

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE HOLY FAMILY ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117481

Headteacher: Mrs E C Hims

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims
28899

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th May 2003

Inspection number: 247792

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 with Nursery
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Holy Family Catholic Primary School Crookhams WELWYN GARDEN CITY Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Makulski
Date of previous inspection:	13 th November 1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
09189	Mr J Horwood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22990	Mr C Furniss	Team inspector	English History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
05565	Mrs B Thakur	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography English as an additional language Special educational needs Educational Inclusion	
22113	Mrs A J King	Team inspector	Science Music Foundation Stage	
29378	Mr K Watson	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on the eastern outskirts of Welwyn Garden City. It is a voluntary-aided Catholic primary school, which draws its pupils from the parishes of Holy Family, St Bonaventure in the town centre and St Thomas More in Knebworth village. It has 206 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 and is an average-sized school. It has its own Nursery, which caters for 28 children who attend in the mornings only. The socio-economic background of the pupils varies considerably, but is generally average. An increasing proportion of pupils, currently around 10 per cent, come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Just over six per cent come from homes where English is not the main spoken language, and two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving, is below the national average. Just under seven per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Around ten per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. Seven pupils receive help from outside specialists for a range of needs, including dyslexia, behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Most children attend the school's Nursery before entering the Reception class in either September or January, according to when their fifth birthday falls. The attainment of children when they start school varies widely, but is average overall. Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher. Over the last two years, the school has experienced significant problems with staff recruitment. Two classes were taught by supply teachers during the inspection. The inspection of collective worship and religious education was carried out by a separate diocesan team.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a good school, with some very good features. The headteacher and her deputy provide good leadership and have managed the school well during a period in which there have been significant disruptions because of long-term staff absence and problems in recruiting new staff. The hard-working and committed teachers observed during the inspection provide good quality teaching and enable pupils to achieve above average academic standards, particularly in English, where the overall quality of pupils' work is very good. The staff work very hard to promote Christian values and to help pupils to develop well personally. They provide a good and happy learning environment. Parents appreciate this, and pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and governing body.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards by the end of Year 6, especially in English, where standards are well above average.
- The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for the pupils, with particularly good opportunities for them to develop their musical skills.
- The staff give very good attention to the pupils' personal development. The great majority of pupils behave well, develop good relationships and have very positive attitudes to school.

What could be improved

- The teaching of and standards achieved in design and technology.
- The arrangements for managing the education of children in the Reception class.
- The role of some subject co-ordinators in leading and managing their areas of responsibility.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the last inspection in October 1997. Most of the key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled well, although there is still room for

further improvement in some aspects. There are now much more effective systems for the headteacher and deputy headteacher to monitor what happens within the classroom, and the feedback from their observations is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, some subject co-ordinators are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring their subject areas. The teaching for some year groups has been adversely affected by long-term staff absence and changes in teaching personnel. The governing body now has much better procedures for overseeing the school's financial affairs and is well informed about what happens in the school. There have been improvements to curricular planning for history, music, physical education and art and design, but there are still shortcomings in the school's provision for design and technology. Standards have fluctuated over the last five years but, overall, they are higher now than at the time of 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			similar schools ¹	Key	
	all schools					
	2000	2001	2002	2002		
English	A	A	A	B	Very high	A*
Mathematics	A	B	C	E	Well above average	A
Science	A	B	D	E	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

National test results: In 2002, the school's national test results at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average in English; in mathematics they were average and in science below average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they were above average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. Since the last inspection, standards in English have risen more than in most schools, but they have fallen in mathematics and science. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were average in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. When compared with the results of similar schools, they were below average in writing, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics. Results in reading and mathematics have improved since the last inspection, but they have fallen in writing.

Inspection findings: The attainment of children when they start school is generally fairly typical for three- and four-year-olds. Children make good progress in the Nursery, but their progress in the Reception class is currently only satisfactory and has been affected this year by frequent changes of staff. Pupils of all capabilities make good progress overall from Year 1 through to Year 6. By the end of the Reception, standards are average in all areas of learning. By the end of Year 2, they are above average, with particular strengths in reading and mathematics. The quality of pupils' writing is improving because of the emphasis placed on this during the current school year. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average overall. Pupils achieve particularly well in English. They write well and standards are well above average. With recent changes of teachers, standards in mathematics and science are now improving again and the school looks set to meet appropriately challenging targets for the current year. Pupils are now attaining average standards in science and above average standards in mathematics. There is sufficient challenge and stimulus for the most able pupils, and good help is provided for those with special educational needs. Standards in information and communication technology are improving. They are currently satisfactory, but further progress is hampered because pupils have limited access to

¹ The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

computers. Standards in design and technology are below expectations, as very little work has been undertaken in this subject. Standards in history are above average, and in music they are well above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. They participate well and are happy and keen to learn in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The overall standard of behaviour throughout the school is good. A few pupils present less acceptable behaviour, but this is managed well. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds play and work well together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are friendly, confident and polite. The great majority have very good relationships with each other and with all adults in school.
Attendance	Good. The level of attendance is above the national average, and there are few unauthorised absences. The number of pupils who arrive late is low.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The combination of good teaching, the pupils' enthusiasm in lessons and well-disciplined classes, results in good learning and standards which improve as pupils move through the school. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and generally cater well for pupils of all capabilities. Most teachers provide sufficiently challenging work for the more able pupils in English and mathematics, but there is not always sufficient challenge in subjects such as science and physical education. Teachers receive very good help from teaching assistants, many of whom play a very important role in enabling pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language to make good progress. English and mathematics are taught well. Pupils' literacy skills are not only developed well in English lessons, but are also consolidated through research and written work produced for other subjects, such as history. The focus given to developing mental skills in mathematics lessons is helping pupils to acquire good numeracy skills. The teachers' confidence in the use of information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection, but the school's accommodation and resources limit pupils' access to computers and their use of them as tools for learning in other subjects. The teacher who has assumed responsibility for the Nursery has worked hard and successfully to improve teamwork and transform the teaching and learning opportunities provided for the school's youngest children. This transformation has not yet extended to the Reception class, where the quality of teaching has suffered because of long-term staff absence and the resulting lack of leadership. Weak subject leadership in design and technology, and, to a lesser extent, in art and design, has impeded the development of teaching in these subjects. In contrast, the quality of the teaching in music by the school's specialist music teacher is particularly good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school fulfils statutory requirements. Overall, the school provides a good range of learning opportunities, which are enriched through special events and a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Although the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs has just left the school, the organisation and management of the school's provision for special educational needs is good and procedures are sufficiently robust to ensure that the school is continuing to identify and meet pupils' needs.
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Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils with English as an additional language are very well integrated members of the school community and they are making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school makes a very positive contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development through timetabled lessons for personal and social education, religious education lessons and assemblies, residential visits and opportunities to learn about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school provides very good care for its pupils and has good procedures to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Staff know their pupils well and keep careful track of their progress. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are very good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well. Parents have very positive views of the school. The school provides a very good range of information for parents. Parents play an active part in the life of the school, making a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and her deputy provide good leadership and have managed the school well during a period in which staffing problems have hindered some of the school's plans for development. Most subject co-ordinators are keen to carry out their responsibilities, and some do so well, but there is room for further development of this role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body is very well organised, provides a significant level of support for the headteacher and fulfils its statutory obligations well. It maintains a careful overview of the school's finances and development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The governors, headteacher and senior staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and have identified appropriate areas for future improvement. Teaching and standards in English and mathematics are monitored carefully, but co-ordinators of other subjects could be more involved in monitoring, evaluating and improving their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of its accommodation and resources. The school budget is planned effectively to meet the school's priorities. Finances are managed very efficiently, as is the school's administration. The school has good procedures to compare its performance with others, to consult parents, staff and pupils, and to ensure that its funding and specific grants are spent in the most cost-effective way.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. Long-term staff absence and difficulties with staff recruitment are still a cause for concern. The school has a good number of capable and experienced teaching assistants. The school has reasonably sized classrooms, but lacks facilities for teaching groups of pupils outside the classroom. A new extension should partially alleviate this problem. Apart from its computing facilities, which are shortly to be improved, the amount and quality of learning resources is generally adequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. • The family atmosphere and the approachability of the school. • The school teaches the right attitudes and values and helps children to become mature and responsible. • The behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • Information about their children's progress. • The staffing situation for children in the Reception.
<p>(The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 33 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 138 parents (58%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also enclosed written comments)</p>	

The inspection team endorses all of the positive views expressed by parents. Inspectors examined the areas that parents would like to see improved. Parents' views on homework differ markedly. Some would like the school to give more homework, others less. The school has an appropriate homework policy and the use of homework is considered to be satisfactory. The school provides parents with a very good range of information. Written reports about children's progress are supported and supplemented by comments, both formally at the regular parents' evenings and informally through contact with the staff as a result of the school's open-door policy. Inspectors share parents' concerns about the staffing situation in the Reception class, which has been caused by the long-term absence of a member of staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002, the school's results in reading and mathematics were well above the national average. In writing, they were average. When compared with the results of similar schools, they were above average in reading, below average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Since the last inspection, the school's results in reading and mathematics have improved steadily. Results in writing have declined over the last three years, but measures taken to improve this aspect of the pupils' work as part of this year's school development plan are helping to reverse the trend. The overall trend since the last inspection is one of improvement at a similar rate to most schools. The range of attainment in all three tests in 2002 was wide, but only a small proportion of pupils achieved below the nationally expected standard in reading and mathematics, and over half of the pupils achieved higher than the expected level. In contrast, one in five pupils did not reach the expected level in writing, and very few pupils achieved higher than expected. The inspection findings show that the overall standard achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 is above average and that progress from the end of the Reception Year to the end of Year 2 is good.
2. The national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. When compared with similar schools, the results were above average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. Nearly all pupils achieved the nationally expected standard in English and two out of five achieved higher than the expected level. In science, almost all pupils achieved the expected level, but few pupils achieved higher than the expected level. In mathematics, one out of five achieved higher than the expected level, but a similar proportion did not reach the level expected for that age group. Since the last inspection, the school's results have improved significantly in English, but they have fallen in mathematics and science. The overall rate of improvement, therefore, is not as great as in most schools. The inspection findings show that the standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. This picture is better than that indicated by the 2002 results and is largely due to changes in teaching personnel. With the improved quality of teaching, pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 2.
3. The school sets itself realistic targets. In 2002, the school met its targets in English, but fell short in mathematics. The targets set for 2003 are slightly higher in mathematics but in line with the expectations of the school as a result of measures that have been put in place this year. Girls achieve better results than boys at the end of Year 2, particularly in reading and writing, but these differences have largely disappeared by the end of Year 6. In 2002, for example, the boys' results in English were identical to those of the girls, which indicates that the boys achieved significantly better than boys in most other schools.
4. The school demonstrates good commitment to achieving equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life. For example, the school took part in a research project, which involved analysing results of the achievement of different ethnic groups in schools where ethnic pupils were in a significant minority. There are no groups of pupils in the school whose achievement is less than satisfactory. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated members of the community who achieve equally as well as their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve good standards of work and behaviour, in line with their peers. The very small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are making very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils identified by their

teachers as more able achieve well above average standards and make good progress. Lower-attaining pupils also make good progress in relation to their earlier attainment. Schemes, such as 'Early Literacy Support' for identified pupils in Year 1, 'Further Literacy Support' for selected pupils in Year 5, and booster classes for identified pupils in Year 6, are increasingly successful in helping pupils to reach the expected standards for their ages.

5. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the learning targets which are identified in their individual education plans. This is because their individual needs are identified at an early stage and there are well-established structures to provide them with additional support throughout the school. Additional in-class support, both from teaching assistants and class teachers during lessons, is effective in meeting individual needs. In the longer term, the modified work for individual pupils usually leads to them achieving the expected standards for their age.
6. The children's attainment when they enter the school, either in the Nursery or in the Reception, varies widely, but is generally fairly typical of the average three- and four-year-old. Pupils settle quickly into the school routine and make good progress during their part-time attendance in the Nursery. The teacher in charge of the Nursery has established a calm and well-ordered environment and provides a very good variety of activities which promote children's learning. Although good teaching was provided by a supply teacher during the week of the inspection, the education of the children in the Reception class has been disrupted this year because of long-term staff absence and frequent changes of teacher. Teaching assistants have provided some stability and continuity, which has enabled the children to make satisfactory progress over the course of the year. However, standards are likely to be no higher than the nationally expected goals for children's learning by the time they start Year 1.
7. With the exception of writing at Key Stage 1, standards in English have improved since the last inspection and, overall, are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. They communicate confidently and effectively and have a well-developed vocabulary. Standards in reading are also very good. Pupils read with expression and understanding and have a good knowledge of different types of writing and texts. Pupils' writing skills are less well developed, but they are improving. Progress in Year 1 has been affected this year by staffing changes but, from Year 2 onwards, pupils are making good progress in their efforts to become more proficient writers.
8. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection and, although the current Year 2 contains fewer higher-attaining pupils than in the last few years, standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils add and subtract numbers confidently to 100 and show a good understanding of the place value of two- and three-digit numbers. After a period of decline, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved this year and are above average overall. Pupils show a well above average ability to carry out calculations, both mentally and on paper, and they explain their own methods of calculation well. Although teachers are now providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations, their ability to use and apply mathematics in different contexts is still the weakest aspect of their work.
9. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards in science by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, few pupils are achieving above the expected level for their age, and the school has, rightly, identified the need to place a greater emphasis on investigative work in order to improve standards overall. In some classes, this is already having a positive effect as pupils become more used to investigative processes but, in others, there is not enough challenge for the more able pupils.

10. The school's provision for, and standards in, information and communication technology are satisfactory and most pupils achieve the expected standards in nearly all aspects of the subject by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils have become more computer literate since the last inspection, but further progress in this rapidly developing subject is hampered at present by lack of access to computers because of the restrictions imposed by the school's accommodation and the nature of the school's ageing equipment.
11. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards which are appropriate for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6 in art and design, geography, and physical education. They make good progress and achieve above average standards in history at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection in this subject, which is frequently linked successfully and imaginatively to work undertaken in other subjects.
12. Standards in design and technology have fallen since the last inspection and the departure of the previous co-ordinator. The subject has lacked leadership, although measures have recently been put in place to rectify the situation. Although isolated examples of good work were observed during the inspection, standards are currently below those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6, and insufficient work has been undertaken for pupils to make satisfactory progress.
13. Music is a particular strength of the school. Very good teaching from an enthusiastic and gifted specialist teacher enables pupils to achieve standards which are well above those normally found at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school because of the rich variety of activities provided. Their enthusiasm for the subject carries over into some very well-attended extra-curricular activities, such as the school choir in which almost half of the junior school pupils participate, and school performances, which are rated particularly highly by parents and staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to learning are very good. The pupils are well behaved as they arrive at school in the morning. All are very happy to be at school and they enter enthusiastically. The day starts well with the effective registration period, which ensures pupils are calm. They are polite and well mannered when moving around the school, and this results in a well-disciplined community, which remains calm throughout the day. The pupils' attitudes throughout the school are good. They pay attention in lessons and work hard. They respond well to vigorous and enthusiastic teaching. In the very well-taught music lessons observed during the inspection, for example, the pupils were highly responsive and very keen to participate. The children's attitudes in the Reception class are less well developed, reflecting the fact that the staffing situation in this class has been unstable this year and the children have been taught by a number of teachers for short periods. Pupils show interest in the activities available to them and enjoy participating in after-school and lunchtime activities, such as the school council. Pupils with special educational needs and those acquiring English language skills show positive attitudes to their work and school. They mix and work well with their peers. Most of these pupils are well motivated and are keen to learn. In lessons, they show increasing degrees of confidence and self-esteem. They co-operate well with their teachers and the teaching assistants and are, mostly, well behaved.
15. The pupils' behaviour throughout the school is good, for the most part. In a small minority of lessons, some less mature pupils do not concentrate as well as they could on their learning. The pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes, and when moving around the school buildings, is good. Although occurrences of bullying do take place very occasionally, the staff deal with them effectively and the pupils do not feel threatened by any type of oppressive behaviour or racist or sexist attitudes. There is adequate supervision at all times during the

day, and staff have a consistent approach to care and discipline. There have been no exclusions.

16. Relationships throughout the school are very good and, in some classes, they are excellent. Staff and pupils communicate well, and there is mutual trust and respect, the adults leading by their example. This results in a friendly and family-type environment within the school. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds play and work well together. They are friendly, confident and polite.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good. There are many opportunities for them to take on responsibilities and to use their initiative. For example, pupils are involved as members of the school council, and they act as 'friends' on the 'friendship bench' at lunchtime. Pupils in Year 6 support younger pupils during the breaks, and pupils in Year 5 have talked to the younger pupils about the school. In many lessons, such as an English lesson in Year 2, pupils review each other's work and, in most lessons, they demonstrate good skills of working co-operatively in groups. The pupils' personal development is supported well through the personal, social and health education provision, the contents of religious education lessons and issues addressed during assemblies, all of which help pupils to understand the feelings, values and beliefs of others as well as the impact of their actions on them.
18. For many years, the level of attendance has been above the national average, with very few unauthorised absences. Last year's figures dropped to just above the national average, but the attendance rate has improved again this year. A few pupils arrive late in the morning, but the school has appropriate procedures to ensure that these occasions are all recorded and followed up. Registration procedures are followed well. Formal analysis of attendance data is carried out regularly.
19. The high standards of attitudes, behaviour, relationships and attendance have been maintained since the last inspection, and a range of new opportunities for pupils to take responsibility has enhanced their personal development.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The overall quality of the teaching is good. The combination of good teaching, the pupils' enthusiasm in lessons and well-disciplined classes, results in good learning and standards, which improve as pupils move through the school. During the inspection, the quality of the lessons varied from satisfactory to excellent, but over two-thirds of the lessons observed were good or better, and a fifth were very good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen, but children's learning in the Reception class has been affected this year by the long-term absence of the class teacher. Nearly all of the parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire feel that their children are being taught well, and the inspection findings largely endorse this view.
21. Since the last inspection, considerable emphasis has been placed on improving teachers' skills. The teaching of English and mathematics is monitored regularly and teachers are provided with useful feedback. The introduction of performance management procedures and a greater awareness of the school's targets are also helping to raise teachers' expectations. Significant improvements to the school's procedures for assessment in English and mathematics and the development of schemes of work for each subject give staff a better basis than before for planning their lessons. Thorough analyses of the school's national test results and the optional tests have given teachers a much better awareness of how well their pupils are achieving and what pupils need to do in order to improve.
22. The overall quality of the teaching of English is good. Pupils' literacy skills are not only developed well in English lessons, but are also consolidated through research and written

work produced for other subjects, such as history, geography and science. The development of writing skills at Key Stage 1 has been a major focus for development within the school's development plan, and inspection evidence shows that standards in this aspect of pupils' work are improving once again. Writing skills are developed well at Key Stage 2, because pupils are given good opportunities to write in subjects other than English. Basic skills are reinforced well during English lessons and at other times. In a very good English lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher emphasised the importance of using capital letters, reminded pupils to use joined up writing and reinforced spelling rules. In a few classes, however, too long is spent dealing with the same point, rather than in revisiting that point briefly in future lessons in order to consolidate pupils' learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills through drama and their participation in end-of-year productions and assemblies.

23. The overall quality of the teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have made good use of the National Numeracy Strategy, and they are aware of the need to pay greater attention to practical and problem-solving activities. Mental activities at the start of each lesson are having a positive impact on the development of pupils' abilities to handle numbers and perform mental calculations. The teachers provide consistently good, direct teaching which helps pupils to understand different strategies for carrying out calculations and for solving problems. Most teachers employ good questioning techniques, which encourage pupils to reflect on and explain strategies for their calculations. In most classes, there is an enthusiasm for teaching and learning mathematics. A number of other subjects, such as science and geography, make good contributions to developing pupils' mathematical skills by providing real-life contexts for their application.
24. The overall quality of teaching and learning in science, art and design, information and communication technology and physical education is satisfactory. In geography and history, it is good. Teachers are good at linking work in these two subjects with other subjects which adds greater relevance and broadens pupils' understanding. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak, but the teaching of design and technology has been unsatisfactory in recent times because so little time has been spent developing pupils' understanding of the subject. Although pupils develop skills to make objects, they have been given little opportunity to develop their own ideas, produce plans and evaluate their products. The teachers' confidence in, and their own personal use of, information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection, although most teachers would acknowledge the need to deepen their understanding of aspects of the subject in order to be able to provide greater challenge for the more able pupils. The teaching of music is particularly good. Lessons are taught by a specialist teacher whose expertise and highly enthusiastic style of teaching motivate the pupils, lead to very good levels of concentration and result in high-quality work. The provision of many additional opportunities to improve their musical expertise outside the normal curriculum, such as through the very well -attended choir or school band, also makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning in music.
25. The teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. A qualified nursery nurse, who is also undertaking training for status as a qualified teacher, has taken over the running of the Nursery and has brought significant improvements to the provision for the school's youngest children. Children are given a good introduction to school. The atmosphere is calm and welcoming, and children are provided with a very good range of activities which promote all aspects of their learning. The teaching in the Reception class has been affected this year by the long-term absence of the class teacher and children have become unsettled by having a succession of supply teachers. The teaching provided by a supply teacher during the week of the inspection was good, but the unsettled behaviour of the children and their responses in lessons indicate that the quality of the teaching and their consequent learning have not been as good throughout the year. The school's permanent

teacher and teaching assistants observed during the inspection have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for young children and teach basic skills well, such as the sounds letters make in words. Sessions are appropriately planned, with clear expectations both for children's behaviour and what they are to achieve. In the Nursery, there is a good balance of child-initiated activities and tasks directed by an adult. The staff manage the children well, with consideration and respect. Assessment procedures in the Nursery are good and are used well to assess what the children already know and can do and to plan what they are to learn next.

