

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST HELEN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117462

Headteacher: Mrs Maureen Hudson

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Evans
20737

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th March 2003

Inspection number: 247787

Short 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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brewhouse Hill Wheathampstead St Albans Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL4 8AN
Telephone number:	(01582) 832106
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Callow
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Helen's Church of England Primary School is an average-sized primary school situated in the village of Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. It provides education for 247 children, 105 boys and 142 girls, aged four to 11. The majority of pupils who attend St Helen's live within the area close to the school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school has no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to the school is in line with expectations for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of St Helen's Primary School is excellent. It promotes excellent personal development and relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and contribute to the very high standards they achieve as they leave the school. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school, which contribute a lot to pupils' learning. The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

In view of its context, the standards that it achieves, the level of education that it offers to all its pupils and the money that it spends, the school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are excellent and contribute highly to the standards that pupils achieve.
- The development of information and communication technology in the school is very good and very well used to raise standards in other subjects.
- The ethos of the school and its involvement with the local and the wider community are very good and have a very positive effect on pupils' learning and standards.

What could be improved

- The ventilation in the information and communication technology suite.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997, when it was felt that standards in design and technology and in information and communication technology needed raising. There was also a need to extend more-able pupils and the marking of pupils' work needed to be consistent about providing detail on how they can improve. Standards in design and technology and in information and communication technology are now well above expectations across the school. There are very good opportunities provided across the school to extend more-able pupils. The marking of pupils' work is of a consistently high standard across the whole school. The standards in English, mathematics and science achieved by pupils leaving the school have been raised at a consistently good rate each year since the last inspection. Overall, the school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	B	A*	A	very good A*
mathematics	A	A*	A	A	well above average A
science	A	A*	A*	A*	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

On entry to the school's Reception class children's levels of attainment are in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress and as they move into Year 1 the great majority achieve the targets for children of their age in all six areas of learning, as set out in the national Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Curriculum. A significant number exceed this level of attainment.

In the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2, the expected level for their age, was average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science, according to teacher assessment, were average. In the 2000 national tests the school's results were in the top five per cent nationally in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Although the school's trend has been one of falling standards in all three subjects since 2000, inspection evidence shows that there was a very high level of pupils of lower ability or with special educational needs in both groups of pupils who undertook national tests and tasks in 2001 and 2002. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 3 in 2002 was well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics.

The school's results in the 2002 national tests for 11-year-olds show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, the expected level for their age, was in the top five per cent nationally in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Since 2000 the school's results in all three subjects have been at a high level. In the 2002 tests, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher than expected Level 5 was well above average in all three subjects. The school also had a well above average percentage of pupils who reached the even higher than expected Level 6 in science.

When comparing the school's 2002 results of national tests for seven-year-olds with those in similar schools they were below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. The results for 11-year-olds, when compared with those in similar schools, were in the top five per cent in science and well above average in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms these high level results, at the end of the school and shows that standards in information and communication technology and in design and technology are well above national expectations. Standards in history, physical education, some aspects of art and design and music are above expectations. Standards in geography and other aspects of art and design are at least satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. All pupils are keen to come to school and have excellent attitudes to the work they undertake.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. The behaviour of all pupils both in and out of classrooms is excellent.
Personal development and	Excellent. There are excellent relationships between pupils and between

relationships	pupils and their teachers. They undertake with great enthusiasm and maturity any responsibility offered to them.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

Pupils show great enthusiasm and maturity when undertaking any responsibility. They are well mannered and welcoming and helpful to visitors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	The Foundation Stage	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	very good	very good	very good

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

During a short inspection few lessons are observed. Overall judgements are based not only on teaching seen in lessons but also on evidence gained from looking at pupils' past work. Seven lessons were seen during the inspection; the quality of teaching in two lessons was excellent. In the remaining five lessons the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers' planning is of a very high level and marking is regular and used very well to guide pupils on how to improve their work. Teachers enable pupils to have an excellent understanding of their own learning. The development of excellent attitudes to school and the management of pupils' behaviour are also excellent.

The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very good.

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The quality of learning throughout the school is very good. All pupils are fully included in all the school's activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The statutory curriculum is fully in place and enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The support given to these pupils enables them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Excellent provision is made for pupils' moral and social development. Provision for their spiritual development is very good. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent.

The partnership between the school and parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides excellent, clear educational direction for the school. There is very strong partnership with all staff and with the governing body.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governing body has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is highly effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school has very high quality strategies for comparing its effectiveness with other schools. All decisions are made with their benefit to pupils as the first criterion.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school ensures that all resources available are used appropriately and effectively.

