

INSPECTION REPORT

KNUTSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117165

Headteacher: Mr R W Randall

Lead inspector: Mr A C Jolly

Dates of inspection: 20 –22 September 2004

Inspection number: 267161

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	467
School address:	Knutsford Avenue Watford Hertfordshire
Postcode	WD24 7ER
Telephone number:	01923 466020
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Plunkett
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Knutsford Primary School, an above average size primary school situated to the east of the commercial centre in Watford, provides education for 467 pupils, including 43 who attend part-time in the Nursery. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1999 and reopened in the new buildings in January 2002. The pupils, who mainly come from the immediate area, live in a range of housing, including older, privately owned, terraced houses, 1930s semi-detached houses and a large modern local authority development. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is about twelve per cent. These include in similar numbers mixed black Caribbean and white pupils, Indian and Pakistani pupils. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is higher than average and their most common first language is Urdu. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and those with statements of special need are below average. Their needs are mainly specific and moderate learning difficulties and communication and visual impairment. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupil mobility¹ is low. The attainment of the children on entry to the Nursery varies annually; the most recent is average but it has been above average in previous years. The school was awarded the Healthy Schools' Award in 2003.

¹ Pupil mobility signifies the number of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the start of the Reception year or end of Year 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8750	Mr A C Jolly	Lead inspector	English Physical education Personal, social, health education and citizenship English as an additional language
14214	Mrs J Smith	Lay inspector	
22489	Mr I Barker	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
26405	Mrs C Bond	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Religious education
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History
30580	Mr D Bateson	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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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 and subjects	
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	
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	17
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	21
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a successful, effective school where pupils attain standards by Year 6 that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are well integrated into the school so that all pupils achieve very well and achievement overall is very good. The quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in national tests in Year 6 are very high;
- standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are well above average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2;
- the role of the curriculum co-ordinator needs to be extended in all subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology;
- standards in art and design are above average;
- there is too high a budget surplus;
- there are very good links with parents;
- levels of attendance and standards of punctuality are very good.

There has been a good improvement since the last inspection and the key issues have been dealt with effectively. The management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs has improved and is now satisfactory. The school has established a Nursery since the last inspection and the overall provision for the youngest children has improved and is now satisfactory. Standards have improved in science and information and communication technology in Year 2 so they are now above average. Standards are also better in art and design where they are good. The quality of teaching remains good and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of leadership and management remains good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003 [*]	2003
English	A*	A	A*	A*
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A*
Science	A	A	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.*

Achievement overall is **very good**. Children enter the Nursery with average levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that they are on course to attain the six nationally agreed areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. Good progress is made in Years 1 and 2, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy so that pupils' achievement is good. This good progress is maintained in Years 3, 4 and 5 and there is a further acceleration in Year 6. Achievement is therefore very good in Years

3 to 6. Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

Standards in Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are average in all other subjects, except art and design, and information and communication technology, where they are above average. There is a further improvement in Year 6 illustrated by the outstanding test results in the table. The A* grading puts them into the top five per cent of schools nationally and compared to similar schools. Standards in the work seen in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are well above average in Year 6, reflecting significant progress in these subjects. Standards in art and design remain above average in Year 6. Standards in all other subjects are the same as in Year 2 and are average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a positive approach to learning and to school life. Their behaviour is good and pupils have good attitudes to work. The pupils' attendance levels are well above average and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. It is good in Year 1 to 6 and often very good for the oldest pupils. Pupils are given a very clear indication of the high standards expected of them and the needs of pupils of different abilities and cultural backgrounds are well addressed. This ensures their learning advances by Year 6 to well beyond what would be expected from their prior attainment.

There is a satisfactory curriculum and a wide range of enrichment activities. This is a caring school that both meets the needs and celebrates the achievement of all its pupils. Relationships with parents are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are all good. The headteacher has only been in post for one year but has a shrewd grasp of what the school needs and how he can lead it on to further success. The governors have effective procedures to monitor provision and standards are well informed and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they are in breach of their statutory duty to provide a daily act of collective worship. This is an orderly, well-managed school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school. They believe the teaching is good, that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and that their children like school and make good progress. The pupils are very satisfied to be at the school. They enjoy the activities available to them and like their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- develop further the role of co-ordinators for areas of learning and for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology;

- allocate the accumulated surplus for appropriate spending with greater urgency;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure there is a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **very good** overall. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and very good between Years 1 and 6. Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by Year 2. By Year 6, standards are well above average in these subjects. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection in the standards attained.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are above average in Year 2.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are well above average in Year 6.
- National test results in 2003 for Year 6 pupils were outstanding.
- Standards are above average in art and design throughout the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

Commentary

1. Children's level of attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly average. They make satisfactory progress throughout the Foundation Stage so that they are on course to attain the six nationally agreed areas of learning by the end of the school year and several children exceed the national goals for personal, social and emotional development.
2. Standards in national tests in 2003 in Year 2 were average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. However, when compared with schools in a similar context, although standards were above average in mathematics, they were below average in reading and writing.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.1 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.6 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The school reviewed its strategies for teaching reading and writing and this resulted in an improved percentage of pupils attaining both the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3 in the provisional national test results for 2004.
4. Solid foundations are laid down in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and scientific enquiry in the early years of the school. This, coupled with consistently good teaching of these subjects from Year 3 onwards, culminating in the best teaching in Year 6,

accelerates the pupils' rate of progress. As a result, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.

