This needs to be extended to other subjects. Subject co-ordinators are now carrying out their monitoring and evaluation roles to a very high standard.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	B	A	B
Mathematics	D	C	A	C
Science	D	A	B	C

Key	
Similar schools-schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

There were only thirteen pupils sitting the National Curriculum tests in 2002. Care should be taken in interpreting these results as they may not be representative of the school as a whole. In 2002, the percentage of pupils in Year 6 reaching the higher levels (Level 5) was above average in English and average in mathematics and science when compared with all schools. However, levels achieved in these subjects when compared with schools in similar contexts indicate that many pupils are not achieving as well as they should, particularly in mathematics. Over the past four years, the trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science is similar to the national trend. Girls have achieved at similar levels to boys in these subjects during the past three years. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science in the current Year 6 are above average overall. Standards in speaking and listening are particularly high. Standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well above average in mathematics, above average in writing and average in reading when compared with all schools and above average in mathematics, average in writing and below average in reading when compared with schools in similar contexts. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 3) was well above average in mathematics and writing and above average in reading compared with all schools. Results in mathematics were higher than the previous year, but lower in reading and writing. Over the past three years, girls have achieved higher levels than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in the Teacher Assessments in science were average overall, but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well above average. Inspection evidence suggests that standards in Year 2 are above average in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and science.

The school exceeded the ambitious targets set for English and mathematics in 2002. The targets set for 2003 have been revised by the new headteacher and represent a realistic challenge for the school. By the time children leave the Reception class, most have made steady progress. Nearly all have achieved the national targets for pupils of this age, and many have exceeded them in all areas of learning. Inspection evidence indicates standards in music in Year 6 are above average. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average in ICT, art and design, D&T, geography, history, PE and RE. Standards in music at the end of Year 2 are average. Overall, most pupils, including high-attaining pupils and those with SEN, make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with English as an additional language [EAL] make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are happy to come to school. They are enthusiastic about their learning in lessons and out of school clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well. Lessons are occasionally disrupted by the immature and attention-seeking behaviour of a few boys.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work very well together. They learn from the opportunities they receive to take on responsibilities around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is improving this year. A minority of pupils arrive at school late.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching and learning are good. They are often good in the Reception class and in Years 1 to 5. Teaching and learning are most often good in literacy, numeracy, science and music. They are sound in all other subjects. Overall, the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN is good. The teaching and learning of pupils with EAL is satisfactory. The skills of literacy and English and of numeracy and mathematics are taught well. During the past year, the attainment of pupils has been assessed and monitored systematically. Individual targets in English, mathematics and science for improvement have been set for all pupils. This is helping to ensure that pupils of all ability, including high-attaining pupils, achieve their potential.

There are a number of features about the teaching and learning that are good. In the best lessons, teachers hold high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their achievement. They plan their work carefully and set activities for pupils at their levels of ability. Relationships are very good. In their turn, pupils adopt positive attitudes to their work, behave well and put in a considerable amount of effort. However, occasionally, teachers do not always set high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly high-attaining pupils, and their management of disruptive behaviour is ineffective. A more general weakness is that teachers do not assess pupils' attainment well enough in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT, and the work set for them is often not pitched at the appropriate level. These weaknesses should be seen within the context of good teaching overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school teaches the National Curriculum, personal, social and health education, sex education and drugs education. The school provides a good range of out of school activities including day and residential visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school identifies appropriate programmes of work for these pupils and provides good quality extra help for them during many lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school seeks the help of specialist teachers from the local education authority to help provide suitable programmes of work for pupils at the early stages of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. It is good for their spiritual and moral development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory; it is good for pupils' understanding of British culture, but not enough provision is made for their understanding of other cultures.
How well the school cares	The school provides sound levels of care for its pupils. The assessment of pupils' progress is good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The

for its pupils	school is aware that it is unsatisfactory in other subjects.
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The school works in partnership with parents very well. The responses from a large number of parents were very supportive of the school's work. A significant number of parents help in school on a voluntary basis.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a clear focus on promoting high standards through effective teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Aspects of the annual report to parents do not comply with statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This has improved significantly during the past year. Subject co-ordinators identify strengths and weaknesses in their subjects systematically.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending decisions are made according to the needs of the school. The principles of best value are applied well.

There are enough staff to teach the National Curriculum. One teacher is temporary and trained overseas. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Resources are adequate in most subjects. However, the school does not have enough up-to-date computers and books for slower readers in some classes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school is good • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed • The teaching is good • Children are making good progress • Children like school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided outside lessons • The right amount of homework given • A closer working relationship with parents.

Inspectors agree with most of the positive points made about the school by parents. However, inspectors judge that pupils make satisfactory, and not good, progress. Inspectors disagree with each of the criticisms of the school by parents. The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, including visits to places of interest. The school works very well with parents. The provision of homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2002, standards in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in these subjects. Standards in speaking and listening and writing are particular strengths. Standards in reading in Year 6 are above average. However, in Years 3 and 5, some average and lower-attaining pupils are not able to tackle or spell some words that are unfamiliar to them. Standards in music are above average. Standards in ICT, art and design, D&T, geography, history, PE and RE are average. This represents an improvement in ICT and music, but standards in the other subjects remain similar to those reported at the last inspection. Over the past three years girls have achieved at similar levels to boys. The school targets set for English and mathematics in 2002 were exceeded. The targets set for 2003 are challenging for the school to achieve.
2. In 2002, standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average in mathematics, above average in writing and average in reading. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in mathematics but are similar in reading and writing. Over the past three years, girls have done better in these subjects than boys. Standards in the Teacher Assessment in science were average. Standards in the current Year 2 class are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT, art and design, D&T, geography, history, music, PE and RE are average. Standards in ICT and music have improved since the last inspection and those in the other subjects are similar.
3. Most pupils enter the Reception class with above average levels of attainment. During previous years, most pupils have made sound progress and entered Year 1 having achieved most of the standards expected of pupils of this age. Since September, these pupils have been making good progress owing to the good teaching in the Reception class. Most are likely to attain most of the national standards set for pupils of this age and some are on course to exceed them. Overall, attainment on entry to Year 1 is above average in all areas of learning.
4. The overall good teaching means that pupils throughout the school are making good progress. This is because the newly appointed headteacher since her appointment in May last year has focused the school's monitoring of its own work on raising standards. The impact of this is that most pupils are making good progress, particularly in literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics and science. Over time, this is likely to improve the school's National Curriculum test results. Present test results indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils are now making better progress than past results indicate. This is especially the case in Year 2. Pupils' past work indicates that pupils in Year 6 have been making good progress until very recently when their teacher went on maternity leave. Most pupils are making satisfactory progress, especially in English, mathematics and science, because of the sound teaching of the temporary replacement teacher in Year 6. However, this teacher's lack of familiarity with the National Curriculum is holding back the progress pupils are making in subjects such as geography and PE. In addition, a few boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties have in the last week or so deliberately decided to disrupt some lessons in this class. The teacher and the school have not managed to get on top of these misbehaviours. At the time of the inspection, this adversely affected the learning taking place in some lessons and slowed down the progress pupils were making.
5. A significant factor contributing to pupils making good progress is that the school has recently begun to assess pupils' work during termly assessment weeks in English, mathematics and science. Individual targets are set by teachers in these subjects after due consideration has been given to other work that pupils have completed in their books. These are written in pupils' books and constantly referred to by teachers and teaching assistants. In this way, the teaching is sharply focused on individual pupils making good progress in these subjects, irrespective of their abilities.
6. On the other hand, teachers do not assess pupils' work as systematically in other subjects and the progress made in these is not as good. However, it is still satisfactory overall.

