

INSPECTION REPORT

HOWE DELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hatfield

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117220

Headteacher: Mrs Sally Somerville

Lead inspector: Colin Henderson

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th October 2003

Inspection number: 256515

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	155
School address:	Old Rectory Drive Hatfield
Postcode:	AL10 8AD
Telephone number:	01707 263291
Fax number:	01707 258248
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Dummer
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Howe Dell Primary School is accommodated in a historic listed Tudor building. It serves an area of mainly private housing, with quite high levels of unemployment due to the closure of one of the town's main employers. The school is planned to move to a new building and site as part of the town's reorganisation of its schools. Delays in the move have resulted in a reduction in pupil numbers. Pupils are of mainly white, United Kingdom ethnic background. A small number of pupils are from other ethnic minorities. There are only two pupils for whom English is not the first language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Fifteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is just below the national average. Their needs include a range of learning and communication difficulties. Attainment on entry is average, although some children have language weaknesses.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23742	Colin Henderson	Lead inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; physical education; English as an additional language
9542	Brian Jones	Lay inspector	
30573	Sonia Bosworth	Team inspector	English; geography; history; music; citizenship
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Science; art and design; design and technology; religious education; Foundation Stage; special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of Howe Dell Primary School is satisfactory.

It is a friendly and caring school community that encourages its pupils to have a positive attitude to learning. Teachers enable all pupils to be included fully in learning activities, although they are not always matched to the needs of more able pupils. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education with satisfactory teaching and sound leadership and management. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. The school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils attain above average standards in reading.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good.
- Attendance levels are below the national average.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Links with parents and the community are good.
- Good procedures for pupils' care and welfare reflect the school's caring ethos.
- Some teachers do not extend more able pupils consistently.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to target the needs of individual pupils.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.

The school has maintained the satisfactory effectiveness reported at the last inspection. It has made considerable improvement on the key issue of Foundation Stage provision and good improvement on managing pupils' behaviour and the organisation of music tuition lessons. More able pupils are still not attaining consistently above average standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	D	A	A*
Mathematics	A	C	C	A
Science	A	D	A	A

Key: A - top 5 per cent nationally; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Test results vary from year to year due mainly to differences in the abilities of the small number of pupils taking the tests. **Pupils attain average standards overall in Year 2 and Year 6.** They attain above average levels in reading.

The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. More able pupils achieve well when teachers have high expectations of their work, for example, in Year 2 and in the current Year 6. However, these are not consistently high enough in all junior classes and this limits their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs achieve soundly and make satisfactory progress towards their learning targets. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and are likely to achieve their learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and helps pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 6. There were examples of good teaching in each class, although some teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of more able pupils. This does not help them to extend their learning. The school provides well for pupils' care and their understanding of becoming a responsible citizen. It makes good use of visits, visitors and community links to enrich the curriculum. Good links with parents contribute effectively to their children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership in promoting the school's caring ethos. A consistent and rigorous focus on raising standards of attainment is not established. Governors provide good support and work effectively with the staff to evaluate the education provided and plan for its improvement. Some co-ordinators are managing their subjects successfully, although they are not consistently focused on evaluating teaching and learning and targeting improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are satisfied with the school. For example, parents in 91 per cent of questionnaires showed that their children liked school and 85 per cent felt that they made good progress. Parents in about 20 per cent of questionnaires felt that the school did not seek their views enough and had concerns about pupils' behaviour. Inspectors found that the school tries hard to get parents' views, for example, using their own questionnaire. There is a small number of boys whose behaviour causes concern. Inspectors found that the school handles their behaviour well and minimises the disruption to other pupils' learning.

Most pupils have positive views of the school. Inspectors talked to a good number of pupils, especially older juniors. They like their school, especially the Tudor building and its grounds. Older pupils enjoy looking after the younger ones. Many enjoy the good range of learning activities and the help they get from their teachers. Some were concerned about some incidents of bullying at lunch-times. Inspectors found that the school has effective anti-bullying procedures that are known by all staff and applied consistently and effectively.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- raise the levels of pupils' attendance;
- raise teachers' expectations of more able pupils to a consistently high level;
- use assessment information more effectively to ensure activities match pupils' learning needs and to extend the use of pupil targets;
- extend the role of subject co-ordinators to focus rigorously on raising standards of teaching and learning;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- extend the range of physical education activities for junior pupils to include gymnastics.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils attain average standards overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are rising, with improvements evident in English, mathematics and science. They are above average in reading. Standards in physical education vary considerably – they are high in swimming but well below nationally expected levels in gymnastics. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 and in the current Year 6 achieve well, promoted by good teaching. Most pupils achieve soundly in other years, although more able pupils are not challenged consistently to extend their skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and often good progress on their individual education plans.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are improving and are above the national average.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make at least good progress in all six areas of learning.
- Standards in swimming remain high, although gymnastics skills are well below expected levels.
- More able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Commentary

1. The results of national tests over the last three years show an improving trend at both Year 2 and Year 6, although with considerable yearly variation due to changes in the ability of the small numbers taking the tests. Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The school exceeded by 20 per cent its 2003 target for the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English. It met its target of 72 per cent in mathematics. The targets for the current Year 6 are not sufficiently challenging to raise standards, especially in the number of pupils likely to achieve Level 5. Test results in science show that pupils do not attain as high as in English and mathematics. A recent strong focus on science teaching is raising standards from below average to average levels. Girls attain better than boys in tests. The school has identified this as a priority for improvement. Resources have improved, particularly in literacy, and the school has broadened the range of teaching methods to improve boys' approach to work and to raise standards. Inspection evidence showed that these strategies are beginning to increase boys' interest and enable them to attain at similar levels to girls.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.9 (14.6)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.7 (14.7)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (26.5)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.3 (27.0)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.0 (27.5)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Most children enter the reception class with average attainment, although some have weaknesses in language and communication skills. They settle happily and, promoted by

good teaching, are likely to achieve their nationally expected goals in all six areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Some will exceed their goals in communication, language and literacy and physical development. Infant pupils attain above average standards in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics. They achieve well, supported by good teaching and the good use of effective support strategies. Junior pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. An analysis of pupils' work from the last school year show that pupils in the current Year 6 achieve well in the amount and quality of work. Good subject leadership in English and mathematics, promoted by effective advisory support, is beginning to improve the achievement of most pupils. More able pupils are challenged effectively by good teaching, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 6. The challenge is less consistent in other years and this restricts their achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall in their learning. It is good in some classes and in some subjects, for example science, where teachers and teaching assistants provide high quality support to enable these pupils to achieve success. This is not consistent in each class and the range of activities is not always matched closely to these pupils' learning needs. The very few pupils with English as an additional language have only recently started at the school. Their needs are currently being assessed. Good use of teaching assistants and other support staff enable them to be included fully in group activities, although they are not always encouraged to contribute to whole class discussions. This limits the development of their English language skills.

