

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FIELD INFANT SCHOOL**

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117161

Headteacher: Mrs E Maykels

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Gough  
22361

Dates of inspection: 14th - 17th February 2000

Inspection number: 190301

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Neal Street Watford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD1 8AX
Telephone number:	01923 227306
Fax number:	01923 227306
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Bridgeman
Date of previous inspection:	5th November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Gough	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well does the school care for its pupils How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils How well does the school care for its pupils or students How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mrs G Pilling	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities Mathematics Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mr D Carpenter	Team Inspector	Under-fives English Religious education Art Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed

The inspection contractor was:

Lynrose Marketing Limited  
Bungalow Farmhouse  
Six Mile Bottom  
Newmarket  
Suffolk  
CB8 0TU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>13</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Field Infant School is situated in the centre of Watford. It is a community school and caters for pupils between the ages of three and seven. There are currently 226 pupils on roll, including 53 part-time Nursery pupils. Of the 156 pupils who are of compulsory school age, 77% are of white ethnicity, and 15% are Pakistani. The remaining pupils represent a variety of other ethnic groups. Twenty-one pupils have English as an additional language, and their main home languages are Urdu, Pahari, Gujarati and Bengali. A total of 50 pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, including seven Nursery pupils. This figure represents 22% of the school population, and is just below the national average. Although no pupil has a statement of special educational needs, three pupils are currently awaiting statements. Twenty-one pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. This figure represents 12% of the school population and is below the national average. The school draws most of its pupils from the local area, and their socio-economic circumstances are mixed. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes is below average in terms of language development, although pupils have good levels of personal and social skills. The school admits pupils into the Nursery and Reception classes at the start of the autumn and spring terms, and at the time of the inspection, 82 pupils were under-the age of five, including the part-time Nursery pupils.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Field Infant School is a hard-working and friendly school which is very effective and which gives good value for money. Pupils start from a below average baseline and make good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. By the end Key Stage 1, standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national average. Pupils of all ages and levels of ability have very positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn. The teaching is good, and has a significant and positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good, and helps them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good. The school has established a very good partnership with parents, and the well-being, health and safety of the pupils are the shared concern of the headteacher, staff and Governing Body. The leadership and management by the headteacher are very good, and ensure a clear focus to the school's work. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the school is well placed for future development.

### **What the school does well**

- Teaching is good across the school.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in English, mathematics, information technology and religious education, and achieve their full potential.
- The school caters well for pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, and enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities have very positive attitudes to work and to school, and are very enthusiastic in their approach to learning.
- Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils respect one another, and relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are very good.
- The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils, including the under-fives.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are very well cared for. Procedures for child protection are very good.

- The school's target setting systems in English and mathematics are excellent and are very accurate.
- Very good links have been established with the parents, and the local and wider community. Parents are kept very well informed.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a very clear sense of purpose and educational direction.
- The school's aims and values are known to pupils, staff and parents, and underpin the life and work of the school.
- This is a happy and hard-working school.

### What could be improved

- Standards in science at the end of the key stage.
- The organisation and presentation of pupils' written work across the curriculum.
- The amount and quality of the written work produced by pupils.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected four years ago, and has improved at a good rate since that time, despite considerable changes in staff and in the composition of the Governing Body. The school now has schemes of work in place for all subjects, and has a good system of long-term planning. Teachers' weekly and daily planning is of a consistently high standard, and is linked closely to termly planning. The school has made very good progress in developing assessment systems in English mathematics and science, and the systems for setting individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics are excellent and very useful. Pupils are well on course to achieve the set targets in English and mathematics. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher is excellent, although there is little monitoring by other members of staff, because most of them are very new to the school, and many are at an early stage in their teaching career. The school has worked hard to ensure that higher attaining pupils are fully challenged, and this is reflected in the end of key stage National Curriculum test results and teacher assessments, which show an above average number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils of all ages now demonstrate very high levels of independence in their work, and are given many very good opportunities in most classes to use their initiative and to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. The school has produced a good quality School Development Plan which is appropriately costed. The school is well placed for future development, and the many well established systems and procedures ensure that a high standard of education can be maintained.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	C	C	C	well above average A above average B

Writing	C	B	E	E	average C
Mathematics	B	B	B	C	below average D
					well below average E

On the basis of the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results, standards in reading have been average for the past three years and have kept pace with national improvement. In comparison with similar schools, the 1999 test results are average. The inspection findings indicate that standards in reading are in line with the national expectation, and that a significant number of pupils attain above average standards in this aspect of the English curriculum.

In writing, standards have dropped from above average in 1998 to well below average in 1999. In comparison with similar schools, standards are well below average. The decline in writing standards coincides with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which, in the early stages of implementation, led to a reduction in opportunities for pupils to carry out independent and extended writing tasks. The school has responded quickly and appropriately by introducing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in English lessons, but there are still not enough opportunities in all classes for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. The inspection findings indicate that standards are now in line with the national average, but that pupils could make even more progress in this aspect of the English curriculum.