7. The high turnover of teachers has not slowed down the progress pupils make. In fact, it has done the reverse. The school has managed to recruit some good teachers and standards have been improving during the past year as a consequence. During the process of recruiting teachers, pupils and parents report that some temporary teachers have been employed prior to the appointment of permanent staff and that this has disrupted learning.
8. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the national and local guidance for all other subjects are being used effectively in teachers' plans and helping to raise standards in all subjects. The school has a very effective system for monitoring which elements of the National Curriculum have been taught to groups of pupils. This is very useful since the school has had a number of mixed-age classes over the past few years. Monitoring the provision of the National Curriculum by each group of pupils helps the school to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. The introduction of additional lessons in literacy for those at the early stages of reading and writing, and for those who are underachieving higher up the school is also helping these pupils make progress.
9. Pupils with SEN are making good progress. The specialist teacher, class teachers and teaching assistants help these pupils achieve the learning targets set for them. High-attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, make sound progress because they are set individual learning targets in English, mathematics and science. Most boys make good progress because the curriculum appeals to them. They like the practical activities and learn from the structure provided for them in their work. Pupils with EAL make sound progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, pupils have positive attitudes to school. However, in Year 6, pupils' positive attitudes are spoilt by the occasional negative attitudes shown by a few boys. Overall, pupils' positive attitudes have been maintained since the last inspection. Most pupils want to come to school, and are very keen to be involved in their lessons, activities and clubs. They want to work hard and do well. They respond eagerly to their teachers, are interested and listen intently during lessons. Children in the Reception class quickly show good attitudes to school and these help them to enjoy their lessons. Most pupils concentrate well and they show pride in their work and the school. Pupils with SEN also show good attitudes to their work. They too, with close adult support, concentrate hard.
11. Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. It is not as good as it was at the last inspection. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good, but is spoiled by the disruptive behaviour of a few boys in Year 6. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are skilfully controlled by experienced teachers. This enables these pupils to be included appropriately in lessons. However, less experienced teachers do not manage these pupils well, as is the case in Year 6. Reception children behave well. Good behaviour contributes to a calm and productive atmosphere in most classes. Behaviour around school is good. There have been very few incidents of swearing or squabbles between pupils. Pupils do not find bullying an issue for them. There have not been any incidences of theft, sexism or racism. Three pupils were excluded last year, one of whom was excluded three times. Parents approve of the school's approach to managing the behaviour of their children.
12. Relationships are very good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The staff act as positive role models, and all pupils and staff show trust and respect for each other in a caring school community. Pupils are confident with each other, appreciate each other's successes and listen to each other with respect. Older pupils look after younger pupils around the school and sympathetically listen to and applaud the achievements of younger pupils in assemblies. Boys and girls of all ages get on well together, irrespective of their backgrounds. Pupils show good manners at meal times and are courteous to visitors.
13. Pupils' personal development is good. This is similar to the last inspection. Most pupils are mature and show initiative and independence of thought and actions when required. They develop inquiring minds in their learning and are involved in a wide range of school activities. Older pupils become increasingly interested when they contribute to lessons through their own knowledge, often gained by their independent research on the Internet. They are learning about their own abilities through targets that are set for them in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 carry

out school duties and diligently assist teachers in other classes during break-times. Pupils gain a wider understanding of caring for others by fund-raising for a range of charities. Pupils enthusiastically take part in a wide range of sporting and non-sporting clubs and activities. This helps them to work and play together in teams.

14. The attendance rate is similar to the national average and to that seen at the last inspection. Authorised absence is low, but holidays taken during term time are significantly high. Unauthorised absence has declined from a previous high level during the last year. A few families do not send their children to school on time. Registers are well maintained and taken at the appropriate times of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning are good overall and are a strength of the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Year 6 and often good in all other classes. The majority of good teaching was observed in literacy, numeracy, science, PE and music. Teaching and learning in ICT, art and design, D&T, geography, history and RE are sound. Overall, teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection.
16. Teaching and learning have a number of good features. In the most effective lessons, teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their learning. For example, in a Year 3/4 science lesson, pupils were so engrossed in identifying the properties of materials, such as balloons, paperclips and PE mats, that they worked very well together in small groups. The teacher and teaching assistant provided very good help to the pupils and did not contemplate any misbehaviour during this practical activity. This example also illustrates the point that, in the best lessons, teachers set challenging activities to carry out that interest and motivate pupils. Planning and preparation for lessons are common features of all teaching and are strengths of the school. Lessons have a clear purpose and this is discussed with pupils at the beginning of lessons. Some teachers refer to this at the end when reviewing how much progress pupils have made during lessons. Lessons are very well prepared with all materials and equipment to hand. This helps the teaching and learning to carry on without interruption. Relationships are very good. Pupils enjoy working in such a positive atmosphere created by the quality of relationships in school. They form positive and co-operative attitudes and put considerable effort into their work.
17. However, the teaching and learning are not always as positive as this. They are occasionally unsatisfactory in Year 6 when the teacher does not have enough expertise in teaching the National Curriculum, for example, in geography and PE. Also in this class, a small number of boys have recently started to become disruptive with a change of teacher. At the time of the inspection, the teacher and the school had not managed to control the disruption caused by these boys well enough and this adversely affected the learning in some lessons.
18. A more general weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not assess pupils' attainment and the progress they are making in all subjects, with the exceptions of English, mathematics, science and ICT. This leads to teachers sometimes not matching the work to pupils' abilities.
19. The teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are good overall. Pupils' understanding of all elements of mathematics is equally good. More emphasis is given to the teaching of number than to other elements of mathematics. Pupils have opportunities to interpret data from graphs and charts in science lessons, often using computers, and this makes a good contribution to their understanding of mathematics. The teaching of speaking and listening and of most aspects of writing is more effective than is that of reading and spelling. Some average and lower-attaining pupils in some older classes have missed out on the teaching of phonics when they were younger. This means that they are not able to work out unfamiliar words when they come across them. This also affects their ability to spell correctly since they cannot work out easily how to build up the spelling of unfamiliar words through sounding them out. Pupils have good opportunities to write for different purposes in lessons such as geography and history. They use computers to word-process their writing from time to time. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory but too few opportunities are provided to consolidate learning in lessons because too few computers are available. Good

opportunities are provided for pupils to consolidate and extend their learning of skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects.

20. The teaching and learning of pupils with SEN are good. This is because these pupils' needs are identified early and suitable programmes of work, including learning targets, are set for them. The teacher for SEN and teaching assistants help these pupils effectively and they make good progress throughout the curriculum. Teaching assistants often explain the tasks being carried out in class directly to these pupils to make sure they understand what they have to do. Teaching in withdrawal lessons with the co-ordinator is very good. The co-ordinator has devised individualised spelling programmes and a variety of approaches, which are enabling pupils to improve their spelling very well. Good records are kept of the progress being made by these pupils.
21. The teaching of high-attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, is better than it was and is now good. Since last September, individual targets have been set in English, mathematics and science for all pupils, including high-attaining pupils. These are reviewed regularly and new targets set. Information from the assessment weeks held around half-terms is used along with teachers' own knowledge of pupils in order to set challenging targets. This is helping pupils at all levels of ability, including high-attaining pupils, to make good progress. Teachers' plans indicate that different work and outcomes of learning are expected from high-attaining pupils. High-attaining pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, carry out research and solve problems, especially in mathematics and science.
22. The teaching of boys is good overall. Many of the activities set by teachers are practical, for instance in science, and this encourages boys to learn. In the best lessons, teachers ask pupils to write in stages ensuring that pupils, especially boys, do not miss out elements of their work. However, there are not enough reading books that appeal to boys and this slows down the progress they make in this aspect of their work. Overall, the methods used for teaching boys appeal to girls also, and they too make good progress as a result.
23. The teaching and learning of pupils with EAL is satisfactory. The school receives advice from specialist teachers from the local educational authority on providing guidance for pupils at the early stages of learning English. The school acts on this advice appropriately.

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

24. Curriculum provision is satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum and RE are taught as required. Sex education and education about the misuse of drugs are taught appropriately. The programme for personal, social and health education is sound. Lessons encourage pupils to think of others, develop skills as good citizens, resolve conflict peacefully and learn more about themselves and others. However, the provision for teaching computer skills is not efficient owing to a lack of computers for practising skills being taught during lessons. Overall, the curriculum is better now than it was at the last inspection.
25. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There are opportunities for older pupils to join a choir and orchestra, to learn to play the recorder, violin, flute, guitar, piano and keyboard and to take part in local musical events. Boys and girls throughout the school take part in football, netball and rounders clubs and compete in matches locally. They also take part in gymnastics, tennis and a French club. The school produces two concerts each year and these are supported well by parents. A good range of educational visits helps to make learning more interesting. Pupils visit places in the locality, such as shops and the church. They visit a zoo, museums, a farm and a Sikh temple and take part in a five-day residential visit. Pupils raise considerable amounts of money for British and overseas charities. All these activities contribute significantly to pupils' learning in subjects and personal development.
26. The curriculum in the Reception class and throughout the school appropriately follows national guidance. Appropriate emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy. Other subjects are organised in half-termly units for each year group. The school has recognised that some of the nationally recommended units need to be adapted further to meet pupils' needs and interests more effectively. Detailed records are kept of how much of the National Curriculum pupils have been taught.