The leadership and management of the school are of the highest level. There is a very high level of teamwork throughout the school and the capacity to improve further is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of the school. • The fact that they are comfortable to approach the school with any questions or concerns. • The high expectations the school has for their children. • The fact that their children like school. • The behaviour in the school. • The quality of teaching in the school. • The fact that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework that their children receive.

Inspection evidence supports the positive views of the great majority of parents who completed the questionnaire and attended the meeting. The school makes very good use of homework, which is appropriate for the age of children and increases as they move through the school. In this area inspection evidence does not support the views of a small minority of parents. A small number of parents at the meeting expressed a concern over pupils' annual written reports. Although there are a few minor areas where they could be improved, their overall quality is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management of the school are excellent and contribute highly to the standards that pupils achieve.

1. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent. The future direction of the school is extremely well mapped out by the headteacher, governors and senior staff. The management team have very positive expectations and do not allow the high standards achieved to lead to complacency. School improvement and raising standards further are the priorities of all staff. Top priority is placed on the inspiration and motivation of staff, who function very well as a team. The explicit aims and values of the school are completely reflected in its work. The delegation of responsibilities to teaching and support staff is very good.
2. The school's performance is monitored and evaluated extremely well by staff and governors. The development of good teaching practice is monitored and evaluated well. Good teachers are used to support others and develop their expertise and areas of less effective teaching are addressed extremely well if they arise. Appraisal and performance-management procedures are excellent and performance targets are clearly understood by all the teaching staff. The team spirit between teachers and support staff is excellent. The school's priorities for development are very well planned and completely appropriate for the needs of the staff and pupils. The actions taken to meet the school's targets are extremely effective. The management team has a very high capacity to succeed and is fully committed to school improvement. The procedures for the induction of new staff are very effective. The improvement in staff development since the previous inspection has been very significant.
3. An example of the school's excellent systems is to be seen in the two significant changes of staffing. Both before and after the last inspection there was a considerable change in teachers. Again, the whole of the teaching staff has changed in the last two years. Structures and systems are so strong in the school, including the strategies for the recruitment and retention of staff, that on neither occasion did staff changes lower the standards that pupils at the school achieve by the time that they leave. On the contrary, standards at the end of Year 6 have shown a consistently good level of improvement each year since 1999 in English, mathematics and science. Standards in design and technology and in information and communication technology have shown outstanding improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged as weaknesses of the school. Standards in both subjects are now well above national expectations. Good improvement has been made in history, physical education, music and elements of draughtsmanship in art and design. In the last inspection report these subjects were judged to be in line with national expectations. All are now above national expectations. Overall, the school has made outstanding improvement since the last inspection and this has clearly affected pupils' levels of attainment.
4. The governing body is very effective in the way that it discharges its duties. Many governors have very regular contact with the school. Governors have an exceptional understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are almost always fully involved in making important strategic decisions which affect the future direction of the school. The governors continuously monitor school improvement and targets for school development and improvement are set very regularly. The governing body ensures that it fulfils its statutory duties to the highest level. The headteacher works extremely closely with the governors and this outstanding partnership between the headteacher, the senior management team and the governors is the major reason that the school continues to be so outstandingly effective, even when faced with difficulties such as changes of teaching staff. Governors continuously appraise and set performance targets for the headteacher. This is done in an atmosphere of complete mutual trust and support and is very closely linked to the school's priorities for development.
5. Overall, the management and co-ordination of the provision for special educational needs is very good. One of the governors has been given specific responsibility for special educational needs and appropriate training has been effectively used to support this role. The special-educational-

needs management team meets very regularly and the governor responsible for special educational needs keeps the governing body very well informed and monitors the effectiveness of spending in this area in conjunction with the co-ordinator. They regularly review the outcome of expenditure on these provisions to make sure that it matches the intended objective.