Standards in mathematics, have been consistently above average for the past three years. In comparison with similar schools, the 1999 test results are average. The inspection findings indicate that the attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is in line with the national average. The discrepancy between the inspection findings and the National Curriculum test results is simply due to the difference in the ability of the cohorts of pupils and does not represent a decline in standards.

In science, pupils' attainment is below average on the basis of the 1999 teacher assessments, and this is confirmed by the inspection findings. Insufficient time is allocated to the subject, and although pupils have a satisfactory breadth of knowledge, their investigative and experimental skills are weak.

The school caters well for pupils of all abilities, enabling an above average percentage of pupils to attain the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive very good support which enables them to make good progress, but despite the school's best efforts, many of these pupils do not attain the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school has set very precise targets for individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, and measures pupils' progress very closely to ensure that they achieve their full potential. Careful analysis of assessment data helps the school to identify general areas of strength and weakness, and this information is used well to help raise standards, and to move the school forward.

Baseline assessments, carried out when pupils start school in the Nursery, and again when they join the Reception classes, confirm that pupils' attainment in language and literacy is below average. By the age of five, despite making good progress, a significant number of pupils do not attain the desirable learning outcomes in the language and literacy area of learning. However, most pupils, attain the desirable learning outcomes in the mathematical and creative areas of learning and have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. By the age of five, nearly all pupils attain beyond the desirable learning outcomes in terms of their physical, and personal and social development.





## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages and abilities have very positive attitudes to school. They have high levels of concentration, and are often enthusiastic in their work. Pupils persevere well, and enjoy being challenged in their thinking. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils have respect for one another and for the adults with whom they come into daily contact. Pupils are friendly, polite and co-operative. They are aware of the impact of their actions on others, and respond well to the high expectations of the school.
Personal development and relationships	From an early age pupils show very high levels of independence in their work. They make choices and decisions with confidence. Most pupils put a lot of effort into their work, and all work to the best of their ability. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very good, and ensure a very harmonious and pleasant working environment for pupils and adults alike.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and is close to the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good

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

Teaching is good overall. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was excellent in 14% of lessons seen, very good in 22% of lessons seen, good in a further 47% of lessons, and satisfactory in the remainder. The teaching of the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is of a consistently high standard, and enables the pupils to make good progress in their first years in school. Activities are stimulating and appropriately focus on the development of early language and mathematics skills. In Key Stage 1, teachers carefully match work to the pupils' ability, and cater very well for the higher attaining pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. Very clear explanations at the start of lessons help pupils to gain a good understanding of what is being taught, and enable them to work independently. Teachers use questions very well to extend pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. The one weakness in teaching is the organisation and annotation of pupils' written work. Although most written work in English and mathematics is well organised in books, topic work is often completed on individual sheets of paper, which become disordered, making it difficult for pupils to see their own progress. Worksheets are sometimes used too much. There are few comments on pupils' work to indicate how much help pupils have had, or what the exact focus of the task was. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, and teachers work especially hard to help the pupils to become readers. Initial snags associated with the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully addressed, and additional time for extended writing is helping to raise standards in this aspect of the English curriculum. Some opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are not fully exploited in all classes, but this is an identified area of school development.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good and activities are appropriately linked to the key areas of learning. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 pupils is broad, but at present a large amount of time is devoted to teaching English and mathematics, leaving little time for other subjects. A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered, although some have to be paid for.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs. They receive very good levels of support from teachers and classroom assistants which help them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school's provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good, and enables them to make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. The 'value of the month' is well-known to pupils and their parents, and provides a meaningful context for assemblies and a focus for personal development sessions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for the pupils and provides good levels of academic and personal support and guidance. Pupils and their families are well known to the headteacher and staff.
How the school works in partnership with parents	The school has established a very good partnership with parents and there are high levels of parental satisfaction. Parents receive plenty of information about the school's life and work, and are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. However there is currently no deputy, and many of the curriculum co-ordinators are new to the school and have limited experience. The special educational needs co-ordinator plays a key role in ensuring good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body is very newly formed, and its impact therefore on school development is currently limited. However, governors are keen to learn, and committees have already been set up for key aspects of the school's work. All statutory requirements are met, with the exception of acts of collective worship, which do not always take place on a daily basis.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and Governing Body have a very clear insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses through the careful evaluation of standards, and regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources and spends its money wisely. It gives good value for money.
Staffing, learning resources and accommodation	The school is well staffed and teachers and support staff are very effectively deployed. The accommodation is attractive, spacious and well used. Learning resources are adequate in range and quantity for most subjects, although there is a shortage of computer software in some subjects. Because of storage constraints, resources are not always easily

accessible to pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents state that the school provides a caring, happy and secure learning environment for their children.</li><li>• Parents comment favourably on the good leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of all staff.</li><li>• Most parents are very pleased with the levels of information they receive from the school.</li><li>• Most parents are very pleased with the way in which the school deals with occasional incidents of misbehaviour.</li><li>• Parents are generally pleased with the amount of homework the school provides.</li><li>• Many parents comment favourably about the 'value of the month' and the way in which the school actively promotes positive values and attitudes.</li><li>• There is an open-door policy, and parents are welcome to come into the school at any time to discuss their concerns or ask about their children's progress.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few parents would like even more information than they already receive.</li><li>• Some parents would welcome more direction about how homework is to be completed.</li><li>• Some parents do not think the school provides enough extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

