

INSPECTION REPORT

SPELLBROOK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishops Stortford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117405

Headteacher: Mrs J Harris

Reporting inspector: Georgina Beasley
27899

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th June 2003

Inspection number: 247776

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: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: London Road
Spellbrook
Bishops Stortford
Hertfordshire

Postcode: CM23 4BA

Telephone number: 01279 723204

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of acting chair of governors: Mr R Leigh

Date of previous inspection: 18th June 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27899	Mrs G Beasley	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Foundation stage Educational inclusion	The sort of school it is. The school's results and achievements. How well pupils are taught.
19653	Mrs E Dickson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils. How well the school works in partnership with parents.
16492	Mr R Lever	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs	How good the curricular and other opportunities are.
11982	Mr R Morris	Team inspector	English Religious education Music Physical education	How well the school is led and managed.

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Ltd, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0RE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Spellbrook Primary School is a small church school situated on a very busy main road just outside Bishops Stortford. It has 98 boys and girls, organised into four mixed age classes. There are currently nine children in the reception year who attend full time and six in the new rising four group who attend part time. The number of pupils who have free school meals is well below average and most children come from socially advantaged homes. Twenty-two pupils are identified with special educational needs, which is much higher than average. The great majority of these are in Years 5 and 6. Two pupils have statements for their needs. All but nine pupils are from white UK background, and they all speak English well. Very few children come from the village, most coming from nearby towns and villages. The children start school with a range of abilities but overall have average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very caring school, which values the whole child. It is giving its pupils a satisfactory quality of education. Achievement is satisfactory overall and pupils make satisfactory progress in all subjects except information and communication technology (ICT). The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with strengths in the reception class and in the juniors (Key Stage 2). The head teacher gives high quality leadership. She is very well supported by staff and governors. Staff value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs, and work hard to ensure they get their best from their time in school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher leads the school extremely well. She is supported very well by governors and staff.
- Achievement is good in art and design and in physical education (PE) due to the rich curriculum in these subjects.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils. Provision for personal development is good and as a result relationships are good, pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching and learning are good in the reception and junior classes.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and give good support to their children's learning at school and at home.
- Assessment procedures are good overall and have made a strong contribution in raising achievement over the last two years.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- Achievement of more able pupils in mathematics and science in the infants.
- Standards and achievement in ICT in the juniors.

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 judged to have serious weaknesses at the time of the previous inspection in June 2001. This is no longer the case. The school has put right the many weaknesses identified in the previous report in a very short time. There has been good improvement since then and pupils achieve much better in many subjects because teaching and learning in lessons have improved. There has been very good improvement in the school's assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science and this has meant that teachers have planned much more suitable work for most pupils to do. Higher attaining pupils are still not challenged sufficiently well in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. Standards in history and geography are now average because the curriculum has improved. The governing body give very good support to the school.

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	A	B	D	E
Mathematics	D	D	E	E*
Science	E	D	D	E

Key

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

Children in the reception class start school with average levels of attainment in all areas of learning except their early reading and writing skills, which are below average. They make good progress in their reading and writing and they all are attaining the early learning goals, the expected national targets, in all literacy activities by the time they start in Year 1. A good number do better than this. They make similar good progress in their personal development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world and many exceed the early learning goals. They make satisfactory progress in their mathematical, creative and physical development and the majority attain the early learning goals. Fewer children exceed them in these areas of learning.

Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing have risen over the last two years and are now average when compared nationally. This is because of better teaching in these subjects. Standards in mathematics and science give a mixed picture. The majority of pupils attain average levels in these subjects which indicate improvement since the previous inspection for some pupils. However, there are not enough pupils attaining the higher than average levels of which they are capable. Standards are therefore currently well below average in science and mathematics. This means that most pupils make satisfactory progress and those with special educational needs make good progress to attain average standards. Higher attaining pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in these subjects.

The table above does not accurately reflect the good progress pupils currently make in the juniors. This is because the year groups are small and there is a well above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in mathematics show the school to be performing in the bottom 5% of schools nationally. Standards by the end of Year 6 remain below average in English and science, and well below average in mathematics this year. Half of the current Year 6 pupils were not

at the school when they took their end of Year 2 tests and started school with lower attainment in mathematics. The school's targets are appropriate and have been exceeded this year because a good number have attained the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils are now attaining the above average standards of which they are capable. However, because of the well above proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group, this will not be reflected in the overall results. Pupils have made satisfactory progress overall, but this is because there has been good progress in the last two years to overcome previous underachievement. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the current Year 4 are attaining average standards in these subjects and this reflects rising standards and good progress over the last two years.

Standards in art and design and PE are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in ICT are average at the end of Year 2 but are below average at the end of Year 6. Standards in other subjects are average. Achievement is satisfactory overall but it is good in art and design and PE and unsatisfactory in ICT.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils have good attitudes in lessons. Care is taken to present work neatly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in nearly all lessons and at other times.
Personal development and relationships	Good. This is a friendly school and pupils get along very well together. Playtimes are social occasions when pupils play together amicably.
Attendance	The school includes a number of children with medical problems and this means that figures show below average attendance. Very good procedures ensure that the majority of pupils attend regularly and that their attendance is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with good teaching in the reception and junior classes. Teachers in the reception and junior classes plan well and lessons are matched well to the learning needs of pupils. Teachers in these classes have high expectations of what pupils can do and standards have risen as a result. Expectations in the infant class have not been high enough and higher attaining pupils have not been challenged sufficiently well in mathematics and science. The use of assessment has been unsatisfactory for these pupils.

The marking of work is of very good quality in reception and older classes and tells pupils exactly what is good about their work and what they need to do next to improve further. It provides useful assessment information and helps the planning of well-matched work in future lessons. This has not been so in the Year 1/2 class where lessons lack challenge for higher attaining pupils and marking does not give sufficient feedback and guidance. Behaviour management strategies have improved since the previous inspection but there are still some pupils who need additional support to help them settle to their work. Homework is satisfactory overall and gives suitable support to learning in lessons.

Teaching assistants give good support in lessons to pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. This enables these pupils to make good progress overall. Higher attaining pupils in the juniors are now making better progress due to the challenging work they are presented with in many subjects. Lessons are interesting, and this motivates pupils to take part and helps them to sustain concentration throughout lessons. They produce good amounts of work in the time allotted.

Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall, with weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 in sustaining the good start pupils make in reception. Learning in ICT is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in the curriculum. The school has not kept up with the many changes and improvements in the subject nationally over the last two years and has fallen behind. This is because teachers have put the emphasis on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching and learning is good in art and design and PE. It is satisfactory in all other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. ICT is not used effectively to support learning in other subjects. A good range of extra curricular activities is provided for older pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they are all included in all activities. They receive good support in lessons from well-qualified teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The community make a good contribution to pupils' learning through visiting artists and links with local sporting clubs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school and the pupils are looked after very well. There are very good assessment procedures for English and mathematics and they are used effectively to guide curriculum planning in the juniors.

Parents have very positive views of the school. They support the school in many activities and this has established good relationships.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives outstanding care, commitment and leadership to staff, pupils and parents. Subject co-ordinators have worked well as a team to put the necessary improvements into place in most subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have built a very effective team and fulfil their responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school looks critically and realistically at how well it is doing. It discusses issues openly and has put into place the necessary steps to put right previous weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses the money it is given well. It has good procedures for making sure it gets 'best value' from its resources.

There is a good number of staff to support pupils' learning. Resources are adequate. The accommodation is clean and tidy, and although small is used effectively by the school to support learning in all subjects except ICT.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>All parents who returned the questionnaires say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and they are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children are expected to do their best and they are making good progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns and suggestions, and that the school works closely with them. • Most parents think behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some concerns raised about homework. • A few parents thought there were not enough activities outside lessons • A few parents feel they are not well informed about how well their child is doing.

