

INSPECTION REPORT

HERTINGFORDBURY COWPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birch Green, Hertford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117563

Headteacher: Mrs Bozena Lapinski

Reporting inspector: Chrissie Pittman
18275

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th May 2003

Inspection number: 255102

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Birch Green Hertford
Postcode:	SG14 2LR
Telephone number:	(01992) 583239
Fax number:	(01992) 505656
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Colin Rees
Date of previous inspection:	6 th July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18275	Chrissie Pittman	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Science Art and design	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	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?
27301	Cynthia Messom	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Geography History Music	
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This popular school is situated in the picturesque village of Birch Green on the southern outskirts of Hertford in Hertfordshire. It caters for 146 boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven years in mixed age and ability classes. It is smaller than other primary schools and admits 17 pupils every year. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Most of its pupils come from the immediate catchment area, which is a mixture of owner occupied homes and some social housing. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with a special educational need is well below average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below the national average. The school's own assessment of pupils' attainment on entry is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has placed an emphasis on identifying and tackling the smallest of weaknesses; this has resulted in the provision of a very good education for the pupils. The school has some excellent features. The attention paid to developing pupils as responsible members of society has led to outstanding attitudes to work and relationships on the part of pupils and very good personal development. The teaching, overall, is very good. The aims and objectives of all the staff are firmly targeted on raising standards. This is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Most achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment at age seven. The school responds very well to the challenges it faces. It has made very good improvement and generally sustained high standards since the last inspection. The school is well governed, self-critical and cost effective. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well because they have clear targets set for them.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning and in their personal relationships as a result of the very good provision, overall, which is made by the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The very good teaching in the school promotes standards that are usually well above average. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is particularly good.
- The headteacher's leadership is excellent. The school is very well led and managed at all levels, including the involvement of governors who regularly monitor and support the school.
- The links with parents are very effective. Parents are very supportive of the school.

What could be improved

- Assessment. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress in the nursery, reception class and non-core subjects are insufficiently developed.
- The teaching of key skills is underdeveloped in the non-core subjects.
- Curriculum provision in the nursery and reception class.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since its previous inspection in 1998. High standards have been maintained for seven year-olds and standards for eleven year-olds are very high. The headteacher reacts swiftly to perceived weaknesses and this has led to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, management and monitoring. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed and changed to strengths. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and nearly half the lessons seen during the inspection were very good and occasionally excellent. However, although curriculum planning and learning are now very well monitored and there are very good procedures for assessing pupils' achievement in the core subjects, assessment procedures are still insufficiently developed for the Foundation Stage and the non-core subjects. The school has identified this as an area for improvement through its very effective programme of targeting and monitoring individual pupils. Given the excellent quality of its leadership and the commitment of its staff, the school is well placed to improve even further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	D	A*	A*
mathematics	A*	C	A	A
science	A*	C	A*	A

Key	
very high (top 5%)	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Most children, when they start school, are attaining standards in line with expectations, although some are above average. By the time they are ready to go into Year 1 they have reached the early learning goals. Most make good progress by the time they reach Year 2 and their attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By age 11, pupils are usually attaining standards in English and science that are very high (top 5 per cent nationally) and well above the national average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools overall standards are very high in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Results over the last three years show that girls out- perform boys in English and science but boys do better in mathematics. Pupils with SEN achieve well. Standards of work seen, in the core subjects throughout the school, confirm the standards suggested by the test results and most pupils are making good progress. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress is restricted because their curriculum is not fully implemented according to the new guidelines and assessment is underdeveloped. The school acknowledges this is an area requiring improvement.

The school sets challenging targets for its performance and is usually successful in achieving them. It received Achievement Awards in 2000 and 2002. In 2001 standards were unusually lower because of the high percentage of pupils that had special educational needs in the small cohort.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are excellent. They try very hard, enjoy learning, are highly motivated to succeed and readily take part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, well mannered and show respect for property. There is hardly any evidence of bullying or disruptive behaviour. This helps to create a very good learning environment. There were no exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and older children support the younger ones. Most are patient and courteous, with a well-developed sense of right and wrong.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The staff provide good role models for pupils. The excellent relationship between pupils and staff helps to create a caring atmosphere in which pupils develop respect for one another and feel valued as part of the community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall with examples of excellent teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There is a positive ethos for learning in most classrooms. The best teaching is in English, mathematics and science and in Year 3/4 where it is particularly effective in meeting the needs of all pupils regardless of the subject being taught. Teaching is least effective in some non-core subjects such as history and geography where basic skills are not well taught. In some afternoon lessons in the Foundation Stage, work is not always well matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly the more able pupils, because of the mixed age and ability groups.

Teachers are generally very knowledgeable and learning targets are clear and understood by the pupils. Teaching in English and mathematics is particularly good because pupils are grouped by prior attainment and the teaching focuses on the pupils' needs more effectively. Teachers take good account of pupils' progress and build on the work done by targeting them individually and assessing their work regularly. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school. This enables a large proportion of pupils to achieve higher than expected standards for their age. Most of the pupils throughout the school are well challenged by their teachers to achieve the standards they are capable of. ICT is well taught and good use is made of the school's ICT resources. Pupils with SEN receive effective support in lessons and as a result make good progress.

The result of the very good teaching is very good learning where pupils gain new knowledge and understanding faster than expected. Older pupils usually have a good knowledge of their learning and know what to do to make it even better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a satisfactory range of relevant tasks in all subjects and good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning. The curriculum is balanced and well enhanced by a range of activities such as, choir, craft and French as well as competitive and non-competitive sports and games outside school hours.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with SEN receive effective support in lessons and make good progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils' moral development is very good. Spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The academic and pastoral aspects of pupils' development are linked very well. Very good procedures are in place for child protection and there are very thorough systems for ensuring the health and safety of pupils. There are good procedures to assess how well pupils are achieving.

The school works very well in partnership with its parents. Most are very appreciative of the very good level of care for their children. Curriculum planning in the infant and junior classes is good. However the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is variable. Planning sometimes lacks focus particularly when the reception children are grouped with Year 1 and the more able children are not always sufficiently challenged

to become independent learners. There is insufficient teaching support in the afternoon in this class to deliver the curriculum effectively. The provision for physical education is curtailed because the hall is too small to allow older children to do gymnastics safely.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She knows what the school does well, where its weaknesses are and how to improve them and has established a good ethos of striving to improve. The management of the school is extremely well focused on improving standards and supporting all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is shrewd, effective and well aware of best value principles. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties well. They are very supportive of the school and take an active interest in forward planning and its day to day work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Data is used very well to monitor the school's performance. The School Improvement Plan is well conceived. It is the result of a thorough process involving audits, monitoring and sharp evaluations of the school's performance. Actions to bring about improvement are planned and implemented without delay.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The targeting of funds to areas where there is the most need of improvement has been very effective. The school manages its finances well, ensuring it gets the best value for money when committing resources or spending school funds.

There is a good ratio of teachers to pupils and all teachers are suitably qualified. Additional support staff are deployed very effectively and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, although there is not enough support in the Foundation Stage in the afternoon. This is impacting adversely on pupils' learning. The school's accommodation is ingeniously used so that all the available space is utilised for teaching and storing resources. However the accommodation provided for indoor physical education is inadequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are happy with almost all aspects of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of activities provided outside lessons. How the school keeps them informed about their children's progress.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by parents. This is a very good school. Although most parents expressed no real concerns about the performance of the school a few would like to see more activities outside lessons. Inspectors do not agree this is a necessity as the school has a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team thought that the quality of information to parents, especially about pupils' progress, is good overall. Strong features of reports include target setting for future learning and details about pupils' personal and social development. New parents to the school receive a helpful information pack about policies and provisions and very good newsletters are sent home to all parents regularly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children, when they start in the reception class, are attaining standards in line with expectations, although some are attaining above. By the time they reach Year 2, they have made good progress in their learning, and their attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, teachers' assessments suggested standards were average overall but teachers identified very high results in certain aspects of the science curriculum. Pupils' attainment at the higher level was estimated to be well above average. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving results that are very high (in the top 5 per cent nationally) in English and science and well above the national average in mathematics. This was a significant improvement on last year when standards were depressed due to the large numbers, with special educational needs, taking the tests. When results are judged against schools in a similar context, attainment at age seven is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At age 11 pupils are attaining results that are very high in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was very high in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The school met its challenging targets this year. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have shown an improving trend overall since the last inspection.
2. Pupils' achievement overall is very good. Pupils' attainment at 11 years, when judged against their prior attainment at seven years, is very high in English and well above average in mathematics and science. A good analysis, by the school, shows that there is little overall difference in the performance of boys and girls in English although boys perform better in mathematics at age 11 and girls perform better in science. This upward trend is largely the result of the successful targeting and monitoring of pupils.
3. In the work seen in English, standards for seven and 11 year olds in all aspects of English are higher than average. Overall achievement at age 11 is good. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good improvement overall. In mathematics, standards are above the national average by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Standards in Year 6 are well above average and pupils are making very good progress. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection for pupils aged 11. In science the standard of work seen during the inspection is above average at Year 2. At Year 6 standards are well above average and pupils are making very good progress. Standards have been improved significantly since the previous inspection.
4. The National Literacy Strategy is well implemented in the school and is making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. By Year 2, pupils speak confidently about their work using a growing vocabulary. They listen attentively to their teachers and to one another, follow instructions and readily join in conversations. By Year 6, pupils confidently express opinions in class discussions and speak with clarity and feelings during role-play. The emphasis the school places on reading and the opportunities provided for it is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm for books. By Year 2, most pupils are independent readers and levels of accuracy are good. By Year 6, many pupils have an impressive range and depth of reading experience and they read with fluency and expression. By Year 2, standards in writing are above average. By Year 6, the standard of writing is well above average. Pupils write for a range of purposes with an impressive use of vocabulary. Basic skills of literacy are very well taught in the literacy lessons. However, there is room for the school to consistently identify when literacy can be learnt and used in other subjects and for it to feature regularly in the planning of all teachers in all subjects.
5. The Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented within mathematics lessons. Pupils receive a good grounding in basic skills in their mathematics lessons; they are taught well. Their standards in numeracy are above average and contribute significantly to their progress in other subjects. Pupils in design and technology have good skills in measuring accurately, which improves the quality of the finished product. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in geography. In a Year 3/4 class, they were able to work out distances and use grid references. Pupils in science can tabulate results from experiments and represent the results graphically. Higher achievers can use a

variety of techniques, calculating averages. The majority of pupils can apply a range of techniques to solve mathematical problems effectively. By the time they leave school, most pupils have developed very good numeracy skills. They calculate accurately, both mentally and with pencil and paper, and can explain their methods and reasoning.

6. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. For example, pupils in Year 2 know how to control a computer by following a series of commands. Year 6 pupils confidently use Power Point to create a multimedia presentation. They show good understanding of the use of a spreadsheet and formulae to make calculations. Good use of ICT is being made to support other subjects. Standards at both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations in all other subjects.
7. Pupils with SEN make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills to achieve the targets on their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Over the years a significant proportion of pupils with SEN gain results in line with national expectations in national tests by the end of both Years 2 and 6. This is due to early identification, appropriate intervention and good teaching and support by class teachers, the headteacher as SENCO and the classroom assistants. Because of the very good support they receive, pupils with SEN show a very positive attitude to the work and are keen to learn.
8. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In all other subjects standards have been maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school has made very good improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning and maintained standards of behaviour, personal development and attendance since the last inspection. These factors make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and the very positive ethos of the school.
10. Attitudes to school are excellent. Pupils show outstanding levels of interest and involvement in lessons and other school activities. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 literacy lesson pupils were bursting to answer the teacher's questions about pronouns and changing sentences from the first to third person. During a whole school assembly pupils were very keen to listen to their peers as they made presentations about 'what the Ancient Greeks did for us'. All pupils then sang 'I'll bring to you the best gift I can offer' very well. Pupils also show great interest and enthusiasm in extra-curricular activities such as netball, cross-country and swimming. They look forward to meeting visitors to the school who support their learning and also to school trips. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are developing very positively in their attitudes, behaviour and personal skills.
11. Behaviour is very good. The pupils at this school are very well mannered and polite towards others. They behave very well in lessons, assemblies, at break-times and as they move around the premises. They say that occasionally they fall out with their friends but this never lasts very long and there is never any malice. They add that name-calling and bullying are not issues in this school and they are very happy here. Pupils are given good opportunities to review classroom rules periodically and can make suggestions to their teachers. This, along with very strong personal and social education, is successful in giving pupils a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. There were no exclusions in the last academic year.
12. Relationships between adults and pupils, and also between pupils, are excellent. Pupils work together particularly well. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 physical education lesson in the hall they all worked in pairs harmoniously as they developed sequences and movements with a 'sea and surfing' theme. Older pupils are often seen to help younger ones with their lunch and during playtimes. This demonstrates pupils' outstanding social development. They show very high levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example, they say that people different from themselves in any way should always be treated the same. Such views demonstrate their very good moral development. However, although pupils' cultural development is good overall, they sometimes confuse the concepts of nationality, race and language.

13. Personal development is very good in terms of pupils' response to responsibility and use of initiative in learning. Class representatives on the school council make very good suggestions for change. For example, the school council debated very well with their classmates and staff the seating arrangements for packed lunches and school dinners. Arrangements then changed and now suit everyone. Pupils develop research skills very well through 'sharing assemblies' where they prepare and present their topic of interest to everyone.
14. Pupils hold positive views and feelings about issues such as honesty, justice and fairness. They show awe and wonder in their learning. For example, a group of Year 4 pupils described to one of the inspection team how interesting it was to find different birds' eggs in the nature area during a science lesson. In mathematics work on 'magic squares', they were amazed to find that they could make tables of numbers that added up to 26. These factors demonstrate their good spiritual development.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are keen and eager to come to school and take a full part in lessons and other aspects of school life. They relate well to adults and other pupils and work hard to improve their skills. They are fully involved in all school activities. Children with physical disabilities enjoy the same high quality education as others. The school makes commendable efforts to include all children in all its activities.
16. Attendance is very good. It is well above the national average. There is little unauthorized absence and punctuality is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is very good and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Just under one in seven lessons was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. At the time of the previous inspection just under one in seven lessons was unsatisfactory. This represents good improvement.
18. Teaching is excellent or very good in a significant number of lessons in the school, most notably in English and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory but less effective in some lessons throughout the school but particularly in the Foundation Stage, where it is sometimes too directive and more able pupils are not always challenged enough. This is usually the case in the afternoon sessions when the reception class is put with Year 1 in mixed age and ability groups and where the more formal Year 1 curriculum is followed. There are certain features that are common to many of the very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which those that do not reach this quality could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes pupils think. In mathematics, where many of these lessons are found, there is always a demanding 'mental starter' to engage pupils in thinking about numbers and the relationship between them. The teacher is indicating, from the outset, that he or she expects pupils to work hard but also that there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning.
19. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as lessons continue. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 1 pupils were encouraged to work out for themselves how to make symmetrical shapes. A great sense of fun was inspired by the teacher and the lesson encapsulated a real love of learning in the pupils. All the pupils, regardless of ability, achieved a good standard.
20. Once teachers have gained pupils' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks so that there is no opportunity for pupils' concentration to flag. This was demonstrated in an excellent English lesson with Year 3/4 where the teacher turned a seemingly uninspiring topic into a very enjoyable learning experience. Usually there is little need for obvious management of pupils; behaviour is very good and there are excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, between pupils and teachers. In an exceptional art lesson in Year 3/4, pupils of all abilities displayed excellent learning skills in the way they planned, designed, made a printing block and improved their printing. The teacher encouraged discussion and the sharing of ideas so that all the pupils took pride in their own and others' achievement. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or lack of effort. Most teachers monitor and adapt their planning to take account of pupils' progress and capabilities.

21. Lessons usually provide a very good atmosphere for learning. Pupils have the confidence to try things out, attempting an ambitious answer or putting forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow pupils will be sensitive and supportive. The teachers also use resources very effectively in their lessons. This is best illustrated in Year 3/4. Here the planning encompasses all the aspects of learning and the work is disguised effectively as 'having fun'. Resources are inventive and make the pupils' learning more meaningful. The activities are interesting, whatever the subject, and pupils are totally captivated. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 5/6 the teacher provided well planned material for every ability and by skilful questioning proceeded to draw out of the pupils different ways of achieving the same answer. Most of the pupils were working at standards that were well above expectations for children of this age. The learning that occurred in the lesson was of a very high order for pupils of all abilities.
22. All SEN pupils have individual education plans which address pupils' difficulties effectively and set appropriate and clear targets for improvement, which enable accurate provision and checking on progress to take place. There is careful planning by class teachers using observation and assessment, and the targets of the individual education plans to differentiate the curriculum for SEN pupils and to make it relevant to their needs. Pupils are given good support by classroom assistants to enable them to fully participate in the school activities, for example, a pupil in a wheelchair is enabled with sensitive support to participate in PE and swimming lessons and choir.
23. The results of the very good teaching are standards that are well above average. Pupils join the school with average levels of attainment; they leave with results that are usually well above average. This is very good achievement. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve very well at the school. Every year there are examples of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, leaving the school having achieved well in the National Curriculum tests (SATs).

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. It covers the statutory requirements of all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. There are now schemes of work for all subject areas, sufficiently detailed to ensure satisfactory rates of progress and the achievement of higher standards. Resources for subjects have been increased and improved. Updated policies are now in place including those for health and sex education and a clear programme of policy review.
25. The curriculum offered by the school is broad and balanced and meets fully all statutory requirements. Religious education is planned according to the locally agreed syllabus. Provision for personal, social and health education is now good. There is a well-developed health education programme and appropriate areas concerned with sex education and drug awareness are incorporated into the teaching programme through direct teaching and personal and social health education. Sex education in Year 6 and drugs awareness in Year 5 are taught in full consultation with parents who have access to the video material and education packs used for lessons.
26. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Provision is well managed and very good support is provided by learning support assistants.
27. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are good and are effective in achieving high standards. There is an effective policy for literacy across the curriculum. All teachers follow the National Strategy for Literacy and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Learning objectives are detailed for each lesson and at the end of each lesson pupils evaluate whether these objectives have been met.
28. Strategies for teaching numeracy across the curriculum are effective. All teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning and teaching strategies are very good and indicate how pupils in each year group will develop their skills over the year.
29. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A good range of activities and clubs enriches pupils' learning. The pupils have the opportunity to join a variety of clubs at the end of the school day.

Over the year these include: premier soccer, rugby, cricket, football, netball, rounders athletics and cross-country. After school pupils have music, choir, art, ICT and craft clubs and other activities. The curriculum is also enriched by educational visits to places of historic and cultural interest and visitors are an important feature of the curriculum. The whole school visited Duxford Aircraft Museum as part of science week which included workshops on building an aeroplane and other technical activities. Years 5 and 6 pupils attend an annual residential educational trip. Year 3 / 4 make a field study of the river at Stevenage and Year 2 pupils visit the National Art Gallery. Visitors to the school further enhance the curriculum. These include the local vicar who takes assembly on a regular basis, and the Bishop of Hertford who presented trophies at the end of year assembly. A science project extended scientific understanding for the whole school through workshops matched to the needs of each year group. The Buttonhole Theatre Company extended the literacy appreciation of pupils from Years 3 to 6 through their Shakespeare workshop, and the museum service gave first hand experience of life in Victorian times. These, by no means represent the full range of visits to the school, which contribute to the pupils' learning. The school participates fully in a number of inter-school events and tournaments and have an impressive number of trophies acquired on display. It is to their credit that with a small roll three pupils have been selected to represent East Hertfordshire in the rugby tournament. They also take part in regional music festivals, football and netball tournaments and a junior citizenship programme, organised by the local police.