6. The school makes maximum use of resources, grants and other funding. The school's financial planning is very effective in supporting educational priorities. The efficiency and effectiveness of the financial administration systems are excellent. The senior management team is kept extremely well informed of the school's financial position. The school's administration and pupils' learning are very well supported by the use of new technology. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purpose to improve the quality of learning. The school monitors the effectiveness of its spending extremely well, governors are kept fully informed and the school's objectives and the outcomes of expenditure are extremely well matched.
7. The principles of best value are applied very well in this school to further the opportunities open to the pupils. The school is fully aware of the need to compare its costs with those of other schools. It invariably engages in competitive tendering and seeks quotations for all significant purchases and the staff are required to justify their use of resources. The school invariably consults widely on further improvements and major expenditure decisions.
8. The overall range of teachers' skills and staffing levels is very well matched to the requirements of the current school population. The number of teachers and support staff is very good for present pupil numbers. The school is able to maintain staffing levels because it uses extremely effective recruitment strategies and manages its excellent budget planning and monitoring. The expertise of teachers is very well matched to the demands of the curriculum. The headteacher has undertaken an audit of staff strengths and all teachers are well matched to the demands of the subjects they teach. Teachers and co-ordinators have very well written job descriptions and teachers and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Administrative and other staff are very well deployed and very good use is made of their talents. The school has very good arrangements to cover and support staff absences.
9. The school has made good use of the overall accommodation to meet current demands and it is matched to the requirements of the age range of pupils. It is also matched well to the demands of indoor games and physical education and there is adequate space for outdoor play and vigorous activity. There is a very highly equipped information and communication technology suite, which is very well used. However, the room does not have an effective ventilation system and doors have to be opened to provide a through-flow of air to keep the room cool. The headteacher and governors are pursuing financing to correct this, but at present this situation is less than satisfactory. There is excellent provision, just completed, for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage. The school provides good indoor facilities for pupils and also provides very good outdoor facilities. Pupils' work is effectively displayed around the school, contributing greatly to the warmth and richness of the learning environment.

The development of information and communication technology in the school is very good and very well used to raise standards in other subjects.

10. The standards achieved by pupils in information and communication technology at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above those expected nationally and all pupils make very good progress. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, but below expectations at the end of Year 6. Expectations for the subject have increased sharply since then and the standards now achieved represent an outstanding level of improvement since the last inspection.
11. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in the school's work in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils of all ages and abilities regularly use computers in other subjects, such as English, mathematics, science and art and design. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 5 computers were used to provide high-level extension work for pupils of higher ability. On another occasion, when asked about frequency charts and graphs that they had produced tracking temperature over 24 hours, pupils explained

them clearly, using very sophisticated language. This study combined information and communication technology with learning in literacy, numeracy and science. This is one of many very good examples of the school's approach to learning in several subjects at once. This approach is seen in many areas of pupils' work and contributes strongly to the high standards that they reach.

12. While there are planned lessons which are entitled 'ICT' this does give a false impression. ICT is not really taught as a stand-alone subject but is very well integrated into the curriculum as a means of teaching other subjects. From the youngest age, children learn to use computers in many areas of their learning. For example, in one such 'ICT lesson', in the Foundation Stage, the learning intention was to use the shape tool in an art and design programme and this was achieved very well. However, the basis for the lesson was the pupils' current studies of a pond in science. The classroom teacher and learning support assistants also focused very effectively on developing children's vocabulary in information and communication technology, such as "log on", "icon" and "double click". The children's vocabulary connected with their science topic was also developed very successfully, as they were encouraged to identify "lily pads", "frogspawn" and "weed" as elements of the pond.
13. This combined learning in children's communication, language and literacy, because the teacher and support staff insisted on their use of correct vocabulary and proper sentence structure. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world were contributed to greatly through the use of computers and the development of their "pond" topic. Through the use of the "colour magic" computer program, children's creative development in art and design was also contributed to at a high level. Because it avoids breaking pupils' learning into falsely compartmentalised sections, this approach has a significantly positive effect on children's learning and, wherever possible, it is continued throughout the school. This holistic approach to learning, from the youngest age, has a very positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school and the standards that they reach by the end of Year 6.
14. Many other examples of this approach to learning were seen in pupils' past work and the very attractive displays of their work around the school. For example, in Year 2, pupils have produced pie charts using data from a vehicle survey, thus combining learning in information and communication technology, numeracy and geography. In Year 6, pupils use "power-point" to produce three-dimensional block graphs of the results of their saturation experiments in science. They also use the Internet to research the lives of John Wesley Hyatt 1837 – 1920, the inventor of celluloid and Wallace Hume Carothers 1896 – 1937, the inventor of nylon. These studies combine the use of computers to promote high-level learning in mathematics, science and history. Pupils were also observed using a digital camera to record scenes around the school for inclusion in their "Prospectus", a very good exercise in using information and communication technology in literacy. Thus the use of ICT is very well integrated into holistic studies involving many subjects. These are examples of the ways in which the school plans the integration of ICT into the curriculum. This approach to learning in ICT has a very positive impact on the standards that pupils reach, not only in ICT but also in other subjects.
15. Pupils have very well developed ICT skills by the time they leave the school. They switch on computers if necessary and load programs, using the mouse to navigate through icon-led procedures. They give instructions to a programmable robot, use modelling software to design an imaginary environment and can talk about the different paint applications in an art and design programme. They combine text and graphics in their writing and use computers for everyday uses such as preparing material for the school council elections.
16. Pupils work extremely well together when required and this happens regularly. The school has a well-equipped information and communication technology suite and there are computers in each classroom which use the same operating systems. This means that, during lessons in their rooms, pupils can continue the work that they undertake in the suite. These facilities are very well used by teachers to promote high levels of learning. While the information and communication technology suite is a very high level facility, the room does not have proper ventilation. This is less than satisfactory.