Parents are very pleased with nearly all of the aspects of the work of the school. Overall, the inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. Pupils are making good progress in the reception and junior classes because teaching here is good. Homework is satisfactory. The quality of information provided to parents is now good. Reports are satisfactory. There is a good range of activities, which take place outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science have improved since the previous inspection and, although this is not yet reflected in the overall results in the end of Year 2 and Year 6 national tests, previous underachievement in these subjects has now been dealt with by the end of Year 6. This year almost half of Year 6 pupils attained the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science in the national tests reflecting their good progress over the last two years. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall.
2. The children start school with average attainment overall. Their reading and writing skills are lower than this. The children make good overall progress and they nearly all attain the expected national levels, the early learning goals, by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. A good number do better than this and exceed these in their personal, social and emotional development, their speaking and listening skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
3. It is not reliable to compare results in national tests of different year groups with each other. This is because year groups are small and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who join the school at other times can make a significant difference to the overall figures and national comparisons. The school's comprehensive assessment information indicates that although pupils are now making satisfactory progress overall in their English, mathematics and science, there are still weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 in the achievement of higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science.
4. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 give a mixed picture. Girls have done better than boys over the last two years. This is because more boys than girls have special educational needs in these year groups. Standards in reading and writing have improved in the last two years and results in the 2002 national tests indicate average standards in reading and above average in writing. Standards in writing improved more than reading because more pupils gained the higher levels of which they were capable. This reflects satisfactory achievement overall in Years 1 and 2 in English. Although results in mathematics showed some improvement, standards remained below average. Teachers' assessments in science indicated below average standards. This is because too few pupils gained the levels they were capable of last year.
5. Inspection evidence confirms the average standards in English and the satisfactory achievement of most pupils in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English and some attain average standards as a result. There has been improvement in the number of pupils attaining average levels in mathematics and science, but there are still not enough pupils attaining the higher than average levels of which they are capable. Standards in mathematics and science are therefore well below average. This means that although most pupils make satisfactory progress and pupils with special educational needs good progress due to the support and focused help they get in lessons, more able pupils have not done as well as they should and their achievement is unsatisfactory.
6. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 do not reflect the good progress pupils have made in the juniors to make up the previous underachievement in English, mathematics and science. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in successive year

groups. In 2002, results were below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics when compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, and with those schools whose pupils started with similar levels of attainment, results in English and science were well below average and very low in mathematics. This put the school in the lowest performing group of schools nationally in mathematics. The difference between boys' and girls' attainment changes each year depending on the particular cohort and no overall conclusions can be drawn from the results. Inspection evidence shows that although test results are unlikely to rise this year, achievement has continued to improve. Standards seen are still below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Almost half of the pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs and have joined the school since Year 2. Their levels of attainment in mathematics were lower when they started at the school than in English and science. This group of pupils have made good progress to attain what they have. Higher attaining and gifted pupils are doing much better in Years 3 – 6, because teaching is better, and they have made up previous lost ground to attain the above average levels of which they are capable in English, mathematics and science. Achievement since pupils started school is satisfactory overall, due to the good progress made in the last two years. There is evidence that standards are still rising. Pupils in Year 4 are attaining average standards in English, mathematics and science due to the improvements in teaching and learning in these subjects.

7. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed suitably in many subjects through the recent written recording of work in science, history, religious education (RE) and design and technology (DT). There are good opportunities provided for pupils to talk about their work and to discuss their findings and what they think in groups, before drawing conclusions in science. Results in geography and science are recorded as graphs to help pupils make comparisons in the information they have collected. The school is still at the early stages of integrating literacy and numeracy more formally into other subjects as they have given priority to raising standards in these skills in English and mathematics.
8. Standards in art and design and PE are above expected levels. This is because these subjects are practical and pupils with special educational needs can shine. Consequently, their achievement is not hampered by the specific difficulties they have. All pupils achieve well in these two subjects. Standards in ICT are average at the end of Year 2, but below average at the end of Year 6. The school has not kept pace with curriculum developments in the subject because it has focussed on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. This means older pupils have fallen behind in their knowledge and use of ICT and the development of skills.
9. Standards in RE, DT, history, geography and music are in line with expected levels. The reason why standards are higher in these than English, mathematics and science is because pupils learn in practical situations and much of the learning is not formally recorded. Talking to pupils indicated a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of facts and processes, and suitable coverage of skills in these subjects.
10. Pupils with special educational needs are doing well against specific targets and goals and are making good progress, due to the extra support they get in lessons. The school uses information from teachers' assessments and test results to identify well focussed targets in individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The school has maintained good standards overall since the previous inspection. Pupils have positive attitudes and these contribute to the productive learning environment that exists within

the school. Most pupils are eager to come to school at the start of the day. They are usually interested in their lessons and are happy to be involved in class activities. Where their teachers' expectations are high and they are clear about what they have to do, pupils are eager to co-operate and work hard. They particularly enjoy lessons where they are encouraged to take an active role. For example, in one good RE lesson, older pupils were fully involved suggesting the many roles and relationships their teacher enjoys with the different people she knows. They were very considerate with their suggestions, responding well to the trust she placed in them to be sensible and in return showing a great deal of respect for her feelings.

12. The behaviour in the majority of lessons is good, and on occasions very good. Examples of these positive attitudes and good behaviour were seen across the school. In a very good PE lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked hard at developing their skills in cricket, responding to the physical challenges with which they were presented. As a result of their efforts and good concentration, they improved significantly during the lesson, with many showing consistent precision and control in bowling and batting the ball. At lunchtime and playtimes pupils behave well, talking sensibly with one another, with older pupils helping to serve lunch to the younger ones. In the playground, pupils show no signs of unacceptable behaviour and play together well. Their good behaviour is a reflection of the positive and caring atmosphere, which the headteacher has helped to create, and of the constructive relationships established by staff. There is very little bullying indeed, and in recent years there have been no exclusions. Virtually all parents feel that behaviour is good and inspectors support this view.
13. In a few lessons, however, pupils' interest and attention fell, particularly when the teaching was not well matched to their needs or did not keep them interested. Whilst generally teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, this fall in interest meant that some time was spent in dealing with this, which detracted from the progress made. There are a number of pupils who display challenging behaviour by talking loudly and not focusing on their work in lessons. They tend to distract other pupils from their work and teachers have to work hard to retain their interest and co-operation.
14. Relationships between pupils, with staff and other adults are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school is a small and tight-knit community within which pupils, teachers, other staff and parents know and respect each other. Pupils like and have confidence in their teachers. Older pupils, spoken to during the inspection, said they liked the small school because *'you are not afraid to talk to anyone, and the teachers know you really well'*.
15. Pupils' personal development is good. In lessons they are encouraged to work together. They contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school and readily accept responsibility for routine classroom jobs. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, for example by helping younger pupils at lunchtime and getting out and putting away play equipment in the playground. The playground committee enables pupils to make decisions about the school environment and at the same time gain experience of managing a budget. Pupils are polite and friendly and helpful to visitors. They show a good level of social awareness, for example in their concern for others who are not as advantaged as they are.
16. The attendance rate of 93.8% for the academic year 2001/02 remains below the national average for similar schools. While nearly all pupils attend regularly, the attendance rate is affected by the prolonged absences of some very sick children and the irregular attendance of other pupils with personal difficulties. In a small school the absence of one or two children can have a serious impact on the overall figures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection when it was a key issue due to inconsistent practices between classes and weaknesses in behaviour management. These have now largely been dealt with due to closer monitoring of lessons and pupils' work, and identifying relevant support and training. Teaching is now satisfactory overall with good teaching in the reception and junior classes.
18. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good. Teaching focuses appropriately on developing the children's self esteem and self-confidence and this means they settle quickly into school. They are willing to participate in all activities when requested. Particular focus on reading and writing skills means that there is good learning of these basic skills. As a result, the children attempt work confidently when reading and spelling words they have not yet learnt. The teaching and learning in knowledge and understanding of the world activities are particularly good because of the practical and first hand experiences through which these are set. Questions are used very effectively to make the children think for themselves how they will approach a task. Several aspects of this area of learning are linked and this gives meaning and purpose to activities and tasks. As a result, children are interested in what they are learning and concentrate well in the lessons.
19. Teaching is better in reception and the juniors because planning clearly identifies what pupils will be learning in lessons. Different tasks are often planned for groups or individuals to make sure that work is matched appropriately to support those pupils with special educational needs and challenge those who are more able. Teachers make it clear to pupils, what they are expected to learn in lessons. This gives a focus to learning and gives pupils clear knowledge of their own learning. Marking of work is of high quality and relates closely to pupils' personal academic targets. These in turn are linked to the school's overall targets and have been instrumental in raising standards and achievement in many subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers know pupils well both academically and personally. They are therefore able to respond to individual personalities in lessons and draw everyone into the activity. *'I'll leave you to think for a minute and come back to you'* commented one teacher to give gentle encouragement to one pupil who had decided not to take part in the group discussions. This produced a knowing smile and ensured the pupil was fully included in the rest of the lesson.
20. Teaching and learning in English throughout the school are satisfactory overall. Lessons are interesting which motivate pupils to concentrate and remain engaged throughout. Teachers encourage pupils to remember to use correct spelling and neat handwriting. Pupils take more care with their work and present it more neatly as a result. Teaching and learning in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. Because assessment information has not been used to plan lessons, teachers have not expected enough of the higher attaining pupils and work has not had sufficient challenge to enable them to attain the above average levels of which they are capable. Marking of work is unsatisfactory as it does not give pupils clear enough feedback on how well they have done or what they need to do to improve. Teaching and learning in these subjects is good in the juniors. Lessons have a brisk and purposeful pace and this means that pupils stay focussed on the task and complete more work in the time.
21. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory. Pupils now have satisfactory levels of handwriting and spelling and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. They are now therefore more confident writers, although more use of writing to record learning in other subjects is only occasionally and formally planned. Mental mathematics is taught well in lessons and teachers encourage pupils to explain the strategies they have used to solve problems. Teachers focus

appropriately on pupils planning and devising their own investigations in science, and this helps them understand the notion of fair testing. Teachers do not plan sufficiently well on how they can develop pupils' ICT skills in lessons. Consequently pupils' skills are falling behind by the end of Year 6.