26. The inclusive nature of the school is reflected in the teachers' good planning of the work for different groups of pupils. The short-term planning indicates how the needs of pupils with different abilities will be met, including the lower- and higher-attaining pupils. The work is suitably modified for the lower-attaining pupils, and activities are generally extended for the more able, offering them additional challenge. The differentiation in lessons is strongest in literacy and in numeracy, although there is some scope for improving the challenge provided for more able pupils in other subjects, such as science and physical education.
27. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and they learn well. Good-quality support from the teaching assistants, combined with the class teachers' intervention during lessons, is effective in meeting pupils' individual needs. This often results in pupils making a similar level of progress to others in the class. The teachers' planning is modified appropriately for pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils. Teachers make good use of pupils' individual action plans during lessons and frequently make reference to pupils' individual targets. Teaching assistants provide good support during whole-class lessons in literacy and numeracy. They have received special training within school for this purpose. They strive hard to ensure that the quality of support they provide is effective in meeting individual needs and in raising achievement. There is very good communication between teachers and the teaching assistants, with reference to lesson planning, the organization of teaching, and in assessing and recording how well the pupils are progressing. This has a good impact on improving pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
28. The school meets the needs of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language well. These pupils are drawn fully into lessons and additional help is provided when required. Teaching and learning for these pupils is as good as for the rest of the school. Teachers are aware of the languages that are spoken at home by their bilingual pupils and parents. There are very good links with their parents. Teachers identify the special expertise some parents might have to support their children's learning, and make good use of this.
29. The teachers are well prepared for their lessons, and their planning is generally thorough. At the beginning of most lessons, the teachers help pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson by discussing their objectives. They use a good variety of teaching strategies and make good use of resources to capture pupils' interest and help them to maintain their concentration. In a few classes, the teacher places too much reliance on the use of worksheets, which do not always provide sufficient scope for pupils to develop their skills. All teachers involve pupils well in discussion. Within the restrictions of the school's accommodation and resources, teachers endeavour to make use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning, but the school acknowledges that greater use could be made of this tool in most subject areas. In some classes, pupils' independence and the skills of investigative enquiry are promoted well in science. In other classes, however, pupils need to be given more opportunities to develop these skills.
30. The teachers manage pupils well. There is a good working atmosphere in most lessons. In a good English lesson in Year 5, for example, all pupils were fully engaged in their various activities and were able to work well and sensibly, both independently and in groups. The

teachers generally make effective use of the time available for teaching, although occasionally activities go on for too long.

31. The marking of pupils' work in English is generally clear and specific, closely linked to pupils' individual targets for improvement, and gives clear guidance on how to improve. In other subjects, the marking lacks consistency and is frequently too vague. Ticks and a general 'well done' type of comment are the norm and pupils are given little or no guidance on how to improve.
32. Homework is set regularly, increasing in amount as pupils move through the school. A number of parents feel their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home; some feel their children get too much, others that they get too little. The inspection findings, along with the views of the majority of parents, indicate that the school strikes an appropriate balance in the quantity and range of homework given. Homework tasks observed during the inspection provided appropriate reinforcement or extension of work undertaken in class.

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

33. Overall, the school provides a good and well-balanced curriculum for its pupils that fulfils statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum. Provision for numeracy and history is good, for literacy and music it is very good, and for all other subjects it is satisfactory, except design and technology, which does not yet provide sufficient breadth and balance. The curriculum for the youngest children in the school is sound; it covers the six areas of learning and the Early Learning Goals.
34. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school makes effective use of agencies to support its programme for sex education, health education and drugs awareness. To support pupils' personal development, circle time² is timetabled across the school.
35. The contribution made by extra-curricular activities to pupils' learning is very good. Extra-curricular activities include soccer, netball, cross-country, rounders, athletics, art and craft, pottery, pets club, computer club, gardening club, choir, recorders and a school band. There is also a breakfast club run by parents. Parents and governors are involved in running other extra-curricular activities, such as netball. The provision is supplemented by a good range of visitors to the school and trips to places of interest. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity of going on residential visits.
36. The school teaches the National Numeracy Strategy well and the National Literacy Strategy very well. There are very good links between subjects and this is a strong feature of the curriculum.
37. All pupils have equal opportunity and access to the curriculum and the school tries hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities. Teachers ensure that there is equal access to the curriculum for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of their individual needs. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. There are close links with the church and a range of charities. The very good links with a

² During 'Circle Time' pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

school in the Gambia have led to visits to the school and a range of activities, including art, music and dance, which have enriched the pupils' experience. There are good links with secondary schools, and secondary students come in and spend time with pupils in Year 6 and lead assemblies from time to time.

38. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is, generally, a good level of additional support for pupils with special educational needs, which helps them to access the curriculum at their levels of need. Individual education plans are drawn up for all pupils identified as having special educational needs. Parents and pupils are involved in devising these plans. Teachers make good use of the individual plans to support pupils' learning. Targets are appropriate, specific and measurable, and are generally focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. There is good liaison with the outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist and the local specialist centre for advising and supporting pupils with specific learning difficulties.
39. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was highly praised at the time of the last inspection, and it is still a very significant strength. This is a caring school, with a firm commitment to helping its pupils to become rounded and responsible members of the school and wider community. Its strong Christian ethos is fundamental to everything that happens in the school.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. During assemblies, religious education lessons and circle time, pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they have an impact on people's lives. The message that everyone has value and is deserving of respect is constantly reinforced and, in many lessons, teachers value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts and ideas. A good example was provided by an art lesson in Year 6, where pupils were encouraged to express their feelings about various three-dimensional works of art. This prompted some perceptive and sensitive comments such as, 'It makes me feel peaceful and a little sad.' Prayer is an important part of school life, such as when the day starts with pupils sitting with joined hands in a circle, quietly saying a familiar prayer. A lit candle is often used on these occasions, and in assembly, to give a focus and encourage an atmosphere of quiet reflection.
41. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is also very good. The school provides a clear moral code as a basis for good behaviour that is promoted consistently in all aspects of school life. Each class has a set of rules, which the pupils have devised with their class teacher, and pupils know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. Through their very good quality relationships, teachers consistently promote principles such as fairness, integrity and truthfulness, and these principles are constantly reinforced. For example, in one assembly, junior pupils listened carefully and willingly answered questions as the headteacher cleverly illustrated how one small lie can lead to others until it becomes very difficult to untangle the deceit.
42. Pupils are given many opportunities to work and play in small group or team situations. In subjects like art and science, workshop days encourage a spirit of co-operation and shared experience. Pupils are given every opportunity to participate in team sports and, through activities such as concerts, talent shows and fund-raising events, they are able to raise self-esteem and develop initiative. These qualities are also promoted through inter-class activities, such as older pupils helping the younger ones with their reading. Each class elects members to the school council, which has been responsible for a number of initiatives, such as the school's 'friendship bench', where children who are lonely can go to meet a friend. There is, however, scope for the council to be further developed, perhaps through the pupils being given more responsibility to elect a chairperson or to draw up agendas for meetings.

43. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good, with many opportunities being given for pupils to participate in music, drama, arts, crafts and other cultural events. Visits and visitors play an important part in the curriculum, for instance the drama workshop to raise awareness of drug abuse, the residential trip to an outdoor activity centre or the visit by a mission team during 'faith week'. There is a well-established link with a school in the Gambia, and teachers from that school have visited to tell the pupils about life in their country and to teach traditional music and dance. Knowledge of different cultures is also enhanced through other subjects, for instance in history, where pupils learn about traditional Greek and Egyptian dances or in art where they learn about Islamic or aboriginal art. The school is well aware of the cultural background of pupils and successfully integrates pupils from different backgrounds. Cultural diversity is welcomed, and celebrated by the school community as part of the school ethos and its work. The school promotes very well the pupils' own culture and successfully raises awareness of other cultures and faiths, particularly through religious education, assemblies and some subjects, such as geography. The Nursery is particularly successful in raising the pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in the school, through using multicultural resources and displays. Books, resources and displays are generally chosen to try and reflect the different cultures represented in the wider society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school continues to provide a secure, caring environment, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The school provides very good care for its pupils and has very good procedures in place for child protection. Staff are all briefed in child protection procedures. The school has a very good approach to health and safety, with procedures following the local authority's guidelines. Requirements for risk assessment and for the uses of potentially hazardous substances are all addressed. The site and activities throughout the day are adequately supervised. The school has very good medical arrangements, including qualified first aid staff and a first aid room. External medical specialist staff visit as required. Accident reports are completed and external agencies are involved as required.
45. The school has a friendly, family-type environment, and the welfare of the pupils is underpinned by the close relationships within school, which ensure that pupils are well known to staff and that the pupils know who to contact about any problems. There is good provision for pupils' personal development as they move through the school, although formal monitoring is an area for development. Staff are available to support the pupils at all times during the day.
46. The procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance are good. Registration procedures are carried out efficiently and effectively, and any absence is followed up to ascertain the reason. Attendance and lateness are monitored on a continuous basis, with detailed analysis carried out at least every half term. There are good systems to ensure that formal applications are made for time off for pupils during term time and that reasons for absence are given. The school has, until recently, not made first-day contact with parents about absence, but systems are now in place to do so on the few occasions when parents do not make contact.
47. The school has a good behaviour policy, which outlines clear rewards and sanctions. However, the policy is not applied consistently across all year groups. Rules are communicated to parents and explained to the pupils, who are clearly aware of the teachers' expectations. Teachers use good classroom management skills to control behaviour but, because poor behaviour is the exception, not all teachers appear fully familiar with the school's strategies should there be any unacceptable behaviour. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection, but discussions during the inspection confirm that it does

occur very occasionally and that the school is addressing the issue on a whole-school basis through assemblies and personal and social education lessons. The anti-bullying policy is very good and is followed well.