17. The school has made very good progress with its improvement plan for ICT and there is now one computer for every five pupils in the school. Teachers' planning is of a very high level and includes the use of computers in lessons wherever possible. This has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and the high standards that they reach.
18. All classes are timetabled to use the ICT suite regularly and were seen doing so during the inspection. The overall quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent and all teachers are fully committed to using ICT to further pupils' learning. Other resources for teaching and learning in ICT include a scanner and an interactive whiteboard, which is used very well for whole-class demonstrations. There is a CD/tape/radio available to each class and there are headphones which pupils use well when computer programs have a soundtrack or when they are listening to music or instructional material. The provision of these resources and their regular use have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
19. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers and all have equal opportunities to do so. They show good co-operation when asked to work in pairs and many show good skills when working alone. Their behaviour is always very good in these situations and they are very well managed by their teachers and learning-support assistants.
20. The co-ordination of ICT has many strengths, which are evident in the standards that pupils reach. Overall the subject co-ordinator gives excellent guidance to all staff, is continuing to develop the subject provision very well from an already very high level and has a very good action plan for improvement in the future. There is very good monitoring of the quality of teaching and of the delivery of the curriculum and this also has a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

The ethos of the school and its involvement with the local and the wider community are very good and have a very positive effect on pupils' learning and standards.

21. St Helen's Church of England Primary School is one in which the welfare and care of all its pupils and the promotion of the highest standards are at the centre of all its provision. Everyone associated with St Helen's rightly considers it to be a school in which teaching and learning and the achievements, attitudes and wellbeing of every young person are of paramount importance. During the refurbishment of areas of the school the governors have also ensured that it is now more accessible for wheelchair-bound children or adults with the installation of a level entrance to the school and toilet facilities for disabled people. It is a very happy school and is a very good example of excellence in primary school provision.
22. Arrangements for child protection, safety and welfare are very good. Teachers are extremely aware of and always sensitive to the personal and home circumstances of each pupil. The school has very good procedures for meeting the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and all pupils are completely included in all the school's activities. The school helps children to look after themselves and others. For example, pupils suggested through the school council that a "friendship stop" system be set up during playtimes so that any pupil feeling lonely or needing support could attract immediate support from older pupils. This system has been adopted with great success. The school complies with local authority child protection procedures and routines for dealing with child abuse are extremely well established, should they be needed. A member of staff has been designated child protection co-ordinator. The quality of liaison with other welfare agencies is very good. The level of staff awareness of child protection issues and procedures is excellent.
23. There is a very good health and safety policy in place and the school has designated a health and safety member of staff. It strongly promotes an awareness of health and safety issues. Procedures for providing first aid are very good and lunchtime supervision is very good. The daily practice of health and safety in the school is very good. Risk assessment is undertaken very regularly and procedures are very well established. The school monitors and reviews safe working procedures very regularly. It has excellent procedures for dealing with accidents and emergencies and many members of staff are trained in first-aid procedures. The result of all these very good and excellent policies is that pupils feel completely safe in school. They thoroughly enjoy attending

because the school raises their self-esteem and self-confidence. They know that their views are respected and this promotes outstanding levels of moral and social development among all pupils.