22. Teachers use appropriate methods, which enable pupils with special educational needs to learn effectively. Sometimes these pupils work together in groups and this means they follow work specific to their needs. Teachers take full account of the targets set out in individual education plans in their planning and these are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. Teaching assistants offer skilled support through questioning and guiding pupils' learning. They keep careful note of how well pupils have done in lessons and this information is used effectively to plan the next steps in learning.
23. Teaching and learning in art and design and PE are good. Lessons are interesting and build systematically on pupils' previous learning and skills. Teaching and learning in other subjects where there was enough evidence to make a judgement are satisfactory and this ensures pupils are making satisfactory progress.

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

24. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are satisfactory. The breadth and balance of the curriculum have improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be too broad and superficial. At the previous inspection there were some weaknesses in PE due to the small hall. The school now teaches classes in smaller groups when PE takes place inside. Professional coaches from sporting clubs provide good support to the teaching of games skills. As a result of these improvements, standards in PE are now above average. The school has a suitable scheme of work for ICT. However, this has not yet been fully implemented and some aspects of the subject have not been taught often enough for pupils to develop the range and level of skills they need by the end of Year 6. Planned opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are unsatisfactory. There are some good links made between subjects, for example in art and design and RE, and DT and science, and these add interest for pupils and gives learning a purpose.
25. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the foundation stage are good. There is a careful balance between adult led and pupil-initiated activities to give a good balance to learning. The outdoor area is used effectively to support play in many areas of learning. For example, the children are growing plants to support learning in science activities and a wide range of equipment provides good opportunity for imaginative play. A good number of wheeled toys provide satisfactory opportunity for the children to develop suitable levels of confidence and co-ordination. Resources are organised so that the children can get to these and start to decide for themselves what they need and want to use in activities. There are plans to follow the advice from specialists to develop learning areas within the classroom further and involve the children more in planning their own learning.
26. Provision is good for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils learn appropriately about the use and misuse of medicines and drugs as part of the science curriculum. Sex education is taught to the oldest pupils, and others consider physical changes to their bodies in science and PE, and feelings and relationships in 'circle time' activities. Pupils are provided with accurate information, which promotes positive attitudes to a healthy lifestyle. The school is actively working towards the Healthy School's Award.

27. The curriculum is well organised for those pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for using individual education plans are effective in ensuring needs are met whilst still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum. Provision in statements is being very well met. There are very good links with outside support agencies and the school receives particularly valuable support from a local centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties. Good links are made with local secondary schools. Staff visit to find out about pupils' specific needs before they transfer and this ensures provision is in place before pupils start at their next school.
28. The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. They have been successfully implemented and improvements to the curriculum put into place. They have been appropriately resourced and are having a positive impact in reading and writing throughout the school, and numeracy in older classes. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to research for information about a current topic and to write down what they have learnt. The range of writing is not as wide as it should be however. Numeracy is appropriately used across the curriculum. In science pupils use accurately a range of measurements, collect data from their investigations and display them in a range of graphs. A science investigation in Class 3 into the "stretchiness" of tights provides a good example. Measuring skills are used appropriately in DT and science.
29. The school provides a good range of clubs for a small school. These include choir, football, games, recorders and French. These enable the pupils to learn to mix with others, form new friendships and to appreciate one another in a different environment. The curriculum is enhanced through a good range of visits made by pupils, and by visitors to the school, and good links with the local community. During the inspection, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the cricket coaching sessions and made very good progress in their skills because they were so engaged in the lessons.
30. The school provides well for pupils' personal development. The good standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained. Opportunities for encouraging spiritual awareness are good. The school aims to ensure that everyone is fully included and valued, and there is an ethos of mutual respect. The topics used in assemblies help pupils to understand life beyond themselves. They are also used effectively to reinforce strong moral and social values such as friendship, caring for others and care for the environment. The carefully chosen music as pupils enter and leave assembly – 'Morning' from Peer Gynt's Suite during the inspection week – helps to create a sense of tranquillity and occasion. In RE pupils reflect on their own beliefs and those of other faiths. Older pupils have studied poetry on the themes of anger, hope, love and hate and developed their ideas through writing their own prayers. Although not specifically planned, teachers seek ways to capture pupils' interest and imagination and to consider the feelings of others. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed sensitivity when they were encouraged to consider the qualities that made a hero.
31. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The school works hard to explain the difference between right and wrong. Staff in the school are good role models for the pupils, with the headteacher setting a particularly strong example. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to each other and to adults are good, and they are usually well behaved. Awards presented at the weekly celebration assembly acknowledge effort and good behaviour, as well as good work and achievements in and out of school. The school encourages pupils to think of others less fortunate than themselves. Substantial sums have been raised for a wide range of charities, and pupils' own ideas for helping others are encouraged. Pupils' social development is enhanced by the good range of extra-curricular activities and outings, and, for Year 6, a residential visit. Pupils, recently returned from their residential visit, said they had appreciated

being *'treated like grown ups'*. They were pleased that the leaders of their outdoor pursuits programme had said they were one of the best behaved groups they had met.

32. The school provides well for pupils' cultural development. They learn about other countries, times and cultures through history and geography, for example through their studies of the Tudors, Ancient Greeks and Victorians. Their learning is developed through visits to places of cultural interest such as a Tudor school, the British Museum and the Toy Museum. Links with the local church strengthen pupils' understanding of their own culture. They are encouraged to appreciate different styles of art and, through music, learn about the works of various composers and instruments from different cultures. Although quite challenging for a school where pupils do not have a range of ethnic backgrounds, there are examples around the school in displays and work, of pupils being brought into contact with cultures quite different from their own experience.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Spellbrook is a caring and inclusive community where pupils are looked after very well. They feel secure and confident. This is because the small size of the school means that staff know pupils very well and respond effectively to their individual needs.
34. The school's procedures for health and safety, child protection and encouraging good behaviour are very effective in promoting high standards of pupil welfare. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and her knowledge of her pupils and their backgrounds, together with clear guidance for both teaching and non-teaching staff, provides a very good level of protection. The school nurse visits regularly and is available to meet with parents of children who are causing concern.
35. The arrangements for health and safety are good and the headteacher and a governor carry out regular checks of the building and site. An appropriate number of staff are qualified in first aid and all incidents are properly recorded. Staff have a good awareness of those pupils with specific medical needs so that they can respond immediately, if necessary. Lunchtime supervision is well organised and midday supervisors regularly meet with the headteacher to discuss any issues arising at playtimes. Parents are happy with the way the school looks after their children.
36. The behaviour policy sets out clearly the expectations for pupils, parents and staff, and identifies positive behaviour management techniques. Effective procedures are in place to promote good behaviour, and are based appropriately on praise and positive reinforcement. School and classroom rules are displayed and all pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils have a say in their class rules and so have a stake in keeping them.
37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Parents are asked to inform the school on the first day of their child's absence. Registers are monitored regularly by a teaching assistant who promptly follows up any unexplained absences. There is a productive working relationship with the education welfare officer who provides good support for pupils with irregular attendance.
38. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well. Because staff know pupils well, any concerns or problems are quickly identified and dealt with. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils, and consistently praise effort and good behaviour. They teach pupils to value and celebrate the qualities of others. Achievements both in and out of school are shared proudly in the weekly celebration assembly.

39. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. There are very good procedures in English, mathematics and science, which record exactly what the pupils can do against national comparisons and provide teachers with good information about how well pupils are progressing. There are effective procedures in all other subjects which record how well pupils have done, and which compare to the relevant national levels. Detailed assessments made on entry to school enable teachers to identify pupils' particular needs early, and the information is used effectively to put suitable provision in place quickly. The use of assessment information to make improvements to the curriculum is good. To this end the school has improved the history and geography schemes of work, increased the number of data handling activities in mathematics and focussed on developing skills in science. They have put more emphasis on pupils' spelling and handwriting and, as a result, standards in these subjects have improved.
40. The use of assessment information to plan learning, which matches the needs of individuals, is satisfactory. The information is used very effectively to identify overall school targets and suitable individual targets for most pupils in English, mathematics and science. These are written in child friendly language so pupils have a clear understanding what they mean. These procedures have been instrumental in raising standards in English, mathematics and science in the juniors, especially for more able pupils. They have not been used effectively to identify the underachievement in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics and science. Individual progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science is tracked conscientiously against national curriculum levels as pupils move through the school, and provides useful information about how much progress pupils have made. However, the school does not yet monitor progress mid year to ask whether pupils are on track to achieve their targets and whether they have made enough progress during the year. Targets in science for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are lower than those in English and mathematics and although aware of this, the school has not had the time to deal with this discrepancy.
41. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs with a statement. There are effective assessment procedures in place for the early identification of difficulties and concerns. Individual education plans are sufficiently specific for accurate assessments of progress to be made. Suitable support is put into place and this is effective in helping pupils to make good progress. Specialists from outside agencies give good support to pupils with special educational needs of behavioural nature. They monitor their behaviour closely offering advice to the school about how to raise their self-esteem and thus improve their attitudes and behaviour in lessons. As a result, these pupils are learning to develop a greater self-awareness and build positive relationships with classmates and adults with whom they work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Evidence from meetings with parents, and the survey, indicates clearly that they are very happy with the school. They like its small size and value the individual attention their children receive. They appreciate the support which the school gives when any pupil or their family have any problems. There are no significant areas of concern. Parents' main wish is to have a car park so that they can pick their children up at the end of the day with less hassle.
43. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their needs. They provide appropriate support and regularly review their children's progress. They are very pleased with extra help their children receive and the good progress they are making.
44. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good. Parents are well informed of school events by regular newsletters. A parent helps pupils produce their own newspaper

'Planet Spellbrook'. The school's prospectus is being updated, but the governors' annual report presents parents with very detailed and useful information on the school's activities. Each term parents are updated on the school's action plan following the previous inspection – this is very good practice. Parents are kept well informed about what their children will be studying because teachers send out helpful information on topics for the year. The pupils' progress reports are satisfactory. They give parents a clear picture of what their child knows and can do, and identify areas for improvement. A good feature is the letter written by each pupil to his or her parents informing them of their achievements over the year. There are progress meetings with parents each term where targets for children are set and discussed.

45. The school's links with parents are effective. When children join the school in the Foundation Stage, parents meet with the classteacher to find out how they can help their child's learning at home. Parents are encouraged to talk with teachers or the headteacher at any time about their children's progress or about any concerns they may have. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to their children's education. A good number come into school to help with reading and extra-curricular activities and two parents help in the library. Parents willingly help on school trips and parent governors play an active part in the school, providing a positive link between parents and the school. At home, most parents are supportive and listen to their children read or help with homework tasks. There is always good attendance at parental consultation evenings. The parent teacher association organises social and fundraising events, such as the summer fair and Christmas bazaar, to provide the school with resources to support teaching and learning. For example, they recently bought books for the library and PE equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and this has been instrumental in making the good improvements in so many areas in the short time since the previous inspection. The last inspection identified the ineffectiveness of the governing body as a key issue for improvement. This has been extensively tackled and governors are now very effective. Responses to their questionnaire demonstrate that these are views shared by parents. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection.
47. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school's development and sets high expectations for staff and pupils. Standards of teaching and the quality of pupils' learning are improving as a result. The work of less experienced staff responsible for subject development is guided and supported by her. This has ensured good progress in the key areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. She has retained tight control over the work of subject co-ordinators in order to bring about the progress noted by inspectors, and staff have learned much about their role in raising standards as a result. Arrangements for increasing their accountability for leading and managing their subjects are now rightly being considered by the school. This will ensure that the good practice she has established will be firmly embedded, and provide a broader base of management expertise in all staff.
48. The headteacher takes the role of special educational needs co-ordinator and, with the support of a teaching assistant, manages the provision well. The teaching assistants offer valuable support for pupils with special educational needs. They are well trained in the school and by outside experts. There are plans in place to provide disabled access, including toilet facilities for pupils with physical difficulties.
49. The governors make a significant contribution to the work of the school. They are very well organised, take their responsibilities very seriously and ensure they are properly trained to carry

them out. As a result, they work well as a team, both amongst themselves and with the school staff. Their training ensures they are fully briefed when making visits to the school. These are regularly planned, have a clear focus and lead to useful discussions with teachers and other governors. A notable feature of these visits is the practice of asking two focussed questions. These questions often challenge the school to justify why, for example, resources are allocated as they are, or to explain if teachers need to modify their teaching to accommodate an imbalance in the number of boys and girls in the class. They scrutinise the information about pupils' academic results very carefully, comparing it with that of other schools and consider it alongside the headteacher's explanation of why things are as they are. Training on the interpretation of data has taken place so governors are able to carry out this task with increasing confidence and this has contributed to raising standards. The good practice they have established is not yet written down formally to ensure that this rigorous system continues to hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance. They have a detailed schedule of work to guide their programme of activities and meetings.

50. The school monitors and evaluates its performance in detail, and takes effective action to secure improvement. The headteacher has established rigorous procedures for checking the standards being achieved by all pupils. Information from national tests and the school's own assessments is carefully analysed so that the school has a clear picture of where it is achieving well and where it needs to improve. The underachievement in mathematics and science of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 has therefore been noted although not yet acted upon. Governors and staff share this information and have drawn up a detailed plan with clear and measurable targets for improvement to guide future work.
51. The extent to which educational priorities are supported through the school's financial planning is excellent. The available budget is allocated after very careful consideration of the school's needs. For example, decisions on the level of teaching assistant hours to manage the administration of support for pupils with special educational needs have been balanced against the need to make more effective use of the headteacher's time for checking and improving the quality of class teaching. Careful use of funds has also led to good professional development of staff and supported the school's excellent arrangements for performance management. As a result, key staff are now better equipped to take on further responsibility for managing aspects of the school's work. Day to day financial administration is of a high order, with a recent independent audit finding no significant weakness, although the use of information technology for other aspects of administration has scope for development. The school makes good use of the principles of Best Value when making decisions on spending. Although it regularly provides parents with an excellent commentary on progress and improvement, procedures for consulting them on major decisions relating to the curriculum and expenditure are at an early stage of development.
52. The accommodation and learning resources are adequate and, in spite of the limitations of the building, particularly the size of the hall, the school generally makes good use of these. In spite of the limitations set by the hall, the school makes good provision for PE in other ways and achieves above average standards as a result. The headteacher and governors recognise the importance of effective staff. Since the previous inspection, existing staff have become increasingly skilled and careful steps are taken to appoint new staff who have the skills and attributes needed to raise standards still further. This is reflected in the appointment of a new deputy headteacher to lead the necessary improvements in provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2 in September. The school has a very good, shared commitment and capacity for further improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to improve further the quality of education for all pupils the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise achievement for more able pupils at the end of Year 2 in mathematics and science by:
 - Raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of doing.
 - Planning work of a more challenging nature for higher attaining pupils.
 - Using assessment information to track the progress of individuals and set more challenging targets in both subjects.
 - Monitoring teaching and learning more closely to track whether pupils are making enough progress.
 - Improving marking so that pupils receive good feedback on how well they have done
(Paragraphs 3, 4, 20, 75, 77, 79, 80)
- (2) Raise standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6 by:
 - Ensuring full implementation of the planned scheme of work
 - Implementing the school's action plan for the subject.
 - Providing additional training for identified areas.
 - Planning to use ICT more frequently in subjects and lessons.
 - Improving the range of software.
(Paragraphs 8, 21, 24, 28, 84, 87, 101)

The school should also consider extending opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles and for different purposes, such as arguing a particular point of view, or reporting events.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	12	9	1	0	0
Percentage	0	8.3	50	37.5	4.2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	95
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	21

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	6	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	10	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	75 (100)	75 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (92)	83 (83)	83 (83)
	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	5	9	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	10	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (77)	71 (77)	86 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	9	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (77)	79 (77)	86 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

The numbers of boys and girls have been omitted because there are fewer than ten in each group.