48. Special educational needs are identified appropriately at an early stage, and all pupils on the special educational needs register have individual action plans that are reviewed on a regular basis. Procedures for reviewing individual education plans have improved since the last inspection. Non-contact time is allocated for teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator to review the plans, and parents are involved more systematically in their children's reviews.
49. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. There are very good procedures in English and mathematics, where end-of-year tests are given to pupils in Years 3 to 5, along with national testing at the end of Years 2 and 6. This information is used very well to monitor how well pupils are progressing. Procedures are also very good in music, where the teacher keeps careful records of how well pupils are progressing. They are good in science and satisfactory in all other subjects, except design and technology where they have not yet been put in place. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory in most subjects, there is a lack of consistency in their implementation and the school has recognised this as an area needing further development.
50. The use of assessment data to help teachers plan for the future is good. It is particularly good in English and mathematics. Extra support given to pupils in English through use of this data partly accounts for the better results in the English national tests in 2002, compared with the other subjects. Extra support and booster classes are now also being targeted in mathematics.
51. The school has very good procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress. All assessment data, including results in the National Curriculum tests, are analysed very well and the information gained is used to improve standards and implement strategies to target any underachievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. There is a very good partnership between parents and the school which has improved since the last inspection. The parents show a keen interest in their children's education and work very well with the school. The school fosters this very good partnership through its open-door policy and the approachability of the staff, which makes parents feel very welcome in school. Parents' views of the school, expressed through the questionnaires and the parents' meeting, are very supportive. The responses showed strong agreement for all questions, except for the amount of homework and the information about their children's progress. In all other questions, the number of parents who strongly agreed was exceptionally high. Written comments made by parents were mainly supportive of the school and its leadership, but concerns were raised about the way the school communicates with parents, the homework policy and staffing problems in the Reception class that are affecting the pupils' learning. The inspection team investigated these areas and concluded that the use of homework is appropriate to the pupils and that the information provided to parents is very good.
53. The information provided for parents is very good. The school sends home letters to parents about specific events and issues, as well as regular monthly newsletters and a periodic religious education newsletter. These letters are factual and informative and provide parents with good information; whilst the presentation is good, they could be enhanced by contribution from pupils. The school prospectus is well presented, but needs to include information to parents about their right to withdraw children from assemblies and religious

education, as well as giving clearer information on the arrangements for Nursery provision. The governors' annual report is well presented and informative, fully meeting requirements. The reporting system to parents on pupils' progress is very good and comprises parents' meetings and an annual report, together with the opportunities to discuss progress at any time if parents are concerned. The reports contain personalised comments and refer to National Curriculum levels. The school's open-door policy allows parents to talk to the headteacher at any time, and parents can make an appointment to see a class teacher after school to talk about their child.

54. Many parents play an active part in supporting their children at school by being a school governor or by being a member of the very active home-school association which makes a significant contribution to the funding of the school as well as the activities for parents and children. The home-school association is an effective link between the school and the parish and local community which is of great benefit to the school. Parents can communicate with school and monitor their children's work through the homework book and the reading diary. A significant number of parents help in school during the week, and many help with school visits and activities.

55. There are very good systems to help children to settle into school when they join the Nursery or Reception classes. Meetings are held before the children start school, and home visits are made prior to this. There are also very good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, which helps to meet individual needs and raise the pupils' self-esteem. Individual targets for improvement in the pupils' individual education plans are shared with the pupils and their parents, and both are involved appropriately in reviewing targets at regular intervals.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The overall quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher, the school's senior management team and the subject co-ordinators is good, although there is room for improvement in the role played by some subject co-ordinators. A new headteacher was appointed three years ago, but the new leadership team continues to provide similarly good leadership to that found at the time of the last inspection.

57. The headteacher herself provides good leadership. She has a strong commitment to high standards and the principle of continuous improvement. She has a very clear understanding of the aspects of the school which need to be improved and of how she would like the school to develop. Her efforts, for example, to improve the quality of education for children in the Nursery and Reception classes have been entirely appropriate, even though they have been frustrated by staff changes and long-term absence. She provides clear educational direction for the staff, who respond well to her leadership. She has generated a very good, co-operative team spirit amongst the staff, who willingly and uncomplainingly take on additional duties to cover for absent colleagues. The staff work together well and successfully to fulfil the school's aims, in which the Christian ethos of the school is of paramount importance.

58. The school is managed well and, in many respects, very well. There is an effective management structure, which provides a good oversight of the work of the school. The deputy headteacher provides very good support for the headteacher and shares a common vision and desire to move the school forward. Staff have a clear understanding of day-to-day procedures. Daily routines are efficient and time is used well during the day. The school secretary is very efficient and provides very good support for the headteacher and staff and a welcoming presence to visitors and parents. Since the last inspection, the role of the subject

co-ordinator has developed very well in the key subjects of English and mathematics. Many of the other subject co-ordinators are keen to carry out their responsibilities, but are not entirely clear what is expected of them. A few subjects, such as art and design and design and technology, have not been managed well. Plans to provide each co-ordinator with non-contact time to enable them to manage their subject and monitor the quality of the teaching have been frustrated because of staffing problems.

59. Because of staff absence, there is no specific person with overall responsibility for the Nursery and Reception classes. Although this is an unsatisfactory situation, the staff are working together to ensure that disruption to the children's education is kept to a minimum. The teacher who has assumed responsibility for the Nursery has worked hard and successfully to improve teamwork and transform the teaching and learning opportunities provided for the school's youngest children. Within the Reception class, the teaching assistants have provided a measure of continuity, but further development of the overall provision for these children is being held back by the lack of leadership.
60. The school manages educational inclusion issues well. The school improvement plan aims to provide equal access and opportunities for pupils with varying degrees of special educational needs. The school's educational priorities and targets are appropriately focused on raising the attainment of pupils of all abilities. The whole-school target setting arrangements and procedures for supporting the more able and gifted and talented pupils are appropriate. In view of the changing context of the school, indicated, for example, by the recent admission numbers in the Nursery, data analysis could be developed further to provide a clearer view of achievement and progress which pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make over time. There are no written guidelines for teachers for supporting pupils with English as an additional language, although such pupils are very well integrated members of the school and teachers give careful consideration to their specific needs. The headteacher has recently drafted the school's policy to promote racial equality, although pupils are already very good at respecting others, regardless of race or background. Any reported incidents of bullying and racist behaviour are recorded, and appropriate action is taken promptly.
61. The school gives high priority to the area of special educational needs and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well in this regard. The special educational needs policy has been revised in line with the new Code of Practice. Governors inform parents about the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy through their annual report to parents. There is good improvement in this regard since the last inspection. The special educational needs co-ordinator has managed the area well, ensuring that the new Code of Practice has been implemented effectively. The responsibility for the management of the provision for special educational needs currently rests with the headteacher. She is supported by the previous co-ordinator, who, despite having left the school at the end of last term, continues to offer support and guidance for parents and teachers by special arrangements on a temporary basis. A newly appointed co-ordinator is to take up her post in September. Governors' involvement in overseeing the school's provision for special educational needs and providing additional help is very good.
62. The governing body is very effective. There is a good breadth of expertise amongst the governors, who fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. There is a good sense of teamwork, and many governors give much time to support the school and the headteacher in a variety of ways. Minutes show that meetings of committees and the full governing body are frequent and are well attended. Full governors' meetings are held in a different classroom each time, giving the class teacher the opportunity to show governors what happens in that class, and helping governors to develop a very good understanding of all parts of the school. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, when one of the key issues was to

improve the effectiveness of the governing body. The governors now have proper reporting and accountability procedures in respect of financial matters and have a much greater awareness of, and involvement in, the monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have taken important decisions which will shortly bring significant improvements to the school's accommodation and resources for information and communication technology.

63. Overall, the school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own performance and taking effective action are good and have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and senior management team have a particularly good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, based on their own observations and monitoring of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work, tracking of pupils' progress and monitoring of teachers' planning. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics carry out their responsibilities well. Teachers respond well to the feedback given and are eager to improve. The monitoring and evaluation of work in other subjects is not as thorough, mainly because these subjects have not been priorities for development, but also because the school has been unable to carry out the planned programme to release teachers from their normal classroom duties.
64. The school's procedures for appraisal and performance management are good. Targets set for individual teachers are linked to the school's main priorities for development. The school's efforts to become more self-evaluative and to ensure that all staff have opportunities for professional development are acknowledged in the renewal of the school's status as an 'Investor in People'. All staff are encouraged to attend training courses as part of their professional development, and there is also a very good programme for developing the expertise of the school's teaching assistants. There is a good induction programme for midday supervisors and teaching assistants, and the deputy headteacher plays a key role in mentoring new staff and teachers in training.
65. The school's priorities for development are very appropriate. For example, the school identified the need to improve the quality of pupils' writing at Key Stage 1, and the measures introduced have been having a positive effect on raising standards. The school development plan is very well written, and the targets are clear. Most staff show very good commitment to implementing change, but absence has meant that a few staff have played little part in the school's drive to improve. Progress in implementing the development plan is monitored closely, both by the headteacher and the governors.
66. The school uses its resources well. Control of the school's finances and the day-to-day management of finance are very good. The procedures for providing accountability are much improved since the last inspection, and governors are kept well informed about the school's financial situation. Financial planning is related through the school improvement plan to the school's educational priorities. The school has carried forward a substantial sum of money from the previous financial year, but this is earmarked for payment for the current building project and for improving resources for information and communication technology, both of which will be of immediate benefit to all pupils. The day-to-day management of finances is efficient. Grants for specific educational purposes, such as special educational needs, are used appropriately for the purposes intended. The school's practice to ensure that it obtains best value is good. Competitive tenders are sought when obtaining goods or services. The headteacher and governors are very aware of how the school's standards compare with those of other schools and there is regular consultation with parents, pupils and staff in order to obtain their views on various matters. Taking into account the school's expenditure and the quality of education provided, including provision for the personal and non-academic needs of the pupils, the school gives good value for money.

67. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Over the last two years, the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff with appropriate expertise and experience, a problem which has been exacerbated by the long-term absence of two members of staff. As a result, many of the younger pupils have experienced several teacher changes. The headteacher and the governors are very aware of the problems and are doing everything possible to rectify the situation. The staffing situation has also adversely affected subject co-ordination responsibilities. There is an appropriate number of well-qualified and experienced classroom assistants who provide good support to the teachers and to the children's education. The school has very good support staff. The caretaker not only carries out normal caretaking duties well, but undertakes many other jobs around the school which are much appreciated by staff and help significantly to keep the school's costs down. The school's catering staff provide very good school meals for pupils and staff.
68. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The structure of the school is of good quality and is well maintained. The classrooms are of a generous size to allow effective classroom activities, and most are well decorated. There is a good-sized hall and a separate adjacent dining area. The original library now shares its purpose with the computer facilities and is too small. A new extension is nearing completion which will provide a separate library and allow the computer suite to be enlarged; at present, it can only accommodate a half class. Even with the new facilities, the accommodation will not be adequate to provide for some subjects effectively. For example, the very good music lessons, which are taught in the main hall, can have a disturbing effect on lessons in adjacent classrooms and this will still occur. There is also a lack of suitable space for small groups to work away from the main classrooms. The school makes good use of the space it does have available, often teaching small groups in the small food technology room or the staff room. Outside facilities are good with both hard play areas and a playing field. There is a separate, secure outdoor activity area for children in the Nursery. The activity areas are well resourced as part of the school's strategy to control behaviour at break times by providing a suitable range of activities. The condition of equipment is good, but some of the hard surfaces are in need of attention.
69. The school's resources are satisfactory and plans are in place to improve them. The school has adequate books. The ratio of computers to pupils is within government targets, but many of the machines are quite old. The school has a good supply of software to support the curriculum and to assist management and administration. Each classroom has a good supply of books and equipment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- i. Improve the opportunities provided for pupils in design and technology by:
- improving the subject leadership in this subject;
 - providing staff with clear guidance as to how the curriculum for design and technology should be taught;
 - providing training for staff to improve their skills in teaching the subject;
 - ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to teaching the subject.