- Most pupils attain nationally expected levels for their age in most subjects. This has been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. Improved resources and increased teachers' confidence are helping pupils to develop their ICT skills soundly, although they are not required to apply their skills enough to support work in other subjects. Standards in swimming are high. The school makes frequent use of the local swimming facilities and pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of swimming instructors. Standards in gymnastics are too low. The school has very limited indoor space to extend pupils' skills, especially in apparatus work, and does not provide opportunities for pupils to develop basic floor-work skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is unsatisfactory but punctuality is satisfactory. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision produces good attitudes and behaviour and very good relationships.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good school ethos and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision lead to good behaviour, good attitudes to learning and good relationships.
- Attendance is well below the national average and action to improve it is not effective.
- Pupils are very interested in their life at school, responding well to lessons and the wide range of activities.

Attendance

Authorised absence	
School data:	6.9
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.1
National data:	0.5

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

- Attendance is unsatisfactory. It was 93 per cent in 2001/02, well below the national average. The 2002/03 figure is 92.9 per cent and is not an improvement. The school is not making full use of information available from its computer system. It is not monitoring absence rates for the whole school and for individual classes at regular intervals. It does not contact families routinely on the first day when pupils are absent without a notified reason. The school is part of the 'Hatfield Ahead Project' that is planning to improving attendance. Punctuality is satisfactory. A very high proportion of pupils arrive promptly each morning.

5. Pupils like their school. A Year 6 pupil says it is 'one of the nicest schools in Hertfordshire'. They are keen to learn in lessons and participate eagerly in the many clubs and activities. Pupils with special educational needs gain in confidence and self-esteem, especially in lessons when they benefit from the good support they receive. Pupils love the Tudor buildings and the trees and plants and flowers. There were intensely spiritual 'oohs' and 'aahs' when the headteacher brought in a twig with conkers to an infant assembly. Pupils wrote their own school song - 'Yellow is the colour, Howe Dell is the school'. They sing it with pride. Overall, behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. Pupils respond positively to the 'golden rules' and the rewards. Even the few pupils with behaviour difficulties are keen to learn. However, they are volatile. The school manages their behaviour well. When necessary, it applies sanctions; there were 8 exclusions last year.

6. There is a strong family feeling. Many older brothers and sisters, and indeed parents, were pupils at Howe Dell. The school develops good relationships, starting effectively in the Foundation Stage. Year 6 pupils value their chance to act as 'buddies' for newly arrived children. They represent their school responsibly, taking new visitors on guided tours. Pupils work very well together. About 10 per cent of pupils come from non-British heritages. The school achieves good racial harmony. However, it has comparatively few multicultural activities. The range of European activities is much wider. There are French, Maypole dancing, Tudor mask making, choir and sports clubs.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	141	8	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	3	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

Teaching was good in the lessons observed. An analysis of pupils' work from the last school year shows that teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching was consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Good teaching in Years 1, 2 and 6 help pupils to achieve well. Variations in some teachers' expectations, especially of more able pupils, do not ensure that they always make consistently good progress in their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good with good teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistant.
- Teachers know their pupils well and provide good support and encouragement to promote their learning, especially in Year 2 and the current Year 6.
- Teachers manage their classes well to promote an enthusiastic attitude to learning.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information consistently to ensure that more able pupils are always challenged enough to extend their learning.
- Some teachers do not guide individual pupils consistently to raise the standard of their work.

Commentary

7. Good and occasionally very good teaching in the lessons observed enabled pupils to achieve well. There were examples of good teaching in each year group. This reflects the positive views of most pupils and their parents. Parents in 94 per cent of the questionnaires valued the good quality teaching. Teaching has been maintained at the level reported at the last inspection. It has improved for the Foundation Stage. An analysis of pupils' work from the last school year showed that teachers' expectations were not always high enough. Consistently high quality work was evident from Years 2 and 5, but these high standards were not sustained in other years.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3 (8)	19 (50)	16 (42)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

8. Teachers have good control and class management skills and use them well to encourage pupils to sustain their interest and attention. Most ensure that they use good behaviour strategies effectively to minimise the occasional disruptive behaviour of a small number of boys. Teachers plan in detail, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to have clear learning objectives for their lessons. They share these objectives with pupils at the start of the lesson so that they know what they are trying to achieve. This gives a good, clear focus to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants plan thoughtfully for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are grouped carefully, according to their prior attainment in literacy and numeracy. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs in some classes, although this is not of a consistently high quality. Teachers use questions successfully to encourage pupils to participate in class discussions. Most teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide effective support to pupils with special educational needs in these discussions. However, opportunities were missed to include pupils with special educational needs and the very few pupils with English as an additional language in whole class activities. This did not enhance their learning, particularly the development of their English language skills. Some teachers use challenging follow-up questions to extend more able pupils. However, this was

not evident in many lessons. For example, too often teachers ask one mental mathematical question of the whole class and wait for an individual pupil to work out his or her answer. They do not ask another more challenging question of other, more able pupils to require them to sustain their attention and apply their knowledge. This results in a slow pace to the lesson and less work being achieved.