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	82	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	32
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

There is an additional teacher from Australia currently working in Key Stage 1 who is classified as unqualified.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	330199
Total expenditure	307569
Expenditure per pupil	3272
Balance brought forward from previous year	5977

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	41	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	37	10	0	3
The teaching is good.	66	31	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	28	10	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	22	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	63	34	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	84	16	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	25	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	41	12	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents would like to see the completion of the proposed car park to make it easier to drop off and collect their children at the start and end of the day, and to allow more and easier opportunity for them to talk both formally and informally with staff and each other.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. Children start school part time in the September or January before their fourth birthday. They attend part time as nursery children until the September or January before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, 6 children were part time and 9 full time. It is only this year that they have started at the age of four, so reception and nursery aged children have been in school for one year. They start school with a range of abilities but this is average overall except in early reading and writing skills, which are below average. They make good progress in the reception class, and they all attain the expected levels of attainment, the early goals by the end of the reception year. Many children exceed these, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Adults know the children's personal and educational needs well. They therefore respond to them individually and make sure planned activities match the children's learning and interests. Activities are mostly taught through play. There is a suitable balance between adult led and child chosen activities, and although not planned formally into the day to day organisation of learning, adults respond positively to the children ideas for self initiated play. For example, in order not to be left out, the children decided they would like to wear badges like their teachers during the inspection. The labels were left on the side for the children to find and those who wanted to, wrote their own sticky labels to wear. Adults work well together. While the teacher works with the reception children on specific targets, the teaching assistant works with younger ones on the same activity pitched at a different level. Routines are well established and the children therefore feel secure. They organise themselves independently for register and class lesson introductions, following the expectations with confidence. The quality of marking is of a high standard and provides very detailed information about how well the children have completed a task. This ensures that learning builds systematically and the children are developing good levels of basic skills as a result.
56. The curriculum is well planned and organised, and this helps the children to develop an interest in learning. The school makes suitable arrangements for parents and children to visit the school before they start and this helps build relationships quickly. The care and consideration shown by the adults to children and parents helps children gain in confidence quickly, and parents know that their child will be well cared for. Careful assessments are made of what the children can do before they start school and this helps the school put well-matched provision into place as soon as they start.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. Particular emphasis is placed on the children developing self-esteem and confidence and as a result they learn to value themselves and each other very quickly as soon as they start school. The classroom is well organised and the children are given freedom to organise their own things independently. Teamwork is the name of the game and therefore the children develop strong relationships and help each other out with a range of tasks. They play together amicably and take it in turns to ride the trikes outside. When playing together in the water at the beginning of the day, three children were happy to share the toys and co-operated very well to act out 'Ariel's rescue from the sharks'. Nursery and reception children play happily alongside each other, sharing and taking turns with the toys and activities on offer. Expectations that the

children will do things for themselves was reflected in the impressive way they got themselves changed for PE. Reception children looked after their own belongings very well, folding their clothes neatly ready for return to the classroom. As a result of good teaching, the children make good progress and many exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Children are confident talkers as soon as they start school. The school places great emphasis on raising the children's self-esteem so they are not afraid to contribute in lessons, in small groups and as a class. They all talk to adults and to each other confidently, sharing ideas and listening to the views of others. Children ask questions if they are not sure about something and make suggestions on how certain activities can be organised. They take part in a range of activities to develop their imaginative play. For example, one group of reception children used puppets to retell the story of the Owl Babies, while nursery children acted out roles in the greengrocer role-play area.
59. The reception children have good knowledge of letter sounds and are using these to help them work out words they have not met before in their reading. This is because the children take part in a range of games as soon as they start at the age of three to match the sound to its letter. This is done through collections, rhyming games and sorting activities. Children enjoy looking at books and taking them home to share with a parent. The emphasis is on the technical skills of writing and spelling and the children therefore form letters and spell words correctly by the end of the reception year. Few go beyond writing more than two sentences however because they are concentrating on getting the writing correct. Therefore there are no extended pieces of work in evidence. The good quality teaching ensures the children make good progress in their early reading and writing skills to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

60. The children start school with average mathematical development. They make satisfactory progress and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good emphasis is given to the children solving problems for themselves. This was demonstrated by a group of reception children organising seats for snack time. They worked together to work out how many chairs they needed altogether and how these would be arranged around the two tables available. The activity involved counting to 14 and working out how many more chairs they would need. Much of the recorded work in numeracy however is identical and does not reflect the good match to individual learning needs evident in other areas of learning.
61. The children have a good knowledge and understanding of shapes and measures due to the practical way they explore these. The older children enjoyed playing the 'Guess the shape' game, which provided great challenge to their thinking. While one child listened, the rest of the group described the properties of a shape for their classmate to guess. *'It has six flat faces which are all the same size'* was such a precise description that the cube shape was guessed correctly. The youngest children explored the properties of the different shapes by finding out which ones rolled down a slope. They linked the curved faces of some shapes with this property and noted that those with flat faces did not roll.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Teaching and learning are good and the children make good progress to attain above average levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many children exceed these. Activities are well planned to relate to the children's personal experiences and are practical in nature. Therefore the children are interested and motivated to take part. They use their senses to find out about a range of materials and use the information to design and make models and other objects. During the inspection the reception children evaluated a range of shopping bags. They noted the size, shape and decoration of these before considering the design, how the handles were attached and the suitability of the materials for strength and weight. They used this evaluation to design and make their own bags, which were strong enough to carry a tin of pineapple safely. They used scissors competently to cut the materials to size and selotape to stick the pieces together. The children were rightly proud of their finished bags and were keen to show them off to any audience. Suitable opportunities are provided for them to use computers to count objects and identify letter sounds. Most use the mouse confidently to select the sound or number they want. Growing activities, and finding out about materials using their senses, give the children a good start to scientific knowledge and understanding.

Physical development

63. The children run with confidence and control and are developing a satisfactory awareness of their own space. They play safely when on the playground with older children and when playing in their own designated area. During the inspection, the children were getting ready for Sport's Day. They co-operated very well together, working in teams to run a variety of races, which they had made up themselves based on their shopping activities. They had a great sense of competition, but at the same time giving each other encouragement to achieve. Teachers' planning indicates that a full range of physical development activities is planned during the year. Due to the wide range of suitable making, drawing and writing activities, the children have good pencil and scissor control. As a result of satisfactory teaching and learning, most children are attaining the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

64. The children explore the range of sounds made from different musical instruments during suitable activities. They sing with confidence the songs with which they are familiar, joining in with singing during assembly with gusto. Younger children enjoyed playing a game, finding the matching instrument to the one played by a classmate behind a screen. They listened carefully to identify the sound and correctly reproduced this on their matching instrument. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to change sounds. There are suitable opportunities for the children to create pictures from paint, paper and fabric. Imaginative play is enjoyed through a range of activities including role-play activities and using puppets to act out favourite stories. During the inspection, younger children enjoyed buying and selling fruits and vegetables in the greengrocer role-play area. As a result of satisfactory teaching and learning, the children make satisfactory progress to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

65. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, although this is not yet reflected in national test results at the end of Year 6. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in recent year groups. Standards have improved in writing throughout the school because teaching is better. Assessment information is used very effectively to match learning to different abilities. Therefore pupils with special educational needs are given good support in lessons on specific skills, and more able pupils are challenged to attain the higher than average standards of which they are capable. As a result, nearly half of the Year 6 pupils attained the above average levels in the national tests this year. Achievement in Years 1 and 2

is now satisfactory, and in Years 3-6 it is good. Older pupils have made up their previous underachievement due to consistently good teaching in these classes. Overall, achievement since pupils started school is satisfactory.