(Paragraphs 12, 24, 33, 49, 58, 104-109)

- ii. Improve the quality of the school's provision for children in the Reception class by:
- taking measures to ensure stability of teaching for children in the Reception class;
 - providing good leadership which can build on the good foundations established in the Nursery class and ensure the provision of appropriate learning opportunities for children in the Reception.

(Paragraphs 6, 14, 20, 25, 52, 57, 59, 72-78)

- iii. Improve the opportunities for subject co-ordinators to provide leadership and exercise their subject responsibilities by:
- clarifying the role which subject co-ordinators are expected to undertake;
 - ensuring that subject co-ordinators have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning within their subject areas;
 - ensuring that subject co-ordinators identify ways in which their subject areas can be improved and provide appropriate opportunities for staff development.

(Paragraphs 12, 56, 58, 63, 103, 104, 115, 127)

71. Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the school's prospectus identifies parents' right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship and religious education. (Paragraph 53)
- Ensure greater consistency of challenge for more able pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics. (Paragraphs 9, 24, 26, 96, 137)
- Greater consistency in the quality of marking in subjects other than English.

(Paragraphs 31, 84, 96)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

56

Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

(In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils)

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	10	29	17	0	0	0
Percentage	2	18	51	30	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 almost two 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)	14	206
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	23

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.4

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	15
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	29	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (78)	81 (88)	94 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	14
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	28	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	94 (97)	90 (88)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	15	18	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	15
	Girls	17	13	17
	Total	32	26	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (87)	79 (87)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	17	14	17

	Total	30	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (94)	85 (94)	97 (100)
	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	165	0	0
White – Irish	8	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	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	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	542,267
Total expenditure	492,850
Expenditure per pupil	2,161
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,417
Balance carried forward to next year	87,090

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.2
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	238
Number of questionnaires returned	138
Percentage of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category³

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	69	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	53	44	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good	56	41	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	40	39	13	4	4
The teaching is good	54	42	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	30	53	16	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	74	25	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	63	31	4	0	3
The school works closely with parents	51	38	9	0	2
The school is well led and managed	56	37	6	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	63	32	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	59	27	6	1	7

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents with children in the Reception class expressed concern over the number of teachers their children have had during the current school year because of the long-term absence of the class teacher.

³ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

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

72. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage⁴ is satisfactory overall. Children's attainment when they start school varies widely, but is broadly average overall. The children in the Reception class make sound progress towards the Early Learning Goals, and children in the Nursery are making good progress. By the time children start Year 1, their overall level of attainment is average.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. The children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well in the Foundation Stage. The children have positive attitudes to their learning. They are generally responsive and pay good attention, particularly in the Nursery. Staff go to some lengths to ensure that the children are secure and happy in their learning environment and to develop children's confidence in their abilities. The staff present good role models to the children, displaying mutual respect and consideration. As a result, the children generally behave well. The children know that they will receive a positive response when they approach adults. They are encouraged to share and take turns, and those who still find this difficult are reminded to play fairly. Sometimes, the children are inattentive, but the staff make good efforts to remind the children to pay attention, listen and concentrate. All staff strive hard to develop and maintain secure relationships with the children. In the Reception class, changes in staffing have slightly unsettled the children, who have, nevertheless, coped well with the situation. The staff, particularly the teaching assistants who have provided an important element of stability for the children, are sensitive to the children's needs and help to resolve any anxieties quickly. A reasonable balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities is provided in the Reception class. The staff in the Nursery have worked hard, with support from the local authority, to develop a good range of activities, which are used very successfully to develop the children's independence and to enable them to have autonomy in their learning. A good range of cultural experiences is provided for the children, such as dressing up in different types of traditional dress to illustrate their own cultural heritage. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain the expected standards for their personal, social and emotional development.

Communication, language and literacy

74. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is sound overall, with a good emphasis on teaching the basic skills of writing and recognising letters by shape and sound. The teachers build successfully on what the children know about words, sounds and the relationship between them. There are good opportunities in the Nursery for the children to develop their ideas, language and imaginative play in role-play situations. The role-play area is presented in a very imaginative and attractive way, and the staff work well with the children, helping them to develop their own ideas in the 'spaceship' and through the use of a good range of interesting equipment. There is also a role-play area in the Reception class, which is used appropriately by the children to develop their ideas, but the area could be developed further. The children's emergent skills in writing are encouraged. In the Nursery, for example, the children have frequent access to an 'office' area, which they use very well to develop their hand control, writing and drawing. There is also a similar area in the Reception class, but opportunities for children to undertake these activities are less frequent, generally only

⁴ Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes.

occurring in the afternoons. The children enjoy stories and share books with adults and also with older pupils in the school. They also take books home to share with their parents on a regular basis. They are becoming increasingly aware that print has meaning; they handle books correctly and generally listen attentively to stories read to them. By the end of the Reception, most children attain the expected standards for communication, language and literacy.

Mathematical development

75. The children's mathematical development is given an appropriate emphasis within the curriculum. The teaching is sound and the children make satisfactory progress overall and achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception class. There is a good emphasis on pattern making and ensuring that the children are aware of sequences and repeating patterns. There are appropriate opportunities for the children to count, recognise numerals and work out simple calculations. The youngest children in the Nursery have a good range of practical activities, for example using sand, water and malleable materials, to explore quantity and to develop their understanding of mathematical language such as 'more' and 'less'. The children in the Reception class have appropriate experiences, using everyday situations to count, explore numbers and build their ideas about measurement, and two- and three-dimensional shapes. They do not have a very secure idea about three-dimensional shapes yet, but the progress they made during the inspection, due to the good teaching they received, aided their progress well. Many of the children have a secure understanding about two-dimensional shapes and can identify these correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. The teaching provided to help children acquire knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory overall. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and achieve appropriate standards by the end of the Reception. The staff provide an appropriate range of experiences for them to explore their environment and to observe and study manufactured objects and living things. For example, the children in the Nursery have grown their own plants from seeds, and children in the Reception use musical instruments to explore sound. Connected with their work on three-dimensional shapes, the children also build and make models from construction equipment and recycled materials. During the inspection, the children in the Reception class were given good opportunities to observe the change in milk and cream, creating 'curds' and 'whey' and, after much vigorous shaking, watched as these turned into butter! The topic on 'Little Miss Muffet' was used very well by the temporary staff, and followed with a study of spiders, which the children then made from paper and pipe cleaners. Effective use is made of the outdoor area and opportunities are provided for the children to explore the environment and to gain confidence in finding their way about, both indoors and outside. In the Nursery, the children develop an understanding of information and communication technology as they use computers, tape players and recorders. In the Reception, opportunities for this type of work are sometimes missed, for example to reinforce work on words and letter sounds. However, the children are offered a good variety of experiences to consider other cultures and backgrounds and to respect these.

Physical development

77. The staff provide an appropriate range of opportunities to support children's physical development, especially their hand control skills. Nearly all children achieve the expected standards for physical development by the end of the Reception. The children are gaining increasing control over their movements, and can negotiate space, obstacles and other children as they move around their classrooms. They are learning to pedal, push and propel themselves along on bikes and other wheeled toys. They use the space in the hall effectively

to refine their movements and move in time to the beat of percussion instruments. They use the large climbing equipment to develop their control and co-ordination in jumping, balancing and climbing. Hand control skills are developing well due to the good range and variety of activities which the staff provide. For example, the youngest children are learning to use scissors correctly, they manipulate malleable materials and have good developing skills using basic tools and equipment, such as the mouse at the computer. The children are also becoming aware of the effects on their bodies of exercise and healthy eating.

Creative development

78. The teaching provided for children's creative development is satisfactory and children achieve appropriate standards by the end of the Reception. However, opportunities for the children to develop their own ideas, and to choose materials and media from an increasing range are sometimes missed in the Reception. In contrast, there are very good opportunities for the children to develop their musical skills. The children greatly enjoy their music sessions, use instruments properly and are developing a good sense of rhythm, beating instruments in time to the music. They can also move in time to music and use their imagination to re-enact situations. The children respond well to stories, songs and rhymes and gain enjoyment from these activities. There are particularly good opportunities for imaginative activities and role-play in the Nursery. There are some, but not enough, opportunities for the children to select materials to create their own designs, models, and use their previously learned techniques in a variety of ways to create different effects, especially in the Reception class. However, generally, there is a good range of opportunities for the children to explore, using their senses, and to use tactile materials.

ENGLISH

79. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection, and they are very good in speaking and listening and in reading. Standards in writing are not as high, but are improving. The 2002 national test results at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average in reading, but only average in writing. The English test results at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average. The inspection findings show that, overall, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well and the quality of English teaching throughout the school is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school.
80. By the end of Year 2, speaking and listening skills are well above the expected level. Almost all pupils communicate confidently and effectively and have a well-developed vocabulary. They chat readily to visitors about their work and have no difficulty in explaining what they are doing. These speaking and listening skills are developed well through the school and pupils continue to achieve well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 have a depth of vocabulary which is often quite impressive and which they use well to express themselves in both standard and non-standard English. The emphasis on good listening throughout the school and the use of activities such as drama, poetry recital, regular class and group discussions and class presentations in assemblies all contribute to these high standards.
81. Standards in reading are also very good. Pupils in Year 1, for example, read challenging texts with understanding and are able to answer questions about the text. Pupils in Year 2 know that there are different types of text, recognising and naming, for example, 'instructional texts'. They talk with understanding about 'phonic sounds' and 'phonemes' and how learning these can help them in their reading and spelling. The pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school and, by Year 6, most pupils are above the expected level for their age.

Pupils use books and the Internet regularly, effectively, and often independently, to research ideas. They read with expression and understanding and have a good knowledge of different types of writing and texts. They talk knowledgeably, for example, about 'narrative structure', 'characterisation', 'plot' and 'setting'. When they are reading aloud, most pupils pay attention to context and punctuation to help them to read with understanding and expression.