5. A key feature of the best teaching is the effective use of modern technology in the form of computer projections through laptops by the teachers to provide interesting and professional presentations that engage the pupils. This is also a contributory factor in information and communication technology where above average standards are attained in Year 2 and well above average standards in Year 6.
6. Throughout the school, standards in art and design are above average and this is reflected in the attractive work on display in several areas of the school. The work in religious education is average and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in all other subjects are average. These findings reflect an overall improvement on the findings of the last report.
7. Achievement is very good throughout the school. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are making good progress. Progress is quicker than average for pupils of Indian descent and less marked for those from Pakistani origin in the early years. However, by both Year 2 and Year 6, these pupils' attainment in national tests in English, mathematics and science matches that of other pupils. This is a result of the effective focus on their needs, particularly within literacy lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs also receive effective support within lessons and the tasks set are well matched to their needs, ensuring they make good progress. The school is developing a register for gifted and talented pupils and recognises their needs. For example, particularly able young readers receive weekly extension activities and there is good provision for talented musicians. A significant number of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in national tests in Year 6, highlighting the good progress made by able pupils.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.2 (28.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.6 (30.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.5 (31.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

8. National test results in Year 6 in 2003 were outstanding, maintaining a consistent pattern from the previous two years. The provisional test results for 2004 continue this trend. The standards attained in English and in science in 2003 were very high, placing the school's performance in the top five per cent nationally. Standards in mathematics were also well above average. When pupils' attainment is measured against their prior attainment in national tests in Year 2, their performance was again very high and placed the school in the top five per cent nationally. The percentage attaining the expected Level 4 was well above average in all three subjects. In science and English, the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 was very high and in mathematics it was well above average.
9. The results in national tests are broadly average in Year 2. The exceptional improvement in the test results in Year 6 highlights the very effective teaching in the three core subjects and the excellent preparation made for the tests in the final year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **very good**. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well during the school day. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes towards school and they enjoy taking part in the many activities provided.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond by behaving sensibly during lessons and at other times.
- The school promotes good relationships very effectively and this creates a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Most of the pupils are friendly towards each other and the school manages incidents of bullying or harassment well.
- Pupils have a good moral, social and cultural awareness.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were identified as exceptional strengths in the last inspection report. Although this very positive picture has not been maintained over the intervening five years, pupils of all ages say they like coming to school and that they enjoy the time they spend there.
11. Throughout the school, pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic. They particularly enjoy taking part in the various extra-curricular clubs and many are also learning to play a musical instrument. They listen carefully to their teachers and respect each other's point of view. They enjoy their lessons and take an active part whenever they can. Children in the Reception and Nursery classes are equally enthusiastic about school and they willingly work on their own or in groups with their classmates.
12. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and, during lessons, they gently remind pupils of the importance of having good manners and showing consideration for others. As a result, the majority of pupils are very clear on how they should behave. Pupils who have worked especially hard or who have been particularly well behaved, receive an 'effort certificate' or are awarded the 'effort cup'. This award is highly prized and recipients are very proud of their achievement. Analysis of the pre-inspection pupil questionnaire shows that almost all the pupils think that their classmates are friendly and they do not share their parents' concerns about bullying. The school takes a strong stand against bullying or harassment of any kind and pupils say that any such incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. The school keeps scrupulous records of any unsatisfactory behaviour and the effectiveness of these systems is reflected by the fact that there have been no exclusions for several years.
13. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel valued and respected and this helps them to make good progress in their work. Many of the opportunities provided help to boost pupils' confidence and the school is keen to broaden their range of experience. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 can go on residential trips to activity centres, such as Cuffley Camp or the Isle of Wight. They like to use their initiative and several pupils have volunteered to become peer mediators or members of the school council. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is successfully developed in subjects such as music and religious education and pupils develop a good understanding of a wide range of cultures, traditions and faiths. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

14. The level of attendance at the school is well above the levels found nationally. Pupils attend very well and school procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very simple and straightforward. Parents are committed to their children's education and ensure that their children attend regularly. Standards of punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. The school has a **satisfactory** curriculum. There is good enrichment of the curriculum and assessment arrangements are good for English, mathematics and science. The least impressive feature is the assessment of pupils' progress in other subjects.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Assessment, although inconsistent across subjects, is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of the key skills of English, mathematics and science is consistently good.
- The teaching in Year 6 is often very good.
- The learning needs of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and varying abilities are well addressed.
- The quality of assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent across subjects.
- There is very good use of modern technology to aid teaching.

Commentary

15. Teaching and learning are good overall. There is more very good teaching than at the time of the last inspection and no unsatisfactory teaching. The proportion of good teaching is broadly the same so that three-fifths of the teaching is at least good.
16. The teaching in the Nursery is good, with a particularly effective focus on developing the children's personal and social development. Good teamwork between all staff, centring on the needs of individual children, makes a valuable contribution to their learning. The good behaviour, which is a consistent feature in the school, begins here as the teachers consistently insist on high standards. There is a growing appreciation of the particular needs of the youngest children and very good support is given to the children who join the Nursery. Teaching in the Reception year is satisfactory. There is a tendency to give rather too much emphasis to the elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies rather than the key areas of learning identified for the early years. Relationships are good throughout the Foundation Stage.
17. The teaching of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and scientific enquiry in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good, and occasionally very good. This provides a very secure base upon which to build as the pupils make progress through the school and is a contributory factor

in the very high standards they achieve in Year 6. For example, in reading, the correct understanding of letter sounds is taught systematically and consistently. The teachers have addressed concerns about the standard of pupils' writing by giving greater emphasis across the curriculum to developing their vocabulary and grasp of sentence structure. This has resulted in an improvement in the standard of writing throughout the school.

18. The quality of teaching is even better in Years 3 to 6 and is at its best in Year 6. The teachers' high expectations are clearly understood by the oldest pupils who are committed to making the best of their abilities. The use of modern computer technology in lessons is particularly impressive and enables the teacher to give greater pace and finesse to the way learning objectives are presented. They are able to prepare professional presentations that make a strong impact and fully involve pupils. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher was discussing the different possible openings to a story. The work set is consistently both challenging and stimulating which is having a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning.
19. One further impressive feature of the teaching is the effective way teachers give explanations and examples of good practice to help their pupils gain a clear understanding of the high standards expected. Often they model good examples with contributions from the class. This is particularly evident in developing the pupils' skills in mathematics and writing.
20. When the teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, it is usually because introductions are too long. Occasionally when this is the case, pupils become inattentive and fidget. This is out of keeping with their otherwise consistently good behaviour. Although planning is at least satisfactory overall, the planning and assessment of pupils' work is better and more consistent in English, mathematics and science than other subjects. This has a positive impact on the generally higher standards attained in these subjects.
21. The learning needs of all pupils are well addressed in lessons. There is a good match of work for pupils who have special educational needs and they receive good support from teacher assistants. The pupils for whom English is an additional language receive adequate support and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated into all lessons so that their progress matches that of other pupils. Consideration is given consistently to able, gifted and talented pupils, and their progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6 is exemplified by the significant numbers who attain the higher National Curriculum levels in Year 6 national tests.
22. The marking of pupils' work is always satisfactory so they have a clear understanding of how they can improve. Individual targets are set effectively in English and mathematics to aid the pupils' progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (18%)	22 (41%)	22 (41%)	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.