66. The standard of pupils' speaking and listening is generally average throughout the school. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to use appropriate vocabulary, both for ordinary discussion and when talking about their work. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, for example, many pupils used specific terms when talking about the way fiction and non-fiction books differed. They used the terms *glossary* and *index* accurately and a pupil with special educational needs confidently volunteered the information that "*Page numbers start at 2, after the contents page*". Although pupils are keen to talk, opportunities are not always created during lessons to structure their conversation in a purposeful way. In the same Year 1 and 2 lesson, a group of pupils were keen to discuss the contents of a page about seeds, but an opportunity to introduce them to new vocabulary, such as *edible* and *inedible*, was not used. In a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, pupils understood and used the terms *dialogue* and *direct speech* and, when the teacher asked them to provide alternative words to make a piece of text more exciting, they responded enthusiastically and made good progress as a result. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are beginning to respond in greater detail to teachers' questions although many still find this difficult. In one lesson observed in which pupils were exploring the feelings of character in a story, the teacher made good use of vocabulary suggested by higher attaining pupils to improve the quality of spoken language being used by all pupils. The standard achieved improved as a result.
67. Pupils enjoy reading and by Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average. Reading is systematically taught so that younger pupils learn to build words from their basic letter sounds and can work out the meaning of unfamiliar words from their context or by using clues in the illustrations. In addition to knowing how non-fiction books differ from fiction, and how to use their particular features to research information, pupils also know how to select stories that will appeal to them. They know about information provided in the 'blurb', and use their knowledge of authors they have already read when choosing new books. Year 6 pupils of both average and higher attainment read fluently and with expression. They tackle unfamiliar words with confidence and make inferences from the text. An example of this was heard when a Year 6 girl of average attainment corrected herself when she misread the word *rummaged*, and then suggested that it implied an untidy and, possibly, poor household. They are developing good insights into contemporary literature and discuss different genres with a degree of confidence. Pupils in Years 1 – 4 have a regular library time and they use the library system to find books about a current topic. Pupils in Year 6 have insecure general knowledge of how fiction or non-fiction is organised in libraries. Too few know about the Dewey classification system because there have been too few opportunities for them to use this in previous years. Although the school has a small non-fiction library, it does not make effective use of it, or class libraries, to stimulate interest in reading and provide opportunities to acquire basic library skills.
68. Although standards of writing are below average overall at the end of Year 6, standards are average in all year groups up to Year 4. Higher attaining older pupils achieve above average standards. Pupils are now encouraged to write more in a range of situations, particularly in other subjects. In history, for example, pupils write about the armour worn by Roman soldiers, or how society in Ancient Greece compares with our own. In RE, pupils write about the basic beliefs of Islam for example and re-write stories used by Muslims and Christians to explain the teachings of Allah and Christ. Handwriting is now systematically taught and pupils present their work neatly and, in their 'Best Work' books, with evident pride. Work is planned to challenge pupils at all levels. They use drafting books to improve writing before producing a final copy. The school has paid particular attention to the weaknesses on writing identified in the previous inspection. However, pupils still do not have enough opportunities to write in a range of styles or for different purposes, such as arguing a particular point of view, or reporting events.

69. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and consistently good in Years 5 and 6. This is because teachers' expectations are higher in Years 3 to 6, particularly for higher attaining pupils. During the inspection the best teaching was conducted at a brisk pace, placed a strong emphasis on the quality of written work expected and, above all, secured pupils' interest and attention. This was exemplified in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, when the teacher successfully adopted the role of a character in the story they were writing and discussed her feelings with the pupils. This immediately engaged them in their learning, stimulated a range of discussion and ideas and, importantly, promoted positive attitudes throughout the lesson. Where teaching was less effective, it was because the tasks set for groups of pupils to work at independently were not as well matched to their ability and the pace of learning slowed as a result. Teachers' marking is of a high quality in Years 3 to 6. It is detailed and, most importantly, gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Pupils therefore have a good knowledge of their own learning. Individual writing targets are agreed and, as pupils use these more regularly, they have the potential to provide an important tool for further improvement.
70. The subject is very well managed. By checking teachers' plans, improving resources and the standard of teaching, significant improvement has been achieved. A particularly strong feature is the extent to which the school analyses the results of assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses, and uses the information to set challenging targets for pupils and check their progress towards achieving these. Teachers' planning ensures that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are fully included in lessons. ICT is not used enough in lessons. This is identified as a priority on the school's improvement plan.

MATHEMATICS

71. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. Achievement is now satisfactory overall even though this is not reflected in standards at the end of Year 6, which are still well below average. This is because almost half of this year group have special educational needs and have joined the school since Year 2, and when they started, their levels of attainment in mathematics were lower than English and science. Teaching is better in the juniors and, because of the quality of assessment procedures and their effective use, work is matched appropriately to their different learning needs. Those with special educational needs receive the support they need in lessons on specific skills, and more able pupils are challenged to achieve the higher than average standards of which they are capable. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at the end of Year 4 are average and are still rising. Therefore pupils achieve well. This is not the case in Years 1 and 2 where standards are well below average. Although pupils with special educational needs have made good progress to attain average standards, more able pupils are not challenged enough in these year groups and their achievement is unsatisfactory.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 overall. Although the lesson seen was satisfactory, work in books shows it to be unsatisfactory over the year. Work is not marked well enough and pupils are not given sufficient guidance on how they can improve. Expectations are too low in terms of pupils' presentation and what they can do. For example, when organising information they had collected in science as a pictogram, Year 1 and 2 pupils understood that each creature was represented by a sticker on a pictograph and worked sensibly in pairs. However, there was no opportunity for them to consider other ways of sorting this information and no attempt was made to consider what they could learn from it. Work in books suggests they rarely work with numbers beyond 20 until recently, and their quick recall of totals and subtractions to and from ten are not as secure as they should be.

73. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are good. Lessons are organised and managed well and pupils show good interest and concentration. Work in books is marked to a high standard with clear guidance on how pupils can improve. Pupils therefore have good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers insist on neat presentation and pupils take a pride in their work. Teachers' planning is detailed and lessons are well structured. Lessons always start with a clear explanation of what pupils are going to learn and they know what is expected of them before moving on to a brisk mental warm up which gets pupils thinking about numbers. Pupils enjoy these sessions and concentrate well to find the answer as quickly as they can. In all the lessons observed pupils were learning appropriate mathematical vocabulary and were given good opportunities to explain their strategies, firstly in pairs to try out their explanations with a friend, before sharing them with the class. Work is matched to need so in one lesson seen, less able mathematicians worked with addition and subtraction number stories, while more able ones worked with multiplication and division. As a result, pupils understood that addition or multiplication could be done in any order, but that when subtracting or dividing you must always start with the largest number. This is helping them to understand relationships between addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division. Pupils concentrate and work hard in lessons because they are interesting.
74. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are provided with real challenge in lessons. Activities are practical and suitable time targets to get work finished within a certain time keep pupils' interest and concentration throughout lessons. Sharing the learning objective at the start of lessons makes pupils look forward to learning. For example, in one lesson seen pupils were consolidating their skills of measuring angles with a protractor and plotting these on a graph. They remained motivated throughout the lesson because of the promise that the next day they would use the skills to find the treasure in a 'Quest'. Higher attaining pupils learned how to use precise mathematical language to instruct their partner on how to get from one point to the next, whilst the average group measured the angles using a protractor. The below average group was well supported by the teacher, to learn how to place co-ordinates in four parts on a graph.
75. Responsibility for the subject has recently changed and it is now being well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for improvements and has identified the areas for development. Assessment of work and analysis of test data are used effectively to identify what needs to be changed in the curriculum coverage and to ensure pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported. It is, however, not used sufficiently well to deal with the underachievement of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. Planned opportunities to use ICT to support learning in the subject is unsatisfactory especially for older pupils. Opportunities are missed in particular to use it to handle and communicate data and to work on mathematical problems using spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

76. There has been good improvement in science results over the last two years. Although results are still below average at the end of Year 6, more able pupils are now attaining the higher than average standards of which they are capable. This is because teachers have attended training and have better personal knowledge of the subject. They therefore expect more of pupils and provide greater challenge in lessons. Pupils now make good progress in the juniors to achieve satisfactorily overall since starting school. Since half of Year 6 joined the school in the juniors and nearly half have special educational needs, this overall good progress is not reflected in the national test results. Work in books and lesson observations indicate that standards lower down the school are improving and pupils in Years 3 and 4 are attaining average levels.

77. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are still too low because progress is still not good enough for higher attaining pupils. The majority of pupils attain at least average levels, including pupils with special educational needs who make good progress due to the support they receive in lessons. Most other pupils make satisfactory progress. However, higher attaining pupils do not attain the above average levels of which they are capable. This is because teaching has not expected enough of these pupils and work has not been planned at a high enough level to challenge them sufficiently well.
78. Good emphasis is given to developing pupils' investigation skills. Many lessons are practical and therefore pupils are interested in their learning. This was evident when younger pupils went outside to look for creatures and plants in different habitats. They learned about which plants are most likely to be found on the school field and which creatures liked to live amongst them. The pond creatures caused great excitement. As a result, pupils noted that some creatures were found in certain habitats because of their life support needs. This higher level of understanding is not evident in other work however, and Year 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of forces and materials and their properties is limited. Older pupils follow structured guidance to record their findings of science experiments. This guidance enables them to use measurements to draw conclusions about what is happening and why. For example, when finding out which fabric is best for babies' clothing, pupils carefully noted the amount of holes that appeared in a range of fabrics which were rubbed a certain number of times on the ground. They interpreted the results of the test to work out which fabric was most likely to stand up to a baby's crawling and thus make the most hardwearing trousers. ICT is not used often enough to support work in science despite recent improvements. When it is used, it is used effectively. For example, in one good lesson, the digital microscope was used to magnify the seed for pupils to observe closely. Pupils were clearly excited by this and were spurred on to find out more about how seeds are dispersed. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use sensors to monitor heat, light and sound and record measurements as graphs.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in the juniors. Although teaching and learning for the majority of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, it is unsatisfactory for higher attaining pupils. There has been significant improvement in the quality of teachers' marking in older classes and, as a result of the feedback and guidance they receive, pupils have a much clearer idea of how well they have done and what they need to learn next. Questions probe understanding and pose further problems for pupils to consider. Marking is still unsatisfactory in the infant class. Little guidance is offered and gives little information about what the pupils need to learn next. In the junior classes, teachers encourage pupils to think carefully for themselves about how they are planning a particular investigation and why, and this helps them gain a better understanding of how scientific processes work and why things happen. For example, when exploring how seeds are dispersed, Year 5 and 6 pupils discussed the possibilities together as a group before sharing their ideas as a class. Teachers use a range of learning methods to sustain pupils' interest and direct their thinking. For example, by floating a coconut in water, pupils immediately realised that some seeds are dispersed by water. Through discussion and demonstration, pupils considered a range of other possibilities and went on to note which ways were more effective than others. Learning is presented in relevant contexts and this sparks the pupils' imaginations and gives learning a real purpose. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils were presented by a request from Father Christmas to find which stockings were most suitable to use for holding the presents. The pupils' subsequent investigations into which tights had the most stretch and therefore would hold the most presents were more meaningful for them.

80. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. An action plan from the previous inspection made sure that the necessary improvements are in place. This has led to better teaching and learning in the juniors. However, there are still weaknesses in monitoring pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 and the underachievement of higher attaining pupils has not yet been dealt with. Assessment procedures are very good in the subject. There is useful information about how well pupils have done and targets are identified to monitor how much progress pupils make. However, the information is not used sufficiently well to set challenging enough targets for higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are predicted to reach higher levels in English and maths.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Standards in art and design are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum is rich and pupils enjoy painting, drawing and making models and sculptures in a range of materials and different contexts. All pupils achieve well.
82. Good links are identified with other subjects and this gives learning a real purpose. In RE the children have reproduced a range of pictures to reflect 'Our beautiful world' including pictures of fish in mosaic designs, realistic observational drawings and paintings of flowers, and clay sculptures of animals and plants. Similar work by different artists is studied. Consequently, older pupils discuss the techniques used by Monet and Van Gogh in their work with good levels of knowledge and understanding. Younger pupils know how colours are mixed to make different tones through the numerous activities to create patterns and pictures linked to their work in science. For example, they used pastels with good control to blend and contrast colours when making their bee hive honeycomb patterns. Sculptures of creatures made from paper complete the display. Older pupils have produced some high quality copies of the designs of William Morris, combining colours to recreate the floral patterns in his work.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to demonstrate techniques for pupils to copy and extend. As a result of teacher demonstration and clear explanation, older pupils layered colours successfully to recreate pictures of fruits. The finished pictures showed clearly how colours overlap and lines are used to give the fruit shape and form. Visiting artists are used to good effect to help with particular projects. This gives pupils real contexts through which to learn about how artists in the community go about creating their work. The clay floral arrangement produced by Year 5 and 6 pupils is of a high standard and is finished to good quality. Pupils developed their understanding of angles and pattern to produce paper geometric flower designs, before transferring these to clay. The individual designs were put together as a class composition before being fired in the school kiln, and painted and glazed appropriately.
84. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Careful thought has been given to how the curriculum could be developed to make learning interesting. Studies of art from other societies and countries have been identified in planning and this makes a good contribution to raising pupils' cultural awareness. ICT is not used effectively to support learning in the subject and is an area for development. Pupils' work is monitored closely to make sure that the development of skills builds on previous learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Standards in design and technology are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the previous inspection as pupils are now being taught at a level

appropriate for their age. Over the last two years, the school has put into place a curriculum, which enabled pupils to learn skills they should have learned at a younger age. Therefore, although pupils' recent progress has been good, their achievements are satisfactory overall.

86. There are strengths in pupils' ability to build models with working mechanisms. Year 3 and 4 pupils used a range of devices such as levers and battery circuits to make moving parts for their Christmas cards and houses. Pupils enjoy these activities and were pleased to talk about how they were made. Because pupils are expected to plan their own design, the houses of the Three Little Pigs are all of an independent design and the alarm systems put in to warn the pigs of the wolf's impending arrival are very sophisticated. Older pupils have developed this knowledge and used pneumatics to add moving parts to their monster models. Younger pupils show off their finished puppets with obvious pride. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learned to decide before making them what their puppets will look like, then to choose for themselves the materials they will need to fit their design proposal. The stitching is neat and tidy and finished to a good standard.
87. There are weaknesses in food technology because the school has not focused on this aspect of the subject as much as it should. Pupils have taken part in cooking activities but they have not used their evaluation skills as often to review what they have made and consider how their recipes can be improved. ICT is not used effectively to support learning because opportunities are not identified when planning lessons.
88. No teaching was seen during the inspection but evidence of pupils' work indicates that it is at least satisfactory. Teachers' planning identifies clearly the structure of each activity and that pupils will evaluate, plan, design and make their products independently. Older pupils' designs of musical instruments show a good knowledge and understanding of the design and make process. They evaluated carefully the different components of instruments that make good quality sound production and have built these successfully into their own models. Careful evaluation has led to ongoing improvements being made to the finished instruments, which are of a good standard
89. Leadership and management of the subject are good and have led to recent good improvement in standards and achievement. The review of the curriculum immediately following the previous inspection has led to a thinning down of content and linking learning with other subjects such as science and mathematics. This had meant that pupils develop knowledge and skills to a higher level than previously.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

90. During the inspection, only one geography lesson and no history lessons were observed. Therefore, not enough lessons were seen to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. Work in books and talking to pupils, show standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory for all pupils. This reflects good improvement from the previous inspection when standards were unsatisfactory in both subjects. Since then the school has improved the curriculum to make sure pupils get a broad and balanced range of activities.
91. In history, pupils in Year 1 and 2 are encouraged to think why people in the past acted as they did. They use information sources to answer questions about the past. This is evident in their knowledge of the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. Their models of houses found at the time of the Great Fire of London reflect their sound knowledge of how these looked at the time, their features, design and facilities. This gave satisfactory insight into the way people used to live. In geography, previous work shows pupils have been taught appropriate

early map work skills and they are presently looking at plans from a bird's eye view and identifying the physical and human features. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use geographical language to describe these. They show sound general knowledge and talk about other countries they have visited. Through their studies of another place, pupils compare and describe the things that are the same and things that are different between the local villages and Harlow. They understand the need to take care of their environment through work linked to the assembly theme 'Our Beautiful World' and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual and moral development.