82. Writing skills are less well developed. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are at the expected level and a fifth are working above this level. The pace of progress in Year 1 is only satisfactory and has been affected by staffing changes, but all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Year 2. Almost all pupils form letters well and produce pieces of extended writing using cursive script. Appropriate attention is paid to spelling and punctuation, with most pupils spelling regular words correctly and generally using capital letters and full stops properly. Several pupils are beginning to use speech marks with reasonable understanding. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and, by the end of Year 6, standards in writing are above average. In a lesson in Year 5, for example, pupils were comparing the use of similes and metaphors and producing their own metaphors to describe classmates. A variety of thoughtful and perceptive images from pupils of very different abilities showed that all had a good grasp of how such figures of speech can enrich language. One girl referred to a boy as 'a pocketful of stars, sparkling everywhere' and another referred to a person as 'a classic Volvo, taking its time down the motorway.' Some pupils in Year 6 have produced excellent descriptive writing, showing perceptive understanding of how adjectives and adverbs can be used to bring a piece of writing to life. They show skill in changing their narrative writing into play scripts. Although still not as advanced as their speaking, listening and reading skills, most pupils show good use of writing techniques.
83. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning English. These are the result of very good relationships in class and most teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils usually work well independently or in groups, and most are well focused on their lessons whether discussing in the whole class or working individually or in groups. Because of these very good attitudes, the high quality of teaching, the very effective literacy strategies the school has put in place, well-targeted work aimed at their needs and the good support given by teachers and classroom assistants, all pupils make good progress. This includes those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This progress is fairly consistent throughout the school, although there are a couple of classes where progress is satisfactory rather than good.
84. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers plan their lessons well, with clear learning objectives, which help pupils to focus on the lessons. Teachers engage pupils well in discussions, making sure that all are involved by asking appropriate questions of individual pupils. The teaching of basic skills is very good overall. Most teachers use a very effective range of teaching methods, which helps to stimulate pupils in different ways. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, there was very effective use of voice as the teacher told a story. Her voice was very quiet and the pupils hung on to her every word, and there was an audible gasp as she reached the point where the fire broke out on board the ship. Teachers manage the pupils well and relationships in class are very good. This is as a result of the very positive ethos in the school and the excellent examples set by staff as role models. Teachers know the pupils well and ongoing assessment is good. This allows teachers to plan work aimed at the needs of different pupils so that they all, including the more capable pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are generally suitably challenged by their work. One of the strengths is the use that is made of English and extended writing in a whole range of subjects. This makes language development far more real and natural and develops a range of skills; and good examples were seen in science, mathematics, history, geography and art. Information and

communication technology is being used increasingly, and most pupils use a word processor competently for their age, adding pictures and even producing leaflets, such as the leaflets about plants produced by pupils in Year 3. This is an area that is still developing. Marking is generally good. Work is marked regularly and, in most classes, the comments are helpful and give clear guidance on how the work can be improved, as well as giving praise and encouragement. However, in a few classes, marking is fairly bland. One of the great strengths of literacy through the school is the very good and consistent use of individual targets that all pupils have. Pupils recognise the value of these targets and are keen to get the 'four stamps' that show they have achieved one. The best marking makes reference to pupils' targets and this provides a really effective way of moving pupils on. Many English lessons provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings, emotions and relationships through a range of poetry and prose texts from different cultures.

85. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The English co-ordinator is very well organised, and has a clear grasp of the needs of the subject. She checks the teachers' planning to ensure that the National Curriculum for English is covered effectively and reviews work through the school to make sure that skills are taught progressively and that standards are consistent across the school. It has not yet been possible for her to monitor teaching regularly, but she shows a clear understanding of the strengths of the team and has identified some development needs. Assessment procedures are very good, and various test results are analysed very well to help teachers with planning for pupils' needs and to provide extra support where necessary. Resources are good overall and are used well. The accommodation is satisfactory, except for the library, which shares space with the information and communication technology suite and is too small. As a result, the library is underdeveloped and underused, but this, too, is on the well-thought-out action plan.

MATHEMATICS

86. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been well above average for the last four years, and are significantly higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. In 2002, they were also well above average in relation to similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current year are not quite as high as in the previous year. They are above average, but fewer pupils are achieving at the higher than expected level than in the previous year. Pupils are making good progress. The school's targets are realistic and are likely to be achieved.
87. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average, but were well below the average for similar schools. The standards achieved were not as high as those at the time of the last inspection. Results have declined in the last three years from the above average or well above average results in previous years. With a change of teacher in Year 6, the school's forecast and inspection evidence indicate that standards are improving and are now above average. They are well above average in some aspects of the mathematics work, and average in using and applying mathematics. The school has set challenging, but realistic, targets this year, and they are likely to be achieved. This indicates good progress overall, and a more positive picture than last year, particularly in terms of attainment at the higher than expected level. Additional strategies applied by the school to raise standards are having a positive effect on raising standards throughout the school. There is no obvious difference in achievement between girls and boys. Progress is good for pupils with special educational needs in relation to their prior attainment. The small number of bilingual pupils in the school makes equally good progress as the rest of the pupils.
88. By the end of Year 2, pupils add and subtract numbers confidently to 100, and apply the four rules of mathematics in simple number sentences. Higher-attaining pupils use numbers to

1000. They learn different ways of adding numbers, for example by partitioning them into tens and units, and recombining. Pupils apply their knowledge well in day-to-day shopping activities, and the more able use their knowledge well in other contexts. They count in sets of two, three and four, and associate their knowledge of 'sets' with repeated addition, but only a few begin to understand how to use table facts to multiply. Most pupils in Year 2 recognise, label and describe properties of the common two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils estimate the length of familiar objects in the classroom, before measuring them with a ruler. They draw straight lines with a ruler and measure accurately their length in centimetres. Pupils process, represent and interpret data well in pictograms, tally charts and in block graphs. In science lessons, for example, they often sort sets according to the different attributes, using a Venn diagram or a Carroll diagram to present their findings. By the end of Year 2, pupils show a good understanding of the place value of two- and three-digit numbers.

89. By the end of Year 6, pupils explain well their own methods of calculation. They use large numbers, often with five or six digits, and have a good understanding of the size of the numbers in the number system. They multiply and divide whole and decimal numbers by 10, 100 and 1000. Pupils use their calculators well to check the accuracy of their answers. Teachers provide increasingly good opportunities now for pupils to apply their knowledge in real-life contexts, but complex problem solving is rare. This is an identified area for improvement. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils made very good use of their knowledge in problem solving in a range of real-life situations. These word problems involved pupils choosing the correct operation, giving their reasoning and using the taught mathematical vocabulary. In this lesson, pupils with special educational needs were supported well through suitably modified work, appropriate intervention by the teacher, and additional support from teaching assistants. Pupils were encouraged to show their methods of recording through jottings, and more able pupils to frame questions for others in problem solving. Pupils in Year 5 know the place value of decimal numbers to at least two decimal places, often beyond. They have a good feel for divisibility in numbers, for example if large numbers are divisible by 10 or 100, and if a given number is divisible by two, four, five or six. In one lesson, they checked this by using different mental methods of calculation and by using a calculator. By the end of the lesson, they were able to devise their own rules of divisibility of numbers, and recorded them in different forms. Pupils in Year 6 analyse data in tables and graphs, linked to their work in science, and give their own interpretation of the results. They have a good knowledge of fractions of numbers and quantities, and apply this in money-related problems. By the age of 11, most have a good understanding of the links between fractions, decimals and percentages, and can solve word problems, involving four rules. Progress is good in work seen on shape, space and measures, and data-handling, often better than expected for their age.
90. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall and often very good. The teachers' planning is very good and ensures that pupils of a range of abilities are involved suitably in lessons, and are challenged. They provide consistently good, direct teaching which helps pupils to understand different strategies for carrying out mental calculations and for solving problems. Most teachers employ good questioning techniques which encourage pupils to reflect on and explain strategies for their calculations. In most classes, there is an enthusiasm for teaching and learning mathematics. Pupils take a keen interest in the subject, and work very well in groups and on their own. The teachers provide good demonstrations and use a variety of resources to aid the pupils' understanding. Most lessons are concluded successfully through an assessment and evaluation of the pupils' work to see if the learning intentions have been achieved, time used effectively, and if pupils have made good enough progress in the lesson.
91. Teachers have good knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and how to teach it, and they implement it effectively to plan work and organise well-structured lessons. This is having

a positive impact on raising standards and on improving teaching and learning across the school. A number of subjects of the curriculum make good contributions to developing pupils' mathematical skills by providing real contexts for their application. There are good examples of teachers linking mathematics to subjects such as science and geography. Mathematics is used well to promote pupils' literacy skills, for example through using mathematical vocabulary clearly to explain methods of calculation or by using different ways of recording and interpreting information, including the use of the computer to support this. There is satisfactory use of information and communication technology to support the different aspects of mathematics, particularly data-handling, although there are few examples of pupils using the computer for their own investigations.

92. The assessment and tracking procedures are very good, and useful in setting realistic, yet challenging, targets for improvement for the school, for groups and for individuals in class. School projects, such as the '10 Pence Maths Trail', are successful in stimulating pupils' interests, raising funds for charity, and in providing opportunities for using mathematics in real life. The co-ordinator for the subject provides very good leadership. The action plan devised by her indicates appropriate priorities for the development of the subject. There is good progress in achieving priorities that are identified. One of the priorities, for example, is training the teaching assistants in the use of 'Springboard' material for pupils in Year 5. In-service training for teachers and the teaching assistants has been effective. The role of the co-ordinator is also well developed in relation to monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning through direct classroom observation, looking at standards of pupils' work and monitoring the coverage of the curriculum. The school has made good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection, and in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

93. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards in science at the end of both key stages. However, there are few pupils achieving above the expected level for their age, and the school has, rightly, identified the need to place a greater emphasis on investigative work in order to improve standards overall. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make appropriate progress alongside their peers, due to the levels of support they receive. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 were close to the national average, although no pupils were assessed to be achieving above the expected level. Following a period in which the school's results at the end of Year 6 improved significantly after the last inspection, being well above the national average in 2000, the national test results fell over the last two years and were below the national average in 2002 and well below the average for similar schools. With a new teacher in Year 6 this year, the trend has now reversed and standards are improving again. The pupils have good attitudes to their learning in science.
94. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of life processes and living things. They know, for example, that certain physical characteristics can be measured, and are developing the skills to make comparisons and record their findings. Although they have experienced some disruption this year, pupils in Year 1 are also making sound progress in learning about growth and living things. They know that certain conditions are necessary to sustain life and are learning how to conduct a fair test by changing one variable at a time.
95. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the features of a good investigation, and their skills of recording their findings are developing well. In the lesson observed during the inspection, pupils wrote an accurate account of their findings, using scientific language correctly. Pupils in Year 5 have a satisfactory knowledge of the earth and beyond and, with the increasing emphasis being placed on investigative work, they are learning how to make predictions, draw comparisons and test hypotheses.
96. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of science topics and teach basic skills appropriately. They produce clear planning for their lessons but, sometimes, there is not a secure enough match of task to the different levels of ability within the class, to ensure the more able pupils are challenged and their learning is extended. One of the reasons for this, in a few classes, is the over-use of worksheets which limit and restrict pupils' opportunities to write independently. There is good classroom management in science lessons, assessment procedures are good, and pupils generally learn at an appropriate pace and have a good awareness of their own learning. In a few classes, however, the pupils' work is not always as neat and tidy as it

could be, and although it is marked there are few comments to suggest how the pupils could improve their work. Information and communication technology is used successfully in some lessons. In Year 5, for example, pupils used computers well to record their findings and, in Year 3, pupils used a digital microscope to investigate the composition of different types of paper. However, new technology is not used extensively in teaching science, and the school recognises this as an area for development.