The curriculum

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum, which affords good preparation for the secondary school. There are **good** opportunities for enrichment. Overall, accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs and school visits.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
- Internal accommodation is very good.
- The school field is in a poor condition.
- The school does not always meet its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

23. The school offers a broad curriculum with a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Some English and mathematics lessons are taught in groups based on ability. A large number of pupils currently take advantage of opportunities for instrumental music tuition. Planning is satisfactorily based on national guidelines and on some commercial schemes of work. This ensures that the school meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and for religious education. However, the school does not always fulfil the statutory obligation of a daily act of collective worship. The teachers plan carefully for the work that the pupils will do each term and each week, paying close attention to pupils' differing needs. The school always looks for ways of improving the curriculum, taking account of national initiatives. It has recently gained the Football Association Charter Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.
24. A wide range of extra-curricular activities allows the pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons. There is a well-attended choir and an orchestra. There are a number of sports clubs, together with clubs for recorders, computers, art and craft, modern languages and drama. Football and netball matches are played against local schools. The curriculum is enriched further by school visits to places such as RAF Hendon, Kew Gardens and Aklowa African Village. There are residential visits for the older pupils to Cuffley Camp and the Isle of Wight.
25. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. They are well supported by the teaching assistants, most of whom have had good training opportunities. The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator has been given a more strategic role with the view to having an overview and managerial responsibilities for the teaching assistants. This is intended to give a whole school approach to the identification, planning and assessment for those pupils who need individual consideration.
26. The accommodation and resources are good overall. Despite a high turnover of staff during the past two years, there are sufficient well-qualified teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Administrative and premises staff provide good support. Internal accommodation is very good. Strengths include the hall, separate dining room, specialist rooms for music, information and communication technology, food technology, special educational needs and a large library. There is very good access for

disabled pupils, including a lift to the first floor. Playground space is very limited, although there are plenty of benches and picnic tables. The field is currently in a poor condition. There are sufficient resources to support learning in all subjects. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. The school provides **good** support, advice and guidance and involves pupils very well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety and child protection procedures are good.
- Pupils trust the adults in the school and say they would be able to confide in them, should any difficulties arise.
- Teachers support pupils well in their work and provide clear educational guidance that helps pupils to improve.
- The school encourages pupils to voice their opinions very well and acts upon them whenever it can.
- Good transition arrangements help children to settle quickly when they join the Nursery and Reception classes.

Commentary

27. Strengths in care, support and guidance noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. Health and safety and child protection procedures are comprehensive and members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.
28. During discussions, pupils say that they feel well looked after at school. They like their teachers and say that they would not hesitate to seek help or advice if they needed it. Parents are equally confident and almost everyone who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they would feel able to approach members of staff with a suggestion or complaint.
29. Pupils' work is constructively assessed and marked. Teachers and pupils agree individual targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. Pupils say these are helpful and that they know exactly what they have to do in order to improve the standard of their work.
30. A school council meets every fortnight and it provides a very useful forum through which pupils are encouraged to make their views known. Pupils have been able to influence various aspects of school life, such as helping to choose the new play equipment and raise funds for local and national charities. In addition, every two years, the school circulates a questionnaire and pupils are able to make various suggestions for improvement. The school is keen to hear pupils' views and to incorporate them into plans for the future whenever possible.
31. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting praised the support provided to children when they join the Nursery and Reception classes. Inspectors agree; induction arrangements are well planned and this helps the children to settle down quickly. For example, Nursery children are able to visit their new class and spend time with the older Reception children during lunchtime. This helps everyone to get to know each other at an early stage and close staff liaison ensures that the children's needs are met in full. Admission times are staggered over three weeks and this helps to ensure that each individual child receives the help and support they deserve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good**. Links with the community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links between the school and parents are very effective; parents provide very good support for their children's learning.
- Parents are well-informed about school life and the progress their children are making.
- The school actively seeks parents' views and responds to their suggestions or concerns very promptly.

Commentary

32. Links between the school and parents are close and mutually supportive. This school is very popular and it is regularly over-subscribed. Parents ensure that their children attend school very regularly and that they arrive in a good frame of mind for learning. Most of the parents abide by the school's wishes and avoid booking family holidays during the school term. Parents' wholehearted support ensures that their children are able to make the most of their time at school and this is reflected in the high standards of work seen in Year 6. Parents also offer generous financial support and the various activities organised by the friends association are well attended. Significant sums of money are raised to provide, for example, additional learning resources and play equipment.
33. Analysis of the pre-inspection parental questionnaire returns shows that parents are very pleased with the work of the school and there is very little they would like to change. Around one in five of those who returned their form, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided about their children's progress. Inspectors disagree; although some annual reports do not give a clear view as to how individual pupils are performing relative to their capability, teachers are always willing to provide clarification. There are also two formal consultation evenings each year and an optional meeting at the end of the summer term. Attendance at these meetings is very good and alternative arrangements are also made for those who cannot attend. Parents receive regular newsletters and these contain plenty of useful information about day-to-day school life. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are especially close and their attendance at annual review meetings is very good.
34. The school actively seeks parents' views and encourages them to be open and frank if they have any suggestions or concerns. The friends association provides an informal forum through which parents can make their views known and the school also circulates a formal bi-annual questionnaire. Their views of the school are very positive and are backed up by analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaire; indeed, although there was some parental concern about bullying expressed at the parents' meeting, there is little about the school that parents would like to change. Almost nine out of ten of the parents who responded are pleased with the way in which the school listens and responds to their suggestions or concerns. Whenever possible, parents' views are acted upon and several have been incorporated into the school improvement plan.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**. This reflects the findings of the last report. Although there is a stated policy to provide a daily act of collective worship, this is not taking place.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very shrewd understanding of the needs of the school and how it can move forward successfully;
- The governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school;
- The school does not have a daily act of collective worship;
- There has been too high a budget surplus;
- The school achieves high standards. Its ethos encourages and supports pupils from a wide range of abilities and backgrounds.