30. Equality of access and opportunity is very good. The school provides equality of access for all pupils and works hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have access to all aspects of school life. They are well integrated into the school and the very good pastoral care which the school provides for all its pupils has a positive effect on their attainment. Achievements are acknowledged at celebration assemblies. No pupil is excluded from school activities including educational visits, due to inability to pay. Boys and girls have equal opportunity to take part in sports such as football and cricket in mixed teams. In order to ensure equality of opportunity for all, the school has made very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The staff know each pupil and each is treated as a valuable member of the school community. It doesn't take long to recognise the school as a very caring organisation. The way in which all pupils are integrated in all activities irrespective of their special circumstances is a credit to the school.
31. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The very good relationship between pupils and staff helps to create a caring atmosphere in which pupils develop respect for one another and feel valued as part of the community. Year 6 pupils carry out their responsibilities for younger pupils at dinner times and play times with care and maturity which is a credit to the school. Pupils are good at taking initiative. For example they offer help to visitors and are very courteous at all times.
32. The school has good links with the local community, which provides important opportunities to contribute to pupils' learning. For example they perform at the Christmas Bazaar and the Summer Fete. Pupils from the school take part in a number of regional competitions and perform in the Hertfordshire and Ware Schools music festival at Castle Hall in Hertford. Links with the wider community include fundraising for the Red Nose Day Appeal, a day's balloon race and cake sale. Fundraising activities are organised for the support of the Kayaletshu Pre-school in South Africa. The school works in partnership with the parents in celebrating special days and many parents attend assemblies every week, especially when their children take an active part. Many parents help on educational visits, as for example on the school visit to Duxford, and with lessons such as art, supporting pupils' reading as well as being general assistants in the classroom.
33. Very good, constructive relationships are fostered with partner institutions. There is very close liaison with the Hertfordshire Small Schools Cluster Group and the headteacher is an active member of the Hertford and Ware Head Teachers' Group where ideas are shared with colleagues. As far as possible contact is maintained with all the feeder secondary schools to which the pupils move. Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school of their choice and the head of mathematics of the local secondary school has been consulted about the teaching of gifted and talented pupils.
34. The school has fully addressed the areas of spiritual and cultural development that were identified as unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Pupils' personal development is now very good overall.

35. Spiritual development is well provided for. Pupils have many good opportunities in the curriculum to develop a sense of 'awe and wonder' in their learning. Pupils often consider important aspects of life such as the beauty of the world around them, the achievements of others, feelings and suffering. Religious education considers the values and beliefs in Christianity and other major faiths. The vicar from the local church makes a good contribution to spiritual and moral development through leading assemblies in school each term. In personal and social education, pupils are often invited to think about personal qualities such as honesty, hard work and caring and there are generally good opportunities for reflection.
36. Provision for moral development has improved from good since the last inspection and is now very good. Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Staff all collaborated in developing a 'vision, practice and values' document and have implemented this very effectively. Behaviour management across the school is very good, giving pupils clear moral messages. Assembly themes, circle times and personal, social and health education lessons all contribute very well. For example, pupils examine relationships, bullying, stereotyping and environmental issues in a moral context. It is clear that as pupils get older they are making better and better moral decisions.
37. Provision for social development has improved from very good since the last inspection and is now excellent. Pupils form extremely good relationships with others. Staff are outstanding role-models for pupils to base their own behaviour and relationships. Many contacts with the wider community allow pupils to interact with a wide cross section of society. For example, the school choir performs at several community venues. The school offers many very good opportunities for pupils to experience responsibility for others. 'House' competitions and extra-curricular activities provide many chances to develop pupils' team-working skills, as do residential opportunities for Year 6.
38. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn much about their own culture through the curriculum and school trips. Literacy includes stories past and present. Visits in the community include museums and other places of interest. For example, the whole school recently went to an aircraft museum that is part of the Imperial War Museum and Class 3 has visited the National Art Gallery. Assemblies often have classical music as a backdrop and music from many parts of the world such as South America and Africa. The school now does much more work to promote pupils' awareness of other cultures in Britain, a particular issue raised at the last inspection. There are now good opportunities through religious education and pupils recently visited a Sikh temple.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. This is a very caring school. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those with SEN, are given equal attention and support in their learning. The school's very good provision to enable equality of access and opportunity for pupils includes a Race Equality Policy as required by recent legislation. These factors demonstrate the school's inclusive approach to learning. The educational and personal support and advice given to pupils at this school is very good.
40. Arrangements for Child Protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. This has improved significantly since the last inspection. The designated officer for Child Protection is appropriately trained and deals with any issues effectively. Another officer is also fully trained. Staff have easy access to the Local Authority's policy and procedures. Accident and emergency procedures, including arrangements for first aid, are very well developed. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis, as are fire drills. The school works very closely with several agencies in raising awareness regarding health and safety matters. For example, the police service organises a special event for 'junior citizenship' that includes much basic advice and guidance on personal safety and drugs education. Also, Year 6 pupils are offered safe cycling training each year. The school has implemented an appropriate policy for the use of computers including safeguards for using the Internet.
41. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are very good. Staff know pupils very well and provide much informal advice and guidance as and when needed. Pupils' records are appropriately detailed regarding attendance, behaviour and personal development including any individual issues. This enables the school to provide support where necessary and represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

42. As at the last inspection, procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. The headteacher monitors attendance issues closely, particularly any holidays taken during term time. Home telephone calls are made promptly regarding any unexplained absence and regular reminders are given to parents about the importance of good attendance and punctuality in newsletters.
43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very strong. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Detailed records are kept if any significant problems occur. There is a highly developed system of rewarding good behaviour including weekly awards of merits for pupils in each class. In addition, merits are given for lunchtime helpfulness and also special merits from the headteacher. A healthy spirit of competition exists for the annual merit cup.
44. The records of pupils with SEN are well kept and up to date. Information gathered from all sources is available and shared at regular meetings between staff and external support agencies. The pupil who has a statement of special educational need is well provided for and receives all the support required as detailed in the statement. The school is aware of, and uses well, the support available for SEN within Hertfordshire's LEA and other agencies. Good links are established with the local Secondary Schools to enable Year 6 SEN pupils to transfer with ease, ensuring continuity and continuing progress.
45. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. They are very good in English, mathematics and science, but insufficiently developed in the Foundation Stage and other subjects of the curriculum. In addition to the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils in each year group 3 to 5 take the optional standard attainment tests. Teachers use on-going assessment very well during lessons to determine the degree of progress which pupils make. Detailed records are kept by each class teacher as well as on the school's database. Additionally pupils' self-evaluation at the end of each lesson using the traffic light system helps to inform the teacher and guide planning for the next lesson. The procedures are well established and implemented in all year groups and used effectively for target setting. At the beginning of each lesson individual targets are recorded by the class teacher stating what is expected by the end of the lesson. These targets are matched to the prior attainment of each pupil including those recorded in the individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' progress towards these targets is regularly assessed and new targets are set to ensure that steady progress is made. Pupils' progress through the school is tracked through the school's database and the information from this is used in guiding their learning.
46. Assessment information is used satisfactorily to influence planning. Notes on the evaluation of each lesson are attached to lesson plans and help to determine what is taught next. Pupils are also required to evaluate their own work, set targets for themselves and monitor their progress at the end of lesson. Teachers identify clearly those who have understood the work in specific lessons and those who require further support. This information is used well to adapt the planning of future lessons so that activities match pupils' learning needs and enable them to make good progress. Weaknesses identified in these on-going assessments are also effectively used to set targets for individual pupils' future development. This process enables pupils to have a good understanding of their own progress and this has a positive impact on their efforts and learning. Individual educational plans are drawn up for pupils with special educational needs and these are carefully monitored and used to determine the next stage of development. Records of assessment are used to identify pupils who need extra support such as additional literacy support and extension exercises for gifted and talented pupils. The school's database is used effectively to track pupils' progress and to ensure that they reach their potential in the core subjects. In addition the local education authority provide data for the test results for the school. These are used to inform the setting of targets for the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Links with parents are very effective and their involvement has a very good impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is also very good. This aspect has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