97. The curriculum for science is sound, and the use of assessment is successful. The subject is managed and co-ordinated satisfactorily, and there is a good degree of monitoring of classroom practice. Resources are adequate overall, and the school grounds and other opportunities for scientific study are used well to promote learning. For example, a science week is held each year, and there are several visitors to the school who share their scientific expertise with the pupils to enhance their learning of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, pupils at the end of Year 2 were found to be achieving above national expectations but, overall, standards have been maintained and pupils are making satisfactory progress throughout the school.
99. By the end of Year 2, pupils use a variety of materials and processes to produce pictures and designs of satisfactory quality. They have looked at the colour and texture of textile prints and extended them into a larger pattern. They are beginning to appreciate the special qualities of some artists, for instance when painting pointillist pictures in the style of Seurat, or studying the use of line in pictures by Van Gogh. Pupils in Year 1 have produced some colourful animal pictures using acrylic paint, and used the design of the Union Jack to explore ideas of pattern and texture.
100. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to appreciate the qualities of a much wider range of images and artefacts. For example, pupils make perceptive comments about some well-known sculptures in the environment such as 'The Angel of the North'. Comments, such as 'It makes me feel peaceful and a little sad', illustrate their developing understanding of the work of painters and sculptors. This is shown, too, in their sensitive pictures with the title of 'Picasso Peace' or the colourful and stylish pictures in the style of Clarice Clift. Pupils are able to work with a good variety of materials and techniques, such as the carefully made 'sequin waste' bags in Year 3 or the press prints produced by pupils in Year 5 based on the complex patterns of the Celtic people.
101. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and all, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They usually behave well and co-operate in a sensible and mature way when working collaboratively. Through the emphasis on collaborative work and the appreciation of the work of artists from many different cultures, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, and cultural development. Sound use is made of information and communication technology, for instance when using a computer program to produce pictures, or the Internet to find examples of the work of Andy Warhol.
102. On the basis of the pupils' finished work, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching in the three lessons observed during the inspection was good because teachers had planned well and shared clear objectives with the pupils. The teachers' class management is invariably good, and pupils respond by showing good levels of interest and concentration. In the lesson in which pupils were looking at the work of Van Gogh, good use was made of high-quality prints, and the teacher was successful in getting the class to look closely at the techniques used, and to experiment with their own line patterns. However,

there is less evidence of pupils working independently or developing their own ideas, and the displays of work very rarely feature any comments by pupils, for instance saying which is their favourite picture and why. Some opportunities to develop literacy skills are, therefore, missed.

103. The school has a well-established scheme of work, but has no systems in place for evaluating teaching and learning or assessing pupils' work at different levels. The co-ordinator, who was absent through illness at the time of this inspection, has made a start on a portfolio of pupils' work, but this is not levelled and contains only a few examples. There are also plans to introduce regular practice of drawing skills, perhaps through the use of a sketchbook. There is a need now to put in place systems to ensure that the progression of skills and knowledge is secure, and to enable teachers to assess with confidence the levels achieved by pupils in the different year groups.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards in design and technology are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6, which represents a decline since the last inspection. The school has been unable to find an effective replacement for the previous co-ordinator so that staff, many of whom lack confidence in teaching the subject, have not had sufficient help and guidance. Even at the time of the last inspection, the scheme for design and technology was criticised for its lack of detail and, until recently, this has remained the case. Staffing difficulties and the long-term absence of the present co-ordinator have added to the pressure.
105. The school has recognised this and has put in place measures to rectify the situation. These include the adoption of a published scheme of work, the use of work cards to support teachers' planning and a programme of whole-school and individual teacher training. These measures have already begun to have a positive effect and the statutory curriculum is being covered, but not yet in sufficient depth to ensure that skills are being taught systematically.
106. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, and only a very small amount of work was available on display. There are no pupils' workbooks for the subject and no co-ordinator's file or portfolio was available for scrutiny. From this limited evidence and talking to pupils and staff, it is clear that standards are not as high as they should be.
107. The work on display in Years 1 and 2 suggests that the school is moving in the right direction. Pupils in Year 1 have been looking at playground structures. They have said which is their favourite and have designed their own, using construction kits. They have also begun to make structures with straws to see what makes them stronger or weaker. In Year 2, they have been looking at puppets and answering questions such as, 'Who is it made for?' and, 'How does it work?' They have practised sewing techniques and then designed and made their own puppets, some of which are of a good standard. They are beginning to evaluate in simple ways with comments such as, 'I had a problem with getting the thread on the needle.'
108. The school makes good use of outside help to run workshop days, and work on display done by the older pupils is evidence of this. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 spent a day making 'band rollers' which they tested by racing against each other. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spent a day making large dome and tower structures out of rolls of paper, many of which are hanging in the hall, making an impressive display. As part of their topic on shelters, some pupils in Year 6 have made some good-quality models of different types of houses that are on display in their classroom. These suggest that, by the time they leave the school, the making skills of some pupils are in line with expectations, but evidence of the development of other important skills is hard to find. For example, there is little sign of pupils generating their own ideas, producing step-by-step plans, comparing their designs with others and identifying what did

and did not work well, or testing, modifying and re-evaluating their product. In addition, opportunities to use information and communication technology skills or to enhance literacy skills are not being exploited.

109. Because so little work has been completed over the year, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. However, the teaching in the lesson observed was good because it was well planned and had clear objectives that were shared with the pupils. As a result, all the pupils were fully engaged in the lesson and learned well. It is clear that, when given opportunities to learn, pupils respond well and enjoy the activities. The school now needs to implement the plans for development in the subject, and make sure that there is a systematic programme for teaching skills and knowledge throughout each year group. Consideration should be given to the retention of planning and evaluation sheets and photographic evidence in workbooks, folders or class portfolios so that pupils, parents and teachers can see the progress being made. A system of assessing achievement at the end of each unit of work also needs to be established.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Standards in geography have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with the national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. There is satisfactory progress in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of places at different scales, and of geographical themes, patterns and processes. There is generally good progress in the development of skills in geography, such as mapping skills and the use of instruments. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons, and in relation to their prior attainment, as a result of the level of support they are given through the school's good support structures.
111. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of the local area and places beyond, at home and abroad. They are aware of special features of countries such as China and Australia, and they know where to locate them on the world map. The learning of geography is made interesting by using contexts, such as the 'travels of Barnaby Bear'. Pupils are encouraged to take a toy bear with them if they travel away from home and to keep a diary to record events and experiences. These are then shared with others in the class. One girl, for example, took her toy bear to Dorset, and she was able to talk about their diary of events. Pupils in Year 2 learn about directions. They use the four points of the compass to indicate directions, and many are able to say in which direction an object is located in the classroom. They follow the teacher's instructions for directions and try to reach the given location.
112. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of different types of environment. They have, for example, made a comparative study of mountainous environments, comparing the mountain ranges from different countries. They have made good use of maps and atlases and have researched information on the Internet. They are developing an awareness of factors which can adversely affect the environment. They have, for example, written letters to the appropriate authorities to state their concerns regarding the plans to build a new ski resort on Mount Everest. Pupils in Year 5 have undertaken an in-depth study on the theme of water and have clearly benefited from learning about the different aspects of the theme, such as the water shortage in countries like Tanzania, its usage, conservation, and the effect of the Spanish oil disaster on the surrounding areas. The work has contributed well to the pupils' awareness of economic, social, moral and cultural issues.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils of all age groups. Geographical skills, such as the use of a key on a map to find major rivers and different land heights, are taught well. Pupils are given good opportunities to present their viewpoints on current issues, both in discussions and in writing. Teachers promote literacy and numeracy skills well through planned opportunities in lessons. They also make good links with other subjects, such as history and science, showing clearly how the physical features of a place affect human activity. There is satisfactory use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in geography. Pupils use the Internet at school and at home to carry out their own research in a chosen area. There are good opportunities, particularly for the younger pupils, to make a study of the local area. Pupils in Year 1 make good use of the school building and grounds to locate different areas and to draw their route from one place to another. Pupils in Year 2 compare their own area with the village of Bennington, and find out similarities and differences between the two. Pupils in Year 3 make very good use of the aerial photographs of the school and describe some of the differences between an aerial photograph and a map.
114. The teachers provide good opportunities for fieldwork. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils were looking forward to their fieldwork and preparing themselves well for their proposed field trip to Ivinghoe. They were able to take bearings from one point to the next, using a compass. Pupils are well behaved and show very good attitudes towards learning geography. They work very well together and remain fully focused on set tasks. Relationships are very good throughout, and this contributes to the good quality of learning and ethos.
115. The curriculum for geography meets statutory requirements. The quality and range of work are satisfactory and there are strengths in teaching. The geography policy has been reviewed recently, and there is useful guidance for teachers to plan their work. The scheme of work indicates clearly what is to be taught in each year group in relation to the study of places, geographical themes and skills. The new subject co-ordinator, however, has not yet had enough time to make coherent links between the existing schemes of work, and the nationally recognised scheme of work. Systems for monitoring teaching and evaluating standards of work are not sufficiently developed. Procedures for assessment and recording in geography are also underdeveloped. This makes it difficult to see how well the pupils are progressing and to ascertain the depth of their knowledge and understanding in the different aspects of the subject. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about leading the subject area and making the necessary improvements. There is an action plan with appropriate priorities for development, and there is a good capacity to succeed. Resources are satisfactory and are used well, but there is constant need to update the resources, to ensure that the quality and range are appropriate to support the planned ideas and skills in geography.

HISTORY

116. Standards in history at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above the levels expected, and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. There are no significant differences between the progress of girls or boys, those learning English as an additional language or those identified as having special educational needs.
117. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past, and are developing good skills of historical enquiry. Through their topic on Victorian times, they learn to identify differences between Victorian homes, schools and transport and those of today. Their visit to a Victorian school has helped them to learn how to find out about the past through looking at artefacts and reconstructions of life in past times. Some particularly good written work arose out of this visit. The pupils have a good knowledge of characters and events in the past, such as Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of

London. A group of pupils, for example, talked knowledgeably about when, where and how the Great Fire started, and how and why it spread.