92. Year 6 pupils demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in history. They recall interpreting information from a variety of sources to learn about the everyday life, homes, and education of the Ancient Greeks. They discovered where and how the Olympic Games started and considered other legacies left by these people including certain words we use today. In geography, pupils used a range of maps and atlases to find out about the rivers, places and mountains of the world and pupils remember the location of many of these when referring to a globe. They have a good factual knowledge of continents, countries and their capitals. Suitable fieldwork skills are developed through practical investigations. In the one good lesson observed during the inspection, pupils conducted a traffic survey and showed sound understanding of the problems experienced locally. They used the information to put forward arguments for and against closing the road to traffic. Although the Internet is used under supervision to research places around the world, there are missed opportunities to use computers to support learning in other aspects, for example recording measurements and outcomes of surveys in graphical form.
93. In both subjects the school has successfully dealt with the issues from the previous inspection. Leadership and management of both subjects are satisfactory. The school has put in place schemes of work based on national guidelines, which are appropriate in ensuring pupils gain a balanced curriculum and skills are developed systematically. This new guidance and improved resources are having a positive effect on raising standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Discussions with pupils and completed work indicate that standards are in line with national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and their achievement is satisfactory. They are below average at the end of Year 6 and achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because there have not been enough opportunities for older pupils to develop skills in some aspects of the subject. The school is well equipped with computers in classrooms but they were not used very much in lessons during the inspection. There is some work in books to support literacy but little evidence of using computers in mathematics and science.
95. By the end of Year 2 pupils produce text and pictures and learn to handle and display simple information as graphs. They use the keyboard and mouse confidently and save and print their work independently. They control a robot successfully by giving it a series of commands. These skills are taught in isolation however and not linked in a planned way to other subjects. By the end of Year 6 pupils have average skills in handling and communicating information. However, pupils do not use computers enough to explore patterns or to make decisions, for example, by creating a sequence of instructions to control a 'screen turtle' or the movement of a model. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work with data including that obtained from using sensors. Consequently standards in these aspects of the subject are below average. Pupils have supervised access to the Internet for research and use it well to search for information to support their learning in some subjects such as history and geography.

96. The one lesson seen during the inspection was good. The teacher showed good knowledge and skills as she extended pupils' skills in how to present their work. The teacher successfully taught pupils to use *hyperlinks* when writing different outcomes in their stories. These enabled readers of the pupils' stories to click on part of the screen and be sent automatically to other pages and illustrations. Pupils were attentive and, as a result, learnt well how to use links and buttons to illustrate and link frames. The teacher made good use of technical language, which pupils quickly picked up. Although it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching as too few lessons were seen, it is evident from talking to staff that they have better expertise and confidence than reported at the last inspection, as a result of training. This is an improvement. However, they are not yet planning enough opportunities for pupils to use computers regularly in lessons. In teaching new skills the teachers have to rely on group work as they only have access to a small monitor. Other pupils are then engaged on other tasks and have to wait some time before they can practise their new skills. This restricts opportunities and progress.
97. There has been a recent change in responsibility for the subject and the leadership and management are currently satisfactory. The unsatisfactory achievement by the end of Year 6 has been identified and an appropriate plan is being implemented to deal with the weaknesses. It is too recent for it to have had a significant impact on standards.

MUSIC

98. It was not possible to observe any music lessons during the inspection. However, evidence drawn from sound and video recordings of pupils' performance indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
99. The school places strong emphasis on performing music. As a result, by Year 2 all pupils sing competently. By Year 4 pupils use a range of simple percussion instruments such as woodblocks, drums and glockenspiels confidently. They make sensitive choices, selecting and organising the sounds made to produce music representing, for example, the sound of waterfalls. They co-operate well with each other to play rhythmic accompaniments and phrases, unaided by an adult. All pupils sing regularly. Pupils in Year 6 sing confidently as a group, tackling songs with several parts, and are encouraged to develop the confidence to sing solo. This work often culminates in performance for their parents, such as the recent production of the musical play 'Alice'.
100. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure a wide range of musical experiences including listening to music from a variety of cultures and good opportunities for pupils to compose and perform. Planning rightly emphasises the use and understanding of technical vocabulary such as *tempo* and *timbre*. Teachers assess pupils' learning during lessons and use the information well to plan future work. Assemblies have weekly musical themes, which introduce instruments from different cultures using photographs and recordings, and opportunities to see and handle real instruments, such as a didgeridoo. While listening to the range of music pupils are encouraged to think about how this makes them feel. For example, during the inspection pupils listened to 'Morning' from Greig's *Peer Gynt Suite*, and discussed their feelings. One pupil explained that it made him think of the birdsong he heard in the morning. These opportunities make good contributions to pupils' cultural and spiritual development.
101. Two members of staff are well qualified to teach music. As a result the subject is viewed positively by pupils. Leadership and management are good and a range of musical activities are planned to provide pupils with rich performing opportunities. The school choir sings at school functions and services and regularly visits a local retirement home to perform for the residents. There are three recorder groups and additional tuition is offered for violin and piano from outside

tutors. Visiting musicians also make a valuable contribution to pupils' experience. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT for composing and recording their own music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. Standards at the end of Year 1 and the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils have positive attitudes to PE and they achieve well.
103. During the inspection three outdoor games lessons were observed. In the Year 1 lesson pupils threw and caught balls with a good level of accuracy. They controlled their throws and, although catching was more of a challenge for all of them, the more able modified their positions in order to catch the ball more easily. Some pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how changing your position will give you an advantage in a competitive throwing game and all competed with enthusiasm and good sportsmanship. By Years 3 and 4, pupils have developed confident ball skills, are developing competence in hitting a small ball with a bat, and by Years 5 and 6 many can both strike the ball cleanly with a cricket bat and bowl a ball overarm with a degree of accuracy.
104. In all three lessons observed, teaching was either good or very good because it was well planned, the pupils behaved well and they tried hard to improve. As a result they demonstrated a good level of skill in the games they were playing and their progress was good. Teachers ensured the pupils warmed up well at the start of the lesson with a good range of exercises, using vocabulary such as *hamstrings* and *circulation* to explain the reasons for doing so. They consistently coached pupils throughout the lesson, helping individuals to refine their skills. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, the teacher's intervention to help a pupil develop a better arm action resulted in a clear improvement in bowling technique. Pupils who are unable to take an active part in the lessons due to temporary illness are involved fully by being asked to evaluate and appraise the work of others.
105. The subject is well led and managed. Effective use is made of visiting specialist coaches and teachers to raise expectations and ensure high quality teaching is available for pupils with a particular sporting talent. As a result, pupils are able to develop their skills further through local clubs, and two pupils have recently competed at county level in swimming and tennis. Swimming lessons by qualified teachers are provided at a nearby pool for all pupils. The school has a suitable range of good quality apparatus and gymnastic equipment, some of it recently purchased by parents. This, together with a carefully planned timetable, helps to compensate for the very small hall which is inadequate for teaching gymnastics to a whole class. A good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities are provided, including a residential visit for older pupils which provides further opportunities to develop physical skills and positive mental attributes to accompany them. The subject thus makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, as well as their moral and social education. The school has a detailed action plan for further improving the quality of teaching and to develop staff competence in teaching dance. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

106. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. From the evidence of this lesson and scrutiny of pupils' books and discussion with pupils, standards are judged to be average. Achievement is satisfactory.
107. The school's curriculum is based on the agreed local syllabus, modified appropriately to suit pupils' stages of learning. Christianity is at the core of the curriculum which also introduces pupils to other major world faiths such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism. In Years 1 and

2, pupils begin to consider how religion plays a part in everyday life. They learn that religions have their own symbols, such as the Christian cross and the Hindu Wheel of Life. They consider what makes people and places special, for example pupils wrote about '*someone who always makes you laugh*' and '*a secret place behind the settee*'. As pupils get older these ideas are revisited and developed so that opportunities are continually provided for pupils to reflect on human spirituality. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, thought about the qualities of a hero and one wrote a sensitive poem about the paralysed actor Christopher Reeve. On another occasion they used abstract art to depict the Christian belief that bread and wine can be used to represent the body and blood of Christ in a church service.

108. Resources for teaching have been steadily improved and are satisfactory. A range of objects which have special significance in other religions are used effectively in teaching to raise pupils' knowledge and purpose of different religions to their own. When learning about Islam, for example, pupils have opportunities to see a copy of the Qur'an and the head coverings worn by men while praying and, after seeing a Muslim prayer mat they also design their own. Books and stories are well used as a stimulus for learning and for encouraging pupils to write about the different, and similar, features of religions. For example, Year 4 pupils retold the parable of the sower, as well as the story of Muhammad, the spider and the dove. These improvements are having a positive effect on learning.
109. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson observed during the inspection, the teaching was good; it was briskly conducted and pupils made good progress. In order to help pupils understand the Holy Trinity, the teacher involved them in discussion about how everybody fulfils a different role in different peoples' eyes. Starting this discussion with a photograph and description of herself, immediately engaged the pupils' interest and a productive lesson followed in which pupils began to consider how God could be Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
110. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Teachers' planning is regularly checked and is linked where possible to work in other subjects such as art and literacy. Although local clergy visit the school to talk about their work and visits are made to the local church, the same links with visitors and visits to places of different religions are not included. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development especially in promoting their spiritual and moral awareness. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.