

INSPECTION REPORT

ICKLEFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hitchin

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117401

Headteacher: Mrs P Salmon

Lead inspector: Mr N Hardy

Dates of inspection: 18-21 October 2004

Inspection number: 267093

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 206

School address: The Green
Ickleford
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
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Telephone number: 01462 459150
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Rev M Holford

Date of previous inspection: April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ickleford Primary School serves the village of Ickleford and the surrounding area. The school has Church of England voluntary controlled status. The school is of similar size to many other primary schools and has 206 pupils. More girls attend the school than boys. Most pupils are from a white British heritage and there is a small number of children from Asian and mixed race cultures. A small number of these pupils speak English as an additional language. There are no Traveller or refugee pupils at the school. The school received an Achievement award in 2002 and an Artsmark gold award for excellence in the promotion of the arts in 2003. A below average number of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. An average number of pupils are on the schools special educational needs list. Several of these pupils have specific learning difficulties whilst others have speech and language, behavioural or physical difficulties. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is below that in many other schools. The percentage of pupils who change schools at times other than normal transfer is below average. The attainment of children on entry to the school is very wide but is judged to be average overall.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
29262	Mr N Hardy	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and Design Design and technology Physical education Music
9505	Mr D Haynes	Lay inspector	
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Special educational needs
1963	Ms S Raychadhuri	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Religious education Geography

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school that provides very good value for money. The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science with pupils achieving very well when compared with their attainment on entry. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are consistently good. The leadership provided by the headteacher, key staff and governors is very good, providing a clear direction for the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- by Year 6 the standards achieved are well above average in English, mathematics and science;
- standards in music and art and design are well above expected levels;
- pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are identified as having particular gifts and talents achieve very well;
- the leadership of the school provided by the headteacher, key staff and governors is very good;
- the quality of support provided by the special needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants is very good;
- pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good;
- teaching and learning are good across the school;
- the systems to assess the pupils' progress and achievement are rigorous;
- opportunities to extend their learning through clubs and activities are very good;
- the provision of resources to facilitate outdoor spontaneous play for Reception age pupils is unsatisfactory;
- links with parents and the community are very good;
- the quality of marking is not always consistent and does not provide pupils with sufficient information about how to improve their work.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	A	A	A*
Mathematics	A	C	A*	A*
Science	A	C	A*	A*

*Key: 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.*

Please note that A* indicates performance within the top five percent of result in the country.

Pupils achieve very well. From average levels of attainment on entry to the school, by Year 6 pupils achieve results that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The most recent results from 2004 show that in English, a well above average number of pupils achieved the more difficult Level 5. A very high percentage of pupils achieved this level in both mathematics and science. These results compare very

favourably with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well, making progress similar to that shown by their peers. In the 2004 national tests in Year 2, attainment in reading was average; it was above average in writing and was well above average in mathematics. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards attained by children in the Reception year are currently at typical levels for their age. Standards are well above average in music and art and design. They are above average in information and communication technology and religious education; no clear judgement could be made in other subjects. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Attitudes and behaviour are good overall and are very good in the infants. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good with eight out of every ten lessons good or better whilst many were very good. Much of this very good teaching was in music and art and design as well as English, mathematics and science and this enables the pupils to achieve well above average standards in all these subjects. The teachers plan their lessons very well so that almost all pupils are interested, motivated and receive a very good level of challenge in lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistants, together with the teachers, provide a very good programme of support for pupils of differing abilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Considerable efforts are made to ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to achieve their best. Assessment procedures are used well to track the pupils' progress. The broad and balanced curriculum provides well for the pupils' learning. Very good provision of additional activities in sport, music and academic subjects enhances the pupils' social and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governors is very good and provides a very clear direction for the school. All involved have high aspirations for the pupils and this has a direct impact on the high standards pupils achieve and in the mature way they conduct themselves. There is a very clear focus on high achievement which is underpinned by effective planning and use of resources. The headteacher, staff and governors work very well as a team and this is ensuring that high standards are maintained and that areas for improvement are identified and addressed. The governors are very supportive of the school and possess a very good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. The management of the school is good and enables the school to operate effectively. All the relevant statutory requirements including those on inclusion and equality are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. The returns made in the parents questionnaire and at the parents meeting illustrate their view that teaching is good, that behaviour is good and that the leadership of the school is very good. Parents also appreciate the very good quality of the information they receive about the progress their children are making through pupils reports and meetings with teachers. Pupils enjoy attending the school because as one pupil put it

they felt "safe and secure". Bullying, they say, is not an issue. Most of them enjoy their lessons, know they are expected to work hard and have to behave.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to improve the provision for the Reception age children to facilitate outdoor spontaneous play;
- to improve the quality of marking across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects.

Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well by Year 6. The standards being attained by pupils in Year 6 are well above the average in English, mathematics and science and pupils are achieving very well in these subjects. Standards in art and design and in music are also well above expected levels. Levels of attainment in information and communication technology, history, geography and religious education are above average. There was insufficient opportunity to make judgements on standards and the quality of teaching in physical education and design and technology. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 in 2004 were above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. They were at average levels in reading.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the national tests taken in 2004 Year 6 pupils achieved results that were well above average in English and were within the top five percent in the country in mathematics and science. A high percentage of pupils achieved the more difficult Level 5 in each of the subjects.
- Pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve very well.
- Standards are above average in writing; mathematics, and in art and design and music in the infants.