There are high levels of parental satisfaction and the vast majority of parents are very pleased with the standard of education provided by the school. The inspection findings confirm all of the positive comments made by the parents, but do not support the negative comments. The school provides very good levels of information, and the headteacher and staff do their best to ensure that parents are well informed. Enough guidance is given about homework, and parents can visit or telephone the school at any time if they are unclear about how tasks are to be completed. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities although some have to be paid for.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. At the time of the inspection, 82 pupils were under the age of five, including 53 part-time Nursery pupils. Baseline assessments, carried out when pupils start school in the Nursery, and again when they join the Reception classes, indicate that pupils' attainment in language and literacy is below average, but that their attainment in relation to the other elements of the baseline assessment is at the expected level. By the age of five, despite making good progress, a significant number of pupils do not attain the desirable learning outcomes in the language and literacy area of learning. Most pupils attain the desirable learning outcomes in the mathematical and creative areas of learning, and have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Nearly all pupils attain beyond the desirable learning outcomes in terms of their physical, and personal and social development. Consistently good teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that the under-fives make good progress in each of the key areas of learning, and that they receive a good grounding in the basic skills of numeracy and literacy.
2. On the basis of the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results, standards in reading have been average for the past three years and have kept pace with national improvement. In comparison with similar schools, the 1999 test results are average. The inspection findings indicate that standards in reading are in line with the national expectation, and that a significant number of pupils attain above average standards in this aspect of the English curriculum. Pupils benefit from good teaching, and quickly develop confidence. They practise regularly at school and at home and this helps them to make good progress. The school's decision to provide reading opportunities that are additional to those incorporated in the literacy hour is having a positive impact on standards and progress, and pupils of all abilities are achieving their full potential.
3. In writing, standards have dropped from above average in 1998, to well below average in 1999. In comparison with similar schools, standards are well below average. The decline in writing standards coincides with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which, in the early stages of its implementation, led to a reduction in opportunities for pupils to carry out independent and extended writing tasks. The school has responded quickly and appropriately by introducing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in English lessons, but there are still not enough opportunities in all classes for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. The inspection findings indicate that standards are now in line with the national average, and a small number of the current group of Year 2 pupils are producing extended pieces that are of high quality. However, the pupils could make even more progress in this aspect of the English curriculum.
4. On the basis of the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, standards in mathematics, have been consistently above average for the past three years. In comparison with similar schools, the 1999 test results are average. The inspection findings indicate that the attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is in line with the national average. The discrepancy between the inspection findings and the National Curriculum test results is simply due to the difference in the ability of the cohorts of pupils and does not represent a decline in standards. The recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' mental agility, and regular practice of number facts is helping them to become more confident and

accurate in their mental and written calculations. There are strengths in pupils' number skills, but some pupils do not have a sufficiently secure grasp of some aspects of shape, space and measure, and do not have enough opportunities to carry out open-ended problem solving tasks. The school provides some opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum, but these could be extended further.

5. In science, pupils' attainment is below average on the basis of the 1999 teacher assessments, and this is confirmed by the inspection findings. Insufficient time is allocated to the subject, and although pupils have a satisfactory breadth of knowledge, their investigative and experimental skills are weak. Science has been identified as the next major area for development within the School Development Plan, and the headteacher and staff are aware that the recent focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy has had an adverse impact on pupils' attainment in science. Already teachers have started to plan more opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary investigative skills, and this is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
6. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain above the national expectation in information technology. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were below the national expectation at the end of the key stage. However, although pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of information technology, and use a good range of skills in information technology lessons. However, opportunities for them to use computers to support their learning across the curriculum are limited in some classes. In religious education, standards exceed the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of the key stage. Pupils have a good knowledge of the main world religions, and a mature understanding of how religion impacts on peoples' daily lives. Pupils' attainment in religious education is better than it was at the time of the last inspection.
7. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in English and mathematics. They benefit from good teaching and frequent practice of basic skills. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring the necessary knowledge, but do not make enough progress in developing investigative skills. Pupils make good progress in information technology and religious education. In art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils make good progress in the areas studied. However, because some elements of these subjects have not been covered over the past two years, in order to allow extra time to be given to English and mathematics, pupils' breadth of experience is relatively narrow.
8. The school caters well for pupils of all abilities, enabling an above average percentage of pupils to attain the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive very good support which enables them to make good progress, but despite the school's best efforts, many of these pupils do not attain the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has set very precise targets for individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, and measures pupils' progress very closely to ensure that they achieve their full potential. Careful analysis of assessment data helps the school to identify general areas of strength and weakness, and this information is used well to help raise standards, and to move the school forward.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment have very positive attitudes to school. They are well behaved, both at work and play, and demonstrate high levels of independence.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their learning and for jobs around the school and do so conscientiously and with considerable pride. There has been an improvement in the overall quality of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development since the last inspection.

10. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. They co-operate very well with teachers, show high levels of interest in their work and apply themselves fully to tasks. They listen well and follow instructions in lessons carefully. They show very good levels of concentration and take pride in their achievements. Pupils are keen to answer questions and participate fully in lessons. Many good examples of this were seen during the inspection, especially in literacy sessions when pupils were often highly enthused and very keen to present their ideas. Nearly all pupils have very high levels of concentration, and persevere for long periods of time. The attitudes of under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes are very positive, and they show a keen and active interest in all activities.
11. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils throughout the school, including the under-fives, is very good, and has a very positive and significant impact on pupils' learning. Although there are one or two pupils in most classes who have behavioural problems, and who sometimes do not conform to the high expectations of the school, their behaviour is managed very well by staff, and they rarely disrupt the learning of others. The school functions as a very friendly and orderly community, where pupils and adults show mutual and genuine respect. Many pupils have very good manners, and are confident and friendly in their approach to adults. Pupils are well aware of the school's expectations of behaviour, and know the system of sanctions and rewards which they believe to be fair. Bullying is not a problem in the school and is not tolerated. Occasional incidents are dealt with very quickly and effectively. The school temporarily excluded one pupil in the past year for unacceptable behaviour.
12. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are very willing and keen to take responsibility. The school provides many good quality opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and to take responsibility. For example, at playtime, Year 1 and 2 pupils signal the end of play and stagger the entry of their classmates as they come into school. To the credit of all pupils, this works exceptionally well. Some pupils are given duties to look after younger ones and help to ease them into their new year groups. Class monitor tasks are well established. All pupils are encouraged to talk with children sitting on the 'friendship bench' in the playground. This fosters caring and friendship. Pupils collaborate with one another very well. For example, in a science lesson, Year 2 pupils effectively shared duties in teams as they carried out an investigation into the effects of distance on sound. Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in themselves as performers by taking the lead in assemblies and school performances. Pupils use their initiative very well in their learning and develop good independence skills at a very early age.
13. Attendance is satisfactory, and is close to the national average. The rate of authorised absence is average and the rate of unauthorised absence is considerably below the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school although some do not arrive as promptly as they might at the start of the school day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. Teaching is good throughout the school. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good or excellent in 36% of lessons seen, good in a further 47% of lessons,

and satisfactory in the remainder. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when almost one fifth of teaching was unsatisfactory. Since that time there have been many staff changes, including the headteacher. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of whole-school planning, which is helping teachers to prepare well focused lessons which have clearly stated learning objectives.

15. The teaching of the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is of a consistently high standard, and enables the pupils to make good progress in their first years in school. Activities are stimulating and appropriately focus on the development of early language and mathematics skills. Effective use is made of daily assessments to ensure that pupils are progressing at the expected rate, and to guide teachers' planning. Classroom assistants are used effectively to support pupils, although there are times when they give too much direction, and this constrains the pupils' own ideas. Very good use is made of play as a vehicle for learning, and good levels of adult help ensure that pupils develop a wide range of skills. Pupils are given a great deal of choice within the planned range of activities, and this helps them to become independent in their work. From an early age, they are encouraged to develop personal and social skills through working co-operatively with their classmates, taking part in 'snack-time' in the Nursery, and participating in whole-class discussions in the Reception classes. Well established daily routines help the pupils to develop a sense of security, and to become confident and happy learners.
16. In Key Stage 1, teachers carefully match work to the pupils' ability, and cater very well for the higher attaining pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. Support staff are used very effectively to work with individuals, and small groups of pupils who have special educational needs or English as an additional language. The practice of support staff sometimes working alongside pupils in class, and sometimes withdrawing them to nearby areas is well considered, and effective. Good use is made of individual education plans to guide the planning of work for pupils who have special educational needs.
17. One of the strengths of teaching throughout the school is the use of very clear explanations at the start of lessons to help pupils to gain a good understanding of what is being taught, and to enable them to work independently. Teachers are also very effective in their use of questions to check pupils' understanding. Where the best teaching occurs, questions are often open-ended, and really challenge the pupils in their thinking. In one class, the teacher allows plenty of time for pupils to answer questions, having recognised that some pupils who know the answers actually need more thinking time than others.
18. Lessons across the curriculum are mostly well paced, although there is a tendency in some classes for introductory discussions to be a little too long, leaving insufficient time for the pupils to complete their written tasks. Very good use is made of learning resources to enhance teaching and to demonstrate important or difficult teaching points. Many resources are easily accessible to the pupils, enabling them to select them for themselves. However, some resources, such as those for science, music and mathematics, are stored centrally, and pupils' access is therefore limited.
19. The teaching of English and mathematics is good in all classes, and some very good lessons were seen during the inspection. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, and teachers work especially hard to help the pupils to become readers. Initial snags associated with the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully addressed, and additional time for extended writing is helping to raise standards in this aspect of the



English curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy is in the early stages of implementation and is already starting to have a positive impact on pupils' mental agility. Lessons are well planned in the suggested manner, and teachers are confident in their handling of the various elements. Some opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are not exploited fully in all classes, and this is an identified area of school development.