48. Parents have a very high opinion of the school. Replies to the inspection questionnaire and responses given at the parents' meeting show that parents are very confident in the school and in its staff. All parents replying to the questionnaire said that the school is well led and managed, teaching is good and pupils' behaviour is good. Parents are very pleased about the school's high expectations of their children to work hard and achieve their best. They say that their children are making good progress, becoming more responsible and they are confident about approaching the school regarding any problems. They confirm that their children enjoy school. The majority is pleased about how closely the school works with them as parents and the arrangements for homework. Inspection findings support parents' positive views. Although a significant number is disappointed about the range of activities on offer outside of lessons, the inspection team judges that provision is good.
49. The quality of information to parents, especially about pupils' progress, is good overall. This represents a further improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' annual reports give enough information about what pupils know, understand and can do. Strong features of reports include target setting for future learning and details about pupils' personal and social development. New parents to the school receive a helpful information pack about policies and provisions. This includes information about how to support learning at home, especially with reading and handwriting. Very good newsletters are sent home to parents each term giving useful information about forthcoming work in the curriculum and dates to remember.
50. Parents fully support the home and school agreement. Many parents help regularly with school activities. For example they listen to readers, give general support in lessons, help with swimming and accompany school trips. The parents and teachers association, known as the 'Help Group' is very active in organising social and fundraising events. The group raises a considerable amount of money each year and this is used to provide additional learning resources including books and laptop computers. The school has established a Parents Forum that acts as a sounding board for school development and issues. All parents are welcome to special meetings and workshops for the forum. Workshops have included consideration of the curriculum, mathematics and extra-curricular activities.
51. Parents are very happy with the support and progress made by pupils with SEN. Communication with parents is good both by letter and in meetings. Arrangements for parental involvement for pupils on higher stages of SEN, including pupils with statements, are good and parents receive good information. Annual reviews are organised well, the appropriate people are invited and the necessary paperwork is completed very well. The headteacher is very committed to ensuring that there is quality SEN provision in the school and takes a strong lead in this area, seeking out extra funding wherever she can.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The feature that stands out in the leadership of the school is the complete absence of complacency in all areas of its work. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is always seeking to improve the school. She is respected by her staff and trusted by the pupils. This is one of the main reasons for the success of the school and its increasingly good reputation in the community. She is well supported by her hard-working and efficient deputy. The staff make a cohesive unit. They believe that they are very well supported by senior colleagues in their efforts to raise standards. The school is self-critical and evaluative of its practices. There are several examples of this approach in action. For example, each year there are reviews of the national tests where co-ordinators are held accountable for examination results in their subjects. In areas where there have been relatively less successful results, the school is quick to take effective action.
53. Very effective monitoring is clearly defined by the headteacher and governors. It is aimed at helping the school to be clear about how well the teachers teach and how well the pupils are learning, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There is a good balance of expertise amongst the staff. Curriculum co-ordinators produce 'position statements', which are then put into the school's improvement and management plan, so that priorities can be established over the long and short term. A thorough review of the school's curriculum planning has led to improvements in the standard of ICT. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have undertaken a school-wide evaluation, with a focus on improvement. This has given a clear educational direction to

the work of the school. It welcomes external assessment of its work and performance. Recently it has achieved School Achievement Awards in 2000 and 2002.

54. The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. With the help of regular reports from the headteacher, they monitor the school's strengths and weaknesses well. This gives them a clear insight into the work being done and the progress that the pupils are making. The resources of the school are good. They are well used and easily accessible. In particular, ICT resources have been improved so that all the pupils have regular access to computers, and new technologies such as the Internet. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide an excellent resource.
55. The headteacher as the SEN co-ordinator makes a very effective contribution to the management of the SEN policy, procedures and support for pupils with SEN. She manages well the team who support SEN, pupils, the resources and the process for the early identification of pupils with special needs. She is well qualified and continues to attend courses and keeps up to date with new developments herself, as well as ensuring the continuing professional development in SEN by other teachers and classroom assistants. The school is already implementing well the new Code of Practice for SEN pupils. Care is taken by the school to provide an appropriate range of specialist equipment to support specific learning needs, such as sloping boards, magnetic and kinetic letters and special computer programs to help pupils with specific learning difficulties. This equipment enables pupils to participate fully in all lessons. The SEN governor gives very good support to the headteacher. She has been trained in her responsibilities and is able to fully represent issues concerning SEN at meetings of the governors. She monitors the SEN work of the school very effectively, involving teachers, parents and pupils in the process and using her own initiative to think up new ways to improve the provision.
56. There are excellent procedures for the induction of new staff. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. Resources for learning are good and the accommodation provided is good overall. However, the hall is unsuitable for physical education lessons, particularly for the older pupils, and there is inadequate provision of a play area for the Foundation Stage.
57. Financial planning is very good and the budget is used very well. The school's strategic improvement plan is very well set out. It identifies the right priorities and success criteria which are arrived at through careful audits, reviews and effective monitoring. Targets for improvement are clearly costed so that governors and staff are able to judge their effectiveness. The targeting of funds to areas where there is the most need of improvement has been effective, ensuring the budget is used efficiently.
58. The impact of the leadership and management is a school where high standards are regarded as the norm, academic standards, overall, are well above average and the personal development of pupils is very good. This is a very effective school and it provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

- (i) improve the curriculum provision for children in the nursery and reception class to ensure that all children make even better progress by:
 - improving how the activities are planned so as to reflect recent guidelines for the Foundation Stage curriculum;
 - providing more challenging activities for higher attaining pupils;
 - providing more opportunities to develop children's independent learning and personal initiative; and
 - providing a more appropriate play area for nursery and reception children.
- (ii) improve assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage and non-core subjects by:
 - providing assessment criteria in the nursery and reception class linked to the new Foundation Stage programme of study. Similarly, linking assessment criteria in each of the non-core subjects to levels in the respective programmes of study so as to enable teachers to monitor achievement more rigorously; and
 - using assessed work to plan future lessons and to target individual pupils to achieve better results.
- (iii) improve the teaching of skills in the non-core subjects by:
 - improving co-ordinator's knowledge of the teaching of skills in their subjects; and
 - ensuring that teachers have adequate skills based training.

(Paragraphs 18, 60, 61, 68, 101, 102, 108, 114, 121, 127)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

45

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

23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	17	18	7	0	0	0
Percentage	6.7	37.8	40.0	15.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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)	8	130
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	7

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	5	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	17	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	4	5	4
	Total	17	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	100 (100)	94 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	6	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	17	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (71)	83 (67)	94 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	6	4	6
	Total	18	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (71)	89 (67)	100 (86)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
99	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
21	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)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	17
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	403,861
Total expenditure	401,870
Expenditure per pupil	2,999
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,743
Balance carried forward to next year	51,734

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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	146
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	58	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	49	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	57	13	1	5
The teaching is good.	50	50	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	59	15	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	45	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	35	50	14	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	40	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	53	16	3	6

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

59. Most children when they start school are achieving standards that are average; some are attaining above. By the time they reach Year 1, they will be reaching the Early Learning Goals for children of five years old and would have made satisfactory progress from their starting point.
60. The school has successfully improved the quality of provision since the previous inspection but still has some way to go in providing for all six areas of learning according to the latest government guidelines. The school is also still in the process of providing a suitable safe play area with adequate climbing equipment and large wheeled toys to promote the children's physical development. Teaching has been improved. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and the support staff work closely together as a team. Teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. It is mainly good to very good in the morning when the nursery and reception children follow the Foundation Stage curriculum closely and satisfactory overall in the afternoon when the reception children are put with Year 1 and follow the programme of study from the National Curriculum. The school's reason for this is the problem of catering for low numbers of reception children, although it is aware that this is an area needing improvement. Children are made to feel secure and happy and they settle well into school routines but they make only satisfactory progress in their learning. This is partly due to the situation outlined above and the fact that assessment procedures are underdeveloped. There are simple, formal records of children's progress over time, but they are not consistently measured against the six areas of learning to ensure that lesson preparation is well matched to children's capability, particularly more able children, and that children are making good progress on a daily basis. This aspect was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. English and mathematics are planned and taught well throughout the Foundation Stage, although the teaching in the other aspects is sometimes too directive and does not always follow the guidelines for the Foundation Stage curriculum.
61. In the good lessons, there is a clear link between the activities the teacher plans and what the children learn. Explanations are careful and well paced and make sure that all children are involved in the activities. In the morning session, with the nursery and reception class mixed together, the teacher generally has a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and a good understanding of how each of the Stepping Stones leads to the Early Learning Goals. Children are encouraged to learn through play and activities are matched to the different ages and capabilities of the children. However, in some [satisfactory but] less effective lessons in the afternoon, with reception and Year 1, the planning is too rigid and follows the National Curriculum, the work lacks variety and is not such fun, and the more able children are not always sufficiently challenged to become independent learners.
62. Most, but not all, children have pre-school experience in the nursery. This helps them settle quickly into the reception class and teachers effectively build on previous learning. Children join in enthusiastically with the rest of the school for assembly and other school activities. Good liaison between the teacher and support staff ensures success in planning for these children. The accommodation is used effectively, in the mornings, to enable children to move freely and have access to a range of interesting and challenging activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. When children first come to the nursery they have a positive approach to experiences but do not show independence in selecting and carrying out activities. They are concerned about themselves but cannot yet talk about their home and community. Although they feel safe in school they don't make relationships easily. They are only just beginning to accept that other children have needs and are not as yet concerned with their general environment. All demonstrate a great sense of achievement in what they do but few take the initiative or make connections between different parts of their lives. When children first come to the reception class, they leave their parents with more confidence and are beginning to feel safe and secure at school. They realise that the other children have needs, but

there is not a high level of involvement with others and many still do not have a positive self-image. A few dress independently, explore their own environment, initiate interactions with other people and are beginning to take control of themselves. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority are sensitive to the needs of others and know the difference between right and wrong. Teachers ensure that there are good levels of support for the activities set during the day to develop co-operation. Children are increasingly prepared to take turns and to share resources. Friendships are quickly developing and most children are happy and secure in the school environment. Teaching is good overall. For example, in a good English lesson pupils made good progress, considering others, following instructions and working confidently with adults.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Children make good progress and most are in line to achieve the expected levels in language and literacy by the end of the Foundation Stage. By the time they are in Year 1, children say 'please' and 'thank you' and take part in conversations with each other. They make up their own stories and rhymes. Most are keen to explore the meaning of new words and are happy to talk in a school situation to people that they do not know. Speaking and listening skills are average when children first come to the nursery, although they do not speak clearly with confidence and control until they are well into the reception class. Here they develop well and most can express themselves clearly, using simple sentences by the time they leave. By the time they enter Year 1 most listen attentively and talk about their own experiences with an increasing vocabulary and the majority can make up their own stories. They clearly enjoy books, understanding how they work. Most associate sounds with letters and recognise simple words. Teaching is good. It is well planned to introduce children to the significance of letter sounds so that by the time they leave the reception class most are able to identify the initial sounds in rhyming words. All children understand that writing conveys meaning. When they first come to the nursery pupils draw and paint but do not give meanings to marks and cannot use one handed tools or equipment very well. By the time they enter the reception class they know that books and the computer carry information, but very few can retrieve any of it. By the time they leave reception most understand the use of words to convey meaning and are aware of the different purposes of writing and are beginning to use it as a means of communicating. Sound planning enables children to make appropriate progress. In a good numeracy lesson, appropriate questioning and a good use of time enabled some of the children to count backwards from 20 and add 7+2 and subtract 6-2. Most of the children are well on the way to achieving Level 1 in their reading. More able children have already achieved it.