Commentary

35. The headteacher has been in the post for one year. During this time he has made a shrewd assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The self-evaluation of the school by headteacher, staff and governors is perceptive and suitably self-critical. The headteacher has been instrumental in reviewing the provision in a number of key areas such as special educational needs and the Foundation Stage to ensure that the school continues to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities and responds to criticisms in the last report.
36. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher who gives effective, clear leadership to the development of information and communication technology both as a subject and a tool to improve pupils' learning. The co-ordinators of the key subjects of English, mathematics and science have provided strong leadership, which has contributed to the high standards attained in Year 6. The leadership of other subjects is less effective, particularly in the context of monitoring teaching and learning in order to devise strategies to raise standards,
37. The school has revised its approach to the management of special educational needs by the decision to appoint one co-ordinator to fulfil a more strategic role. The action plan for those pupils with special educational needs emphasises the school's commitment to developing a fully inclusive² school. The link governor is knowledgeable and has worked closely with the headteacher to develop school policy. The school has responded effectively to legislation. For example, it has a lift for those with a physical disability and tactile strips for the visually impaired. The headteacher and governors have taken their responsibilities seriously and are making good progress in ensuring the good achievement of pupils who have special educational needs.
38. The headteacher and governors have also recognised the importance of meeting the needs of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. There is a race equality policy that is translated into effective practice and an ethos where pupils of all abilities and from a range of cultures are welcomed and valued.
39. The leadership of the governing body has a number of strong features. They meet regularly with an established system of working parties and committees. The minutes of meetings are well documented. They are aware of the need to hold the school to account and effectively monitor results against targets. There is an established protocol where classroom visits by governors are followed by a report to the full governing body. One interesting recent development is a monthly newsletter to keep all governors fully informed of any developments, either in school or from committee meetings.

² An inclusive school is one that meets the needs of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background.

40. Although the school has a policy that states that there is a daily act of collective worship, this is not always happening in practice. In this respect the governors are not complying with a statutory requirement.
41. The school receives a monthly printout and has correct systems for setting a budget at the start of the financial year. However, it has built up too high a budget surplus. The headteacher, who joined the school half way through the financial year, recognises that this needs to be allocated appropriately. Financial procedures overall are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily both in terms of purchasing and comparing its performance against similar schools.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,044,439
Total expenditure	986,670
Expenditure per pupil	2,113

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	44,758
Balance carried forward to the next	102,527

42. The management of the school is good overall, and it operates smoothly. The school has satisfactory links with initial teacher training institutions and arrangements for professional development. It has managed to recruit and deploy staff effectively. Induction arrangements are good. The performance management of staff is thorough.
43. A strength of the school is its honest and perceptive self-evaluation. The school has been very successful in terms of maintaining high standards, particularly in tests in Year 6 and meeting the needs of its pupils. This reflects good overall leadership and management.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction³ arrangements are good.
- Standards in personal and social development are above average.
- There is good teamwork between the adults in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Relationships with the children are good.
- The learning environment for Reception children remains unstimulating; resources require improvement in quality and range, and some learning opportunities for Reception children are too formal.
- The co-ordinator has too little opportunity to provide practical support and guidance to Reception staff.

Commentary

44. Provision for early years children is satisfactory, with many good features. In the newly opened Nursery, children make a satisfactory start to their education. Standards on entry to the Nursery are at the levels expected for children of this age in most areas of learning, although many children's personal and social development is above average. Good induction procedures ensure that all children feel secure and comfortable from the outset. The emphasis on care for the individual child is evident throughout the Foundation Stage and they all achieve satisfactorily. Children, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. Most will achieve the early learning goals in all areas, with several exceeding them in personal and social development.
45. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator works hard but has had little opportunity to develop provision in the Reception classes. She is, however, beginning to have an impact there. There has recently been significant input from the local education authority to influence the planning and teaching across the Foundation Stage, accelerating the improvements that the new coordinator is achieving. All support staff are well briefed about their roles and make a good contribution to children's progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching in the Nursery. Both Reception teachers are new to the school and are very committed to providing good quality education. Strengths of teaching are the encouragement and engagement of the children through positive relationships and the insistence on high standards of behaviour. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Detailed observations of children's responses are providing a satisfactory base for assessment to enable staff to track children's progress.
46. Accommodation is newly built and resourced, providing spacious indoor areas for learning. There is a small secure outdoor area where Nursery and Reception children play together throughout the year. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Management of the outdoor area is insufficiently structured to ensure

³ Induction refers to the arrangements for receiving pupils new to the school, helping them settle into school routines and make friends.

maximum learning from the regular play sessions there. Resources generally are satisfactory but for Reception children in the classroom they are too few and of a limited range. Classroom walls in Reception are bland and unstimulating, and the organisation of the rooms does not at present provide opportunities for adults to be easily involved in children's play activities. This is limiting the opportunities for adults to extend children's learning. The Nursery is bright and appealing with equipment available at children's level and arranged to support key learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective induction procedures help children to adapt to new routines quickly.
- Good emphasis on developing appropriate social skills.
- Staff provide good role models and promote good relationships.
- Children are encouraged to be independent and self-reliant.