Commentary

1. Results achieved by pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science improved sharply in 2004 when compared with those achieved in 2003 and are much more in line with the school's previous results. Standards fell in 2003 largely because of the higher than average number of pupils in the cohort who were identified as requiring additional educational support together with several pupils new to the school who arrived either in Year 5 or Year 6. In 2004, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieved the expected Level 4 in both English and science and almost all did so in mathematics. A very high proportion of pupils attained the above average Level 5 in all three subjects with the number reaching this level in mathematics and science being amongst the top five percent in the country. This resulted in very good value added scores when these results are compared with the results achieved by these same pupils when in Year 2. During the inspection there were no significant differences between the performance of either boys or girls.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.8 (28.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	30.6 (26.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	31.9 (29.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. When these results are compared with those from other similar schools based on the number of pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals, results are very high and within the top five percent in the country in all three subjects. Of particular note are the achievements of those pupils identified as having special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Because their specific needs are identified at an early stage and very good help and support quickly provided most of these pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils who are identified as being particularly gifted and talented are provided with suitably challenging work that fully meets their needs. These pupils achieve very well and reach their full potential.
3. Results in 2004 achieved by pupils in Year 2 show that standards in reading fell from those attained in 2003 and are at average national levels overall. Standards attained by boys were below national average levels in reading. However, results in writing and in mathematics rose and are now above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The number of pupils attaining the more difficult Level 3 was above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Over the last five years the results achieved by the school have improved at similar rates to those Year 2 pupils in other schools.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.1 (17.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.7 (15.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.8 (16.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. When children first enter the Reception class their levels of attainment are very wide but are broadly average for their age. Current standards are average with regard to all the required areas of learning although some children exceed this. Children at this stage achieve well because teaching is good and they receive good levels of challenge and support to extend their thinking and learning. The provision for their personal development is good and enables them to settle quickly into the routines of the school. Interesting tasks motivate most children to learn and helps them to achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance levels are well above the national average. Punctuality is also very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall but are very good in the infants. Provision for pupils' personal development is good and that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are interested in their lessons and are eager to learn and join in with the wide range of sporting, musical and academic activities organised during lunchtimes and after school.
- A lack of bullying and harassment ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and secure.
- Most pupils are confident and have very good levels of self-esteem.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall.

Commentary

5. Most pupils show a keen interest in their lessons and other activities offered by the school are very well attended, for example, almost seventy pupils receive additional music tuition. Pupils in the infants have very good attitudes and behave very well. In the juniors, while attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority remain good, a small number of pupils find it difficult to focus on what they are to learn and sometimes provide challenging behaviour. Almost all pupils are eager to take part in discussions in lessons and offer mature and sensible contributions. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and based on mutual respect. Most pupils are confident and have very good levels of self-esteem, which are promoted very well by the teachers who value contributions to lessons. No incidents of harassment or bullying were observed during the inspection and pupils report that these very rarely occur. Appropriate systems are in place to record any incidents and prompt action taken to address these.

6. Pupils spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good overall. Their spiritual development is good and there are examples in history and religious education of pupils developing a good understanding of, for example, children in Victorian times and the hardships they had to endure. Pupils empathised well with these children. Moral, social and aspects of pupils' cultural development are very good. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate care and consideration for each other and for adults. The school has established a buddy system in which older pupils look after the younger ones, and especially on wet days, give their time to read to younger ones and play games with them. Social opportunities through the very good range of activities available in the school help to raise pupils' interest in healthy sporting competition and the idea of giving to others through the activities of the choir and orchestra. The musical and artistic aspects of pupils' cultural development are very good with pupils achieving very good standards in both areas. Pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is good and results from good quality teaching and pupils' mature attitudes. There have been no exclusions in the current year and none during the previous school year.

7. Attendance and punctuality are very good and parents are playing a full part in ensuring that this remains the case. Attendance has been consistently above the national average since the previous inspection. However, the system in place to contact parents on day one following any unexplained absence is not consistently applied.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of teaching is good and the pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that enables them to make good progress and to achieve very well overall. A very good range of additional activities in sport, music and academic subjects helps pupils to develop their

personal skills very well. There is a very good ethos within the school which is based on hard work, a desire to learn, and caring for others.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and results in the pupils learning effectively. Assessment is good overall and has some very good features although there are also areas in need of improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance and ensure that they work hard.
- Teachers' lesson planning is very clear and detailed.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking does not always make clear to pupils how they could improve their work.

Commentary

8. Parents are happy with the quality of teaching. The inspection team agrees. Over three quarters of the teaching was good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching.
9. Teaching across the school is good with many strong features. Teachers have implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies with confidence. In English and mathematics, under the strong leadership of the co-ordinators, the strategies are well embedded and as a result, the teaching and learning in these subjects are good. In mathematics and science, the teaching ensures that pupils learn through investigation. In addition, teachers plan a good range of work in which literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are used in other subjects and which make the tasks more interesting, relevant and challenging to the pupils.
10. Most lessons motivate and interest pupils. Teachers plan lessons carefully, including precisely what skills are to be taught. Learning objectives are shared so that the pupils are aware of what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. A great deal of learning is packed into most lessons. Expectations are often high and tasks are suitably matched to the varying needs of the pupils in the class. Teaching was particularly effective in Years 1 and 6 where teachers consistently maintained very high expectations of the pupils' performance and set high standards.
11. Teaching assistants have been well trained to support pupils who have a special educational need and those who require additional support in learning English. This is paying off very well and results in these pupils concentrating fully on their work and contributing positively to discussions. Teaching assistants are well informed about the needs of individual pupils and the role the teacher expects them to play in particular lessons or in withdrawal groups. Pupils with special educational needs are provided

with very effective support from class teachers and teaching assistants. Their individual education programmes are used very effectively to guide their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	9 (25%)	20 (55%)	7 (20%)	0(0%)	0(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.