27. Curriculum planning is good. Following national guidance, teachers produce lesson plans that indicate the purposes for lessons and devise activities for pupils that are interesting and varied. This ensures lessons have a clear focus and engage pupils through the activities provided. This helps them learn and make progress in their work.
28. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. Teachers plan detailed individual educational programmes of work for these pupils after their needs have been identified to ensure they have full access to the curriculum. Their learning is broken down into a series of small targets that are appropriate for them. The co-ordinator withdraws some of these pupils for extra help. These lessons are proving effective in raising standards. Provision for pupils with SEN is regularly evaluated as pupils achieve the targets that have been set for them.
29. Overall, the school provides appropriately for high-attaining pupils. Additional activities are planned for these pupils and these are indicated in teachers' plans. The school is focusing, quite rightly, on ensuring that more of these pupils achieve the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Provision for pupils with EAL is satisfactory. The school seeks help and guidance from the local education authority about the early stages of teaching English to these pupils. Girls and boys and pupils from different backgrounds work well together in all subjects and co-operate well at playtimes and lunchtimes.
30. The school has satisfactory links with partner institutions. The Reception class teacher has close links with the on-site playgroup and they share use of the outdoor area and outdoor toys. Pupils in Year 6 visit the secondary school which they will attend. Their records from Oaklands are subsequently transferred there. Staff from the secondary school also take part in the school science week activities.
31. The contribution made by the community to the school is satisfactory. The community police officer is invited to talk to older pupils about the misuse of drugs; the school nurse contributes to the programme of sex education. A local church leader has talked about the church building. Other visitors to school include musicians, a drama group, members of religious faiths and charity workers. Parents and friends of the school help by raising funds, working in school as volunteers and by organising extra-curricular activities.
32. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its overall provision for pupils' personal development. For example, provision for their social development is now very good and for spiritual development, good. Provision for moral development remains good and for cultural development it remains satisfactory.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. From the Reception year onwards, pupils take part in assemblies. They act out roles of a story and show their good work. This helps to develop their self-esteem. They are encouraged to reflect on why people think the way they do about a range of issues. For example, they understand why Lent is observed by Christians. In science, they are surprised and marvel when thinking about the relative sizes of the sun, earth and moon. Pupils are given time for reflection and contribute well in discussions.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are taught to behave well both in lessons and in the playground. Appropriate ways of behaving are reinforced by the headteacher and staff as they discuss with pupils right from wrong. The school's positive approach to behaviour is rooted in the new code of conduct, is consistently applied by teachers, and is understood appropriately by most pupils. Only a minority of pupils, mostly in Year 6, are not fully aware of the need for self-discipline, but they are being constantly reminded about appropriate ways of behaving. Through personal, social and health education lessons, pupils realise that there are two sides to arguments and they debate moral issues with conviction, such as vivisection and fox hunting.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and is a strength of the school. Staff at all times like and value their pupils. Pupils, in their turn, mirror the staff's positive emphasis on care, tolerance and valuing people. Pupils work sensibly and maturely with "talking partners" when discussing issues in lessons and this feature makes a good contribution to their learning. Pupils understand that there are people in the world who are less fortunate than themselves. They raise

money for them and give it to a range of charities. Assemblies, extra-curricular clubs and sociable lunchtimes ensure that the school includes all pupils equally and fairly in school life.

36. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to study their own local community in history and geography lessons. They understand aspects of life in Victorian times and reflect on how families coped when fathers were away during the Second World War. Pupils listen to many types of music from different cultures. They learn about the work of famous artists. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity but have a limited understanding of the similarities and differences between religions. Although the school is considering life in Mexico, insufficient provision is made for pupils' understanding of other cultures and of living in the culturally diverse society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is good. This is similar to the finding of the last inspection. The headteacher and staff carry out their pastoral roles with enthusiasm and dedication. Pupils feel secure and trust the staff. They believe that they are well looked after, and in their turn many older pupils help to look after younger pupils at lunchtimes. Pupils' security and confidence at school contribute significantly to their high levels of achievement, both personal and academic.
38. The school uses outside agencies as appropriate, such as the health authority, to help with the welfare of pupils. The school nurse visits the school to carry out routine medical checks and train the staff on specific issues. She helps with teaching sex education. The Hertfordshire Behaviour Support Unit gives the school good support in dealing with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
39. The school is vigilant towards child protection, and procedures comply with local requirements. However, none of the staff have received training in child protection procedures. The school does not enable children to take the initiative in protecting themselves through displaying the Childline number.
40. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. The school site is potentially hazardous for young children, having a number of steep gradients and steps and poor provision for parents to park their cars at the beginning and end of the day. However, the site is made safe by the vigilance of the staff. The rate of accidents is low. Accident procedures are satisfactory. There are sufficient staff trained in first aid. However, midday supervisors lack training in first aid procedures.
41. Overall, procedures for monitoring the personal and social development of all pupils are satisfactory. In the Reception class, they are good and are effective in contributing to pupils' learning. In the rest of the school, procedures are informal. They rely on teachers' classroom experiences and subsequent informal discussions with the headteacher.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Most teachers understand these procedures and are skilled in managing the behaviour of pupils. Rewards are given for good behaviour. These include certificates and the Oaklands Stars. These help raise the self-esteem of pupils and encourage their self-discipline. Sanctions for misbehaviour are well understood by pupils and their parents. The headteacher and staff have a very good awareness of any short-term problems between pupils, so that they are effective in anticipating any oppressive behaviour by sensitive interventions when necessary.
43. Under the strong guidance of the headteacher, procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school telephones parents when reasons for absence have not been received. Attendance registers are monitored conscientiously. The school receives appropriate support from the educational welfare service. Good attendance is helping pupils to make good progress as their learning is not interrupted by absence unless absolutely necessary.
44. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and recording pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT are unsatisfactory. This means that the use of assessment

information to guide curriculum planning is also unsatisfactory. There are no assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT apart from informal observations made during lessons including classroom observations and work sampling. Consequently, subject co-ordinators do not have the full picture of how much pupils are learning in these subjects or what standards are being reached. This is an improved picture since the previous report.

45. The recently introduced procedures for assessment and record keeping in writing, mathematics and science mark an improvement since the last inspection. They are now good. A termly assessment week has been introduced this year. This assesses pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' work is monitored well through the regular marking of exercise books. Marking in Year 5 and 6 books is particularly helpful in giving pointers towards improvement as well as praising pupils' good efforts in achieving their personal targets. Pupils' reading diaries provide a satisfactory record of books pupils have read. However, they are not consistently used to record how well pupils are learning nor do they provide suggestions for improvement.
46. The results of assessments in English, mathematics and science are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. This is a way of ensuring pupils are achieving as much as they are able to. They are used to set individual learning targets for pupils to identify what they need to learn next. Pupils are aware of their targets because teachers constantly draw attention to them and proudly talk about those they have already attained. These assessments are also used to improve provision for pupils with SEN through their early identification and in review of their progress towards the targets on their Individual Educational Plans. They are also used to identify which pupils will benefit from being taught in small groups on the national accelerated learning programmes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school works very well with parents. Parents' views of the school have improved since the last inspection. Parents are very pleased with their children's levels of maturity and responsibility, their good behaviour, the standards of their work, the good teaching and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors confirm most of their positive views. They consider that most pupils are making good progress as a result of the initiatives introduced by the new headteacher, but judge that their achievement since they joined the school has only been satisfactory. Most parents show a high level of support for the school. They recognise that the efforts of the headteacher and staff are improving the school.
48. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a significant proportion of parents indicated they were dissatisfied with the range of activities provided outside lessons. Inspectors disagree with this criticism and judge that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons, including visits to places of interest. A few parents expressed concerns about the provision of homework and how well the school works with parents. Inspectors judge that the setting of homework is a strong feature of the school and that it contributes effectively to lessons in class. The school's partnership with parents is very strong, although some parents have been frustrated by the high turnover of staff during the past two years.
49. The school is successful in building a very good relationship with most parents. The headteacher and staff are active in meeting parents at the end of the day. Parents have very good access to teachers and learning support staff. Parents often have informal conversations with teachers and staff at the end of the day and their concerns are listened to and appropriate action taken. A high number of parents help in classrooms. Half the governing body is made up of parents and they are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the school. The Parents' Association is very supportive of the school. It raises significant amounts of money for the use of the school.
50. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus is a good quality document and, along with the weekly newsletters from the headteacher and the Oaklands News from the governors, keeps parents well informed about events in the school. Noticeboards for parents are satisfactory. Written communications to parents are easy to understand and written in parent-friendly language. Annual reports to parents about the progress being made by their children are good. They identify the strengths and the next steps in pupils' learning. The annual governors' report does not include all the information it should.

51. Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at home. They are informed of the topics being studied in class at the start of each term. Homework is carefully explained to pupils. Pupils do not have homework diaries to record their work at home. Parents enjoy curriculum evenings and are given sufficient time to discuss their children's progress at parents' evenings. Parents of children entering the Reception class are provided with good information and this helps them and the children to settle quickly into school routines. Parents of pupils with SEN contribute to developing individual learning programmes for their children. This enables them to help their children at home. The local community make a good contribution to school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school are very good. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the whole ethos and climate of learning in the school have changed for the better. She has clarity of vision about what needs to be done and how to achieve it, and, with the deputy head, in under a year has welded the staff into a team that works together well. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to develop their leadership roles well. All permanent staff have been observed teaching literacy and numeracy and have talked over the strengths and areas to develop in their teaching. This is enabling them to focus more closely on the needs of individual pupils. The combined commitment and determination of the staff and governors to provide the best education possible for all pupils, including those from minority ethnic communities, reflect the aims of the school and are already showing good results. High individual targets have been set for pupils, and challenging targets put in place for the school. The school has the capacity to improve significantly over the coming years.
53. The governing body has successfully implemented the key issues from the previous inspection report. There are now programmes of work for all subjects that ensure the National Curriculum is being taught in full. The role of subject co-ordinators has been very effectively developed and is now a strength of the school. This is a major achievement because this has happened despite the many changes in staff during the last two years. Pupils' attainment in music is now high because of the appointment of a gifted specialist teacher, and D&T and ICT standards have risen to average. Teachers with curriculum responsibilities are effectively monitoring and evaluating their subjects in order to raise standards of teaching and learning. For example, the English co-ordinator, through her analysis of data, correctly identified that writing throughout the school needed improving. The co-ordinator arranged training for staff and, in collaboration with the headteacher, altered the timetable to allocate more time to writing in literacy lessons. The co-ordinator for SEN worked closely with the English co-ordinator to develop spelling programmes for pupils who were below standard. Assessment procedures have been introduced to identify how well pupils are responding to the new initiatives.
54. The governing body is effective in carrying out its role. Its recent thorough evaluation of its practices has highlighted areas it needs to improve; such as ensuring its annual report for parents meets statutory requirements. The new chairman has a purposeful ambition to be supportive and understanding as well as to act as a critical friend to the school. In order to encourage this, the headteacher produces her reports to governors in a way that encourages questioning and debate about issues. Comparative information about schools in similar contexts is thoroughly analysed to identify where the school needs to improve, such as in raising the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels in mathematics and English.
55. Financial planning is good. Spending decisions are carefully based on priorities outlined in the school's improvement plan and governors have a good understanding of the principles of best value. The current improvement plan does not include the amount of staff time involved. This means that the school does not know the amount of work being asked of co-ordinators as they lead initiatives in this plan. The headteacher and senior staff plan to change the way the current school improvement plan is devised in order to link spending more directly with improving standards further and to allocate co-ordinators' time more accurately. Most of the budget is allocated to staff costs. A considerable amount of the budget has also been allocated to recruiting new staff during the past two years. Having appointed a new headteacher, one of the foremost priorities has been to

establish a stable staff and management structure. This has been achieved and governors can already see the benefits to the school of the decisions they have made at interviews. The governing body receives good quality financial information monthly and is rigorous in checking this to ensure it does not run a deficit budget. All special grants, such as allocations for SEN and staff training, are used appropriately. The school budget is run efficiently on a day-to-day basis by the office staff. Financial controls are good and the general administration of the school, including the use of technology for administrative purposes, is efficient.

56. The school has a sufficient number of teachers to teach the National Curriculum. The school has recently recruited one temporary teacher in Year 6 to cover for a maternity leave. Teachers have a good balance of experience, and are appropriately qualified to carry out the full range of responsibilities expected of them. Staff receive appropriate training where this is needed. Learning support assistants are very capable. They are effectively deployed, well trained and add significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. The school has difficulty in recruiting midday supervisors to supervise pupils during lunchtimes. The headteacher and parent volunteers often help supervise pupils during lunchtimes. All administration duties are carried out efficiently and effectively.
57. The school's accommodation is satisfactory for teaching the National Curriculum, but has some weaknesses in other areas. Classrooms are light and airy and of a reasonable size. The school makes good use of the available accommodation to provide a large hall, adequate library space and medical and music rooms. The school is aware that the shared outdoor area for Reception children prevents them from carrying out some activities. Administration areas are adequate. The school's large hillside position is both a strength and weakness. The playgrounds, field and outside swimming pool are set in natural surroundings from which the pupils benefit greatly. The two-floor building design necessitates access stairs to lower classrooms and the junior playground. The site has a number of steep gradients, which are not ideal for young pupils. The school is positioned on a busy main road with inadequate safe car parking for parents.
58. Overall, there are enough resources for teaching most subjects of the National Curriculum. However, there are insufficient computers for pupils to practise the skills they learn in ICT lessons. The school does not have a wide enough range of reading books to interest boys or higher-attaining pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors, as appropriate, should:
- (1) assess and monitor pupils' progress in all subjects by adopting the best practices currently being used for English, mathematics, science and ICT;
(See paragraphs 44, 82, 94, 100, 105, 108, 115, 121, 132, 137, 143.)
 - (2) ensure that pupils learn the skills of geography and history in a way that builds progressively on their previous experience;
(See paragraphs 115, 121.)
 - (3) increase the provision of computers so that computer skills can be practised by all pupils during computer lessons.
(See paragraph 126.)

In addition, the following minor issues should be included in the school's improvement plan:

- (1) Include more teaching of other cultures throughout the curriculum (see paragraph 36).
- (2) Ensure that key staff are trained in child protection procedures as appropriate (see paragraph 39).
- (3) Ensure the governors' annual report complies with statute (see paragraph 50).

The school has included the development of skills in geography in its improvement plan for 2003-04.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	23	12	2	0	0
Percentage	6	20	46	24	4	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	165
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
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
	2002	10	11	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	81 (86)	86 (90)	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	18	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (90)	90 (90)	95 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	100 (75)	100 (75)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85 (81)	92 (88)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Separate totals for girls and boys are not given in the above table as less than 11 boys or girls took the tests, therefore individuals could be identified.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
141	2	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
3	0	0
1	3	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	415,034
Total expenditure	412,357
Expenditure per pupil	2,514
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,170
Balance carried forward to next year	34,848

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	171
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	56	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	63	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	57	12	1	0
The teaching is good.	41	57	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	55	10	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	37	50	11	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	46	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	53	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	41	21	0	1

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE (RECEPTION CLASS)

60. Most children entering the Reception class have attended a playgroup or other pre-school provision. There are twenty-seven children on roll in the care of a teacher and nursery nurse. Good contact is maintained with parents and detailed records are kept of each child's progress. The teacher's plans are securely based on national guidance. The classroom environment is attractive and stimulating for children. Children's work is displayed well and materials and equipment are systematically organised. The Reception class shares its outdoor area and some wheeled toys with the on-site playgroup. The school is aware that this arrangement is not entirely satisfactory because the outdoor area is not being used enough by Reception class children to promote learning throughout the curriculum.
61. Most children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment that are above those expected for their age. However, some do not, and their attainment is below average. Most children are likely to achieve the national standards for pupils of their age by the time they enter Year 1. This is similar to the attainment seen at the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to achieve the national standards in their personal, social and emotional development. Most children settle happily into the Reception class. This is because the contacts between home and school before admission and subsequently home-school reading diaries help keep staff in touch with parents. Children are generally confident, talkative and eager to try out new activities. They co-operate well together, have good relationships with adults and are willing to share and take turns in their activities. They are able to organise themselves and they concentrate well. All the children have positive attitudes to learning; they are co-operative and enjoy the activities provided for them.
63. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Staff have good relationships with children and provide good role models for them. They offer caring support to help develop children's skills and sense of well-being. Adults have high expectations of children's independence and encourage them to organise their own activities when it is appropriate to do so.

Communication, language and literacy

64. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to achieve the national standards for children of this age in communication, language and literacy, and some may exceed them. Most speak confidently to adults and to each other. They write their names and some, a sentence. They recognise letters and are learning their sounds. All children enjoy listening to stories in literacy sessions and story times. They recognise some words and sentences and are keen to join in the chorus of well-known stories. Higher-attaining children read a story caption book and most can recognise and read familiar words and captions in their reading books. Children take books home to read with parents. This helps them with their reading as well as their speaking and listening skills.
65. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Adults have good relationships with children. They encourage them to listen carefully, to be interested in stories and to recognise words. They give children good opportunities to develop their speaking and vocabulary in a range of contexts, for example, in role-play, in construction and in investigative activities. Children respond well to this good teaching and are keen to contribute what they can from their experiences.

Mathematical development

66. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to achieve the national standards for children of this age in mathematics and some may exceed them. Most children count to 20 and

some to higher numbers. They recognise and write numbers and are beginning to understand how addition and subtraction can be written down. They readily take part in number rhymes and counting games. They understand concepts such as 'full' and 'half-full'. They can name some shapes and compare the size and shape of things as they work with blocks and construction equipment or when making models with waste materials. They use money in the class shop and have many opportunities for work involving length, weight and capacity as they work with sand and water.