Commentary

47. There are sensitive procedures for admitting children to both year groups that ensure that early experiences inspire confidence. As a result, routines are quickly followed, and children demonstrate an eagerness to become involved. In the Nursery, the stimulating environment invites participation. Good teaching and learning in this area of development are based on adults' high expectations of behaviour, which are constantly and appropriately reinforced. Personal, social and emotional development is a planned element in the curriculum. Children's independence progresses well, as does their ability to work and play alongside each other. Nursery children select easily from a range of suitable activities when they are not engaged in focused group work. They show good concentration, are taught to listen carefully and are eager to learn. They are encouraged to care for themselves and to manage their own hygiene. Good teamwork between all staff makes a valuable contribution to the quality of learning, as adults seize every opportunity to encourage social development and independence.
48. Children achieve well. In the Reception year they respond well to the activities provided, but some find it hard to make choices at present. Several need adult guidance to sustain their concentration for more than a few minutes. Although there is sensitive support and direction, there is insufficient structured adult intervention in play routines alongside the focused group work. All adults are good role models. Consequently, the children learn from this and help one another well, showing sensitivity towards others in their play. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and recognise the need for a common code of behaviour. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they transfer to Year 1 most children will reach the standards expected for their age. Several will exceed them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong relationships encourage children to share conversation and ideas freely.
- Staff provide varied opportunities for speaking and listening.
- There are regular opportunities to develop early reading and writing skills.
- Some activities require more adult intervention.
- Literacy and numeracy sessions in the Reception year are too formal at this stage of the year.

Commentary

49. The quality of teaching is good in the Nursery and satisfactory in the Reception year. The pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Adults in both year groups constantly encourage children to talk and expect them to listen. However, language development opportunities in the Reception year are not built into the planning for each day. Although the staff take many chances to extend children's vocabulary, much of this is random and in response to children's own contributions. Important as that is, the lack of structure leads to many missed opportunities for extending children's learning further. Role-play activities are also entirely at the children's level, with little or no adult intervention to develop learning. Nursery children have positive attitudes to books and have confidence in talking about the stories and characters they hear about. Parents are encouraged to share library books at home, and contribute freely to writing. Writing skills are given strong emphasis, with opportunities provided for children to put their new skills into practice.
50. This is followed through into the Reception year, where children learn to form their letters well and begin to write independently. Play activities for writing are also provided, but at present few children choose them and adults are rarely available to offer encouragement and help. Prominence is given to developing reading skills, harnessing children's enthusiasm. However, too much emphasis is currently placed on trying to teach through the style of the National Literacy Strategy. Although several children show good progress in learning letter sounds, sessions of whole class instruction are not appropriate at this early stage for all children. Most will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception year and several will exceed them in writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of practical activities is provided every day to develop mathematical skills.
- Mathematical learning is promoted regularly.

Commentary

51. Teaching is satisfactory and teachers develop children's understanding of numbers satisfactorily. By the time Reception pupils enter Year 1 most attain the expected standards for their age demonstrating satisfactory achievement. Children in the Nursery develop mathematical concepts and language through some good focused activities that adults lead. They have good support as they explore the properties of sand and water, discovering for themselves the meaning of such words as 'full' and 'empty'. Many can put different sized shapes in order, or count the chairs as they re-arrange them.
52. In the Reception year, children's learning has developed sufficiently to enable them to match number cards to the value of 6, and to recognise and write numerals to 5. There are number lines and numeral pictures around the room to stimulate mathematical thinking which teachers and support staff use to enhance learning. Whole class sessions are used to introduce and recall key learning in lessons. However, as this is their first week of full-time schooling, many children are not ready for this more formal approach. They are not able to respond appropriately to the range of mathematical activities

available to them in group times without adult help. However, pupils who have just transferred to Year 1 have made satisfactory progress in their Reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a range of stimulating activities to develop children's understanding and knowledge.

Commentary

53. Children take part in many first hand experiences that widen their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many have had good opportunities to develop observational skills before entering the Nursery, and are able to put these to good use through the provision of such equipment as magnifying glasses and magnets. In the Nursery, children melt ice and chocolate, investigate how shadows are formed, and compare different materials. They track routes to school on large maps, and think about the differences between their town and St. Lucia. A newly built kitchen corner provides an excellent base for cooking sessions.
54. Both classes learn about road safety, the police force and the fire service, through visiting personnel. Reception children explore how cameras work and these are used to photograph their own models and pictures. The new outdoor area provides a rich source of interesting opportunities that are included in plans for this term. Computers are used regularly, so that children develop good mouse and keyboard skills. Teaching is consistently satisfactory so that the children achieve satisfactorily. Most will attain the levels expected for their age by the time they move to Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- An interesting range of appropriate activities and resources is provided.
- Both year groups have good, regular access to a safe outdoor area.
- The Nursery makes very good use of the school hall.

COMMENTARY

55. Teaching is satisfactory overall in this area of learning and there is some very good teaching in the Nursery. Achievement is satisfactory, and most children are likely to reach the expected levels for their age group by the time they leave the Reception class. Particular emphasis is placed on holding pencils and paintbrushes correctly to produce recognisable drawings and develop hand control. Children in both years are able to negotiate space well. Nursery children adjust their speed well when pedalling wheeled toys and learn to change direction appropriately to avoid each other and obstacles when playing in the crowded outdoor area. Dance sessions in the hall, when the children learn to move to the rhythm of music, are particularly effective in encouraging them to control body movements. They move with confidence and imagination.

56. Reception children also explore body control, both when playing outside and in regular apparatus times in the hall. The improvements made to the provision for outdoor play have greatly enhanced their opportunities. Reception children also show satisfactory skills and control in handling tools, objects and malleable materials.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- There is a range of opportunities for children to explore a variety of media, make and listen to music and use their imagination.

COMMENTARY

57. Children develop satisfactory skills and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory, and most children will attain the levels expected for their age group by the time they leave the Reception class. Painting and drawing materials and tools are available throughout the day so that children can spend time exploring different textures and techniques with the support of adults.
58. In the Nursery, adults also encourage children to talk about their work, using appropriate vocabulary. Models they have made are on display with pictures and drawings, giving value to these creations and providing a stimulating environment. Music making, begun as carpet sessions is followed up with opportunities to create and record children's own compositions, further enhanced by children and parents providing objects from home that 'create' music themselves.
59. Such activities are available to Reception children, but there is no clear organisation to the provision as yet, as this is the first week. Children are enjoying exploring new equipment and opportunities with guidance from adults. They sing enthusiastically and communicate ideas through role-play and alongside story tapes.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain high standards in national tests in Year 6.
- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- The new co-ordinator is already providing good leadership and management.
- Teaching is good overall and consistently very good in Year 6.
- Standards in national tests in Year 2 for reading and writing were below average when compared with schools in a similar context.