Mathematical development

65. Attainment in the mathematical area of learning is above average. Children achieve better in this area of learning, due to well planned, appropriate activities which hold their interest and enable them to make good progress. Resources are used well to allow plenty of practical mathematical experience. In lessons the teacher demonstrates high expectations of work and behaviour. The teaching of numeracy is good. On entry to the school, most children show an interest in numbers and counting but cannot use number names. They can compare two groups of objects to say whether they are the same number or match shapes but do not show an interest in number problems. They use language like "big" and "small" but show little interest in talking about shapes. On entry into reception pupils are showing some curiosity about numbers but several still do not use the number names correctly. They can separate a group of objects in different ways and recognise the total is the same but show little confidence in offering solutions to problems. By the end of the Reception Year, most children can recognise and count numbers to ten, and confidently use language such as 'big' or 'little'. Higher-attaining children are secure in their understanding of 'long', 'short' and 'small' and use their knowledge correctly. Most can sort, match and order; some can sequence. All are familiar with counting rhymes and songs. Teaching is good overall. In these lessons, planning is thorough, more able children are appropriately challenged and the teacher uses questioning very successfully to encourage pupil participation and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. When they come to the school, most children play with construction material but very few can use it to build. Although they realise that tools can be used for a purpose, few can do anything purposeful

with them. When children move onto the reception class they can join construction blocks together to build and balance. They explore objects, talk about what they see, show an interest in ICT and know how to operate simple equipment. It is very difficult to get them to talk about significant things that have happened to them but they do express feelings about personal events like the birth of a sister or brother. They do not often comment on the obvious differences between living things or ask questions about how things work. A few know some features of the locality. The majority have not mastered the skills of cutting, joining, folding or building. Nonetheless, they make progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and the indications are that, by the time they are ready to start Year 1, most will have achieved the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of this area of learning. Teaching is good. In a good ICT lesson, pupils were able to manipulate the mouse, and programme a toy to go backwards and forwards, left and right with a remote control. Teachers used questioning effectively to promote speaking and listening skills and involved pupils in a demonstration to encourage interest and enthusiasm. Because the lesson was 'fun', children wanted to learn.

Physical development

67. This is an area of learning where all children reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they move to Year 1. However, when they first come to the school, children in the nursery can move spontaneously in a limited space but when asked to stop - they cannot. Only a small minority is confident at balancing, or using scissors. They show an awareness of their own needs with regard to sleeping, eating and hygiene but often need adult support to meet these needs. When they enter the reception class they are attaining standards that are below expectations when using tools in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination and in negotiating space. They are in line with what is expected of children of this age in terms of how they move in a range of ways, their awareness of their own bodies and how to keep them healthy.
68. Provision in this aspect is variable. The enclosed outdoor play area is inadequate and lacks appropriate climbing equipment and wheeled toys. The school is aware of the situation and is planning to rectify it. Physical skills are more successfully developed during sessions in the hall and outside on the field. Teachers' use of time and management in this area is good. However because the reception children are joined by some in Year 1 the lesson format is more on the lines of a formal physical education lesson from the National Curriculum. In an otherwise very good lesson, children's physical development was constrained by low-level equipment that lacked challenge. There was no independent access for the children to the apparatus and they are not being given enough opportunity to develop their skills sufficiently in this area. Most of the children, but particularly the more able, did not find the activity very interesting and little learning took place. In the classroom children use and manipulate construction and play equipment with growing confidence and dexterity. Good pencil control is developing in their attempts at writing.

Creative development

69. On joining the school most children are beginning to differentiate colours and show an interest in the way musical instruments sound. They show an interest in what they see, hear, smell and touch and use gestures and body language to indicate how they feel. When joining the reception class, most children can differentiate marks and make 3-dimensional structures. Most use imagination in play with others and can sing a few simple songs. When they leave the reception class, most children show an increasing ability to use imagination in activities and represent ideas in a variety of ways. The majority can use a wide range of materials to express feelings and ideas and they readily explore colour, sound and texture in two dimensions. There are good activities to develop children's confidence. Teachers' records show that children are achieving in line with the expected level in artistic development. The majority can make a considered choice of colours and mix paints effectively to acquire the correct shade. For example, they have enjoyed making hats for their teddies with material and plastic plates. Some children demonstrate good modelling skills. The provision of good resources allows children the opportunity for a wide range of experiences. For example, the role-play area enhances learning most effectively by providing children with a good forum to engage in imaginative play. In music, children enjoy singing in a range of songs from memory and express and communicate their feelings with a range of musical sounds. Teaching is good in this area of learning.

ENGLISH

70. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards in Years 1 to 6 in all aspects of English are generally higher than those found nationally. In Years 1 and 2 attainment is above average. In Years 3 to 6 it is well above.
71. Speaking is well developed and most pupils contribute confidently in groups and lessons, during assemblies and when with their peers. They generally answer in sentences and give reasons for their responses readily. Discussion is rightly encouraged in most lessons and is often beneficial to learning. Most pupils listen well when either an adult or child is talking. They show respect and are keen to listen to other points of view and other ideas rather than just their own. Pupils are given good opportunities to talk and to extend their vocabulary and this is effectively extending their thinking skills. A strength of the school is the opportunities that pupils, throughout the school, are given to deliver presentations on their own chosen subject to the whole school in assembly.
72. Standards of reading in Years 1 and 2 are good but there are a few pupils who cannot gain meaning from print readily. Most pupils enjoy reading, even those who are less fluent and expressive. Many pupils are above average readers. They read with enjoyment, emphasising important words or phrases; some are expressive in characterising voices and recounting action. Most are beginning to use information books effectively and put their good knowledge of the alphabet to good use. They can put what they have read into their own words whether retelling a story or recalling information. Most pupils in Year 3 to 6 can read well and an above average proportion read better than the expectations of their age. Younger pupils use books from schemes that develop skills and vocabulary progressively and then, as they progress, they become 'free readers' and are given access to a wider range of books in school and in the classrooms and school library. Some borrow books from the public library. Lower attainers use a range of strategies to read, their preference being to match sounds to letters and build up words they are not familiar with. Higher attainers are adept and fluent readers and read a range of texts. Older higher attainers are beginning to use higher order skills such as skimming and scanning effectively to locate what they are looking for. Pupils have good knowledge of accessing and using information via the Internet and have satisfactory planned opportunities to do so within the classroom. However, there is room for further development in this area when the new laptops come into use. Pupils' skills of accessing information in the library are good throughout the school and appropriate for their age.
73. Pupils' enjoyment of writing is clear, even in Year 1, and some pupils already have satisfactory handwriting. Planned practice of handwriting is having a positive effect on standards and is good throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to write on their own. In Year 2 most understand the need to organise their thoughts into sentences. Punctuation is used well. Higher-attaining pupils employ speech, exclamation and question marks appropriately to punctuate their writing. They experience and can recreate a good range of styles for different purposes and audiences. Groups from Year 2 also learn useful features of word processing. However there are insufficient opportunities to make use of computers to reorganise or redraft text in many classes in the school. The arrival of the new laptops should address this issue.
74. In Year 3, pupils learn how to write first person accounts of a story using well thought-out characters with particular feelings. They write poems of their own based on the poem 'If you want to see a tiger' by Grace Nicolls, and add synonyms to the text to improve the writing.
75. In Year 4, pupils create their own myths and legends, such as 'Why pandas have black eyes' and 'Why monkeys swing on vines', and write newspaper articles in which two imaginary villagers were interviewed after the killing of St George. They use powerful verbs and adjectives to create maximum impact for the reader, having studied how writers use these in their work.
76. In Year 5, they learn how synonyms can improve their writing and explore how different words with the same meaning can be substituted in their writing to make it more interesting, for example, 'recent' rather than 'new' and 'ferocious' rather than 'fierce'. They learn the difference between metaphors and similes and apply them to their writing, for example, 'My baby brother is a killer' and 'Her eyes were dancing wickedly'.