67. Teaching and learning are good in mathematics. There is a full range of mathematical activities provided, including a variety of counting games. Tasks are explained clearly so that children know what is expected of them. The use of mathematics in everyday life is pointed out well to children. Good use is made of the computer number-matching programs and children enjoy the mathematical activities provided for them. For example, they enjoyed the walk round the school in a search for numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. By the end of the Reception year, most children will achieve the national standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Most talk about their families and current and past events in their lives. They learn about the wider world as they visit local shops and engage in a range of role-play and construction activities. They use a range of materials, such as paper, card and fabric, as they cut, stick and join things together imaginatively. They observe living and growing plants, animals, birds and insects in the classroom and as they go for walks in the school grounds and locality of the school. They use the computer with confidence and enjoy playing in the grocery shop. They know how materials change when they are mixed together and heated or cooled when cooking. They are interested in vehicles that move. As well as using construction kits, toy cars and trains, on the playmat and in the model area, many children have made paper vehicles secured with a paperclip. These model vehicles move by the use of magnets. These and similar activities stimulate questions about why things happen and how things work.
69. Teaching and learning in this area are good. The teacher provides stimulating activities for children that promote children's curiosity and learning whilst also giving them opportunities to investigate and use their own ideas and imagination. Her input and questions help to develop children's understanding. Children are well organised and they respond positively to all the opportunities offered them.

Physical development

70. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to achieve the national standards in physical development. Children run, jump, hop, skip and balance appropriately for their age. They handle small apparatus well, and throw and catch beanbags competently with a partner. They are aware of their own space and that of others. Children use pencils, scissors and brushes with appropriate skill. Most control the mouse on the computer skilfully. They change for PE with reasonable independence.
71. Teaching and learning in this area are satisfactory. Good provision is made for the development of fine motor skills in the classroom and children handle equipment competently. Children respond well and develop their skills in PE lessons in the hall. However, they need more access to outdoor play, and to opportunities for climbing, balancing and using wheeled toys and for using the full range of small apparatus outdoors.

Creative development

72. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to achieve the national standards in creative development. Children draw colour, paint, print and make collage and waste material models. They also use dough. They use a range of techniques when working with these materials and enjoy all these activities. They often choose the subject matter and appropriate materials for their work, so developing their own ideas and imagination. They play with puppets in the role-play area. They also play with toy farm animals, cars, trains and people. The classroom is not large so space is limited for some large-scale role-play activities. Sometimes the learning could be more

extensively developed if there were more props and space available to help pupils. For example, a home corner as well as a shop, telephones and directories and materials to promote hospital, café, or office play would help children develop their imaginations more than current provision allows. Children enjoy singing and soon learn the words and tunes of songs. They play percussion instruments.

73. Teaching and learning are good. Satisfactory provision is made for creative work and children are encouraged to use their own ideas and imagination. They are given appropriate help when learning new skills. The classroom is well organised and children's work is well displayed. Good support and praise is given to children and this has a positive impact on their learning.

ENGLISH

74. Inspection evidence indicates that at the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in English are above average. The high standards acknowledged in the previous report have been maintained. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, the attainment of boys in Year 2 was below average. Indications are that this is no longer the case. Many pupils are now making good progress in English, but their achievement over time is satisfactory. This is because the teaching is better now than it was. Pupils with SEN make good progress in their work and achieve the targets set for them. Pupils with EAL make good progress in learning English. The school is working at increasing the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. Inspectors agree with this approach. The use of literacy in other subjects is good.
75. Year 6 pupils speak confidently using Standard English and appreciate this is different from colloquial speech. They develop persuasive arguments from different viewpoints, and use this skill effectively to debate topical issues such as fox hunting or vivisection. They listen to the main points of an argument before making up their minds. They talk confidently on a wide range of topics and have a well-developed vocabulary. For example, they use precise geographical language to explain what they have found out about rivers from a field trip. Their very good listening skills are evident in lessons as is their ability to ask and respond to questions. The reason for above average attainment in many subjects is their very well developed skills in listening. Occasionally, some pupils do not listen well. This is generally because there is insufficient challenge in the teaching or because pupils have special educational needs that identify this as a weak area.
76. Year 2 pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other and they ask and respond to questions well. For example, in a geography lesson they used these skills well to find out information about life in a village in Mexico and to compare it with life in Welwyn. They express their feelings clearly and empathise with characters in books. Their speaking skills enable them to ask for help when they need it. This helps them to learn in all subjects.
77. Year 6 pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and speak about their favourite authors, such as Tolkien and Jacqueline Wilson. Many visit the local library and use a wide range of books for homework. Some average and above-average-attaining pupils say they 'get lost in books for hours'; they talk about different aspects of Shakespeare's language in 'Macbeth' and quote from different poems they have enjoyed reading. Pupils read from Internet sites to gain information and know how to find the sites they need just as confidently as they find a library book. Lower-attaining pupils, whilst technically competent in reading, have not yet found this love of reading and prefer other activities.
78. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils read with a fair degree of accuracy and fluency a range of texts suitable for their age. Higher-attaining pupils read with good expression and have favourite authors such as Dick King Smith. Standards in reading have improved this year, partly because more time is now allocated to guided and silent reading each day. They are now above average. Some pupils sound out letters to help them read unfamiliar words. However, a number of pupils cannot do this well enough in order to read unfamiliar words. For example, a few higher-attaining pupils are unable to work out 'probably' or 'aren't' and say they often end up making a guess at words they do not recognise. The range of books within the reading scheme is too narrow and prevents pupils of all ability from making the progress in reading they should. Most pupils use the

content and index pages of non-fiction books well to find out information as well as dictionaries for their spellings and meanings of words. They also read information on Internet sites well.

79. Standards in writing are improving because of the increased focus given to it in the Literacy Hour. They are now above average. Most Year 6 pupils write neatly and present their work beautifully. They write extensively and produce a range of writing in different genres, including, for instance, witness accounts, advertisements, poetry, scriptwriting and biographies. Most pupils plan their work systematically and have a very good knowledge of language, using it well to write in different tenses, use complex sentences and include a variety of punctuation. A few lower-attaining pupils are untidy in their work; they muddle their thoughts when writing and often forget to use simple punctuation, such as capital letters. Spelling is a weakness in writing in Year 6. For example, some lower-attaining pupils are uncertain how to spell the days of the week correctly whilst average and above average pupils confuse the spellings of words that sound the same but are spelt differently. Weaknesses in spelling in Year 6 are caused by a lack of regular and systematic teaching of letter sounds and skills in building up words when these pupils were younger. The school is aware of this weakness in spelling.
80. Year 2 pupils spell well due to a systematic focus on teaching the sounds letters make in Years 1 and 2. For example, they know which words contain 'ee' or 'ea'. Higher-attaining pupils consistently use the correct tense in their writing. They write using joined up script. Pupils write in many styles, such as making instructions for using the printer, labelling diagrams, and retelling stories. Most pupils are starting to use interesting words to connect their sentences and put capital letters in the correct places.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their lessons very well so that pupils at all levels of attainment are set appropriate levels of work. Good use is made of ICT in teaching.
82. There is a clear focus on improving standards of writing and consequently teachers are demanding very high standards of presentation and providing regular sessions to practise handwriting skills, demonstrating very clearly how letters should be formed and joined. Pupils respond positively to these expectations and achieve high standards in their written work. Teachers show pupils how to write for different purposes and this helps them write well in a variety of styles. For example, in Year 5, one pupil wrote with feeling, '*Sadness is blue it smells like an old book; it sounds like a dog howling and lives in the middle of a frosty lake.*' Teachers assess pupils' written work accurately and set pupils short-term targets for improvement. They mark pupils' work very well with these targets in mind. This is helping pupils to achieve higher standards in their work. Pupils are proud of achieving their targets and are clear about what they must do to improve further.
83. Teachers ask pupils searching questions and these help pupils to understand and consolidate their learning. Teachers ensure there are good opportunities in lessons to hone speaking and listening skills through asking pupils to brainstorm in pairs or collaborate on group tasks. Individual whiteboards are well used for pupils to practise new learning so the teachers can see how well pupils have understood. The teaching and learning of pupils with SEN is very good. Several with dyslexia receive direct help from a visiting specialist teacher who uses laptop computers very effectively with them to provide them with individual programmes of work. Pupils who are withdrawn from lessons to take part in nationally-funded initiatives receive good teaching from specially trained assistants. This is raising their standards well. Those who go to spelling lessons with the co-ordinator for SEN are making very good progress.
84. During the inspection, teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 was very good. Here the pace of lessons is very good and pupils are so interested in their work that they behave and concentrate extremely well. Computer programs are used effectively to help pupils learn. Learning support assistants are busy helping various pupils as suggested by the class teacher.
85. Three weaknesses in the teaching were noted during the inspection. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils with SEN could not understand the shared text about space probes and were therefore unable to contribute to the discussion. However, this was followed by activities set appropriate to their abilities. In Year 6, the misbehaviour of a few boys took too long to correct and this meant that pupils in this lesson did not make the progress they should. Occasionally, teachers do not use their classroom assistants well during introductory sessions.