Commentary

60. Standards in the work seen in Year 2 are above average overall, reflecting good achievement. Standards in Year 6 are well above average reflecting both sustained good achievement and an improvement on the findings of the previous report.

61. The national test results for Year 2 pupils in 2003 were in line with the national averages for reading and writing but below average when compared with schools in a similar context. The indications from provisional test results for Year 2 pupils in 2004 are that standards have risen by a discernible amount in both reading and writing.
62. The standards attained in Year 6 in national tests in 2003 were excellent for all levels of ability. The provisional results for 2004 indicate the percentage attaining the expected Level 4 has increased slightly and the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 remains impressive.
63. Standards in reading in Year 2 are currently above average. The school gives considerable emphasis to developing this basic skill and receives considerable support from parents. There are daily opportunities for pupils to practise their reading and a wide range of resources to support them. Standards of writing are also above average in Year 2, which reflects the success of the recent initiatives to improve the general standard, particularly of boys. Able pupils in Year 2 are already writing confidently using a wide range of vocabulary, and they have a mature grasp of language.
64. The co-ordinator, who has been in post since April, has successfully endeavoured to make literacy more appealing and creative in order to stimulate the pupils' interest. As the pupils contribute to a class piece of writing led by her, they understand how to write better in a particular style or for a specific audience. The result of this is that in Year 6, standards of writing are well above average. Pupils clearly enjoy the plentiful opportunities for writing both in English and across the curriculum. They write both interestingly and accurately. All classes now have an identified 'writer of the week' so that this skill is given status.
65. The school has also given emphasis to developing higher order reading skills. Groups with a different focus work on specific reading tasks. The pupils take part enthusiastically in these activities. Standards of reading in Year 6 are well above average. There are regular opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting throughout the school, so that standards of presentation are good overall. Weekly spelling tests and the regular correction of mis-spellings ensure consistently good standards. Occasional drama lessons, and regular question and answer sessions in lessons, give appropriate emphasis to the development of skills in speaking and listening. The standards of these skills are satisfactory overall.
66. Teaching is good overall. It is predominately very good from Years 3 to 6 and at its best in Year 6. It is consistently good in Years 1 and 2. What characterises the particularly effective teaching in Year 6 are the high expectations of the teachers for their pupils. Pupils in a very well taught lesson were given a list and they applied identified criteria to measure the effectiveness of different openings to a story. This gave them a clear understanding of what was expected of them when they wrote. Computer technology is also used to very good effect. All teachers have very good subject knowledge which enables them to teach the basic skills of literacy effectively. Planning is consistently good and clear learning objectives are set for lessons. The success in achieving these objectives and a thorough evaluation of what has been learnt is a strong characteristic of all lessons. On the few occasions when teaching is less effective it is because of overlong introductions causing slight restlessness.
67. The needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are well addressed and their progress is assessed effectively within lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support, particularly

from teacher assistants, who ensure they have full access to what is being studied by other pupils. The promotion of equal opportunities is very good. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress related to their prior attainment. Some of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, especially those of Pakistani origin, experience early language difficulties but by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 their results in national tests are comparable to other pupils. Pupils of Indian descent make particularly good progress. Able pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 2 although their test results are only average. Their progress in Year 6 is very good because of the high expectations of the teachers.

68. The present co-ordinator has only been in post since April but she is already providing good leadership. She acts as a very good role model to other teachers and insists on high standards. The school has made an effective analysis of previous national test results and implemented successful initiatives to improve standards of writing. Pupils' progress throughout the school is assessed effectively and the marking of their work is regular, efficient and often gives clear guidance on how to improve. The school is well placed to maintain these high standards in Year 6 and recognises the need to improve test results in Year 2 so that standards compare better with schools in a similar context at that age.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

69. Good use has been made of other subjects to promote standards of writing as part of a whole school initiative. This is particularly evident in history and geography. In Year 2, pupils write letters as from Florence Nightingale to the Prime Minister, making him aware of conditions in Scutari while the older pupils in history write letters and stories empathising with a child labouring in a Victorian mine and a wartime evacuee. In geography, pupils write interesting, accurate descriptions of places they have visited on holiday. Information and communication technology is used very well to promote literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Teaching is good and in Year 6 often very good which enables all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Subject leadership is strong and is a significant factor in the high standards.

COMMENTARY

70. By Year 2, all groups of pupils achieve well. Standards are above average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Progress accelerates as the pupils move through the school and by Year 6, all groups achieve very well. Standards here are well above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection and is the result of good, and often very good, teaching and of good subject leadership. Boys and girls achieve equally well. This picture is reflected in the national test results.

71. By Year 2, the pupils have a good understanding of basic number facts and other areas of mathematics. They use this understanding well to solve simple problems. They measure and compare the lengths and weights of classroom objects and they tell the time accurately to the hour and half past. They have a good understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They represent data accurately by means of graphs and diagrams.
72. By Year 6, the pupils have a thorough understanding of basic numeracy, including fractions, decimals, percentages and negative numbers. They apply their knowledge effectively to solve real life problems, involving money, ratio and proportion. There is a strong focus on developing problem-solving skills.
73. Teaching is consistently good and this helps all groups of pupils to achieve well. There are some examples of very good teaching particularly in Year 6. There is a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to make quick mental calculations and the teachers employ a variety of strategies to achieve this. They give clear explanations of topics and use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully. The use of correct mathematical terminology is encouraged. Group work is organised efficiently, so that work is matched accurately to pupils' differing needs. This ensures that all groups, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are fully included in learning. Teachers also ensure that there is challenging work for higher attaining pupils.
74. The teachers make good use of resources to enhance learning. In two Year 6 lessons, the teachers used a very effective computer presentation to aid the pupils' understanding of equivalent fractions and decimals. The teachers encourage the pupils to explain their strategies and this helps them to see that there is often more than one way of solving a problem. Introductory sessions are occasionally too long, with the result that some pupils lose concentration. The teachers conclude lessons well to recap learning and to assess progress. They set regular homework tasks for the older pupils in order to extend learning.
75. Subject leadership is good and is a significant factor in the quality of teaching and in high standards. The co-ordinator monitors planning and teaching with a view to gaining consistency of approach throughout the school and he has led in-service training for colleagues. Some higher attaining pupils are given specific learning opportunities that enable them to reach a higher level in the national tests. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and for using this information to plan the next steps in learning. There is a clear action plan to raise standards further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, for example, Year 2 pupils construct accurate bar charts of their favourite fruits and vegetables. In geography, pupils in Year 1 contribute to a class pictogram of the ways in which they come to school. As part of their information and communication technology work, pupils in Year 6 represent data through accurate graphs of various types. In history, pupils in Year 3 draw accurate bar graphs of the birthplaces of Watford residents.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Experimental and investigational work is both well planned and taught.
- The use of scientific vocabulary is promoted well in lessons and on display boards.
- Leadership and management are effective.
- Pupils enjoy science activities and many achieve well beyond the expected level.