24. The school has very good attendance monitoring procedures and arrangements for following up unauthorised absences are very good. Improving attendance is very high on the school agenda. The school has very good links with the education welfare officer and very good provision for supporting long-term absentees. This has resulted in attendance being very good. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning and the standards that they reach.
25. Systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. The school's policy for promoting positive behaviour is outstanding and is implemented uniformly across the school. Outstanding records of pupils' personal, social and health education are kept. The climate within the school always promotes good behaviour and all pupils respond very well, becoming mature and responsible as they progress through the school. The systems for monitoring and eliminating negative behaviour are excellent. Unsatisfactory behaviour is extremely well managed by the school and pupils report that incidents are rare and they know how to respond in line with the school's procedures. Appropriate anti-bullying policies are extremely well established and records of instances of bullying and harassment are carefully kept. Parents report that incidents of bullying are handled well by the school, on the rare occasions that they happen. The way in which the school's anti-social behaviour policies are implemented is very effective.
26. These procedures are so well established that many pupils, of all ages, say that their favourite time in school is spent in the playground. This is a clear reflection of the great pleasure that pupils take in attending school in a completely secure and caring environment.
27. The school's procedures for monitoring its pupils' academic performance are excellent. The assessment of their attainment and progress is based on procedures that are extremely well established for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils throughout the school. The school complies fully with the requirements for statutory assessments in Years 2 and 6. The teachers make maximum use of assessment information to guide their lesson planning in English, mathematics and science as well as in other subjects. Excellent use is made of these records to help pupils make academic and social progress. Targets for pupils' individual academic progress are revisited and revised if it is felt necessary throughout the year. Staff make it their practice to know and to provide for each child. Targets for learning are set for each child and teachers constantly monitor and evaluate the progress they make. A "traffic light" system shows clearly whether pupils are on track to fall below, meet or exceed their targets and adjustments and support are varied as appropriate. Targets are fully shared with pupils, who, as soon as possible, are involved in setting their own targets. As they progress through the school, this promotes the highest possible knowledge and understanding of their own learning.
28. Assessment, recording and monitoring of attainment and progress are an integral part of teaching procedures and extremely well presented portfolios of pupils' work are part of this process. If a pupil is identified as falling below his or her targets teachers take practical steps to remedy the situation and monitor the resulting progress, working closely with parents to meet the needs of pupils as effectively and as inclusively as possible. Such steps sometimes include working very closely with outside agencies such as the Links education centre, occupational therapists and speech and language advisers, or children working with the school learning-support teacher or in groups with learning-support programmes such as the Early Literacy Strategy. These links with the immediate community have a very positive effect on the learning of the pupils involved.
29. The effectiveness of the policies for the support and guidance of pupils is excellent, and results in extremely significant progress. Achievement is always acknowledged, with the aim of encouraging further progress. The personal records kept by the school are comprehensive, kept up to date and stored securely. All staff in the school work very hard and very successfully to promote very good relationships and to set very high standards of behaviour.
30. The school works very closely with the immediate and wider communities to promote pupils' learning and achievement. There are regular visits to places of interest in and around Hertfordshire and London, which form a substantial additional dimension to the curriculum. The one-week

residential school journey for children in Years 5 and 6 also provides the opportunity to extend the range of curricular opportunities offered by the school. Photographic evidence shows pupils undertaking outdoor and adventurous activities during their visit. The journey also contributes very well to pupils' personal and social skills and to their self-confidence and maturity.

31. In an effort to further promote pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of our society, the school has developed close links with an infant school in Luton. It has a largely Muslim intake and very successful exchange visits have taken place between the two schools. The school is planning to widen its contact with the Luton school even further. Theatre groups, visiting speakers, artists, musicians, dancers and puppeteers are regular visitors to the school and provide an even greater and more varied range of activities to further broaden the curriculum.
32. There are very strong connections with St Helen's Church, which contributes to the school's budget each year. A thriving and well-motivated Friends of St Helen's School Association raises a considerable amount of money each year to provide extra facilities for the school. Strong connections with the local community include links with the senior citizens' group, which is both entertained and invited to visit the school. The school has very close links with a disabled club held at a nearby school and also takes part in musical concerts and traditional entertainment at Christmas. Each morning some pupils arrive at the school as part of "The walking Bus" which is run by parents. Links with the local community involved the school in distributing the parish council magazine to every house in the area. There are close sporting connections with the Saracens Rugby Union Club, Watford Football Club and the Batchford Tennis Club. There are very close links with the other local primary school and some secondary schools. These include initiatives for the extension of more able pupils. All of these very good links with the local and wider community have very positive effects on pupils' personal, social, sporting and academic development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The ventilation of the information and communication technology suite.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the learning environment in the information and communication technology suite even further the headteacher, governors and staff should provide an efficient system of ventilation by:

- continuing to press rigorously for the funding to undertake this improvement.

(paragraphs 9 and 16)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	7
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage	29	71	0	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 16 percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	247
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	44

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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	21	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	18
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	36	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (90)	81 (90)	86 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	36	37	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (90)	86 (93)	91 (93)
	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	14	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	18	17	19
	Total	32	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (88)	94 (92)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	32	29	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (88)	88 (88)	100 (92)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	197	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	1	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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	202

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	561,918
Total expenditure	540,541
Expenditure per pupil	2,013
Balance brought forward from previous year	53,232
Balance carried forward to next year	74,609

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	163

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	36	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	43	10	1	0
The teaching is good.	61	36	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	52	9	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	24	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	33	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	49	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	37	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	38	9	1	6

Please note that not all columns total 100 due to rounding and the fact that not all parents responded to every question.