9. Teachers use resources effectively to gain pupils' interest and attention and encourage them to learn. For example, in a good Year 6 science lesson the teacher used a good range of resources and set a clear expectation of what was to be achieved in the lesson. This enabled pupils to complete an interesting investigation into dissolving solids. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in the procedures teachers use to assess pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. However, the leadership and management have not established a rigorous enough system to ensure that teachers use assessment information consistently to match the range of learning activities to pupils' needs. An analysis of pupils' work showed that all too often teachers used the same learning activity for all pupils. Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively to set activities that extend pupils' learning and set targets for improvement. Some teachers mark pupils' work in detail with good points for improvement. Inspectors found clear examples where the teacher had followed this up later with the pupil and this had improved the standard of work. However, other teachers do not mark constructively and do not let pupils know what they need to do to raise the standard of their work. They do not link their comments with reviewing how well pupils are progressing towards their improvement targets. This does not help pupils to gain a good understanding of the quality of their work and any weaknesses on which they need to focus.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. This includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, a good range of extra-curricular activities and good opportunities for pupils' personal, health and social education and citizenship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are good.
- The range of learning activities does not consistently challenge more able pupils.
- The school makes good use of external resources to enrich pupils' learning.
- The good opportunities for personal, health and social education and citizenship promote pupils' personal development well.
- The curriculum for teaching physical education does not include all the required aspects for junior pupils.

Commentary

10. The school provides a broad curriculum, including religious education and sex education, which meets most statutory requirements. It has recently improved the balance of time given to each subject and mostly uses national or Hertfordshire guidance to plan satisfactorily for the coverage of each subject area. Literacy and numeracy are developed well, with the help of consultants from the local education authority. In these subjects the school identified weaker areas of learning and have begun to put strategies in place to improve them. For instance, recent attention to reading has raised standards. The school includes all pupils soundly in the full range of learning activities. Pupils who have behavioural and learning difficulties have satisfactory support in class, often by teaching assistants. Some receive high quality support from teachers from other agencies. However, teachers do not always plan lessons to meet the needs of the range of ability in the class, especially those of more able pupils. This restricts their achievement. Although all subjects are taught, the school does not provide opportunities for gymnastics in the junior classes.
11. Since the last inspection the school has developed the Foundation Stage curriculum very well. It now gives a good emphasis to the recommended learning outcomes for young children and

takes account of each child's present stage of development. There are good opportunities for these children to find things out for themselves. This improvement has raised standards.

12. The school offers a good range of extra activities to bring class-work to life. Visits to places of interest enhance subjects such as history and geography. The school extends and motivates pupils' own ideas well with visitors such as artists, poets, authors and the school nurse. There are good opportunities for pupils to have musical experiences and individual tuition from visiting teachers. The school provides well for sporting activities and other clubs outside the school day. Personal, health and social and citizenship education has a pivotal role in the curriculum. It is part of all school policies. Through discussion and activity, pupils have good opportunities to develop confidence and responsibility, to understand how to develop a healthy and safer lifestyle and to prepare for active roles as citizens.
13. The school makes satisfactory use of its accommodation, for example, corridors and entrance halls are used soundly for library areas and for small group activities. The music room is used more often than at the last inspection for music and other lessons which need an open space. A spare classroom provides a useful space for art activities or for the headteacher to teach groups of pupils. The school has improved its ICT resources satisfactorily by creating a computer suite in an annexe to the school. The buildings are clean and attractive. The school has improved facilities for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage and resources for literacy, numeracy and music.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides good care for pupils, and gives them satisfactory guidance and support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for health and safety, child protection, first aid, pupils' welfare and security are good.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and build good relationships with them.
- There is strong encouragement of good work and good behaviour.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

14. The school has good and very thorough procedures for health and safety. The former Tudor rectory is beautiful, but the premises require special vigilance to keep pupils safe and secure. The school reviews procedures regularly. Recent improvements include traffic safety and new requirements for off-site trips. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection. She works closely with local agencies and makes sure that staff are aware of the requirements. Staff are trained in first aid and caring for pupils with medical needs.
15. Effective leadership has enabled the assessment system to improve recently and it is now satisfactory. The school uses an increasing range of tests and assessments to target improvement. For example, having identified a weakness in writing, it now carries out mid-year writing tests. Teachers use these improved procedures to know pupils' academic standards accurately. Each half term they identify where pupils need extra help, particularly in English and mathematics. Most pupils are more aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. The next step is to make sure that the improving use of pupil target setting works consistently in all the classes. Pupils with special educational needs get achievable targets in their individual education plans and they achieve them.
16. Personal monitoring and support are satisfactory. Pupils respond well to the wide range of rewards for good work and behaviour. For example, a pupil with behaviour problems is keen to win ticks in a 'credit card'. Teachers, classroom assistants and midday assistants all give the rewards. This significantly improves behaviour in the playground. Procedures against bullying are strong and the school successfully uses discussion to resolve difficult situations.

17. The headteacher, teachers and non-teaching staff know the pupils well because the school is small. They are aware of their personal needs, especially those with special educational needs. Pupils are very ready to raise a problem or concern with a member of staff when necessary. They discuss citizenship issues during the personal, social and health education lessons. Year 6 pupils are aware of their responsibilities as citizens of the school community. They welcome the chance to look after the young children joining the school. However, formal procedures for citizenship and expressing opinions are limited at present. The school plans to establish a school council later this year.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good links with parents and the community contribute positively to pupils' learning. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents give good support to their children's homework and home reading.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by the good variety of activities organised by the parents' and staff association.
- There are good links with the community, particularly in sport and the arts.
- Parents in about 20 per cent of questionnaires feel that the school does not take account of their concerns.
- A few parents do not give good support to their children's homework and home reading.