118. By the end of Year 6, pupils have not only developed good skills of historical enquiry, but they organise and communicate their work well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, have undertaken some good projects, on the Romans and World War II respectively, which have involved personal research, often using the Internet. Good foundations for this sort of work are laid in Year 3, where displays of pupils' work on the ancient Egyptians are of a good standard. Pupils not only have the opportunity to develop their writing skills, for example by writing about the finding of the tomb of Tutankhamen, but they have also had the opportunity to present what they have learnt in a school assembly.
119. Because of timetabling constraints, it was only possible to observe one history lesson. However, analysis of the pupils' work through the year indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in history is good overall. The teachers' planning is good. They are particularly good at linking work in history with other subjects. For example, work in mathematics, art and design, information and communication technology, design and technology, religious education, geography, music and personal and social education has all had a historical flavour from time to time.
120. The school provides a balanced curriculum for history and the subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a good grasp of the strengths and needs of the subject, gained from monitoring teachers' planning, pupils' books and displays. The subject's action plan rightly identifies the need for more historical artefacts and for better assessment procedures to enable staff to monitor more consistently how well pupils are progressing and achieving through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards in nearly all aspects of the curriculum for information and communication technology are at the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has endeavoured to keep pace with changes in technology since the last inspection, but the restrictions of the school's accommodation and shortage of resources have hampered the school's efforts to develop the use of information and communication technology as they would have wished. Nevertheless, teachers make satisfactory use of the available equipment, and pupils of all capabilities are making sound progress in learning new skills.
122. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are working at the expected level in all aspects of the curriculum, though few have progressed beyond this. Pupils understand how new technology can enable them to exchange and share information. For example, pupils produce short pieces of writing using a word processor and have learnt how to use basic editing features to alter their text. They do not, however, have many opportunities to review and modify their work. Pupils know that computers can be used to find things out, but do not have regular opportunities to use CD-ROMs or the Internet. Most pupils have learnt essential skills, such as logging onto the school's network, locating programs, starting a new piece of work and printing it out.
123. By the end of Year 6, pupils are working at the expected level in most aspects of the subject, but few pupils are working beyond this level, except in the aspect of exchanging and sharing information, where some higher-attaining pupils demonstrate good skills in setting out text in different ways. For example, two- and three-fold brochures advertising local tourist attractions, produced in connection with work in literacy, show not only a good command of the software, but also a good awareness of audience. Pupils in Year 6 also make effective

use of a spreadsheet program to produce graphs of their findings in science. The use of a word processor is developed effectively as pupils move through the school. In Year 3, for example, pupils learn how to incorporate clip art into their documents and, in Year 4, there are good examples of pupils setting out their thoughts connected with work in personal, social and health education lessons. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to find things out using new technology, for example by using the Internet, such as the research conducted by pupils in Year 4 on Warhol. Pupils in Year 5 have learnt the principles of constructing simple databases, which they then interrogate in order to find out information. The pupils' understanding of how computers can be used to monitor events is the area in which pupils have least experience. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they have acquired a satisfactory range of skills which enable them to operate a variety of applications.

124. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. The teachers' confidence in teaching the subject has improved since the last inspection, and most teachers are starting to make much greater use of new technology for their own personal use, for example when producing their planning or when preparing lessons. Most are competent in teaching the basic elements of the curriculum and are keen to learn more and move beyond the boundaries of the familiar and provide real challenge for pupils. The teachers' planning for their information and communication technology lessons is generally satisfactory and follows the recommended scheme very closely. In some classes, more imagination is needed to adapt the printed scheme to a context which is more immediately relevant to the pupils and what they are studying in other subjects. Teachers introduce their lessons well and give clear explanations, but the school lacks resources such as a digital projector or interactive whiteboards to enable teachers to provide clear demonstrations which all pupils can see clearly. Some teachers use interesting methods to motivate the pupils. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, in which pupils were learning how to give instructions to a programmable robot, the teacher got pupils to work in groups to give each other instructions which had to be followed exactly, whilst an assistant explained to a small group of pupils how to enter instructions to make the robot move. Pupils enjoy working with the computers, although sometimes their ebullience acts as a hindrance. In one lesson, for example, pupils were so keen to try out different things, that they did not pay sufficient attention to what they were required to do and did not learn well. Sometimes, the pace at which new concepts are introduced is a little slow, as the more able pupils grasp new concepts quickly. Teaching assistants play a vital role in teaching information and communication technology. In some classes, the assistant supervises activities with half of the class, while the teacher works with the rest of the class in the computer suite. In other classes, the assistant works with small groups of pupils on their information and communication technology tasks. They carry out their duties effectively and well.
125. The teaching scheme used for information and communication technology is thorough and covers all aspects of the curriculum. The teachers endeavour to make use of new technology to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In Year 2, for example, the teacher successfully linked a unit in which pupils were learning how to create, test, modify and store instructions to control the movements of a floor turtle with the week's literacy focus on instructional language. In Year 5, the development of pupils' understanding of how to use a spreadsheet also contributed to their understanding of formulae and the use of simple algebra in mathematics. However, not all units are used as imaginatively as they could be by adapting the context to tie in with work being undertaken in other subjects.
126. The school has maintained its positive approach to the subject since the last inspection when, for its time, the school's provision was considered to be good. Improvements have been made to the school's provision, but these have not fully kept pace with developments in technology over the last six years. The school's facilities for information and communication technology provide the biggest barrier to further improvement at the present time. Some years ago the school turned part of the school library into a small computer suite. Whilst this has enabled teachers to give half a class access to computers at the same time, it has also imposed restrictions on the way the subject is taught and has had ramifications with regard to the organisation of the curriculum and the use of the library. This has meant that pupils have not had as frequent access to computers as necessary in order for them to make more extensive use of new technology in all subject areas. In one lesson, for example, the first group of pupils did not have sufficient time to complete their investigation before the next group was due in. The suite is also generally unavailable in the morning because the area is needed for teaching literacy and numeracy to groups of pupils who are taught outside the classroom. The small suite has also been beset with technical problems, such as an unreliable power supply, which caused the server to shut down unexpectedly and lose pupils' work.

127. Recently, two members of staff took over responsible for co-ordinating the subject and have set about their task with energy and enthusiasm, although they need greater clarity as to how the school expects them to fulfil their role and the opportunity to monitor more closely what is happening throughout the school. They have devised an appropriate action plan and drawn up an appropriate policy for use of the Internet. Rules for responsible Internet use are posted in classrooms which have access to the Internet. The governors and headteacher are committed to improving the school's provision for information and communication technology and a major investment in new equipment is shortly to be made. In conjunction with the building of the school's new extension, the existing machines are to be distributed amongst the classrooms, thus improving classroom facilities, and a brand new suite of computers is to be installed in an area which will be used solely for information and communication technology. The school is, therefore, well placed to make further improvements in the subject.

MUSIC

128. The provision for music in the school is very good, and there has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in music are very good throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make very good progress and achieve very well. They respond very positively to a rich variety of musical activities, which also make an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

129. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are beginning to understand the concept of recording music in a graphic form, and they use musical instruments with great vigour and enjoyment to perform and develop their musical skills. Because of the very good variety of activities provided by the teacher, the pupils have a very good sense of rhythm and they sing well.

130. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have developed an understanding of many different types of music. This term, for example, pupils in Year 6 are learning about music in the 1960s. They perform with enthusiasm and enjoyment, work purposefully together and handle musical instruments with proper care and respect. The pupils' musical skills are developed very well throughout the school. In Year 3, for example, they develop their rhythmic skills very effectively by working in groups to create ostinato accompaniments to a rap. They understand and can define the term 'ostinato', and successfully record and interpret their compositions on a grid. In Year 5, they very successfully create a mood or impression, using their existing knowledge of musical instruments and the effects they can obtain. They understand very clearly the difference between composition and improvisation and produce very good musical effects.

131. Music is taught throughout the school by a music specialist in a consecutive series of short action-packed lessons. The quality of the teaching is very good. The teacher establishes an excellent rapport with the younger pupils and, with her highly skilled and enthusiastic delivery, the pupils learn very quickly. Their creative efforts are very good; they praise each other for their compositions and performances and work with very good levels of concentration and independence. Music continues to interest the pupils as they get older, as the enthusiastic teaching motivates them very well. There is a very good development of musical skills, and very clear and comprehensive planning and assessment procedures, which are maintained regularly and used well to help plan future teaching. The teacher has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and what they can achieve. Musical activities are linked thoughtfully and well with topic work in other subjects. In Year 5, for example, pupils have worked on musical

activities linked to the topic of the Romans and pupils in Year 2 have undertaken musical activities related to the Great Fire of London.

132. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is highly skilled and makes good use of the well-organised and well-maintained resources. The school has no specialist accommodation for music. Lessons take place in the hall, which is adequate for the purpose, but this causes some disruption to other classes which back on to the hall, and people passing through the hall to get to other parts of the building pose possible distractions to the music lessons. The curriculum for music is very good and very well organised. The planning is monitored regularly. Music plays a very prominent part in the life of the school. Pupils share their work with the rest of the school in productions, at assemblies and impromptu performances. Productions are a regular occurrence and have included 'Dream On', based on 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. The choir, band and recorder groups, all of which are well attended, give regular musical performances. Additional tuition is offered to pupils in woodwind and violin, to which parents make a financial contribution. Pupils taking these lessons make very good progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils achieve standards in physical education that are in line with national expectations. Within this broad picture, there are some variations. For example, games and athletics are particularly strong, whereas gymnastics is not so well developed. Overall, this is similar to the last inspection, when most pupils matched or, in some cases, exceeded national expectations, but there have been some improvements since then, notably in the way the planning now covers all areas of learning in more detail.
134. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can perform simple movements such as rolls and jumps with control and co-ordination. In a lesson in Year 1, they were able to produce various balances, some of them quite imaginative, and combine some of the balances into sequences showing an awareness of the need to pause at the beginning and the end. They use and control a ball in different situations and are beginning to understand the techniques of some games and sports. For example, in a games lesson in Year 2, they knew how to hold a tennis racket correctly, and most were able to balance a ball on the racket with a fair degree of success. Many were able to hit the ball to each other along the ground with good control. Overall, pupils are making sound progress in Years 1 and 2.
135. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have made good progress in developing their games skills. They can apply their skills in a competitive situation, such as football and netball, and the success of teams representing the school shows that the more able pupils are achieving very high standards. In a tennis lesson on the playground, pupils in Year 6 were able to keep a rally going using forehand and backhand strokes, and showed good skills when learning how to volley. In a team activity, they demonstrated a good awareness of tactics and the need to adjust their own play for the benefit of the team. In an athletics lesson, they understood the need for different techniques when trying to improve their performance in the hop, step and jump. All who have benefited from the school's swimming programme achieve at least the minimum expected standard, and many achieve much more. They understand the need for safety principles and can describe what effect exercise is having on their bodies. They are able to describe some of their gymnastic and dance activities, but are not generally as confident or knowledgeable in these areas of the physical education curriculum. Overall, most pupils make sound progress from Years 2 to 6.
136. Most pupils enjoy physical education, particularly games and athletics, and have good, positive attitudes. They generally behave well, and a particularly strong feature is the way they work well together in group and team activities. This makes a good contribution to their personal development. All pupils, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs, are fully included in the activities and make satisfactory progress, although ways

should be found to give greater involvement to those pupils who occasionally have to sit out of a lesson for one reason or another.

137. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. In some lessons, it is good. In the best lessons, the teachers' good subject knowledge and careful planning help pupils to understand what they can do to improve. In some lessons, although the pupils try hard, they are not sure at the end of the lesson what they have achieved. Teachers need to highlight success more and use the concluding session of the lesson to say what they will need to concentrate on next time. In most lessons, the teachers' management and organisation are good, but sometimes the activities go on too long or are not challenging enough to keep the interest of all the pupils.
138. The school makes good use of specialist coaches to enhance the curriculum, for instance in lacrosse and basketball, and has a full programme of inter-school sports and athletics fixtures. Outdoor and adventurous activities have been enjoyed by pupils in Year 6 on their visit to a residential centre, and good cross-curricular links are exploited, for instance when linking dance with topics on the Greeks or the Egyptians. The co-ordinator, who is new to the post, has appropriate plans for development, including developing teachers' expertise in teaching gymnastics, and purchasing some new gymnastics equipment. The use of a published scheme should ensure that skills are systematically taught, but ways need to be found to monitor teaching and learning more closely, and in particular to develop systems to assess pupils' progress.