12. Assessment systems and procedures are used well in the school overall and there are some areas of particular strength but some where improvements could be made. In many subjects the progress of pupils is measured and recorded on a daily basis through the annotations to be found in teachers' planning and records made by teaching assistants. This is particularly well done in English, mathematics and science. Regular formal assessment in these subjects helps to inform teachers about how successful their teaching has been. A particular strength is the year on year tracking of pupils' progress and how well they are achieving. Where there are areas of concern, support for pupils is quickly and effectively organised. The data from the various assessments is rigorously and effectively analysed by the co-ordinator and information is passed on to teachers. Assessment of pupils' progress and achievement in the other subjects in the curriculum are made less regularly but by the end of the year teachers have a clear picture of what pupils have learned in all subjects. This information is provided for parents through the very good pupil reports and at parents meetings. The quality of teachers' marking is not always consistent. Although work is usually regularly marked comments in pupils' books do not provide sufficient guidance on areas for improvement. Targets for the improvement of work are set, but with the exception of English, are not recorded formally and there was little reference to targets in lessons during the inspection.

The curriculum

The school offers a rich curriculum, which prepares the pupils very well for secondary school. Accommodation is good overall and there is a wide range of learning resources for all subjects.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is a rich one, in which the creative arts maintain a strong presence.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very wide range of clubs and school visits.
- The outside area for the Reception children is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

13. The school offers a broad, rich curriculum, which affords very good preparation for secondary school. There is a strong focus on giving the pupils opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in a wide range of subjects. The creative arts are also given prominence, with a strong focus on art and music. Last year, the school was one of only two primary schools in Hertfordshire to gain the Artsmark Gold Award in recognition of this commitment. Currently, about 70 pupils take advantage of opportunities for instrumental music tuition from visiting teachers. Whilst higher attaining pupils are challenged through extension activities, there are very effective support programmes in place to help

lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The teachers plan very thoroughly for the work that the pupils will do each term and each week, paying close attention to differing needs. The school meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and for religious education.

14. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. A very wide range of well-attended lunchtime and after-school clubs allows the pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons and parents appreciate this. These include recorders, choir, orchestra, drama, information and communication technology, French, Latin, board games, football and netball. The choir has sung at the Royal Albert Hall. Learning is enriched by a good number of school visits to places of worship, museums and to places of interest. There are residential visits to Kingswood and to the Isle of Wight for the older pupils. The school makes very good use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors, whenever possible.
15. Despite a reduced budget, the school is well staffed to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Learning support assistants and administrative staff play a very effective role and staff work hard to keep the building clean and tidy. The accommodation is good overall. The outside play area for Reception children, however, is unsatisfactory. It is very small and cannot meet the requirements for spontaneous adventurous and creative play. There is a wide range of resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The non-fiction library is well stocked with books to support learning in a range of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care and welfare of pupils is good and there is a very good level of personal support for pupils. There are good procedures to seek the views of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very high level of personal support for its pupils.
- No structured or guided lunchtime play activities are available for pupils.

Commentary

16. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities. First-aid provision is satisfactory but records lack formality or analysis. The levels of playground supervision are satisfactory and mid-day supervisors have been appropriately involved in the implementation of the behaviour policy but there is insufficient play equipment for children to use, or structured or guided play activity. Standards of maintenance and cleanliness are very good and vandalism and graffiti is not a problem. This instils high values in the pupils who show respect for property and resources. Teachers know their pupils and families very well and provide a very good level of personal support, involving parents where necessary. Pupils are confident in approaching adults in the school.
17. Induction arrangements for pupils starting at school are good and help to establish a good home-school relationship. There are a very good range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the school, responsibilities the pupils take seriously. Good use is made of personal, social and health education periods to obtain the views of pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a very good and effective partnership with parents and the community and good links with other schools. The views of parents were very positive in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- There are good links with other schools that benefit pupils.
- There are very good links with the community.
- There is a very active parents', teachers' and friends' association.
- The quality of information for parents is good, particularly the pupils' reports.

Commentary

18. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire show that they are very happy about all that the school has to offer and particularly value the caring ethos. An active parents', teachers' and friends' association supports the school very well by providing good social opportunities for parents and their children and by providing very good financial support for learning resources.
19. The school has sought parents' views through a general questionnaire and a parent governor is working with parents on safer ways of bringing pupils to school. Information for parents is good and the annual report on pupils' progress is very good with clear statements of what a pupil understands and at what level the pupil is working. The use of homework and reading diaries is good and is an effective means of communication. Parents are welcome in school and there is a high level of attendance at special events and parents' evenings. Overall procedures for pupils entering school are good; members of staff make visits to several local preschool organisations and parents are invited to help their children settle into full time

education. There are good procedures in place to deal with the concerns of parents but they seldom have to be used.

20. The school has good links with other local schools and assistance to develop Internet access is available. The school maintains very good relationships with the local secondary school and this helps pupils transfer smoothly. The special needs co-ordinator also works at the local secondary school and this provides very good continuity of care for pupils. Placement is available for trainee teachers and places are offered to secondary schools for work experience pupils.
21. Links with the local community are very good and the school takes an active part in community life both locally and in neighbouring areas. The school choir is a regular feature at local events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is very good because governors are very well informed and very supportive of the aims and aspirations of the headteacher and her staff. The leadership of the school provided by the headteacher and key members of staff is also very good and is firmly based on the maintenance of the high standards achieved in English, mathematics and science. Management of the school is good and enables the school to function effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors are very knowledgeable and contribute very positively to the leadership of the school.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership based on a strong team approach.
- The leadership provided by subject co-ordinators is very good.