Commentary

18. Good links with parents add effectively to their children's learning. Four parents regularly hear the younger pupils read in class. Others help pupils choose books. Teachers set homework regularly and most parents support it well. The great majority of parents with children in the infant classes regularly hear them read at home. The parents' and staff association arranges seasonal activities. Pupils interviewed say that events such as harvest festivals are highlights in their year. The successful Christmas and summer fairs give pupils the chance to meet the wider community. These events raise substantial amounts of money which the school uses to provide extra facilities at school.
19. Information for parents is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Parents meet the class teacher in autumn and summer terms. However, there is no meeting in the spring term to update parents on their child's progress. Annual reports give most detail in English, mathematics and science and cover most other subjects well. Some teachers set specific targets, but in other classes the targets are general. The school welcomes parents' views and suggestions. It circulates its own questionnaire and the responses from most parents are favourable. However, parents in about 20 per cent of questionnaires do not recognise that the school takes account of their views. This does not match the positive opinions at the pre-inspection meeting.
20. Links with the community are strong. Pupils participate in many sporting activities. They swim at the local Swim Centre. Some Year 6 pupils play real tennis at Hatfield House. Visiting theatre groups and a pantomime by a local college extend their experience of drama. Pupils sing in a choir club provided by the county music service. There are satisfactory links with educational institutions at every age. A mothers' and toddlers' group prepares young children to settle into school. Parents appreciate the preschool visits offered by Foundation Stage teachers. Half-termly meetings of the Hatfield Consortium enable staff to share training and expertise with other primary schools. The school shared an artist and a writer in residence with another local school. Year 6 pupils have an induction day with local secondary schools in the summer term. The school is a partnership school with Hertfordshire University. Students come in to help with pupils' learning and others provide soccer coaching.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.

The headteacher and other key staff provide satisfactory leadership. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory overall, because a statutory requirement in physical education is not met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership in promoting the school's caring ethos. She manages the day-to-day organisation successfully, although her leadership is not rigorously focused on raising standards of attainment.
- The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work well with the headteacher and her staff to evaluate the quality of education provided by the school and to shape the direction of its work.
- Subject leadership in literacy and numeracy is good, supported strongly by advisory staff from the local education authority. The leadership and management in other subjects are not focused enough on raising standards of teaching and learning.
- Governors do not ensure that the school complies fully with the statutory curriculum requirements for junior pupils in physical education.
- The school has good financial procedures and uses its funds efficiently to target priorities for improvement.

Commentary

21. The headteacher has managed the school soundly during the recent uncertainty caused by the school's planned move to a new site and premises. She has maintained a strong team approach and staff have agreed a new mission statement to give a clear direction to their work. The headteacher works closely with her staff, particularly with her deputy headteacher, to continue to focus on good standards of behaviour and a supportive caring ethos, as reported in the last inspection. She knows and values each pupil well and encourages their participation in the range of school activities. This was recognised by the supportive views expressed to inspectors by many pupils and in that parents in 85 per cent of the questionnaires felt that the school was well led and managed. The school has benefited from good quality support and guidance from the local education authority. This is beginning to help subject co-ordinators to focus more on improving teaching and learning, particularly in literacy, numeracy and in the Foundation Stage. Leadership is good in these areas. This good practice is promoting improvement, for example, in reading and particularly in the quality of education provided for children in the Foundation Stage. Procedures for monitoring teaching and its impact on standards of attainment in other subjects are improving but are not being used to provide a consistently high quality of subject leadership. They are not established fully and subject co-ordinators do not apply them sufficiently rigorously to improve inconsistencies in teaching, for example teachers' expectations of more able pupils, and targeting improvement.
22. Governors are very supportive of the school. They work effectively together and with the staff and have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. They are increasingly involved in planning strategically for the school's move to new premises, although still maintain a good focus on checking the quality of the school's current educational provision. Governors are kept well informed about standards, for example, when discussing and agreeing the school's targets for national tests. The headteacher provides a good range of assessment information to show how standards vary from one year to the next and how to target weaknesses. This does not always provide enough detail to enable staff and governors to track the progress of different groups of pupils, for example more able pupils. Individual governors have responsibilities for specific subjects or aspects of the school's work. Many visit school to observe lessons and talk to co-ordinators, for example, on special educational needs. They share their information and this good sharing of responsibility enables governors to make valuable contributions to school improvement. Governors meet most of their statutory requirements, although the full range of required physical education activities for junior pupils is not established. This has not improved since

the last inspection. Governors know that the limited indoor accommodation restricts the opportunities for gymnastics, although the school has not tried other ways of using the space, for example, by more flexible grouping and teaching strategies.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	449,222	Balance from previous year	12,704
Total expenditure	447,944	Balance carried forward to the next	13,982
Expenditure per pupil	3,245		

23. The governors use their good financial procedures to ensure that they target funds on the key priorities in the school's detailed school improvement plan. This provides a good focus for the school's immediate priorities as well as a five-year strategic plan, linked to the transition to its new building. Financial planning is good. Governors make good use of additional funds provided by the local education authority, due to the delay and uncertainty created by the proposed move. They use the funds efficiently, with good use of best value principles, to maintain a satisfactory standard of the current educational provision as well as looking at preparations for implementing the more strategic aspects.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory.

Planning is linked very well to the six areas of learning and there are stimulating and exciting opportunities for children. Most children enter reception with attainment typical of children of this age, although some children have language and communication skills that are slightly below those expected. Staff concentrate on the development of language and as a result children make good progress and gain in confidence. Teaching in all six areas is good and the teaching assistant works very well with the teacher. Children with special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive. Children take home diaries so that parents are well informed about what their children are to learn and have learnt at school.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing confidence and improving levels of concentration.
- They are learning the expectations of the adults around them.
- There are many opportunities for children to learn to share and take turns.

Commentary

24. Most children enter reception with personal and social skills that are typical of those found nationally. Children make good progress and achieve the expected levels by the time they are five. Much emphasis is placed on the development of independence, working together and a feeling of achievement. Routines are quickly established. They know there are rules to follow and there are clear expectations of behaviour. On occasions, adults' skilled interventions help them to understand the social rules of taking turns, sharing and listening to others when sitting in a circle. Children move independently around the classroom areas and select materials for their modelling or painting without adult support. Children work well in small groups because there are adults who give them support and guidance.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills, particularly through skilful questioning.
- Writing for a purpose is included in many imaginative play situations, such as the supermarket.
- Children have the opportunity to reinforce learning or move on to the next stage towards reading, according to their abilities.