77. In Year 6, pupils are able to identify features of an effective story opening, make it precise and concise, paying due regard to audience and language features. They learn how better use of punctuation and more effective words can improve their work. They are also able to plan and organise writing in a range of styles, such as explanations, newspaper reports, biographies and diaries. They compile banks of words and phrases to create atmosphere and build suspense. The writing of older pupils is of a generally high standard, but higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged to become 'real writers' and write extensively for the sheer pleasure of it.
78. A scrutiny of pupils' written work throughout the school shows that a wide range of styles and audiences have been used and understood by pupils. Good attention is paid to encouraging pupils' use of creative language, the quality of presentation, the structure and features of different forms of writing and the extension and development of some pieces of writing.
79. English teaching overall is very good and it is even better where teachers have a real passion for language and a detailed knowledge of the structure of language. The National Literacy Strategy has been adapted to suit the pupils and is implemented well, effectively raising standards. Work is well planned by teachers and is suitably adapted for pupils with special educational needs, although higher attainers in some classes could be given greater challenge.
80. In most lessons, teachers introduce lessons and their expectations clearly through sharing planned outcomes so that pupils know what they have to do and by when. These outcomes are challenging and based on the very good knowledge of both the subject and the learning needs of pupils. There is constant checking and focusing on progress towards the outcome. The final plenary session is used effectively to ensure that the teacher has good knowledge of how targeted groups and individuals have got on and that all pupils' learning is reinforced. Teachers' planning is good, with information about how the teacher is intending to move all pupils' learning on from what they have already attained. Homework is set regularly and often linked to planning. Teachers' responses to pupils' work are based consistently on the targeted learning that was planned for them as well as praise in the form of, for instance, 'well done' or 'excellent work'. In most lessons, teachers indicate to pupils how well they have met what was asked for and how they could improve. Although some progress has been made in introducing texts which represent the diverse nature of multi-cultural Britain, this approach is not fully embedded in the practice of the school. There is room for further improvement, as there is in the use of texts related to the foundation subjects, such as history and geography.
81. Classroom assistants support learning well. They know particular pupils well, especially those having special educational needs and are effective in preparing material and helping these pupils to make good progress and ensure equality of access.
82. Most pupils make good progress in most lessons over time. When teaching is more effective, pupils show they are capable of making very good progress. Pupils enter the school with average attainments in language and leave with attainments that are well above average. The school is very effective in promoting pupils' learning in English and in enabling them to succeed in above average attainments by the time they are 11. Pupils achieve very well.
83. Almost all pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to learn. They pay good attention and respond promptly and thoughtfully to adults. Most pupils try to produce their best work and effort and to stick at tasks until they are finished. They take pride in what they do and help make lessons a positive and productive experience.
84. The co-ordinator for the subject has overseen the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy into the school but time to check that it is still being followed consistently and effectively in classrooms has been limited. She has satisfactory knowledge of the strategy and gives some advice on planning and raising standards to teachers. However, as she is also the co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, English has suffered somewhat as she has not had enough time to devote to it.
85. Reading is given time every week, either during the literacy hour or at another time, and this has resulted in reading in the school being really strong. There is room for the school to identify consistently when literacy can be learnt and used in other subjects and for it to feature regularly in the planning of all teachers in all subjects.

86. There are insufficient opportunities throughout the school for extended writing in the foundation subjects and the skills learnt in literacy lessons are not readily transferred when writing in other subjects.
87. Accommodation and resources are well able to meet the needs of the curriculum and the subject benefits from the knowledge and efforts of teachers and classroom assistants. There is a good range of reading books, big books, library books and other resources to support all aspects of literacy. Money is well spent by the co-ordinator to target the purchasing of materials to support curriculum needs, such as the recent initiative to improve group reading opportunities throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

88. Inspection evidence shows that the standards of pupils in the current Year 6 are well above average, with a few pupils working at an even higher level. Standards in the current Year 2 are also above average, with a number of pupils achieving standards well above expectations for pupils at the age of seven. This is in line with the results of the 2002 national tests at the end of both key stages which show that pupils achieved standards that were well above average compared with all schools nationally, as well as in comparison with similar schools. The achievement of pupils by the end of Year 6 is very good.
89. In Year 2, pupils confidently perform operations with two digit numbers mentally and in recorded form. They know their two, five and ten times tables, understand tens and units and apply the four rules to solve number problems. Higher attaining pupils carry out operations that require knowledge of multiples of 3, 4, and 6. They use different methods for solving problems especially when working on time and money. They record measurements in centimetres accurately and make measurements in litres and centilitres. Most use the correct mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes describing their properties, including the number of sides, corners and faces. Higher attaining pupils begin to understand the place value of numbers up to 1,000, construct and interpret graphs in terms of what is indicated as well as what is not, demonstrate knowledge of symmetry and show understanding of simple fractional parts.
90. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their ability to calculate and manipulate numbers mentally. In Year 3 pupils write and order numbers to 1000. They use different strategies when calculating the difference between numbers such as counting on from the smaller or back from the larger number. They confidently explain the method used including partitioning. They have a good understanding of fractions such as a half, quarter and a third. In Year 4 pupils work accurately finding the difference between two four digit numbers by adding on, beginning with the highest value or the lowest value column, showing clearly that their result becomes the same. They confidently use metric units of measurement to solve problems involving length, weight and capacity. Most pupils estimate length well and measure accurately using centimetres. The majority of pupils know their multiplication tables up to 10×10 , perform mental calculations accurately with two digit numbers and the most able pupils use all four operations on two and three digit numbers. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of factors and multiples as well as squares and roots. They know the nearest square to any number up to 400 and create formulae to work out numbers from the sum and difference. They reduce fractions to their simplest terms and convert vulgar fractions to decimal and percentage. They understand the concept of negative numbers and plot co-ordinates correctly on the x and y axes. In Year 6, many pupils demonstrate levels of understanding well above national expectations. They solve problems involving all four operations, make estimates close to the answer in order to check for accuracy. They demonstrate very good skills in handling data using tally charts, bar and line graphs of distance against time. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout. Higher attaining pupils perform challenging activities involving investigations in mathematics.
91. The quality of teaching in both key stages is very good with some areas of excellence. Teachers plan their work well and provide the necessary resources, which enable work to proceed unhindered. Exercises are differentiated to match the prior attainment of the pupils and as a result pupils with SEN make good progress. Basic skills are well taught in lessons and pupils are encouraged to use their own method of calculations and to explain their procedures. Pupils therefore develop confidence

and enjoyment of their lessons. Teachers follow the school's policy of ensuring inclusion by giving all pupils an opportunity to contribute at their own level. The very good relationship between the staff and pupils and the willingness of the pupils to learn provide a very good environment in which they make good progress in their learning. The good knowledge of the teachers enables them to challenge the pupils to apply what they already know to a new situation. Very good pace of lessons especially in mental maths generates interest and excitement and an eagerness to learn. Pupils are given work that matches their levels of attainment and resources are provided for pupils to work at their own pace. On-going assessment is used effectively to check that the pupils understand before moving to the next stage of learning. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good because of the good level of support that they receive. Good use is made of computers to support teaching and learning.

92. The quality of management is very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is fully committed to the task. Standards have risen significantly in both key stages from the time of the last inspection, higher attainers are appropriately challenged, teaching has improved from satisfactory to very good, the marking of work includes advice for improvement. National test data is collated, assessment analysis is used to inform planning, new resources have been acquired, the co-ordinator monitors teaching and co-ordinates the work very effectively. The areas earmarked for further improvement include the extension of numeracy skills through all other subjects of the curriculum and a whole school focus on using and applying mathematics.

SCIENCE

93. The work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils' standards are above expectations by the end of Year 2. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above the national average. Pupils' achievement is very good from the end of Year 2 until they leave at the end of Year 6. There is no significant variation in attainment between boys and girls. Pupils with SEN achieve well because of the very good quality of support they receive. There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.
94. By the end of Year 2, pupils are very familiar with the experimental and investigative approach to science. They practise the skills of scientific enquiry, observing carefully, making predictions, testing and recording their results. For example in a very good Year 2 lesson pupils set up an experiment to see whether height affected the distance a person could jump. The pupils themselves decided on the experiment and they took full control of recording their findings and ensuring that it was a fair test. Many were working at the higher Level 3 responding to each other's suggestions and expressing their own ideas about finding solutions. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with the main properties of certain materials, know the difference between metal, wood, plastic, and glass and which material is best for making a rain hat. They also know which materials are magnetic and those that are not. Various experiments have been carried out in this year group and the pupils have a good grounding in how to approach scientific experiments. Their use of scientific terminology is very good at this age. By the end of Year 2 they have had a balanced coverage of all the Attainment Targets in the science Programme of Study.
95. Pupils in Year 3 build on the foundations laid earlier, investigating why some magnetic forces are stronger than others. They also go into materials in more depth and conduct simple experiments on the absorbency of paper and on the permeability of rocks. Higher achievers have done good work on gravity and forces. In a good lesson, where pupils were setting up an experiment to test the properties of material that is opaque, transparent or translucent, higher achieving pupils could make predictions and select information taking account of identified patterns. This is further developed by Year 4 pupils who have done experiments about solids and liquids that we use in our daily lives. They have experimented to find out what makes a good filter and have combined knowledge of material properties with investigative techniques to show how quickly ice melts and salt dissolves in different circumstances. By Year 5 pupils can explain how and why an electric circuit works, how the blood is circulated around the body and how our muscles control our movements. Most can describe the life cycle of a plant and higher attainers have good recordings of experiments to compare the amount of air in different soil samples. By the end of Year 6, pupils are working at a high level of scientific understanding covering topics such as ecosystems, interdependence and adaptations, properties of light photosynthesis and food chains. Scientific vocabulary is effectively applied, for

example when dissolving solids distinguishing between solvents, solution, suspension and separation. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils on an environmental walk could explain why conditions such as the availability of water and light in specific quantities supported certain organisms. All could use keys based on observable features to assist in systematically identifying and grouping living things.