Commentary

22. The governors are well informed and play a very active role in the leadership of the school. They demonstrate a considerable knowledge and understanding of the performance of the school and the detailed analysis of the results achieved by pupils in the school. Comparisons with other local schools and with national results are regularly undertaken and help the school to prioritise its areas for improvement. Governors have a good knowledge of the standards achieved in the different subjects across the school through their regular visits to observe teaching and their discussions with subject leaders. Both teachers and governors report to the full governing body on the progress being made in their subjects and this keeps the whole governing body very well informed. The governors carry out their statutory duties thoroughly. The governors and headteacher consistently and rigorously monitor the quality of services provided for the school to ensure that the school receives the best possible value.
23. The headteacher has a very clear vision of what she wants the school to achieve with high standards, not only in English, mathematics and science, but also in the other subjects. This is very well supported by the desire of all staff to ensure that there is a very positive ethos within the school, based on high expectations of learning,

behaviour and hard work. Pupils of all abilities benefit from this, resulting in very good support, especially for those who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language, and those who achieve well. The schools improvement plan is clearly focused on the maintenance of high standards. The thorough analysis of results by the headteacher, assessment co-ordinator and governors enables them to identify areas for improvement, for example, mathematics in the infants, and provides a clear focus for change. The headteacher and staff have developed a very good team approach. Ideas are shared; priorities decided upon and unified action taken. Good use is made of the staff's skills and the headteacher sets a very good example by her skilled teaching of music. Members of staff support each other very well and provide advice readily. The quality of teaching is rigorously checked, and where necessary, support is provided.

24. The school is managed effectively, enabling the school day to run smoothly. Teachers have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities which results in clear lines of communication and effective coverage of the various tasks required to ensure the school is efficiently run. For example, the assessment co-ordinator ensures that a very rigorous analysis of the school's test data is completed. Pupils' progress is carefully measured and regularly monitored. This information is passed to teachers who are able to modify their teaching to take account of this valuable information. In a small number of instances the information available in the school is not gathered centrally and this reduces its effective recording and analysis. Care is taken in selection and recruitment and new members of staff are well supported to enable them settle into the school routines.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	576,360	Balance from previous year	57,296
Total expenditure	584,190	Balance carried forward to the next year	49,466
Expenditure per pupil	2,797		

25. Both the headteacher and governors ensure that the funds received by the school are efficiently and effectively spent. The budget is managed very well with the educational priorities being backed by effective financial planning to ensure efficient delivery of change.

COMMUNITY PROVISION

Provision is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the local church, Parish Council and charities are strong.
- School facilities are used by a local sports club, a play scheme for children with disabilities and groups such as cubs and brownies.

Commentary

26. Pupils from the school regularly raise funds for local and national charities. Several of these fund raising events are initiated by the pupils and raise considerable amounts of money. The school choir take an active part in several church events including Harvest Festivals, Christmas Carol Concerts and a garden party for elderly people from London. A parent governor has introduced a School Travel Plan and the school are in discussion with the Parish Council on how to improve local footpaths. Further positive links have been made in support of the village's entry for the Village of the Year. The school was made available for use during the summer holiday for a respite play scheme for autistic children which was very much appreciated and valued by both the organisers and parents of these children. Pupils performed country-dances as part of a fundraising event and have submitted a traffic survey to the Hitchin council aimed at easing traffic in the High Street. A very good range of sporting and other activities take place outside school hours with support provided by a qualified coach. This is much appreciated by the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

27. Provision is good overall. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is very variable. Teaching and learning are good and this enables most pupils to achieve well and make good progress so that by the time they transfer to the infant stage a majority of children have achieved the goals set for their early learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good arrangements for those children who enter the Reception class.
- The good provision encourages children to settle into the routines of the school quickly and to become increasingly independent.
- Teaching and support staff know the children well and respond positively to individual needs.

Commentary

28. Current standards are average and children's achievement is good. There are good arrangements to help children to settle in to the Reception class securely and happily. This involves visits by staff to the pre-school organisations and visits by children to the school. Equally good arrangements exist for the transfer of children from the Reception class to Year 1. The teaching and attention paid to children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Members of staff work flexibly so that they can take account of the different learning needs of children and progress in these areas is recorded so that appropriate action can be taken when required. The teacher plans well, and in conjunction with the teaching assistant, provides a good range of activities so that children can work on their own; with a partner; supported by an adult if required; or in a group. This ensures that children have the opportunity to develop good working relationships with one another and with the adults who work with them. Adults work well together, moving flexibly from their planned activities to others where there is a greater need, based on what the children are doing at the time. This ensures that there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the classroom. The adults set good examples for the children which helps them to understand how they should treat one another. The activities that are provided are interesting and often exciting. Children are becoming increasingly independent and are able to organise equipment and materials when given the opportunity. Good opportunities are given for children to take responsibility. Most children focus well on what they are learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults consistently encourage children to develop their speaking skills.
- Children are given many opportunities to read and write.

Commentary

29. Many children talk confidently and maturely about a range of topics and are eager to answer the teacher's questions. The members of staff are skilled at encouraging those children who are reluctant to talk and ensure that these children have the opportunity to enter into discussions in whole class sessions and in small groups. Answers are praised and this encourages the reluctant speakers and raises their self-esteem and confidence. A good example of this occurred in a physical education lesson in which children were asked to comment on other children's work. Many of the more able children are adept at hearing initial and end sounds of words and are confident in their replies. Some of the most able children are beginning to blend sounds at the beginning, middle and ends of words as they begin to write.
30. A good range of books is available. These are enjoyed by children who handle them with care and enjoy joining in with the stories they share. Most children recognise the majority of letter sounds and are beginning to use this knowledge to build words. Several of the higher attaining children are beginning to read simple texts using their knowledge of sounds to help them. Parents support their children well and work with them to improve their knowledge of sounds and words.
31. Children are encouraged to write as they play in the Butterfly Veterinary Surgery, where they write out appointments and prescriptions. More formal opportunities for the development of writing skills are provided when children write about their experiences in and outside school. More able children are beginning to write confidently using a good range of words, many of which they spell correctly. They use their knowledge of words and sounds well in trying to spell more difficult words. Most children make a good effort to copy the shapes of letters and words. A small minority are still at an early stage of writing where the marks they make sometimes resemble writing. However, all children are making good progress in acquiring speaking, reading and writing skills and are achieving well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical skills are developed well through practical reinforcement.
- Work is well structured to ensure that children build on what they know and can do.