Commentary

25. Children are on course to attain the early learning goals at the end of the reception year. More-able children are likely to be working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum because of what they have already achieved. Children achieve well because of the strong emphasis on language throughout the day. They are expected to answer questions and predict what will happen in experiments or to read back the shopping lists they make for the supermarket. Adults make careful observations of all activities. This information is transferred to the teacher's planning to ensure that the child will either repeat an activity or progress to

something new in the next lesson. There are many opportunities for children to write and exercise their fingers in singing rhymes, painting and practising letters in the sand. Children enjoy thinking of items that begin with the same sound and are developing a good understanding of the letters and sound that go together to build up words. All children are pleased to have opportunities to share books with adults or each other.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults question children well and use a good variety of activities to support learning.
- Numeracy is used very well across the areas of learning,

Commentary

26. There is a consistent emphasis on the development of children's mathematical skills and language. Adults question children whilst they are engaged in shopping, gardening or looking at shapes. They note the confusion between curved and straight to deal with this in the next lesson. Children sing number rhymes with enthusiasm, count lines of cubes they have placed on the floor and compare one item with another for height or length. Children achieve well because all aspects of numeracy are included in different activities throughout the day. They acquire a good understanding of mathematical language.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good development of specific technical language by adults.
- Teachers plan exciting experiments to develop curiosity and stimulate learning.
- There are good opportunities to explore materials and ask questions.

Commentary

27. Children achieve well and are likely to achieve at least the expected levels by the time they are five. This prepares them well for science in Year 1. There are many daily opportunities for children to develop thinking skills through structured play and exploration. Staff attract children's curiosity and stimulate interest through exciting activities and discussions. There is an air of mystery about the classroom as the teacher gives children an opportunity to explore objects and materials with their senses. They observe changes in materials and gasped when they saw a frozen hand emerge from a rubber glove because they knew water was in it previously. Children learn to make choices and experiment with construction materials. They use the computer confidently, aware that they are controlling what happens on the screen as they click the mouse and drag shapes from one picture to another.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is good because the teacher makes good use of the hall, the playground and the outside area for a range of planned activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children show good control when using their bodies in dance.
- Valuable observations of each child by one of the adults in the lesson are used to help in future planning.
- Limited space for physical activities inside and outside of school restricts some activities.

Commentary

28. Children achieve well and are likely to attain the levels expected for their age by the time they are five. Some children will exceed these levels. Adults work well together to involve all children in dance sessions and question them thoughtfully so that they think about what they do. When they visit the nursery to meet new children they show agility on the climbing frames. On the grassy area outside, they balance well on the apparatus set out for them and indulge in games with each other using the prams and bicycles. Children have a wide range of experiences to help them develop their manipulative skills. They handle dough, scissors, brushes and glue spreaders with care.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good support from adults stimulates imaginative play by children.
- A very wide range of opportunities is provided for painting, printing, modelling and designing.

Commentary

29. Children achieve well and are likely to attain the expected levels by the time they move to Year 1 because there are very good imaginative activities in the classrooms. These encourage language development, social play and other skills. Children enjoy finger painting, drawing portraits and making good observational drawings of a flat iron. They paint with deliberation and care. Children learn new songs enthusiastically and find great satisfaction in exploring the ways in which instruments are played.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading.
- The English co-ordinator has led the subject well.
- Teachers do not always challenge the most able pupils sufficiently.
- Marking varies in quality between classes.
- The school has a good range of reading resources.
- Targets for end-of-year tests in Year 6 are too low.

Commentary

30. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Although pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening and writing, standards in reading are improving and are above average. Because of variations in pupils' ability, the 2003 tests for seven-year-olds show lower standards overall. Nevertheless, a good proportion of these pupils attained higher levels in reading and writing. The high proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained above average levels in the 2002 tests was not maintained in 2003. An analysis of pupils' work from the last school year shows that the school's targets for pupils in the current Year 6 are likely to achieve the targets set for them at the beginning of Year 5 for both reading and writing, particularly for above average levels.
31. Pupils achieve well in infant classes and satisfactorily in the junior phase. This includes those with special educational needs, who have sound support from teaching assistants in lessons. The school identified that in some year groups boys do not achieve as well as they should. It has purchased a large variety of books to suit boys' as well as girls' interest. This has created enthusiasm in lessons. During the inspection period, boys took an active part in lessons and worked at a similar level to girls in the ability groups. The school provides an effective support

programme for some pupils in Years 1 and 2. This helps these pupils to mostly attain similar standards to their peers.

32. The literacy co-ordinator has been supported well by the literacy consultant and adviser from the local education authority. She has evaluated pupils' attainment comprehensively and identified relevant areas for future development. Under her guidance, from this term, the school provides separate well-planned reading sessions so that more time for the development of writing skills is available in the main literacy lesson. Until this term, there has been inconsistency in the quality and usefulness of pupils' individual targets for improvement. The co-ordinator has introduced a structured system that directly links to pupils' prior attainment for reading and writing. There has been insufficient time for this to have an impact on pupils' attainment.
33. The subject co-ordinator has had little time to monitor classroom practice over the last year, but the literacy consultant has modelled lessons for most teachers. Improvements have been made to lessons, which have a good sense of purpose and explicit learning intentions. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in infant classes and some other lessons seen. Teachers make satisfactory assessments of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding but do not always use this information well to plan activities to extend the most able. Good examples of teachers' marking were seen from Years 1 and 6. However, the marking of pupils' work varies in quality and does not always help them to improve their work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

34. The school identified a need for pupils to practise their writing skills within other subjects. Good examples were seen in religious education, history, design and technology and science. Reading for information is used well in history and geography lessons. The school gives pupils good opportunities to speak and listen to each other, especially in their personal, health, social and citizenship education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching, especially in Years 2 and 6, is raising standards.
- The leadership of the subject is good and is supported well by local education authority's advisers.
- Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good.
- Some teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of more able pupils.
- Teachers do not use pupils' ICT skills enough to support their work in mathematics.