20. The teaching of science is satisfactory, and some good lessons were observed during the inspection. Teachers are now starting to provide more investigative opportunities for the pupils, but still do not allocate enough time to the teaching of science. Information technology is taught well in all classes, and regular whole-class sessions have been instrumental in raising standards by ensuring that pupils systematically acquire the necessary range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Religious education is taught well, enabling pupils to attain high standards, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to record their learning in written or diagrammatic form. As a result, they have little to draw upon if asked to recall their previous learning. Within the range of experiences offered, the teaching of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education is good. However, because only a small amount of time is currently allocated to each of these subjects, pupils' experience is relatively narrow.
21. Teachers throughout the school have a secure subject knowledge and a good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Teachers plan well together in year groups, sharing expertise and experience, and this ensures that pupils in the same year group, but different classes, receive the same experiences. The newly qualified teacher enjoys good levels of support from her colleagues, and has had the opportunity to watch more experienced teachers lead lessons with her class. However, there are no opportunities for teachers to exchange classes in order to teach their specialist subjects.
22. Teachers make very consistent and good use of the school's behaviour policy to promote good behaviour and manage occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Teachers' class control, and management of the pupils, are very good in all classes, and this enables lessons to proceed smoothly and without interruption to pupils' learning. The one or two pupils in each class who have behavioural problems are dealt with sympathetically but firmly, and these pupils are not allowed to disturb the learning of others.
23. Good use is made of a range of teaching methods, including whole-class, individual and group work. Teachers provide many very good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, sharing ideas and resources, and making decisions about their work. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good, and underpin the quality of life in the school. Pupils know that teachers value their opinions, and respond well to the frequent praise and encouragement they receive.
24. The one weakness in teaching is the organisation and annotation of pupils' written work in some subjects. Although most written work in English and mathematics is well organised in books, topic work is often completed on individual sheets of paper, which become disordered, making it difficult for pupils to see their own progress. There is little annotation of pupils' work and it is therefore not always easy to see how much help pupils have had, or what the exact focus of the task was.
25. Homework is used effectively to enable pupils to practise basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and an appropriate amount is provided for each year group. However, the tasks are sometimes unimaginative, and do not cover subjects other than English and

mathematics. There is scope for the school to develop the variety of homework provided.

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

26. The curriculum for the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good and activities are appropriately linked to the key areas of learning. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 pupils is broad, but at present, the large amount of time devoted to the teaching of English and mathematics leaves little time for other subjects. Religious education is taught according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and all other statutory requirements in relation to the curriculum are fully met.
27. The school has a good equal opportunities policy and pupils of all ages and abilities have full and equal access to the curriculum. The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils at Stage 2 and above on the school's special educational needs register, and most contain very clear targets which teachers use effectively when planning work for these pupils. The school's provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good, and enables them to make good progress in their learning. The practice of some of the bilingual teachers and support assistants working alongside pupils in lessons, translating difficult or technical words, enables pupils to participate fully in all activities.
28. The curriculum for the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is very well planned around the key areas of learning, and activities are presented in an interesting way which captures and maintains the pupils' attention. Good emphasis is placed on the development of early language and mathematics skills, especially spoken language, which for many pupils is below average when they join the school. Free and structured play activities are used extremely well to promote pupils' learning and to fire their imaginations. The transition of older Reception pupils to the National Curriculum Key Stage 1 programmes of study is seamless, and is very effective.
29. The school has successfully implemented both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. There were some initial organisational problems with the National Literacy Strategy resulting in a dip in standards in writing. The school responded very quickly by introducing additional extended writing sessions which supplement the writing activities in the literacy hour, and this has had the desired effect of raising standards. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been much smoother, and it is already starting to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The mental mathematics activities at the start of the sessions are popular amongst the pupils, and very effective in improving their mental agility.
30. All other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught regularly in all classes, but in order to devote more time to English and mathematics, to raise standards in these areas, the other subjects each receive only a small amount of time, which limits the amount of work that can be covered. The time allocation for science is not enough to enable full and in-depth coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study and this is adversely affecting the standards pupils attain. The recent introduction of a whole-class teaching session for information technology is having a very positive impact on standards, and enables teachers to ensure that pupils acquire and practise the necessary computer skills. However, due to a shortage of software in some subjects, information technology is not yet being used as much as it could be to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
31. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, although some have to be paid for. They include French, football, short-tennis, drama, chess and choir, but not all run throughout the year. These activities successfully enhance the statutory curriculum

and are popular and well attended. The school makes good use of visits to support pupils' learning, and Year 1 pupils have recently visited the House of Commons, at the invitation of the Local Member of Parliament. The headteacher and staff are very effective at picking up and developing incidental opportunities that come their way, and through their visit to a local superstore, have developed some good additional links which will support pupils' learning in information technology.

32. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. 'Circle Time' is effectively used across the school, and gives pupils high quality opportunities to discuss many important issues which often link with the 'value of the month', which at the time of the inspection was 'caring'. The school's values and attitudes are clearly and effectively promoted, and parents are particularly pleased with the way in which the school fosters positive attitudes and relationships. The school has a clearly stated sex education policy, and aspects of sex education are sensitively taught within a context of strong family values. Drugs education is mainly provided through work in science, although there are some opportunities for pupils to discuss associated issues in 'Circle Time'.
33. Links with the local and wider community are very strong, and have a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning. The vicar from the local church is a regular visitor, and frequently leads school assemblies. Year 1 pupils visit the Church when they learn about places of worship in religious education. Very effective links have been established with the local emergency services. The school has developed a very good link with Watford Library. Pupils played a lead role in launching 'The Year of Reading' at the Library, and the Library hosts many events and sessions for pupils and effectively promotes their interest and love of books. Although business links are limited, the school benefits from the support of local firms who make financial donations and give prizes for raffles.
34. The school has very good links with universities and colleges, and welcomes trainee teachers and childcare students for periods of school placement. Pupils benefit considerably from these arrangements and enjoy the new experiences these students offer. The school has good relationships with the neighbouring junior school to which most pupils transfer, and effective arrangements for transition are in place.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. Daily assemblies are important social gatherings which effectively promote pupils' moral development, and provide some very good moments of reflection, although they do not always contain a collective act of worship. The 'value of the month' is used as a stimulus, and is well known to pupils and their parents. Music is an important part of whole-school assemblies and pupils listen quietly and thoughtfully to recorded music as they enter and leave the hall. Pupils sing hymns joyfully and with real feeling, and think hard about the words they are singing.
36. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and are given the chance to explain their actions, and to apologise if they misbehave. They are encouraged to have respect and tolerance for the views of others, and staff work hard to ensure that the many different cultures within the school are represented and celebrated in classroom displays, and in the range of books on display in the library. Pupils are given many very good opportunities to work together collaboratively, and to take responsibility for aspects of their learning and jobs around the school. Teachers and other adults are excellent role models, and this creates a positive atmosphere to which the pupils respond. Teachers are very sensitive to opportunities for promoting awe and wonder in the natural environment, and help pupils consider moral issues such as caring for animals

and living things, and preventing the environment from becoming polluted. Very good use is made of incidental opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that arise during the course of the day.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

37. The school takes positive and effective steps to ensure pupils' health and safety, and the levels of support and guidance it provides are very good.
38. Procedures for Child Protection are very good. The headteacher is the designated officer, and she is appropriately trained. All staff recently took part in training provided by the LEA and are fully aware of the school's policy and procedures. The school has effective links with the appropriate external agencies.
39. The Governing Body Premises Committee frequently carries out health and safety risk assessments, and follows up immediately on any matters that arise from these checks. Accident and emergency procedures are well established and are understood by staff and pupils. All staff have completed a basic first-aid course, and three members of staff have received more substantial training. Fire drills are carried out regularly, and appropriately recorded. Staff are very vigilant in health and safety matters and they follow the school's procedures fully. The school works very closely with external agencies in raising awareness of health and safety matters.
40. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are well established and effective. Good use is made of a range of rewards and sanctions to manage pupils' behaviour, although some of the recently appointed staff are not fully conversant with the school's procedures and this creates some inconsistency of approach. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are satisfactory.
41. Assessment systems and procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science are very well established and very well used to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. The school's systems for target setting in English and mathematics are excellent, and ensure that very accurate and precise targets can be set. Good use is made of the analysis of end of key stage National Curriculum test results to measure the school's performance against the national and county picture, and to highlight areas for curriculum development. The school has recently developed a new report form which will be built up cumulatively through the year, and which will give parents a very good overview of their children's progress across all subjects. Procedures for tracking pupils' personal development are also very good, and enable the school to identify problems at an early stage. Very good use is made of assessment to identify pupils who have special educational needs, and to monitor their progress. The school has not yet extended its assessment systems across information technology and religious education, although this is an identified area for future development.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

42. The vast majority of parents have positive views of the school. Replies to the inspection questionnaire, and responses at the pre-inspection meeting, indicate that parents have a high level of confidence in the headteacher and staff. Parents are happy with the quality of education provided by the school.
43. Whilst the inspection findings confirm the parents' positive views of the school, they do not support the small number of negative views. Although some parents would like more

information, this is not practical or necessary. Parents are well informed through newsletters, curriculum letters and regular meetings. In addition, parents can come into school at any time they wish to discuss issues or concerns with the headteacher or classteachers. A few parents would like more guidance about the completion of homework, but the tasks set for the pupils are nearly always self-explanatory and parents are encouraged to contact teachers if they need further clarification.