Commentary

32. By the time children are ready to move into Year 1, standards are average overall with many children attaining the national goals for early learning. Children have achieved well because the teaching is good. Adults regularly assess what children have learned and their planning is modified in the light of what children know and can do. Most children can count accurately up to ten with many counting well beyond this, accurately sequencing numbers to 20. Many are able to divide groups of objects by colour or shape and record this, using accurate mathematical symbols. More able children are able to accurately follow more complex patterns of shapes while others require practical help in matching numbers to apparatus.

Most children are able to demonstrate a good understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes, with some naming cubes, cuboids, cylinders and cones with little hesitation.

33. Mathematics is built into day-to-day activities with the adults asking questions such as “how many are here” and “how many are away” when taking the class register or working out how many children will be staying for lunch. Adults take every opportunity to build on children’s mathematical skills and knowledge, such as counting, wherever a link can be made.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching provides a range of exciting activities to increase children’s interest and enjoyment.

Commentary

34. Children reach the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is good and well planned. Most children link young animals with their parents successfully and can order the process of growth in humans. They encounter festivals in other faiths, for example Divali, and this increases their knowledge and understanding of other people and faiths in the wider world. Using the story of “The Hungry Caterpillar” children learn to accurately sequence the days of the week and increase their understanding of the reasons for day and night. Their understanding of history is increased well through their involvement in the May Dance. Children quickly gain confidence in the use of computers and in the control of the mouse to move objects around the screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned programme for most aspects of physical development is good.
- Outside provision for the development of children’s social and physical development is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

35. Wherever possible the development of children’s physical development is well planned. Painting and drawing skills are well developed and children demonstrate good levels of control when applying paint and crayon. Cutting skills are well developed with children using scissors accurately. Most children are able to hold pencils appropriately when writing which encourages them to form letters correctly. In a dance lesson all children moved with care. They made imaginative use of space when they danced, showing good control as they moved about the hall. The physical skills are taught effectively and this results in children making good progress.

36. Outside facilities are insufficient and do not allow children to make full use of the physical environment to develop social and physical skills. A small number of toys to promote these areas have been purchased but insufficient space and inadequate amounts of time allowed result in children making insufficient progress in this area. Opportunities for spontaneous outdoor play for reception age children are therefore very restricted.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of children's art work is good.
- Musical skills are developed well.

Commentary

37. Art techniques are taught well, and as a result, the standards of children's work are good. They pay careful attention, for example, when creating fish using colour wash techniques and take care in their choice of materials when creating an angel collage. Teaching the skills of mixing paint begins early. These skills are put to good use in paintings which show the use of tone and shape. Good levels of skill and control are demonstrated. Adults value children's work and give them opportunities to discuss and talk about how they could improve the quality. Children observe, draw and paint well, often using the things they see around them as a stimulus for their ideas and imagination.
38. Music is taught well. Children are able to clap a given rhythm and many are able to keep time. They know the names of several instruments and are given the opportunity to play several demonstrating good control in their playing. They derive much pleasure in singing and show good recall of the words and tunes. Many sing tunefully. There is interest and enjoyment in making music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve well.
- Teachers make effective links between pupils' speaking and listening and writing skills; standards in writing are improving.
- The subject is very well led and progress is carefully monitored.
- Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects.
- Marking gives encouraging comments but does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

39. The school has maintained its high standards since the last inspection through consistently good teaching which has significant strengths. Standards in writing, and speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and well above average in reading, writing and speaking and listening by Year 6. These standards are reflected in the results of the national tests for Year 6 in 2004. In Year 2, standards in writing have improved from average to above average.
40. There are several reasons why standards are so high and achievement is good. The school has taken steps to narrow the gaps between pupils of different attainment through the careful tracking of progress and monitoring the quality of teaching. All groups of pupils achieve well, and most pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language reach average standards for their age. They achieve very well in their literacy targets because of the very effective support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistant for those who have special educational needs.
41. A particular strength in teaching is the way the teachers develop pupils' writing skills through discussion and talk. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the pupils were given an opportunity to develop and rehearse their arguments for and against holidays in Keswick and Majorca, orally before starting to write. The pupils prepared and presented their arguments to the class very effectively through role-play, which was modelled on the performance of the teacher and the teaching assistant. The pupils spoke confidently and eloquently. When they wrote their opening paragraphs, which were based on these arguments, their composition was spontaneous and captured the interest of the audience. Teaching is particularly effective in Year 6 where the teaching maintains high expectations of pupils' performance and sets high standards.
42. A strong focus on the teaching of phonics linked to spelling, from an early age, helps pupils to read fluently and spell correctly by Year 2. There are many opportunities for reading during the school day. Pupils are heard reading regularly at home and in school. Teaching assistants and parents make a good contribution to the development of their reading. There is a wide range of books to stimulate pupils' interests. They learn to value books and write book reviews, giving their opinions. The examples of very well written book reviews by Year 5 pupils showed their understanding of different types of writing. Achievement in writing is improving and more pupils are reaching higher levels in Year 2 because the school has focused on improving this aspect of English. The teachers across the school have high expectations of their pupils and offer them opportunities for different styles of writing through well-planned activities. The result is that learning is good and sometimes very good – pupils move on quickly and write with creativity and expression. Handwriting and spelling are taught systematically to ensure that pupils can write in fluent joined handwriting and can spell most words correctly by Year 6. Both pupils and teachers make good use of information and communication technology in English.
43. Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills and this is another factor leading to good achievement. Their assessments are recorded and used to set the targets pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each year. Although there are examples of good marking, it is not always consistent in giving comments which help the pupils to improve their work.