Commentary

77. Standards in the teacher assessments in Year 2 and in the national tests in Year 6 are very impressive. Standards in the work seen in Year 6 are well above average. They have improved since the last inspection. This is due to effective teaching and a good curriculum that focuses well on the key skills of experimental and investigative work to underpin the development of knowledge and understanding. All pupils achieve well.
78. The attention now paid to promoting scientific investigation across the school is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to science are good, behaviour is very good and pupils apply themselves well to practical tasks. In Year 6, for example, pupils were encouraged to develop their own questions as part of an investigation involving solids and liquids. Pupils share scientific resources and equipment fairly.
79. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. One particularly effective feature of teaching is the way teachers promote the use of scientific vocabulary. This is introduced, explained and reinforced during lessons with teachers expecting pupils to use it in their own explanations and recording. In Year 2, for example, pupils' understanding of the word 'amphibian' was promoted very well; in Year 6, they learned the meaning of 'condensation' when investigating solids, gases and liquids. In the best lessons, the teachers show good subject knowledge which enables them to ask relevant questions to challenge the pupils' thinking and develop their learning. Where teaching assistants are present in lessons their skill enables them to support pupils with special educational needs in accessing lessons fully. The work is well matched to the wide range of pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and able pupils.
80. The subject co-ordinator's effective leadership has led to high standards in the subject. Assessment arrangements are good overall. Pupils are given assessment tests at the end of each unit of learning which enables the teacher to monitor their progress and to maintain standards. Growing use is being made of information and communication technology to support learning in science, particularly in Year 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, work hard and behave well.

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Good resources are used effectively.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

81. The provision for information and communication technology has continued to improve since the last inspection and is now very good throughout the school. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6, reflecting good achievement by all pupils. The computer suite houses sufficient computers and resources are now good. They are used very effectively to support learning, both in information and communication technology lessons and throughout the curriculum. Pupils throughout the school, but particularly in Year 6, are confident and familiar with computers and are able to use them effectively to support their work in other subjects.
82. Some very good teaching was seen in specific information and communication technology lessons and other areas of the curriculum, particularly English and mathematics, where Year 6 teachers made good use of the computer linked projectors in the classrooms. Good planning and preparation ensures that lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers demonstrate and explain skills clearly in order that the pupils can achieve the lesson's objectives. Good use is made of the teaching assistants to support the learning of all groups of pupils.
83. There is a good curriculum that covers all the required aspects. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of standards and provision in order to drive the subject forward and has produced a detailed action plan to promote further improvements. This includes the current development of an assessment system to highlight any pupil weaknesses in order that support and provision can be better targeted. The co-ordinator is also trying to ensure that all aspects of information and communication technology are taught consistently across all age groups.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The use of information and communication technology to support and reinforce the curriculum is good in Year 6. Information and communication technology is planned into the mathematics curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6 and is used both in the computer suite and classrooms. The use of information and communication technology is being further developed in other subject areas. For example in science, a website was being used to explore gases, liquids and solids and in history pupils use the internet to search for information.

HUMANITIES

85. In **geography**, insufficient lessons were observed during the inspection to make an overall judgement on provision for the subject or on the quality of teaching. An analysis of pupils' work, however, indicates that, by Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection.
86. By Year 2, the pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing their understanding of a map as a view from above. They locate their homes and other features on a street

map of Watford. They see the importance of a map key. They use their literacy skills well to write simple descriptions of places which they have visited on holiday and they locate postcards of these places on a world map. The pupils compare life in Watford with that on a Scottish island and they suggest the advantages and disadvantages of island life.

87. By Year 6, the pupils have satisfactory map reading skills. They use coordinates accurately to locate map features and they understand the significance of scale. The pupils investigate aspects of the local area, such as the need for speed restrictions in Bushey Mill Lane. They understand the need for environmental conservation and recycling. They look at environmental change, such as the construction of a bypass, from differing viewpoints. From direct experience, the pupils know about aspects of the coastal geography of the Isle of Wight and they compare the island with their own locality. They also make comparisons between life in Watford and that in a village in Kenya.
88. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory, although the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing the pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has developed a clear action plan which aims to raise standards further.

HISTORY

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- There are good opportunities for the pupils to develop their literacy skills.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' research skills.

COMMENTARY

89. By Year 2 and Year 6, the achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory. Standards are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection.
90. By Year 2, the pupils are beginning to understand how homes, household items, transport and holidays have changed over time. They are familiar with some stories from British history, such as the Great Fire of London. They know about some famous people from the past, such as Florence Nightingale.
91. By Year 6, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of aspects of life in ancient Greece and Egypt and in Roman Britain. They research information from a variety of sources, including the Internet. Higher attaining pupils make good use of their literacy skills in comparing Athens with Sparta. The pupils know how life in Tudor England differed markedly between the rich and poor. They research information about life in Victorian times and about aspects of the Second World War.
92. Teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' understanding of chronology and of the need to look for clues in order to find out about the past. In a lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher emphasised the need to search for evidence about the past and this prompted the pupils to look carefully for clues about life in ancient Greece from the objects and artefacts they had available.