86. The school teaches the National Literacy Strategy appropriately. Guided reading sessions take place each day in addition to the Literacy Hour and these allow greater time to be allocated to the teaching of writing skills during the daily literacy lessons. This appears to be paying dividends, particularly as standards in writing are high. The very good procedures for assessing writing and using the information to raise standards is relatively new, but already proving beneficial. Teachers do not use reading diaries effectively to outline either where difficulties exist or what needs to be done to improve reading further. Pupils do not have individual targets in reading similar to those in writing, although the group targets and assessment of guided reading sessions are good.
87. The co-ordinator is leading and managing English very well and has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of English has improved teaching and is raising standards. Literacy skills are consolidated well in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

88. Standards in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. This represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The school is quite rightly focusing on improving standards further by trying to increase the number of pupils who attain higher levels in national tests. Most pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, are making good progress in mathematics and have positive attitudes to the subject. They work hard in lessons. However, over time, their achievement is satisfactory. This is because mathematics is now being taught better than it was.
89. By the end of Year 6, most pupils use multiplication tables effectively. They manage addition and subtraction calculations well, using double figures mentally and numbers in four figures when writing down their work. They know how to work out problems involving fractions and correctly complete calculations up to four figures in decimals, for example, ' $44.33 \times 20 =$ '. They work with positive and negative numbers and can explain how they have solved problems. They record their work neatly. Pupils know the names of angles. They measure angles and understand fractions of a turn. They understand the properties of a variety of shapes, such as rectangles and triangles. They know how to calculate the area of shapes and recognise symmetry in two- and three-dimensional shapes. They understand the concepts of reflective symmetry and rotational symmetry. Pupils use their number skills in problems involving length, weight, capacity, time and money. They produce and analyse block graphs and use data handling skills in their work in science. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to understand 'mean', 'median' and 'range' when interpreting data following investigations. Pupils apply their skills in mathematics to help solve a range of everyday problems and in work in other subjects, particularly science and D&T. They also use computers to help them with their mathematics, for instance, when analysing data from graphs and charts.
90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure grasp of number facts and become increasingly skilled at manipulating numbers mentally. They work with tens and units in addition and subtraction sums. They understand multiplication and division as repeated addition and subtraction. They work with two- and three-digit numbers effectively and explain and record their work carefully. They estimate and measure length, weight and capacity in metric units and calculate in money. Most pupils name shapes and know the correct terms for faces and edges of three-dimensional shapes. They have a sound understanding of simple fractions, for example, halves, quarters and thirds. They are developing an understanding of how to tell the time accurately using analogue and digital clocks. They produce and analyse block graphs and use their work in mathematics in other subjects, particularly in science.
91. Throughout the school, pupils with SEN make good progress in mathematics. This is because teachers make accurate assessments of their needs and provide good support for them, often using learning support assistants.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. Where teaching is good, teachers discuss with pupils what they are to learn in the lesson. Their lesson planning, subject expertise and the teaching of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are good. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, lessons are taught at a brisk pace and pupils have opportunities to solve mathematical problems. Where teaching is particularly effective, all tasks are challenging for pupils of varying ability, including higher-attaining pupils. All pupils have equal

opportunities to learn. The help given by learning support assistants to lower-attaining pupils ensures that they have a chance to succeed and learn well. Pupils are set appropriate learning targets. They respond positively to these and take pride in achieving them. The use of computers in mathematics is good.

93. Two weaknesses in the teaching and learning of mathematics were noted during the inspection. On one occasion, the work did not provide enough opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to extend their learning. On another occasion, the mental calculations at the start of the lesson were not well matched to the needs of lower-attaining pupils.
94. The management of mathematics is good. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and regularly observes teaching. The results of non-statutory national tests for each year group are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Using the results from these tests, as well as teachers' knowledge of pupils, targets are set for year groups and individual pupils. These are discussed with parents. Mathematics workshops have been arranged for parents to learn more about the teaching of mathematics and numeracy. Numeracy makes a good contribution to other subjects, including science and geography.

SCIENCE

95. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, standards were above average when compared to all schools and average compared to similar schools. However, the attainment of higher-attaining pupils was well below average. Standards in the current Year 6 class are above average. In the Teacher Assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002, standards were average. Higher-attaining pupils did well in these assessments and achieved above average results. Pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with EAL make good progress in science. Overall, standards are higher than those noted at the last inspection.
96. By the end of Year 6, most pupils understand the importance of carrying out a fair test, and some do this well. For example, they set up an investigation to see what conditions are needed to stimulate the growth of mould on bread. Some bread was placed in the light, some by the heater and some in darkness. They understand that protein, fat and carbohydrates are contained in food and that they are important within diet. They investigate which forms of exercise stimulate the heart rate. They learn about the effects of drugs, such as alcohol and other drugs, on health. They know the male and female parts of plants and their importance in their reproduction.
97. Year 2 pupils understand how to make an electrical circuit and the importance of electricity in their lives. They understand that rough surfaces slow down movement. They learn about the importance of exercise and the growth cycle of plants, animals and humans. They know about the changes in materials, such as ingredients for bread, when subjected to heat. They sort materials, such as wood, metal, leather and plastic. They are learning the importance of carrying out a fair test, but cannot carry out such a test by themselves.
98. Teaching and learning in science are good overall. A small proportion of the teaching and learning are very good. At best, teachers plan their lessons very well and have all materials to hand. They involve pupils in practical activities to help them understand what is being taught. For example, in Year 5, pupils went out into the playground and acted in role to understand the relative sizes of the sun, moon and earth. They repeated this learning technique as they understood how night follows day. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their explanations to pupils are clear and at the appropriate level for their understanding. Relationships are good: any immature behaviour is effectively corrected and pupils behave well. Different tasks are set for pupils at appropriate ability levels. Teachers provide pupils with key words so that they spell them correctly in their work. Using computers and other ICT resources is making a good contribution to science teaching and is a strength of the subject.
99. Two weaknesses in teaching were observed during the inspection. In one class, work specifically set for higher-attaining pupils was not hard enough for them. In another class, the teacher's management of behaviour was not effective enough in correcting the attention-seeking disruptions of a few boys.

100. The leadership and management of science are outstanding. The co-ordinator's knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject are excellent. The monitoring and evaluation of teachers' plans, of pupils' work and through observations of lessons are systematic and rigorous. They provide very helpful and useful feedback for teachers to help them improve their teaching and raise standards. Ambitious targets for the end of Year 6 have been set in science for 2003. All pupils have individual targets for improvement in science to help them raise their attainment. These initiatives were newly introduced last year and there has not been enough time to evaluate if they are contributing to higher standards.

ART AND DESIGN

101. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards of work seen are average. Pupils, including high-attaining pupils and those with SEN, make satisfactory progress in those aspects of art and design seen, especially in drawing. Pupils with EAL make sound progress in art and design. These standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
102. By the end of Year 2, pupils have opportunities to paint, print and weave. They make rubbings and create collages. They understand aspects of the work of the famous artists, including Monet. They work in three dimensions using construction kits and plasticene. They draw objects with increasing skill. Drawing makes a good contribution to work in other subjects; for example, it is often used as a part of their recording of work in science and geography.
103. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to develop their skills in observational drawing, including of faces and hands. They produce some very good sensitive drawings and paintings about relationships that are linked to work in personal, social and health education. They use glass paints on acetate to make insect paintings. These are recorded on computers and show high levels of skill. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have drawn shoes and living things in their habitat in connection with poetry and refined their drawing of faces and portraits. They are learning about the colour wheel and warm and cool colours. They have made a variety of containers in mod roc. However, they have insufficient experience of extending their skills in painting, printing or collage.
104. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well. They select interesting activities in which pupils become engrossed. They provide a stimulating range of materials for pupils to use in art lessons. The direct teaching of skills in art and design is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress in the subject. Relationships are good and pupils respond positively to the teaching.
105. The school uses the nationally recommended guidance as a basis for planning lessons. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in art and design have not been developed. Visits from local artists and visits to museums provide further stimuli for pupils' work in art and design. The school recognises that it does not provide pupils with enough opportunities for work with clay, materials for fabric printing and sketch books. Computers are beginning to be used in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY [D&T]