44. Very effective subject leadership displays both vision and commitment to developing and improving the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning have been developed to achieve consistency in teaching and to maintain high standards.

Literacy across the curriculum

45. The provision for literacy across the curriculum is good. The pupils use their strong reading skills to research subjects such as history and geography. Their speaking and listening, and writing skills are promoted effectively in all subjects. There is ample evidence of teachers using subjects such as mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education, and art to develop subject specific vocabulary, reading and writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is very good.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- .By the time pupils leave the school, standards are well above average.
- .Teaching is good and this enables all pupils to achieve well.
- .There are many opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- .The quality of marking is variable.

Commentary

46. Pupils achieve well by Year 2 and very well by Year 6. Standards are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. Boys and girls attain equally well.
47. By Year 2, the pupils' basic numeracy skills are good. They make quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts. They have a good understanding of multiplication as repeated addition. They solve simple word problems, such as calculating costs of shopping and change. The pupils present data by means of simple graphs and diagrams. The presentation of work by lower ability pupils is often rather untidy.
48. By Year 6, the pupils use quick mental recall of all four number operations. Basic numeracy skills, including knowledge of fractions and percentages, are very good. The pupils apply these skills very well in solving real life problems, involving money, ratio and proportion. They plot coordinates accurately in all four quadrants and they investigate the effect of rotation and translation on a shape's position. They represent data by means of accurate graphs and diagrams.
49. Teaching is good and this leads to effective learning by all groups of pupils. There are examples of very good teaching. The teachers use a variety of strategies to develop the pupils' mental calculation skills. Explanations of key concepts are clear, with a strong focus on the use of correct vocabulary, and this consolidates the pupils' understanding. In a Year 5 lesson, this impacted well on the pupils' ability to draw and interpret line graphs. The teachers encourage the pupils to explain their strategies and this helps them to see that there is often more than one way of

reaching the answer. In a Year 3 lesson, this helped the pupils in their understanding of counting on and back in tens from two and three-digit numbers. Effective use is made of resources to enhance teaching and learning. These include the interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6 and other elements of information and communication technology. Learning support assistants are deployed well and this helps individuals and groups to make good progress. The teachers match work closely to pupils' differing needs, ensuring that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' investigative and problem solving skills, often through practical activities. In a Year 2 lesson, this helped the pupils to explore number patterns and in a Year 1 lesson, it enhanced the learning of directional language. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively. However, the quality of marking is variable and sometimes lacks guidance as to how the pupils might improve further. There is regular homework to extend and consolidate learning.

50. The co-ordinator has assumed responsibility for the subject from this term. There are good procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress and for using this information to plan the next steps in learning. There is a clear action plan, which seeks to maintain the current high standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. The pupils make good use of their mathematical skills in a wide range of other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 4 draw accurate bar graphs of their favourite animals and pupils in Year 2 draw pictograms of their eye colours. Year 6 pupils record the results of investigations into viscosity and saturation points by means of accurate bar and line graphs. In art and design, pupils in Year 2 draw imaginative, colourful pictures using different lines, and pupils in Year 1 consider the geometric drawings of Mondrian. In geography, pupils in Year 6 use computers to generate accurate bar graphs of sunshine hours in Keswick and in design and technology they make careful measurements when designing and making a moving 'roundabout'.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the age of eleven standards are well above average.
- The curriculum is firmly based on scientific investigation and enquiry and helps pupils develop a very good scientific understanding.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to achieve very well.

Commentary

52. Current standards of work in Year 2 are above average and are well above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve very well overall. The high standards are achieved because the teaching of science is consistently good, the curriculum is well organised and a good level of challenge is set for all pupils. The teaching of the skills of investigation is very well planned and this

ensures that pupils become adept at careful observation and conducting fair tests. The pupils predict outcomes accurately. Observations are accurately recorded using the pupils' extensive technical vocabulary and graphs of findings are accurately drawn. The pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are very well supported by well-trained and skilled teaching assistants, which results in these pupils achieving very well.

53. The consistently good teaching is a feature of the school's science provision and accounts for the high standards achieved. The work is firmly based on the investigative aspects of science, provides good levels of interest, and motivates the pupils to learn. The work is planned well and provides a good level of challenge for most pupils. The most able are often provided with additional challenges that fully extends their learning and ensures that they achieve very well. Pupils work well together when given the opportunity. They discuss their observations sensibly, draw on their previous learning and make accurate predictions. The teachers have high expectations of the quality of work the pupils produce and consequently standards are high. The teachers questioning skills are good and this ensures that pupils are attentive and most respond eagerly. Good links are made with other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 used the data they had collected in an investigation on dissolving and saturated solutions to create graphs. Anomalies in their results were discussed and agreements reached, extending both their scientific understanding and their mathematical knowledge. Literacy skills are also extended well when pupils research and write biographies of famous scientists, for example, Alexander Fleming.
54. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The teachers' curricular planning and the quality of their teaching are rigorously and regularly monitored. Systems to monitor the pupils' progress through testing and assessment are very good in this subject. Although individual targets are set for the pupils and are discussed with them, they are not recorded formally or systematically. The co-ordinator has very good scientific knowledge and is readily available to provide help and advice to colleagues. There is a consistent focus on raising standards through scientific investigation, the success of which can be seen in the latest result in the national tests.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is good.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and are the result of good teaching and effective learning.
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects.
- Subject leadership is very good and is a significant factor in high standards.