Commentary

35. Pupils attain average standards overall. This is similar to the last inspection. The proportion of pupils attaining standards that are above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 meets the national average. This has improved since the last inspection. An analysis of pupils' work from the last school year shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving well and a higher proportion are attaining above nationally expected standards than in previous years. Pupils achieve well, especially in Years 1, 2 and 6. Good teaching, supported by teachers' high expectations of pupils' attitudes and work, promotes learning effectively in these year groups. Teachers challenge pupils effectively to develop their mathematical skills, especially in number work. They require pupils to apply their skills to solve difficult problems or carry out interesting investigations. These encourage pupils to develop a positive and enthusiastic approach to many aspects of their mathematical work.
36. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough in each class, especially for more able pupils. Some teachers do not use questions successfully or provide different activities that require more able pupils to extend their skills, knowledge

and understanding. This limits the standards attained in some lessons. Teaching and support staff work together well in group activities to provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, the small number for whom English is an additional language and less able pupils. This enables them to achieve soundly and improve their skills and knowledge. However, the support is not so consistently effective in whole-class introductory or end-of-lesson feedback activities. In some lessons observed, for example in Year 1, good communication between the class teacher and support staff enabled pupils with special educational needs to explain the strategies they would use to solve a particular number problem. In other lessons, they were not supported so well and did not participate enough in the class discussion. This limited the development of their mathematical and English language skills.

37. Teachers use good assessment procedures to check on pupils' progress through, for example, regular tests and assessing progress towards learning objectives. Each class teacher uses assessment information soundly to set class improvement targets for the next school year. Teachers are beginning to use pupil targets to improve standards in numeracy, although these are not based on a detailed assessment of individual pupils' weaknesses. This does not help pupils to focus consistently on how to raise the standard of their work. There was evidence from the sample of pupils' work that some teachers mark pupils' work in detail and follow-up weaknesses in their subsequent marking to check if pupils have made progress. This resulted in clear improvement in pupils' work. However, this was not consistently evident and the lack of constructive marking by some teachers does not give pupils specific points for improvement. They do not link marking and on-going assessment to inform pupils' numeracy targets and review their progress towards them. Pupils occasionally use their ICT skills, for example, to produce graphs when handling data. They have too few opportunities to use these skills to extend their number knowledge and understanding.
38. The leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator, supported effectively by advisory staff from the local education authority, provides good advice on teaching and learning, for example in promoting pupils' number investigations skills. Procedures to monitor teaching and learning are improving, although they are not always focused rigorously on raising attainment.

Mathematics across the curriculum

39. There was some evidence of pupils applying their mathematical skills to record and check their results in science, in design and technology and in geography. Teachers do not plan and use opportunities to help pupils to apply and extend their skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving.
- The range of experimental and investigative work is good.
- Teaching is good and has a clear learning focus.
- The co-ordinator, supported by the advisor, has used assessment information well to define areas for improvement.
- More pupils should achieve at a higher level in statutory assessments.

Commentary

40. Standards vary from year to year because there are more pupils with special educational needs in some Year 6 groups and pupils have not been building consistently on previous learning. In 2003, results suggest that at the end of Year 2 pupils achieved standards that were below the national average, but inspection evidence shows that the current group is likely to achieve standards much closer to the national average in 2004. More pupils should attain at the higher level. The results in 2003 for the end of Year 6 were below the national average, with few pupils attaining at the higher level. However, there has been a whole school

review of the teaching of science and inspection information suggests that the current group of pupils in Year 6 is likely to achieve close to the national average, with several pupils attaining at the higher level. No significant differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well because of the support given in lessons.

41. Years 1 and 2 pupils acquire a wide range of words that are used specifically in science and improve their knowledge and understanding of topics because of the good teaching. Sympathetic presentations, good visual aids and consistently good questioning enable pupils to share their knowledge and learn from each other. They reinforce their understanding of the use of a tally chart to collect information that can be used to give a visual presentation of their findings in a colourful graph.
42. Junior pupils benefit from the good range of active investigations planned to give them greater understanding, for example, of how the heart works or how to create a fair test. They use prepared charts successfully to help them organise their writing and extend their understanding of what they are learning by answering teachers' questions sensibly and logically. They complete grids and charts in their books accurately and make good use of bullet points to present information more clearly. Pupils use the library and computers soundly to search for further information to find out more about their topics.
43. Teaching and learning are predominantly good. Teachers use a wide range of interesting resources and ensure that pupils are purposefully involved in a range of practical activities. They give clear explanations and instructions and organise pupils into groups so that they may help each other. Good use is made of opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with a partner. Teachers plan well and encourage pupils to work out possibilities for themselves. In most lessons, teachers use a sound range of worksheets that ensure that pupils have tasks that match their abilities. There are some good examples of marking pupils' work to help pupils improve, although this is not consistent.
44. The adviser has supported the co-ordinator in the analysis of assessments. This has helped the school to identify areas for improvement. The school has acted upon the available information and the impact on teaching and learning is clear.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in resources and teachers' confidence and subject knowledge are promoting pupils' skills soundly.
- Pupils' basic ICT skills are taught effectively but teachers do not ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to apply and extend these skills.
- Teachers' use of some new resources, for example in control and monitoring, has not promoted high enough standards in this aspect by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

45. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that meet nationally expected levels. They are similar to those in the last inspection. Resources have improved and increased staff training has improved their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching basic ICT skills. All classes have one timetabled lesson in the computer suite. Teachers use a well-structured curriculum programme to ensure that they teach basic skills soundly in all required ICT aspects. The knowledge and skills of the older junior pupils in control and monitoring are below nationally expected levels, although they have yet to benefit fully from the recently purchased resources in this aspect. However, pupils in some classes do not have enough opportunities, either in the computer suite or on computers in or near their classrooms, to apply and extend their skills. Having learnt a new skill, for example when Year 1 learnt how to

use a specific graphics icon, they do not have opportunities to use this skill before their next basic skills session. This restricts the pace at which they improve their knowledge and understanding. There was evidence of pupils achieving satisfactorily in most years. Pupils develop their word-processing skills soundly throughout the school when, for example, Year 3 pupils type a poem and combine it well with graphics. Many use their research skills soundly to gather information from the Internet when, for example, Year 6 find out about the history of Barton Broads.