106. Only one lesson in D&T was observed during the inspection. Other evidence was provided in teachers' plans, records of work and displays around school. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. Pupils of all abilities make sound progress in the subject. This represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when it was stated that pupils had insufficient opportunity to develop their skills in D&T.
107. In Year 1, pupils construct model houses related to their work in geography on the local area. They understand the function of hinges. They make a range of structures with straws. They make sliders and pop-up books and a range of models using waste materials. They weave using a variety of materials. In Year 2, pupils make puppets using split pins and learn how to make an electrical circuit to light a bulb as well as developing work on vehicles. This is linked to their work in science. Their work is carefully carried out. They systematically record how they constructed their models. In Years 3 and 4, pupils design and make a photograph frame, make sandwiches and construct a variety of structures. They build on their knowledge of circuits to make an alarm. In Year 5, pupils make bread and design and make a controllable vehicle. They design and make money containers and decorate them with complex designs. In Year 6, pupils design and make slippers. All work is neatly recorded and pupils write careful accounts of the design and making processes.
108. Teaching and learning are sound. Lessons are planned and prepared well. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the designing and making processes. Their finished products show an increasing development of their skills in handling tools and materials. In the lesson observed, teaching and learning were good and pupils responded well and worked hard in the lesson. The

teacher had good subject knowledge, organised resources appropriately and helped pupils effectively. Pupils showed understanding of the techniques they were using to make a controllable vehicle and enjoyed the work. Each year group keeps brief records of what has been taught. The assessment of pupils' work is not systematic enough. Computers are beginning to be used in D&T lessons.

109. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The school uses nationally recommended guidance as a basis for planning. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning well and observes teaching. This is beginning to raise standards in D&T.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are average; they are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils, including high-attaining pupils and those with SEN, make satisfactory progress. Pupils learning EAL also make sound progress in geography. Most pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
111. Most Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge about rivers and mountains. They have a good general knowledge about where countries and mountain ranges are and can use an atlas to point out these features. They understand and use subject specific vocabulary, such as 'tributary' and 'meander', in their explanations. They have measured the flow of a river in a practical way on an educational visit. They know that humans can spoil the environment by cutting down the rain forests, such as the Amazon, or dropping litter, for instance, even when climbing Mount Everest. They conduct local surveys to canvass views about the use of land and how the environment could be improved. They use grid references on large-scale maps to show how Welwyn has changed over the last fifty years. They use the Internet and library books well for personal research in geography.
112. Most Year 2 pupils know there is a variety of different landscapes. They point out the similarities and differences between town, seaside, and countryside environments. They draw simple maps and include suitable keys on them. They also make effective use of a variety of resources, including the Internet, to gather information. For example, they found out that Mexico is eight times larger than the United Kingdom and that Mexican villages are different from Welwyn in a number of respects.
113. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are a number of good features about the teaching. Teachers choose a range of good resources, such as the Internet and large good quality photographs, to enable pupils to develop a good understanding about places far away, such as Mexico. In Year 5, groups of pupils chose a different mountain range to research and were given two weeks to plan a presentation of their findings for a school assembly. Pupils were encouraged to carry out much of this work at home. This helps to promote pupils' skills as independent learners and their personal qualities of co-operation very well. On the other hand, some weaknesses in teaching were noted. The pace of learning slowed down in one lesson because pupils became bored after working hard on an activity for too long. In Year 6, the teaching did not include enough challenge for pupils. The teacher read a great deal of information about mountain weather from a small computer screen with her back to the class. As pupils could not see the screen, nor hear much of what was said, their behaviour deteriorated and they lost concentration. Later in the lesson, pupils were bored by the task of filling in worksheets that were undemanding and chatted amongst themselves.
114. Visits to places of interest make lessons enjoyable. Some classes have visited Stevenage Environmental Centre and have taken part in a residential visit to a Norfolk environmental centre. The local environment is used well for geography lessons by younger pupils. Visits in connection with history projects also give pupils an insight into different environments. Pupils practise the skills they have learnt in literacy in their geography lessons. For example, Year 6 put together persuasive arguments for and against cutting down mahogany trees in the rain forest. They practise the skills they have learnt in mathematics as they compile and interpret graphs and charts. They deepen their understanding about different environments as they study the most appropriate habitats for animals. Good use is made of computers during geography lessons.

115. Some teaching has been observed, teachers' plans monitored and pupils' work sampled by the teacher with responsibility for the subject. This has identified some strengths and weaknesses in the subject. However, in spite of following national guidance for planning geography throughout the school, there is a lack of a planned programme for the development of geography skills that would ensure there is sufficient progression of these skills. The school has recognised this and included it in its improvement plan. No formal assessment of pupils' progress in geography takes place. Consequently, the school has no certain view as to how well pupils are achieving and there is little help for teachers to know at what level to pitch their teaching.

HISTORY

116. History was not taught during the inspection. The school alternates its teaching of history with that of geography each half term.
117. Evidence from pupils' books and from talking to Year 6 pupils indicates that attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 is average. Overall, pupils, including high-attaining pupils and those whose first language is not English, make satisfactory progress over time. Pupils with SEN also make sound progress relative to their abilities. These standards are similar to those seen at the last inspection.
118. By the end of Year 6, pupils know about some of the great explorers. They have a depth of knowledge about the different topics they study. For example, they know about the structure of the Aztec society and aspects of everyday life at that time. They find out information from books and the Internet, often in their own time. Most pupils have detailed knowledge of aspects of the Tudor era, including the importance Henry VIII placed on having a son. They know aspects of the Reformation. They understand why the Second World War started and talk knowledgeably about prisoners of war and Pearl Harbour. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and find history interesting. However, their knowledge of dates is insecure and there is little evidence that they appreciate that history can be viewed from different perspectives. They do not fully understand the similarities and differences between the different periods they study.
119. By the end of Year 2, most pupils know that many soldiers died in two world wars and that those from Welwyn are commemorated on the Welwyn war memorial. They understand the reasons for the Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph and know why poppies are worn. They compare Victorian life with their own. They know that cooking ranges were used at that time whereas now microwaves are often used in their kitchens. They also know they have a greater range of toys than Victorian children. However, they are not clear about why people in the past acted as they did.
120. From the evidence of pupils' work and conversation with pupils, it is clear that teaching and learning in history are satisfactory. No history teaching was observed. A strength of the teaching is that some teachers are good at bringing history to life by using a good variety of methods to hold pupils' interest. For example, the Internet is used well, as are non-fiction books, videos, visits to places of interest and visitors to school. Year 6 pupils talked movingly about the knowledge they had gained about the Second World War from a visitor who had been a Japanese prisoner of war. Teachers make good links with other subjects to give extra depth to pupils' knowledge. For example, pupils study excerpts from Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' and sing songs from that time when studying Tudors. Teachers expect high standards of presentation and books are neat. Teachers use history well to develop pupils' spiritual awareness by posing questions such as 'What qualities does it take to be an explorer?' There is a clear focus on developing pupils' ability to research and communicate their findings and so pupils develop well as independent learners, whilst also developing their literacy skills well.
121. Some teaching has been observed, teachers' plans monitored and pupils' work sampled by the subject co-ordinator. This has identified some strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The school follows national guidance in planning history. However, overall, there is a lack of a planned programme for the development of skills in history to ensure that pupils make enough progress in this aspect of their work. No formal assessment of standards has been developed by the school. Consequently, the school does not have an accurate view about how well pupils are achieving. This means there is little help for teachers to know at what level to pitch their teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY [ICT]

122. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average overall. This is higher than they were at the last inspection when not enough ICT was taught to allow a judgement about standards. The use of ICT in other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy, science, geography and history, is a strength of the school's provision. Overall, pupils of all abilities make sound progress in ICT in spite of not having enough opportunities to practise their skills in computer lessons.
123. By the end of Year 6, most pupils use the Internet to search for information about a variety of topics, such as looking for an explorer's diary from long ago in history and studying weather in geography. They produce multimedia presentations on a variety of topics using graphics, text and colour. They practise adding, subtraction, multiplication and division using mathematical programs and carry out comprehension exercises following English programs. They design furniture in a classroom, setting out a plan showing its position. They move, rotate and re-size the furniture using a graphics program. They use the digital camera to record the bread they have made in food technology.
124. Year 2 pupils use the Internet to find out features of places elsewhere in the world. For example, they find out about the houses, shops, weather and food in Tocuara, Mexico, by reading extracts they have researched. They improve their literacy skills by following a program about adding beginnings to words, such as "un" to "happy" to make "unhappy" and "dis" to "agree" to make "disagree". They plot block graphs about the types of houses in which pupils live. They create pictures of flowers, houses and abstract designs by following an art program. They control the direction in which a robot turtle travels by programming instructions within it.
125. Standards of teaching are satisfactory overall. Sometimes, they are good. Features of the good teaching include good planning that includes clear purposes for lessons and clear teaching of the skills required to carry out tasks. This is helped because a number of teachers have good expertise in teaching ICT. Teaching ICT skills is often linked to work being carried out in other subjects and this helps pupils to see how computers can help them learn. In the most effective lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils, in their turn, behave responsibly with maturity. Teachers allow pupils to answer questions at length and this helps them to feel that what they are saying is important. This raises their self-esteem and helps their speaking skills.
126. However, the weakness within the teaching is the lack of immediate impact on pupils' learning. This is an issue of the school's provision and not one teachers can resolve themselves. Teachers teach computer skills to the class well, but with only two class computers it can take two weeks for all pupils to have an opportunity to practise the skills they have been taught. This slows down the rate at which pupils learn about computers. In spite of this, though, most pupils make steady progress with computers because of the good sound teaching they receive.
127. The management of ICT is good. The school is doing its best under difficult circumstances. The newly appointed co-ordinator has monitored teachers' plans. The school's ratio of up-to-date computers to pupils is well below the national average. However, when older computers are taken into account, the ratio is about average. All class computers contain the programs used for their age group.