Commentary

55. By Year 2 and Year 4, all groups of pupils achieve well. Standards are above average. By Year 2, the pupils use both keyboard and mouse confidently. They alter font size, style and colour to suit their writing. They use the computers to generate imaginative pictures and patterns, illustrating, for example, Joseph's multi-coloured coat. With

help, the pupils save, print and retrieve their work. They programme a floor robot confidently.

56. By Year 6, the pupils access the Internet and CD Rom to research information in a variety of subjects. Their word processing skills are good and they are aware of the need to make their writing appeal to the reader. They combine text and graphics effectively. The pupils use spread sheets effectively to enter, retrieve and analyse data. They use sensors accurately to monitor change and they make effective use of the school's digital microscope and digital camera. The pupils create good quality multi-media presentations on a variety of topics, such as the advantages of Keswick as a tourist attraction. They communicate by e-mail.
57. Teaching is good and this leads to effective learning by all groups of pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and this helps to develop the pupils' confidence. There is a good balance between formal instruction and hands-on experience. In a Year 1 lesson, this had a good impact on the pupils' use of the tool bar as they drew pictures in the geometric style of Mondrian. The teachers organise lessons well in the information and communication technology suite, where they are helped effectively by learning support assistants. This was apparent in a Year 4 lesson, where the pupils inserted maps of varying scales into text boxes, which enhanced learning in geography. In Years 5 and 6, the teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboards to improve learning in a number of subjects, especially mathematics.
58. Subject leadership is very good and is a significant factor in high standards. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and samples of pupils' work, to gain an overview of standards. There are good procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress and for using this information to plan future work. The curriculum is enriched by two lunchtime information and communication technology clubs for the older pupils. There is a clear action plan to raise standards further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. Information and communication technology is used widely to enhance teaching and learning in many different subjects. In literacy, for example, pupils in Year 4 use their word processing skills effectively to produce newspaper reports based on traditional tales. They choose an appropriate font to make the reports attractive, with centred headlines and lead paragraphs in bold. They insert and re-size pictures to accompany the text. They click and drag the text, in order to arrange it in two columns. In mathematics and science, the pupils represent data accurately by means of computer generated graphs. In history, the pupils access the Internet to research information about life in ancient Egypt and in Victorian Britain.

HUMANITIES

60. There was insufficient opportunity to complete a detailed inspection of **history and geography** during the inspection. Both history and geography were sampled during the inspection. Only one geography lesson was observed, with the result that it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching or overall provision for the subjects. Nevertheless, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with some of them indicated

that, by Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding in history and geography are above average.

61. By Year 6, the pupils have a good understanding of aspects of life in Victorian times, such as the hardships faced by many children. They understand how these were years of discovery and invention. They compare Victorian schools with those of today. The pupils know how life differed for rich and poor and they make good use of their literacy skills in writing effective letters in the role of a poor child. The pupils have a good understanding of life in ancient Greece and in Roman Britain. They write effectively about Boudicca's revolt.
62. By Year 2, the pupils are beginning to appreciate how things change over time. They look at toys and houses to see how these have evolved. They are beginning to understand the function of simple timelines. The pupils use their literacy skills well to describe the Norman invasion of England and life in a Norman castle.
63. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits to museums and to places of interest. During a residential visit to the Isle of Wight, the pupils visit Osborne House and Carisbrooke Castle and this leads to useful research on Queen Victoria and Charles 1.
64. Only one geography lesson was observed. This was in Year 2 where the quality of teaching and learning was good. An examination of pupils' work shows that there is a clear focus on the study of places and people, as well as developing their mapping skills. For example, in Year 2, the pupils examined an aerial view of their own village and excitedly tried to spot the places they knew. The pupils develop mapping skills well as they move up the school and by Year 6, they know how to draw maps using a range of scales with grid references. This is a good use of their mathematical skills. Pupils also learn about different localities, often based on their first hand enquiry. Older pupils in Year 6 worked on a project on the Isle of Wight following their residential trip and individual research. They used art and information and communication technology effectively to present their project in an attractive way. Pupils in Year 3 studied distant places such as Jamaica to understand that its culture and foods are different from their own.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, and as a result, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by Years 2 and 6.
- Strong links with literacy encourage pupils to explore and express views, beliefs, feelings and understanding of different faiths through discussion and writing.
- Teaching of religious education promotes respect and interest in different faiths and beliefs, contributing very effectively to pupils' personal and cultural development.
- Subject leadership ensures that the subject is planned and taught well.