44. The school has successfully maintained a very good partnership with parents since the last inspection, and this remains a strength of the school. Parents receive very good quality information about the school, its policies and procedures. This enables parents to become better involved in their children's learning. For example, they receive guidance about listening to reading at home and developing their children's handwriting. Good information is provided for new parents to the school including, for example, the behaviour policy. Newsletters are sent home regularly, and are appreciated by parents. They are well presented and effective in keeping parents informed about any issues and forthcoming events. Classteachers provide very good information about ongoing classwork by means of 'topic sheets'. In addition, teachers invite parents to curriculum meetings to tell them about the work their children are involved in. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality and they contain plenty of information about what children know, can do and understand.
45. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed and are fully involved in discussions about their children's progress. They are encouraged to work in parallel with the school, helping their children towards the targets in their individual education plans. The school does all it can to cater for those parents whose first language is not English, and, when important messages need to be conveyed clearly, provides some translation facilities through members of staff who speak other languages.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

46. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, who has been appointed since the time of the last inspection. Together with the staff and Governing Body, she has addressed each of the key issues identified in the last inspection report, and has overviewed the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. The school is currently in the process of being assessed for an Investors in People Award, and as a result of this initiative has developed many good quality systems and procedures for identifying areas for development, and for monitoring and evaluating improvement. At present there is no deputy headteacher, and until a new appointment can be made, the two most senior members of staff are supporting the headteacher in her work.
47. Curriculum co-ordinators are in place for some subjects, although the headteacher is currently carrying the responsibilities of the deputy who has recently left, and a teacher who is absent through illness. This load is untenable in the long-term, but in the short-term ensures that planned curriculum development can be carried through. Co-ordinators have well defined job descriptions, and are responsible for developing aspects of their given subjects. Co-ordinators have a good overview of their subjects across the school through regular informal and formal discussions, and through monitoring colleagues' planning, but do not yet monitor teaching and learning through direct classroom observation.

48. The school's aims are very clearly stated, and demonstrate the commitment of the headteacher, staff and Governing Body to promoting high standards and maintaining a good standard of education. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum, and the school's equal opportunities policy is fully reflected in practice. The school provides very well for pupils who have special educational needs, and the co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that pupils who need help are given the necessary support from within the school and from the appropriate external agencies. Individual education plans are of good quality and the school meets the recommendations of the Code of Practice fully. The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good, and full-time teaching staff work closely with part-time teachers and support assistants to ensure that these pupils make good progress. Delegated funding for special educational needs and English as an additional language is well spent to ensure that the pupils concerned receive the best education possible.
49. The headteacher has implemented many very good strategies for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and has a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's educational provision. She regularly observes lessons, and gives feedback to teachers. Annual discussions help staff to identify areas for professional development, which are then linked into the School Development Plan. The headteacher carefully monitors all teachers' weekly and termly planning, enabling her to have a very clear overview of the curriculum.
50. The Governing Body is very newly formed, and many of its members are inexperienced. Its capacity to fulfil its role of 'critical friend' to the headteacher is therefore limited, and at present, most governors are relying heavily on the headteacher for information and guidance. The Governing Body is very involved and supportive in the life of the school, and is keen to learn. The Governing Body fulfils its statutory duties, with the exception of acts of collective worship which do not take place on a daily basis. The School Development Plan is a good quality working document which sets out the school's priorities. It is fully costed, and progress towards the identified targets is regularly evaluated.
51. The school's procedures for measuring pupils' progress in English and mathematics and for setting individual targets for development are excellent, and enable very accurate predictions to be made about pupils' attainment. The school makes good use of the results of end of key stage National Curriculum assessments to identify general areas of strength and weakness in pupils' learning, and has a very clear understanding of how the school's performance compares with similar schools, schools in the same LEA, and all schools nationally. Very good use is made of assessment data to measure the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, and to ensure that the highest attaining pupils in the school are being sufficiently challenged.
52. The school's procedures and systems for financial management and control are very good, and enable the headteacher and Governing Body to have easy and fast access to up-to-date information about income and expenditure. The school Bursar is responsible for much of the day-to-day running of the budget, and plays a valuable and important role in monitoring the school's finances. The most recent audit report was complimentary about the school's financial systems, and the few minor recommendations have been addressed. The school anticipates that it will carry forward approximately 7% of its total income. This is slightly more than the recommended 5%. The school uses its money wisely, and seeks to secure the best value when ordering goods or carrying out work on the building or grounds.

53. The school has sufficient experienced and suitably qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teachers are very well supported by a dedicated team of qualified support staff and volunteers, who mostly work with pupils who have special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language. A number of teachers are recently appointed and one of the teachers is newly qualified. There is a very co-operative ethos amongst the staff and a strong team spirit that contribute to the good quality of education delivered by the school. The ancillary staff is also much valued as a part of the school family, and makes a significant contribution to the effective running of the school.
54. The accommodation is attractive both internally and externally and is of a good standard. A separate and equally attractive building houses the Nursery class. The school grounds are set out in a pleasing manner on different levels. Play areas, and an area containing tables and a pergola, are pleasing to the eye and popular with the pupils. There are some small sheltered areas where pupils and parents may gather and converse with one another and members of staff. Inside, the classrooms are well maintained and very clean and welcoming. Rooms open onto shared areas that are well used both for general teaching activities and small group work. The learning environment is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. The school benefits from a well-proportioned hall that can accommodate the whole school, including the Nursery class.
55. Overall the quality and quantity of learning resources is satisfactory, although there are not enough ethnic or tuned percussion instruments in music. Some resources are centrally stored on high shelves in closed cupboards making it difficult for the pupils to access them. This storage arrangement means that there are missed opportunities for pupils to handle a range of resources in class, during times when they have finished their set tasks. When resources are in use in the classrooms they are well cared for and valued by the pupils. The library and reading areas are well stocked and used to good effect both in lessons and at break-times. Books figure prominently in the classrooms and are suitably matched to the needs and interests of the pupils. The school works hard to cater for all pupils, and many of the resources reflect the multi-cultural nature of the school.
56. The school is well placed for future development, and gives good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