96. Pupils throughout the school have a very positive attitude to science. They particularly enjoy performing experiments. Year 6 pupils showed great enthusiasm for their work on habitats and were amazed at the different creatures they found. They apply their scientific knowledge in all their lessons throughout the school and are very confident from Year 2 onwards setting up their own experiments. They record their findings diligently and find their learning fun.
97. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject that enables them to make it interesting. All work is well planned with the necessary resources available so that no time is wasted during lessons. The very good relationships between staff and pupils help to create an enjoyable atmosphere for learning where discovery is encouraged. Older pupils are directed to make their own decisions as to how best to conduct their experiments. This develops their skills of independent learning. Pupils' enjoyment of the subject is clear throughout the school. Work is meticulously set out in most classes and teachers' marking is constructive and usually offers useful indicators of how to improve. The pace of lessons is brisk and resources are very well used. Learning in this subject is considered effortless by so many pupils because it is 'fun.' Good systems are in place for monitoring children's progress in the subject, although the monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection in updating the scheme of work, increasing resources and engaging in professional development.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Pupils' attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. From the time pupils start school, they are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, to explore pattern, to work from observation and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them. Reception children have enjoyed painting their names with their fingers. They have used pastels effectively to paint a teddy and tulips from observation. They have also used a simple paint program to create pizzas on the computer. Most of the pictures were lively and showed their enthusiasm for the project.
99. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment, especially in drawing and sketching, is at the expected level. This competence in using dry media, pencils, charcoal etc, stands them in good stead in the junior classes. Pupils' attainment in other aspects, such as painting, shows an average range of skill and understanding. There is sound development of practical skills in some classes, although this depends largely on the subject expertise of the teacher. For example, Year 1 has created still life paintings in poster paint using vegetables and fruit, the colours reflecting what they have learned about colour mixing and matching. Year 2 have effectively printed alternately on black and white tyres as part of their transport project. The oldest pupils in Year 2 have learnt to use a larger range of materials and show increasing control of tools.
100. By the end of Year 6, pupils are competent at colour mixing and matching, using pastels, and are able to use a variety of media, like charcoal, to achieve the results they want. Year 4/5 has produced some effective paintings for the art competition of flowers and kitchen implements. Year 5/6 has completed effective paintings in vibrant colours in the style of Kandinsky and well depicted paintings of animal silhouettes on various tones. Pupils are learning to evaluate their work. There is a readiness to question, adapt and modify their own work and learn from their own mistakes. Standards achieved in painting are within the average range. Their drawing from observation, using tone and shading, shows good skill. Some higher attainers in Year 6 are beginning to compare methods and modify and improve their work to meet their intentions. Pupils with SEN make appropriate progress overall and use the skills they acquire in other subjects.
101. The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subject, although some lack confidence in certain areas of learning and need more training in how to teach art skills. Where teachers' planning is particularly good, it gives details of learning objectives and careful

attention to the development of skills and techniques. In an excellent lesson in Year 3/4, the teacher's good planning and use of time and resources enthused pupils to not only stay with the task of making a printing block, but encouraged all abilities to show their skill in planning and designing to produce simpler and better blocks than they had at first envisaged. Teachers are responsible for their own assessment but most are not assessing and recording pupils' individual progress in art regularly enough. Although good learning is taking place at both key stages, there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching, assessment and the standards being achieved. Examples of good learning and progress include a clear development in pupils' observational skills and in their understanding of artistic elements. The use of information and communication technology for graphic work is underdeveloped throughout the school.

102. The management of the subject is satisfactory. However, there is no whole-school overview to monitor pupils' progress; consequently assessment does not adequately inform curriculum planning. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. During the inspection one lesson only was observed in design and technology because the subject is taught in concentrated blocks of time, most of which did not coincide with the time of the inspection. Judgements on attainment, teaching and pupils' learning are therefore also based on planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils.
104. The standard of work seen overall is in line with standards seen nationally. Pupils experience work in a range of media including textiles, clay, paper and wood. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. There is better understanding of the design process, they plan, draw diagrams, make accurate measurements and discuss their ideas before making their product. Materials are carefully selected for a specific purpose. They always evaluate the finished product.
105. In Years 1 and 2 pupils use a variety of materials to construct buildings. They learn to cut accurately and join by different means and evaluate their results. Year 2 pupils make a wide range of vehicles linked to their plan for a Teddy Bear's picnic. The finished articles show a high level of skill in design and effectiveness, with functional wheels to enable smooth movement. They understand why some materials combine easier than others and suggest ways of improving their finished articles. Their work reflects relevance to other subjects as for example the construction of circuit boards with light bulbs that switch on and off and buzzers for sirens. They sew buttons on the dresses that they designed and stitched by hand.
106. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 plan their work carefully and produce appropriate designs. They understand the importance of accurate measurements and of choosing the right materials. They list the tools required, the materials to be used and the stages of construction. These are well illustrated in displays around the school. They understand the importance of package design in marketing by disassembling existing boxes and constructing nets for their own designs. Food technology is practised when Year 5/6 pupils complete a survey of commercial biscuits and use the information to design and make their own to specified requirements. Year 3 / 4 pupils make sandwiches with a variety of fillings. As pupils move through the school, the designing and making process continues to be developed. They design and make an impressive variety of colourful hats of amazing styles well displayed in the school corridor. They discuss and evaluate the advantages of different materials for a specific function. The model Tudor buildings on display in the school are exceptional and demonstrate remarkable skills above expectations for pupils of similar age. Thorough evaluations of their finished efforts are perceptive and suggestions for improvement show a good understanding of the process of production and marketing. By the time pupils leave school at the age of 11 they have had a range of experiences of designing and making articles.
107. Evidence available, mainly from work on display, suggests that the quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching in both key stages. Pupils show good progress in the work recorded. Pupils are expected to produce work of a high standard as indicated by the marking of their designs. Pupils with SEN achieve well.

108. The subject is satisfactorily managed by an experienced co-ordinator who provides support for colleagues when needed. Monitoring is achieved through shared planning across year groups. Teaching is not monitored consistently. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme has been adopted and is being evaluated in relation to the requirements of each year group but at present there is no consistent format for the tracking of skills as pupils move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

109. No judgement can be made about standards achieved or rates of progress by the end of Year 6 as not enough of the geography curriculum was available to be inspected. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
110. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy the story 'We're all going on a bear hunt' and are then able to place the characters in the story on a simple map of the area. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the differences between the areas. They can also mark capital cities on a map of the British Isles, can compare life on the Isle of Struay with life in Hertingfordbury and can explain what transport would be needed to get there.
111. In Year 2, pupils further develop their mapping skills and learn how to draw pirate treasure maps, explaining the location of the treasure by single figure grid references and working out which way the pirates went to find the treasure. They can also map the journey of the 'Owl and the Pussycat' and 'Little Red Riding Hood', can draw a plan of the school using their own symbols and a map of Wilson Theme Park with their own grid references. They study Ordnance Survey maps of Welwyn Garden City and Hertford and carry out a population survey of the class pupils, plotting where they live on the maps. They study journeys to school and methods of transport, begin to ask questions of a geographical nature, such as why some roads in the locality have more traffic than others roads, and what kind of traffic it is. They are able to make use of fieldwork skills, such as surveys, to collect information on this subject, and to record their findings in simple tally charts and block graphs, using knowledge gained in their mathematics lesson.
112. By the end of Year 6, plans show that pupils will have studied settlement and the local area, environmental change and improvement, contrasting the local area with India, water and rivers, but there is as yet no planned development of key geographical skills throughout these years. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 become more familiar with using maps and are learning how to use secondary evidence to compare a road, before and after development, and to study why traffic use on roads has increased over the years. In Year 5, pupils draw plans of their school environment and carry out surveys to find out the noisy and quiet places in the school. They also study rubbish problems in the school and the community, make suggestions as to how the situation could be improved and study what happens to the rubbish. Year 6 pupils identify areas in the school grounds from photographs, marking their position on a plan of the school, but due to preparation for the Year 6 tests, there was no other geography in books or displays to inspect.
113. Teaching in geography is satisfactory overall, but in one class teaching was very good. Here the teacher had excellent geographical knowledge and the lesson was very well planned. There was an excellent use of a wide range of secondary source material, such as maps and pictures, and due regard was given to the development of key geographic skills. Some limited fieldwork is carried out practising geographical skills, but there is room for improvement in this area to help pupils understand the purpose of geography. Geographical equipment, such as atlases, maps, graphs, aerial photographs and weather measuring equipment, is readily available, but greater use could be made of it and, in some cases, teacher knowledge could be improved.
114. The geography subject co-ordinator has good geographical knowledge, and has attempted to raise the profile of geography in the school, but as yet this had had insufficient time to impact strongly on standards or breadth of study. Pupils' attainment and progress and teaching are not yet being monitored in geography.