Commentary

65. Standards are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good across the school and pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning. This is because teaching and activities are carefully planned to help all pupils to take a full part in lessons.
66. An analysis of work reveals that pupils show good attitudes to learning and take pride in the presentation of their work. In Year 2, the pupils record their visit to a church in well-written booklets and show good knowledge and understanding of the features of a church. By Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of Christianity and stories from the bible. They have a good knowledge of the customs and beliefs of other faiths including Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism. Pupils make good use of their literacy and information and communication technology skills when writing and recording work. They use these skills particularly well, for example, the Year 4 pupils have written Harvest prayers to thank God 'for bright and warm weather that allows people to farm crops.' They have also used information and communication technology to create a Hindu symbol and images of Ganesh, a Hindu god.
67. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning to ensure its good quality. Only two lessons, in Years 3 to 6, were observed. From the analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons, it is clear that teaching is good. This includes opportunities for the pupils to visit places of worship and to listen to visitors from different religions. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils, and as a result, they learn to develop respect for different religions. The pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they learn, linking it to their own feelings and experiences. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used examples of stained glass windows to remind pupils of the atmosphere inside a church. This led to the pupils discussing eagerly their feelings inside a church. They also talked about their feelings in a Sikh temple visited previously. A pupil from the Sikh background explained why she felt safe and secure there because it belonged to her community. Year 4 pupils learn about the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan and the positive aspects of sibling relationships with enthusiasm. These examples indicate that the subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development.
68. Assessment in the subject was informal until very recently. The co-ordinator has developed an assessment system, which has been introduced to the school this year. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but the quality of marking is not consistent across the school. The curriculum is well led and good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6 the standards of the pupils' work are well above average.
- The technical skills required are very well taught.
- Pupils are able to experience a wide range of media.

Commentary

69. Pupils enjoy art and design work. Samples of their work show very clearly that they have levels of skill that are well above average. From the earliest times that art and design is taught, appropriate skills and techniques are part of each lesson. Pupils make clear that the start of each lesson involves discussion and demonstrations of the uses of materials and techniques. A wide range of art materials, including various types of paint and pencils, crayon, and inks are available for the pupils to experience. Information and communication technology is used well to produce high quality pictures of dragonflies in a good link with science. The pupils in infant classes show good skill in mixing colours and apply these with care when, for example, painting pictures of winter vegetables. By Year 2 pupils produce work in the style of Mondrian, and develop their mathematical understanding and vocabulary by using words such as vertical, horizontal and diagonal. Pupils in other year groups work in the style of great artists and discover something of their life and work. By Year 5, sketchbooks are used well across the school, when pupils try out new ideas and design articles, prior to the process of making. Three-dimensional art is not so evident in the pupils' work. This aspect is included in the school's improvement plan for future development.
70. The teaching of art is good. Work is well planned and is well focused on specific areas of learning. Particular stress is placed on the quality of observation and pupils are encouraged to experiment with line and form. Teachers' high expectations of good quality result in high standards. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and is able to provide very good quality help and advice to colleagues. The pupils' achievement and progress are recorded and form part of their progress reports to parents.

Design and technology

71. Design and technology was not a specific focus of this inspection and it was not possible to make judgements on the provision or the quality of teaching. Discussions with pupils, samples of work and teachers' planning show that the pupils develop a good understanding of the design process. Plans for the models they are to make are carefully drawn, and details of measurements and the materials to be used, are recorded in the pupils' own words. Evaluations of these are completed and changes are made where required. The pupils reveal that care is taken to ensure that safe and hygienic practices are taught, for example, when food technology is covered. Careful attention is paid to the quality and finish of the products produced. Good examples of this included the production of designs and wrapping paper for the outer layer of packages using information and communication technology. Skills learned in science are put to good use when pupils use electric power to drive their models of merry-go-rounds. Good attention is paid to the quality of finish of these models.
72. It was not possible to see sufficient **physical education** lessons during the inspection. Judgements on the quality of teaching and the standards achieved cannot therefore be made. Evidence was gathered from an examination of teachers planning and discussions with pupils. This indicated that all the various aspects of physical education take place over the course of a school year. This includes outdoor adventurous activities, which pupils undertake when attending residential educational visits, and includes activities such as abseiling and orienteering. There is a good range of activities for pupils to extend their sporting skills and enjoyment and these often involve pupils from a wide age range. Many of these take place during lunchtimes and after school and help pupils to increase their social as well as sporting skills. Pupils also successfully compete against other local schools in, for example, football and athletics. Skills are well developed and supported by both school staff and outside coaching staff.

Music

Provision in music is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and playing of music are well above average.
- Music plays an important part in pupils' social and cultural development.

Comments

73. The pupils' interest and enjoyment of music is very high. There is a flourishing and very successful choir and a large number of pupils have the opportunity to undertake individual tuition with local education authority music staff. This results in very good standards in the school orchestra which includes pupils from the whole of the junior age group.
74. The quality of teaching is very good and results in standards which are well above expected levels. All infant and junior pupils are taught music by the headteacher who has a high level of skill and knowledge of the subject. Her enthusiasm and enjoyment of music has a very positive effect on pupils and they are keen to be involved in making music. The lessons for pupils in Years 2 and 3 were very well planned and contained high levels of challenge for all the pupils involved. The quality of singing was very good and resulted from the focus on the improvement of diction, phrasing and timing. Pupils sang enthusiastically and very tunefully. Older pupils in Year 6

listen appreciatively to the music from the ballet "Swan Lake", describing the varying elements of the music using the correct technical vocabulary.

75. Opportunities for pupils to take part in musical events are very good. The choir has represented the education authority at a choir festival in London and regularly entertains groups in the community. Instrumental tuition is provided for a wide range of pupils and includes instruments such as the violin, cello and piano. A high percentage of pupils are able to read music and this directly helps their composition skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There is good provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship education.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- There are regular opportunities for the pupils to discuss issues of concern.
- The pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop social skills.

Commentary

76. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to discuss relevant issues, such as feelings; rules; responsibilities; listening to others and playing a constructive role in the community. The pupils develop social skills in assemblies, school productions and clubs and on school visits. Older pupils are given responsibility in carrying out tasks around the school and they share reading sessions with younger pupils. The pupils think of people less fortunate than themselves by supporting Garden House Hospice and other charities. They learn about the need for a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle and about the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse. There is formal sex education for pupils in Years 4 to 6.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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