46. Teaching is similar to that reported previously. The teaching of basic ICT skills has improved. Most teachers are confident in the way they use specific programs and subject guidance successfully to develop pupils' skills. They use good teacher demonstrations, for example when changing the size and style of text, to extend pupils' skills and knowledge. Teachers plan well to build on prior learning, although some do not always plan activities that extend the skills of those pupils who benefit from regular use of a computer at home. This restricts their achievements in some lessons. Teaching and support staff work well together in lessons to provide good individual support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs. This encourages them to sustain their interest and concentration and develop their skills soundly. Most teachers maintain a good pace to lessons, although significant time is wasted in organising pupils, especially younger ones, to get to the computer suite, settle and start work. The current teaching time allocated to using these resources is not enough for some infant pupils to enable them to achieve as much as they should in the lesson.
47. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is beginning to promote a wider use of ICT and to develop procedures for assessing pupils' learning, for example, through collecting samples of work from each class. She uses her good subject knowledge to support colleagues and extend pupils' skills, for example to help Year 6 pupils use a voice input when making a multi-media presentation on their 'Joke Page'. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching plans but does not monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. She is starting to use pupils' work folders to evaluate standards of attainment. These are at the early stages of development and are not contributing significantly to raising standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

48. Some teachers use pupils' ICT skills to support work in some other subjects. For example, work processing skills are used effectively in English to promote pupils' understanding of poetry and their use of descriptive phrases in their extended writing. Pupils use the Internet to locate informative web-sites for their work in history, geography, science and religious education. However, teachers do not consistently use pupils' ICT skills in other subjects, for example mathematics. This is not promoted effectively throughout the school. Teachers do not identify opportunities in their lesson plans to help them broaden the range of learning activities, although they are restricted by the limited resources in classrooms.

HUMANITIES

Two lessons were seen in history and two in religious education. No geography lessons were seen but inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work from the last school year and the current term and spoke to a group of Year 6 pupils.

Provision is satisfactory in history, geography and religious education.

Provision and standards have been maintained at the levels reported in the last inspection.

History

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of visits to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- There are improving links with literacy.
- There is little monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice.
- Assessment procedures are not fully in place.

Commentary

49. Pupils attain average standards and achieve satisfactorily. In discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils, the most explicit recall of historical study is linked to the well-planned visits. For example, the visit to Knebworth House helped them to think about life in Tudor times, 'better than any of the other things we did'. They recalled their visit to the Celtic Harmony Camp in Year 4 in detail and totally enjoyed the reconstruction of life in those times. Good planning fits other visits and walks around the local area into the scheme of work and brings the subject to life.
50. The subject has good links with literacy. In the infant lesson seen, pupils read well from a big book about going to the seaside in the past. This created many questions and much discussion and obviously generated high levels of interest. Using good writing frames suited to their ability and some vocabulary support for lower attaining pupils, pupils produced interesting comparisons between seaside holidays 'then and now'. Older pupils in Years 4 and 5 used the Internet, books and a computer program to research satisfactorily. The subject is soundly linked to other subject areas, such as art, science, geography and design and technology. For instance, pupils constructed Tudor houses for design and technology.
51. Teaching is satisfactory in infant and junior classes, although some teachers do not extend more able pupils sufficiently in their research skills. Some teachers use a good range of resources such as videos, artefacts, maps and photographs to stimulate pupils' learning, whereas others use a more limited range. The headteacher is the co-ordinator of this subject and has a considerable number of responsibilities within the school. Therefore, classroom practice has not been recently monitored for history. The school has a framework for the assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, but this has not been adopted uniformly by all teachers.

Geography

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Fieldwork enhances knowledge and understanding.
- The subject leader's role is not fully developed.
- Assessment procedures are not fully in place.

Commentary

52. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they display average standards of attainment and in the sample of work they achieve satisfactorily. The subject co-ordinator monitored samples of pupils' work satisfactorily and noted particular weaknesses, which have begun to be addressed. For example, teachers used worksheets too often, which limited pupils' application of literacy skills. From this academic year, pupils record work soundly in workbooks. However, the co-ordinator has not had opportunities for monitoring or improving classroom practice or assessment procedures.
53. Teachers plan the subject soundly using national subject guidance, although teachers do not always plan extension activities to challenge more able pupils. However, teachers are increasingly taking pupils' ability into account for recording methods. The locality is used effectively to promote pupils' mapping skills and to compare Hatfield with other parts of Britain and places in the world. The Year 6 residential visit to Barton Broad sailing centre enhances the comparison between the rural and town environments. Pupils display a sound

understanding of atlases and maps but have no experience of using aerial photographs. Teachers plan sound links with mathematics, ICT, history, religious education and design and technology. For example, simple block graphs, directions and co-ordinates are developed satisfactorily in Year 2. Teachers make good links within topics to a sustainable environment.

Religious education

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is sensitive coverage of other religions.
- There is a good quality of discussion in Year 6.
- Pupils produce an increasing amount of written work for each unit covered.

Commentary

54. Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 matches the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, enhanced by national guidance. Pupils throughout the school gain a secure understanding and knowledge of several world religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Teachers help pupils feel and experience the importance of understanding different ways of life and the need to respect other's symbols and beliefs. They learn the importance of symbols, such as special foods and candles, and the stories linked with celebrations, such as Diwali and Easter. Pupils in Year 6 discuss aspects of suffering in a mature and sensitive manner because the teacher encourages them 'to think like a Buddhist.' These discussions make a good contribution to promoting pupils' personal development, particularly their understanding of different cultural practices and beliefs. Achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.
55. Religious education is linked well to personal and social education, and to assemblies, and this enriches pupils' understanding. They are helped to apply what they learn to their own lives and write their own views and feelings about what has been discussed in lessons in increasing detail. Pupils celebrate a range of religious festivals throughout the year, including a carol service in the church at Christmas.
56. The subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She checks teachers' planning and pupils' writing and ensures that suitable resources are available for each topic.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is satisfactory

57. Only one lesson was observed in art and design but an analysis of pupils' work and discussions enabled a secure evaluation of the quality of the overall provision. Pupils' sketchbooks are used regularly for pupils to practise skills that are developed from Year 1 to Year 6. Pupils use a wide range of media, including pastels and watercolours, and study the work of several artists. The school has had artists in residence who have improved pupils' skills. There are good links with history to apply and extend pupils' skills.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is organised well so that pupils have experience of food technology and the design and planning elements of the curriculum.
- Finished work is of a high quality.