MUSIC

128. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in singing and performing music are above average. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6, including high-attaining pupils and those with SEN, make good progress in music. Pupils with EAL also make good progress in music. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when standards caused sufficient concern to become a key issue. By the end of Year 2, standards in composition and singing are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
129. Year 6 pupils maintain their own parts well during a four-part round following a written score. They sing difficult melodies such as 'Hallo Control Can You Hear Me?' with very good pitch and diction, following the conductor's signals with excellent concentration to create an increasingly tense

atmosphere. They know a range of traditional songs from different countries such as

'Kookaburra' from Australia and the Negro spiritual 'Ole Man River'. Pupils understand conventional notation, evaluate their performances and make sensible suggestions on how to improve.

130. Year 2 pupils create a variety of sound effects by using their bodies as percussion instruments. They also use conventional percussion instruments, such as triangles, shakers and beaters. They co-operate well in groups and choose the most suitable instruments for their composition. They devise appropriate ways to record their composition so they can return to it later. Higher-attaining pupils understand some conventional musical signs, such as 'p' for soft and 'f' for loud, which they use in their scores. Pupils know the correct way to stand and breathe when singing.
131. Teaching and learning are good overall. Music is taught by specialist teachers throughout the school and this high level of expertise is the major factor in pupils achieving above average standards by the end of Year 6. These teachers have the confidence to demonstrate effectively to pupils what they wish them to learn. In the one lesson seen in the infants, teaching and learning were satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, the very detailed planning was based on high expectations of pupils' achievements. It included a fast build up of skills in a systematic way. Another excellent feature of planning is the acknowledgement of which pupils need special help. These pupils are asked appropriate questions that check their understanding. Extremely interesting methods are used to reinforce teaching points. This enables pupils to have a very clear understanding of what is being taught. For example, in one lesson, the teacher arranged pupils into human sculptures of a musical score to help them understand bar lines. This was also used to illustrate the different value of notes, such as quavers and crotchets, and, by different positioning, whether the music they represented was loud or soft. In the best lesson, pupils worked extremely hard and with absolute concentration. Their behaviour was excellent because they were totally absorbed and trying hard to emulate the high standards demonstrated to them. The teaching in one lesson did not reach these high standards because a few pupils misbehaved. Some time was wasted correcting this misbehaviour, causing the pace of learning to slow down.
132. The appointment of a high calibre specialist teacher has resulted in a significant rise in the profile of music within the school, the quality of the curriculum and the standards of teaching and learning. Good opportunities are provided for extra tuition and clubs in music. Many pupils learn instruments, such as the violin and piano. The school is rightly proud to have developed an excellent choir and orchestra, which take part in school concerts and join with other schools for public performances. The curriculum has been improved since the previous inspection and now covers all statutory requirements. Computers are beginning to be used well to help pupils in their composition of music. There is no formal assessment of the National Curriculum levels pupils attain and consequently no check on the effectiveness of teaching or pupils' rates of progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION [PE]

133. It was not possible to observe the full range of activities in PE during the inspection. Lessons in dance, work with small apparatus and games were observed and teachers' plans were examined. From this evidence, it is judged that the attainment of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average. Standards in swimming are above average. Overall, pupils, including high-attaining pupils and those with SEN, make sound progress in PE. Pupils with EAL also make steady progress in PE. Standards are similar to those seen at the last inspection.
134. By the end of Year 6, pupils can throw, catch and field balls effectively in games and they organise themselves appropriately to play quick cricket. Nearly all pupils can swim 25 metres, which is the national standard for pupils of this age. Many pupils can swim much further than this. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed good control of their movement and responded to music effectively. They produced a slow smooth sequence and mirrored the movements of their partner very well. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular school sports, including football, netball, tennis and rounders. They take part in outdoor activities on their residential visit. Most pupils enjoy PE.

135. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can create a sequence of three movements involving a bridge, a turn and a jump. In the lesson observed, they improved their techniques appropriately and made satisfactory progress. In a Year 1 dance lesson, pupils contrasted slow, smooth movements with sharp spiky ones as the mood of the music changed. Their work in small groups to become like water lilies was particularly effective and linked well to their work in art.
136. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers manage their classes well and have good subject knowledge and their direct teaching helps pupils focus on developing their skills appropriately. Where teaching has weaknesses, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise skills and too few coaching points are given to help pupils improve.
137. The school organises PE lessons in one long session each week. This means that pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their skills in more than one aspect of the subject at the same time. The school does not assess and monitor pupils' performances in PE. Pupils take part in inter-school sports in football, netball, rounders and athletics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION [RE]

138. At the end of Years 2 and Year 6, attainment is average. Most pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress in RE. Pupils with EAL also make sound progress. Standards are similar to those seen at the last inspection.
139. Year 6 pupils are aware of different major world religions and of some of their features. For example, they know about their founders, festivals and places of worship. Their understanding and knowledge about the Christian religion is strong. For example, they know about the forty days of Lent. They understand that this was the time when Jesus fasted in the Wilderness and that many Christians use this time to make sacrifices, such as by giving up things they like, as they remember Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. They visit their local church and celebrate Christian festivals and the vicar is a frequent visitor to school. However, their knowledge and understanding of other religions is superficial. They often confuse them and are unable to see similarities or quantify differences between them in any detail. They recollect visiting a synagogue but remember little other than that they were given sweets at the end. They know from a visit to a Gurdwara that worshippers cover their heads and remove their shoes to indicate respect, but show little appreciation of the relevance of what they saw inside. Pupils' attitudes to RE are satisfactory overall, but some have negative attitudes to the subject. They show little interest in other religions apart from Christianity. They say they find lessons boring and methods uninteresting because they are generally told a story and then have to write about it. They rarely have the opportunity to carry out their own research.
140. Year 2 pupils understand that just as they have special places such as the park or their bedroom, a church is special to Christians. They have visited St Mary's church and understand the symbolism of the cross and the purpose of a lectern and font. They know the story of Mohammed and that Muslims show respect for the Qur'an by washing their hands before prayer.
141. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. During the inspection, the teaching was very good and pupils learnt very well. However, evidence from pupils' work and from discussions with pupils indicates that this is not always the case. There are a number of features about the very good teaching. Behaviour in such lessons and pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good because they enjoy their active participation in lessons. Teachers' planning is detailed and they use a variety of interesting methods to stimulate discussions. This helps pupils to understand what is being taught. Very good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, and social awareness. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and ask probing questions very well to help pupils understand the meanings of different religious practices. For example, in one class, the story of Zaccheus was brought to life through the teacher's very dramatic style of telling the story. This was followed by excellent questions that enabled pupils to reflect on the changing emotions Zaccheus might have felt at the time. The teacher then encouraged pupils to learn from this story that we all have things in our lives that need discarding and this is what Christians mean by repentance. Very good teaching was again evident when the teacher told an imaginary story about vandalism in the school in order to help pupils understand how Jesus felt when he saw the temple

being used by commercial traders. This led to a very good discussion about different ways to resolve conflict. In one lesson, the library was set up as a church and groups of Reception class children invited to come to look around and ask questions under the supervision of a learning support assistant. In Year 1 a well-chosen story, 'Dogger', was used to enable pupils to understand the concept of special things and how we feel when we lose them.

142. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus as required by statute. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning and identified some strengths and weaknesses. There are no formal assessment procedures, although informal assessments lead to the comments in annual reports for parents. There is little evidence of the use of computers within RE.