The teachers maintain a satisfactory balance between direct teaching and the development of individual research skills. The use of reference books and opportunities for extended writing make useful contributions to the development of the pupils' literacy skills. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher made effective use of role play, which helped the pupils to empathise with both the Celts of ancient Britain and with the invading Romans.

93. Subject leadership and management have been satisfactory, although the post of co-ordinator is currently vacant. There is a clear action plan which aims to raise standards further.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is related to the locally agreed syllabus.
- The curriculum covers all major faiths.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has begun but is at a developmental stage.
- Assessments of pupils' progress are very limited.

Commentary

94. The school uses the local guidelines to make sure that pupils reach the expected standards for their age in Years 2 and 6 as at the time of the last inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily.
95. Teachers' planning is based on national schemes of work, and is used well to help pupils consider how their learning about religious principles might influence everyday life. Year 3 pupils, for example, re-enacted the story of the philosophy of Islam by pretending to be the wrong-doers seen by Mohammed and thinking about the emotions this might arouse. Year 4 pupils learn about Sikhism, and Year 5 pupils compare the beliefs held by Jews with Christian thinking.
96. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in Year 2 where the use of artefacts and visual aids helps pupils to understand key learning in the story of Noah's Ark. Although there has recently been an audit of the work covered by different year groups, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to check that teaching is consistently good across the school. Together with the lack of clear assessment procedures, this means that pupils' progress varies from year to year. Recording of work is satisfactory and marking is carried out regularly, offering praise and encouragement. Resources are appropriate and of satisfactory quality which is an improvement since the last inspection.
97. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The previous co-ordinator has provided clear guidance for teachers, and has addressed the issue of time allocation raised at the last inspection. Support for pupils with special educational needs is no longer a significant issue but tracking progress in learning is an area still to be dealt with satisfactorily. Action planning for next year includes a sharper focus on spiritual development. This will be significantly improved by the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

98. Very few lessons were observed in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education** and so they were only sampled. As a result, no overall judgement on the quality of teaching is possible.
99. An analysis of pupils' work in **art and design** indicates that all groups of pupils achieve well. Standards are above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
100. By Year 2, the pupils are making good progress in their ability to use a variety of techniques and media. In work linked to literacy, the pupils blend and smudge pastels to create effective pictures of the Rainbow Fish. They use computers to generate vivid pictures on the same theme. The pupils are familiar with the work of famous artists such as Matisse, Rousseau and O'Keefe, and they use this knowledge as a stimulus to create imaginative pictures using natural objects. In three-dimensional work, younger pupils recently worked with a visiting artist to produce good quality homes and gardens out of clay. They design and create effective fabric weavings.
101. By Year 6, the pupils continue to make good progress in developing their skills in two and three-dimensional work. They are refining their ability to observe detail as they make good pencil sketches of objects, paying close attention to line and tone. They use computers to generate imaginative pictures in the style of Klee. They modify digital images of themselves to create effective portraits in the style of Warhol. In work linked to literacy, the pupils create effective collages on the theme of 'behind the door'. The pupils explore harmonising and complementary colours in order to create effective patterns. They are familiar with non-European art and they create eye-catching pictures based on Aboriginal designs. As part of a topic on journeys, the pupils design and make very imaginative and highly decorated African masks.
102. Subject leadership and management are good and are a significant factor in the high standards although the coordinators have not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching. There is a clear action plan to raise standards further.
103. An analysis of pupils' work in **design and technology**, displays and discussions with staff indicate that the satisfactory provision in this subject matches that found during the last inspection.
104. Pupils' work shows that they experience the complete design, make and evaluation process. For example, pupils' finished vehicles in Year 6 are well made and supported by designs showing measurements; making instructions and an evaluation of the finished product. Similarly, a torch display by Year 4 pupils involved investigating torches and switches before designing and making one. Some of their work, such as making biscuits in Year 1, is recorded photographically. However, the teachers' marking of the design diagrams and instructions recorded by the pupils do not give sufficient feedback on the standards achieved or how pupils might improve further.
105. The co-ordinator is new and enthusiastic. She is aware of developments that have to be made and these are identified in the school action plan. The school has a medium term teaching plan and policy. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

106. In **music**, pupils cover the full range of study across the school but management of the timetable for teaching music varies according to the availability of the music co-ordinator. She is an enthusiastic and skilled teacher, whose influence has a significant and positive impact on pupils' attitudes to singing and playing instruments. Consequently, a quarter of the school's pupils take part in instrumental tuition in school time, and many attend orchestra and choir practices at lunchtimes or after school, where they experience a wide range of exciting and appropriate music and songs. Singing is of a high standard across the school, as pupils rehearse, improve and perform with great enjoyment.
107. Most music lessons currently occur on Mondays when the co-ordinator is in school. Class teachers give good support during lessons, which are held in the spacious and well equipped music room. Pupils learn to follow rhythm and notation, with emphasis on dynamics and pitch, and some classes are also concentrating on the element of composing. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the more advanced skills of those who have individual tuition, which further raises standards of performance. However, the system for recording the progress of each pupil requires some improvement, as does the use of information and communication technology for musical learning and research.
108. In **physical education** lessons, pupils are enthusiastic, well-motivated and active. They partake in good warm-up and cool-down routines and understand the need to do this prior to and after exercise. There are good resources which are well used during lessons. The school accommodation is satisfactory overall. The grass area used for outdoor games has been left in a poor state after the school was rebuilt and the playground space is limited. However, there is a good size hall, with an additional dining hall, which can be used for some activities. The school has good links with the Queen's School, a local specialist sports school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The co-ordinator has recently taken up her position and has made a good audit of resources and provision, recognising that assessment arrangements need to be improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

109. There is good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to discuss relevant issues, such as friendship, feelings, sharing and community service, and to develop social skills in clubs and school productions, on school visits and by helping with tasks around the school. The pupils support many local and national charities. They learn about the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse and about the need for a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. There is formal sex education for pupils in Year 6. A school council meets regularly to foster pupils' understanding of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	2
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).