HISTORY

115. Standards in history are satisfactory throughout the school and pupils make satisfactory progress. This matches the findings of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and there are no significant differences in progress between the achievements of boys and girls.
116. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate a developing knowledge of Victorian houses and homes, and compare the facilities of houses then with present day houses. They take part with enthusiasm in a Victorian washday workshop, using washboards and dollies and dressing in appropriate clothes. They also learn about Victorian schools, toys, transport through the ages and about important historical figures such as Guy Fawkes and Samuel Pepys and are inspired by the act of heroism carried out by Grace and William Darling in the famous rescue of 1838. They show some understanding of chronology in studying time lines and can recognise the difference between old and new, and understand the development of household objects. They handle artefacts carefully, with respect.
117. By Year 6, most pupils demonstrate further understanding of chronology by ordering developments with reference to the periods they have studied, such as the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks, the Invaders, the Tudors and the Victorians. These topics are studied on a four year cycle by Years 3-6 at the same time, but as yet there is no focused development of the key skills of historical enquiry appropriate to the various age groups in these year groups, or assessment of this development.
118. Historical visits are a strong feature of history teaching and photographs depict an exciting visit for Year 2 pupils, dressed in Victorian clothes to Hitchin Museum, and a Year 3/4 visit, wearing Tudor clothes to Letchworth Museum, making Tudor spice bags, and trying out the stocks. Year 4/5 studied the differences between the known Tudor world and the present day and re-enacted the Spanish Armada in Assembly. Year 5/6 presented Tudor dancing as part of their class assembly.
119. Teaching in history is generally satisfactory and better in lessons where teachers show real enthusiasm and detailed knowledge of the subject. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and are interested in the subject. They very much enjoy the visits and learn a great deal from the real experiences.
120. Resources for history are good. There is a good supply of library and textbooks, packs of source materials, videos, tapes and maps and artefacts for each topic are provided by the Hertfordshire Museum Service.
121. The co-ordinator for the subject is new but a good start has been made in checking teachers' plans and in deciding how to spend the budget for history. As yet there is no systematic monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress, or of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with expectations nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The good support given by teachers and learning support assistants ensures that pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with SEN also achieve well in this subject, so that by the time they leave the school they have satisfactorily developed their skills, knowledge and understanding in ICT. Since the last inspection, provision overall has improved considerably. A portable ICT suite has been acquired with a sufficient number of computers for almost the whole class to work individually. The optional national scheme of work has been adopted and modified in line with staff expertise; assessment procedures are being developed and teachers' confidence and competence are improving. Teachers are more confident as a result of training on the NOFL scheme as well as other inset courses provided. The school has clear plans and funds allocated for further improvement. Satisfactory use is being made of computers to support and enhance teaching and learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
123. In Year 1 pupils show familiarity with the keyboard functions and many skilfully use a mouse for pointing, selecting, dragging and moving items around the screen. For example in their science lesson on growing plants from seeds they use a database to select a variety of seeds and the best conditions for growth. They import and attach a variety of pictures to illustrate their stories of for example the land of the ice palace. Using 'my World' software they word process short sentences,

using upper and lower case, punctuation marks and a variety of font styles and sizes. They communicate their findings of their favourite things using computer generated block graphs satisfactorily. In Year 2 pupils use appropriate software to communicate information by combining text and graphics when writing their story about North American Indians by the river. They use the keyboard successfully to delete, backspace, change the font, alter the size of print, introduce colour, save and print their work. Using Colour Magic, they select specific tools to draw shapes and fill with favourite colours. The roamer is effectively used in providing experience of control technology and making things happen.

124. Year 3 pupils successfully interrogate databases and use the computer to display collected data as bar and pie graphs. They demonstrate their skills as seen in an assembly using a computer controlled projector to illustrate a variety of topics presented to the whole school and parents. Year 4 pupils use Colour Magic to draw pictures incorporated into a Power Point presentation on myths and legends. By the end of Year 6 pupils competently use the Internet to extract relevant information to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum. This was well illustrated by a presentation at assembly on endangered animal species. In Year 5 pupils merge text and graphics effectively, move, rotate and resize and show awareness of their audience. They learn to construct graphs and use them to illustrate different aspects of collected data. By the end of Year 6 most pupils successfully use Power Point to create a multimedia presentation. They show good understanding of the use of spreadsheets and formulae to make calculations. The use of the Internet to access information is well established and E-mail is competently used. Year 6 pupils created a children's page for the school website. However the opportunities for using sensing are limited due to lack of appropriate hardware. The school is aware of this shortcoming and has plans for rectification.
125. Pupils enjoy ICT, especially when using computers and the digital camera as for example to take pictures of a variety of poses for use in a design and technology lesson. They are highly motivated and show positive attitudes towards learning. They enjoy their turn on the computer during lessons and take turns to practise their skills. They talk with enthusiasm about what they are doing and share their knowledge and understanding with one another. They handle all equipment with care and work co-operatively. When working in pairs pupils learn to share ideas and take turns to use the computer. This contributes well to their social and moral development.
126. No teaching of computer skills was seen during the inspection as there is no timetabled space for the subject. The skills are taught as and when required linked to lesson plans. Teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject to guide pupils' learning forward. Most have increased confidence since the completion of the NOFL training, although there are new staff who have not as yet been through the programme. Computers were in regular use in most lessons during the inspection. However there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in ICT.
127. Information and communication technology is satisfactorily co-ordinated by the headteacher who maintains a good overview of the work throughout the school and gives support to staff when necessary. The scheme of work has been updated and the work is monitored well. Assessment procedures are not presently established to record the progress of all pupils.

MUSIC

128. Only two lessons of class music were taught during the inspection (Years 3 and 5), so it is not possible to make a judgement on the standards of attainment or achievement of pupils.
129. Music is taught using two very different commercial schemes of work, which give attention to singing and playing, composing, listening and appraising. However there is a lack of systematic planning of key skills in music to ensure that pupils make the necessary development in these throughout the school. Lack of planning in key skills leads to a lack of assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do, so lesson planning, although thorough in individual lessons, is not sharply focused enough, or leading to the proper development of the subject in the school.
130. Pupils showed obvious enjoyment of music in the lessons that were seen and in lessons and assemblies pupils demonstrated good ability to sing sweetly, in tune, observing the correct pitch and

rhythm and showing a knowledge of a small range of songs. Pupils listened well to the music that was played as they went in and out of assemblies.

131. In Year 3, pupils could identify that the slower music to represent the tortoise in 'The Carnival of the Animals' by Saint-Saens was the same as the faster 'can-can' music by Offenbach. In Year 5, pupils perform 'Rotation Rap' (about the orbit of planets), observing carefully the rhythm and then create a group composition using body sounds to illustrate the planets that they have been studying in geography.
132. Teaching in music is generally good, the teacher demonstrates good musical knowledge and the lessons are lively and interesting.
133. A number of pupils learn recorder and violin in school and these lessons are very well taught and pupils make good progress, the more experienced violin players being entered for grade examinations. These lessons, together with the wide variety of musical opportunities available, greatly enhance the music provision in the school, which is generally satisfactory.
134. Pupils learn African rhythms in the after-school percussion club and create compositions and ostinati to well known songs, using glockenspiels. Twelve pupils took part in the Hertford and Ware Musical Festival singing 'Ocean World' with other local schools and all classes experienced the Gamelan Orchestra and Steel Drums in Stevenage. The whole school takes part in Christmas productions and concerts, older pupils performing the 'Pied Piper' with musical accompaniment, and younger pupils, 'Humph the Camel', a version of the nativity story. Music is regularly used in class assemblies, such as a Halloween assembly where older pupils sang 'Gobolino the Witch's Cat' and younger pupils 'The Old Witch.' The musical production 'Rats' raised money for the Kayaletshu Crèche, Pre-School and Nursery in South Africa. Religious education, music, literature and design and technology are all linked well together.
135. There is a good selection of musical resources including tuned and untuned percussion, other instruments and CDs for listening. However, the selection of music resource books is limited. Opportunities for singing and listening to multi-cultural music and playing ethnic instruments have been improved since the last inspection, but there is room for further improvement. Opportunities to listen to professional musicians in school and locally are limited. Music is not yet playing as significant a part in the life of the school as it could.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and 6. The school covers most of the physical education curriculum including swimming for all pupils. The on-site pool provides a very valuable resource which is effectively utilised by the school, enabling all pupils to learn to swim. By the time pupils leave school they all meet statutory requirements for swimming. Although the school achieves satisfactory standards overall, attainment in dance and gymnastics is severely restricted by the unsatisfactory size of the hall. The last inspection report made reference to its inadequacy but this remains unresolved.
137. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use space sensibly, control their body movements and vary form, speed and expression. They exercise control and awareness of space when engaged in warming up exercises through the use of simple games that demand change of pace, assuming different postures and using all the space at their disposal. They understand the reasons for cooling down activities and pay attention to safety when handling apparatus. They practise games' skills, catching and throwing using beanbags and balls of varying types and sizes depending on the lesson objectives. Working in pairs they appreciate the value of co-operation in developing skills.
138. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their skills of ball control, throwing under and over arm and from the shoulder in order to improve their performance in different ball games. They learn to work in partners and in groups, developing team spirit when they practise ball control with their feet and passing to a partner. In a Year 5 lesson pupils demonstrate well-developed skills in the pop and gut pass during their rugby lesson and practise evasive techniques in order to score a try. They practise passing the ball accurately to a partner by throwing back while running, or kicking accurately to a selected spot. In dance the Year 5/6 pupils produce varied and imaginative combinations of movements which satisfy

the high expectations of their teacher, demonstrating entertainment in Roman times. They use information and communication technology well to make a video of their dance routine, editing to present the best performance. Pupils understand the effect of exercise on the body and appreciate the importance to the body of warming up and cooling down activities.

139. The pupils have a very positive attitude to their physical education lessons. They enjoy the subject and take part with enthusiasm. They respond readily to their teacher and always move sensibly. Pupils generally have their kit, they dress correctly for activities and handle equipment safely. They follow established routines, are keen to help with the apparatus and follow their teacher's instructions carefully. However they express disappointment at the restrictions encountered in the hall through lack of space for imaginative dance and gymnastics. They speak highly of the opportunities provided for swimming. The caring ethos of the school and the very good relationship between staff and pupils contribute to the very good behaviour of the pupils. A pupil in a wheelchair enjoys taking part in all the activities.
140. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and have high expectations of their pupils. They use praise appropriately and provide opportunities for pupils to improve their performance. They manage the pupils well using a variety of strategies to keep them on task. Demonstrations by pupils are often used to improve the quality of performance and to give other pupils ideas for their own activities. The lessons are very inclusive as clearly demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson when every pupil was fully involved throughout.
141. The subject is well co-ordinated. Resources are plentiful and of good quality for delivery of the curriculum and the subject benefits from the availability of outside agencies for coaching in football and cricket. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities through after-school clubs. These include rounders, premier soccer, netball and athletics and the school takes part in fixtures against other schools. These extra-curricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' attainment through high expectations and the desire to improve standards of performance.