Commentary

58. Attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because they are building on their knowledge and understanding of the design process. They are taught skills and techniques systematically to use a wide variety of materials and tools correctly and safely. Good attention is made in developing the process of evaluating items made and how they could be improved. They learn the skills of bread making and enjoy comparing the actual taste of biscuits with their expectations before eating them.
59. Pupils work well together and enjoy discussions about their tasks. They present their work neatly and categorise items sensibly. Pupils with special educational needs receive support from adults so that they can explain their conclusions and give their opinions verbally.
60. The subject is co-ordinated effectively and resources are appropriate for the tasks completed by each group during the year.

Music

Provision is satisfactory. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of is made of a music specialist to model lessons.
- The enthusiasm of pupils for learning the subject.
- There are good opportunities for individual tuition.
- The co-ordinator has not monitored music lessons.

Commentary

61. The co-ordinator has worked soundly with a music specialist from the local education authority to identify areas for improvement in the subject. The school has adopted national subject guidance and supplemented this satisfactorily with a published scheme and good resources so that the subject is taught more effectively. By team teaching in lessons led by a very good and enthusiastic music specialist each autumn term for the past two years, teachers' confidence and expertise have been raised. The time allocation for the subject has also been increased to allow for better development of pupils' skills. The co-ordinator has other challenging areas for development in the school and so has not monitored and evaluated teaching and learning.
62. Pupils' attainment is broadly average, although there is some good individual attainment promoted in instrumental lessons for piano, violin, cello, flute and clarinet. The school extends pupils' musical experiences well with visiting music teachers, for instance Year 4 had a music workshop and upper juniors took part in a choir. In class lessons and assemblies, pupils sing and perform confidently, gustily and on the whole tunefully.
63. Teaching is satisfactory in class lessons, although it is very good in lessons led by a music specialist. In class lessons and assemblies, teachers plan good contributions to pupils' cultural development. For instance, in assemblies, pupils listen to a sound range of music and practised enthusiastically a harvest song in a samba rhythm. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of Apartheid and how lyrics can have social and cultural meaning as they sang, 'Children of Africa' and a rap version of 'Missing You'. Teachers plan a good progression of skills in infant classes, moving from 'body' percussion to musical instruments, both tuned and un-tuned. Teachers have sound expectation of pupils' attainment, but do not always give them enough opportunity to refine and improve skills.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is unsatisfactory overall. It is good in swimming but poor in gymnastics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards in swimming that are above expected levels by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have positive, enthusiastic attitudes to physical education.
- Pupils' skills are extended effectively by sporting competitions and extra-curricular activities.
- The school does not include gymnastics in the range of activities for junior pupils.

Commentary

64. During the inspection, the focus was on pupils' skills in swimming and in games. Standards in swimming have been maintained at the high level reported in the last inspection. Almost all pupils swim with increasing confidence and improving technique. Pupils' games skills have improved and now meet expected levels. The school makes good use of students from the nearby university to improve pupils' games skills, for example, in soccer. Year 6 pupils are provided with opportunities to improve their skills through clubs organised by the local consortium of schools, for example in lacrosse, and through sporting competitions in soccer, netball and athletics. They also benefit from a week's residential trip to the local education authority's sailing centre. These activities contribute well to pupils' personal development and to their enjoyment of school. This was reflected clearly in their positive views during discussions with pupils. However, the school does not provide satisfactorily for pupils, especially in the junior phase, to develop their skills in gymnastics and dance. This has not improved since the last inspection. The school's range of activities is restricted by the lack of a large indoor space and suitable apparatus. Teachers have not evaluated different ways in which they can make more effective use of their accommodation, especially for creative aspects of dance and gymnastic floor-work activities. This significantly limits the standards attained by pupils. It also restricts teachers' skills and confidence in teaching these aspects of the subject. This will require urgent action before the school moves to its new accommodation.
65. Teaching has been maintained at the satisfactory level reported previously, although the school now makes good use of the specialist games skills and knowledge of university students to enhance its teaching provision. Teaching is good in swimming where the school makes very good use of the expertise of the swimming instructors from the local education authority. Teachers make good use of the school's outdoor facilities to try to ensure that pupils have regular physical activity, although this is limited by bad weather. Teaching for infant pupils is limited by the time needed for pupils to get changed and to walk to the playground. In a Year 1 lesson observed, the teacher had less than 15 minutes to complete the activity part of the lesson. This restricted the development of pupils' throwing and catching skills. An analysis of teaching and curriculum plans shows that teachers provide sound opportunities for creative dance work with infants and traditional, country dancing with juniors, but the range of activities is limited. Teachers use the log-trail to provide some opportunities for pupils to improve their physical skills in control and balance. However, gymnastics is not included for junior pupils. This does not meet national requirements. The subject has not been a high priority for school improvement and the subject co-ordinator does not provide a clear lead, focused strongly on improving standards of attainment. She has not monitored and evaluated teaching and learning, and procedures to assess and track pupils' skills and knowledge are not established.

Personal, social and health education and Citizenship

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are regular opportunities for pupils to speak to the class and listen to each other's opinions.
- The school uses the Hertfordshire local education authority guidance well.

Commentary

66. The school promotes an effective whole-school approach to aspects of citizenship in assemblies, through personal, social and health education lessons and through most other subjects to help pupils to understand that they are members of the school community. For instance, pupils have good opportunities to discuss and develop class rules, understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour and discuss their rights and responsibilities. The school promotes good personal, social and health education and encourages pupils to express themselves clearly on issues that affect them and to set themselves personal goals. There are clear links with other subjects. For example, aspects of drug, sex and health education are taught in science lessons and pupils study a range of religions in religious education. Year 6 pupils are given relevant responsibilities, such as helping younger pupils at the lunch table. In discussion they expressed a desire to have a greater voice in whole-school decision making. In lessons, teaching is satisfactory and pupils achieve soundly. They attain standards in line with their age.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).