57. The Governing Body, headteacher and staff should:-
- 1) raise standards in science by giving more time to the subject, and ensuring that all teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills; (*paras 5, 7, 18, 20, 30, 97-104*)
  - 2) improve the organisation and presentation of pupils' written work by making more use of books for pupils to record their work in, by reducing the number of individual worksheets, and by annotating pupils' work in more detail. (*paras 24, 95, 103*)
  - 3) improve the quality and quantity of pupils' written work by ensuring that pupils have enough time to complete written tasks; (*para 86*)
  - 4) provide time within the week for pupils to complete unfinished work. (*para 18, 86*)



**Other issues which should be considered by the school:-**

- acts of collective worship do not take place on a daily basis;
- co-ordinators do not contribute to the monitoring of teaching and learning by carrying out classroom observations;
- some resources are difficult for pupils to access;
- there is not enough computer software in some subjects;

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14	22	47	17	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	173
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.21
National comparative data	0.2

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	21	28
	Girls	25	23	24
	Total	50	44	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (88)	73 (87)	87 (87)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	28	27
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	50	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (88)	85 (89)	87 (86)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	23
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	20

### Education support staff: YR-Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
--------------------------------	---

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	381,042
Total expenditure	368,563
Expenditure per pupil	1,543
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,865
Balance carried forward to next year	40,344

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	76

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	16			
My child is making good progress in school.	55	41	1		3
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	8		5
The teaching is good.	72	28			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	40	8	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	27		1	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	3		1
The school works closely with parents.	46	43	5	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	63	32	3	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	3	1	
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	37	12	6	6

## **PART D:**

### **THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

#### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. The results of the baseline assessments, carried out when pupils join the Nursery and Reception classes, show that most pupils enter school with standards below those expected for their age in terms of their language development. The under-fives make good progress in each of the key areas of learning and by the age of five, attain the desirable learning outcomes in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, and mathematical development. They attain beyond the desirable learning outcomes in terms of their personal and social development, and physical development. Despite making good progress, they do not attain the expected standards in the language and literacy area of learning.
57. The quality of teaching of the under-fives is good, and there are some very good and excellent features to the teaching. Teachers are very well supported by a team of well-qualified and experienced classroom assistants, and the quality of this teamwork is a major contributing factor to the good progress being made by the under-fives. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes have a very clear understanding of the way in which young children learn, and place good emphasis on play as a vehicle for learning. The development of early language and mathematics skills is given high priority and staff work hard to promote language through play, ensuring that pupils have a meaningful context for their learning. Pupils' personal and social development is actively promoted and pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. They have many very good opportunities to make choices and decision about their work, although there are occasions when too much adult intervention prevents them from expressing their own ideas.
58. The monitoring of pupils' progress is efficient and effective and the results of all assessment procedures are reflected in teachers' planning. The school has recently developed a new report and assessment form that will provide a good level of information for parents. Very good use is made of the results of ongoing assessment to identify pupils who have special educational needs and the early identification of pupils who need additional help and support in their learning significantly enhances their progress.

#### **Personal and social development**

59. By the age of five, most pupils attain beyond the desirable learning outcomes in terms of their personal and social development. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good at work and at play, and pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Pupils are confident and independent learners who are keen to take the lead in shared activities and are willing to join in with class tasks. The under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes share and co-operate well, and respond positively to the simple classroom rules. Relationships amongst the pupils are very good, and during the inspection there were many occasions of older pupils helping their younger classmates. Pupils are learning many personal and social skills, such as sitting together for snacks, changing clothes for physical education activities, and playing and working together in small groups. They are encouraged to select their own resources, and do so with confidence and purpose.

60. The teaching of personal and social development is ongoing throughout the day, and is of a consistently good standard. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, the under-fives are given a wide variety of stimulating and challenging learning opportunities which contribute significantly to all aspects of their personal and social development, and promote effective learning.

### **Language and literacy**

61. Pupils start the Nursery and Reception classes with a low level of language, and despite making good progress in their first years in school, most do not achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. The teaching of language to the under-fives is of a consistently good standard. Very good opportunities for role-play, and for taking part in class discussions and action rhymes, help pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, and there are many enjoyable structured and free-choice activities in both the Nursery and Reception classes which encourage pupils to develop early reading and writing skills. Pupils have access to a good range of games and other activities that effectively promote language development, and staff supervising play activities are conscious of the constant need to promote and develop pupils' spoken language.
62. Most of the under-fives are keen to communicate with one another and with the adults with whom they come into daily contact, but only a few have a sufficiently wide vocabulary to draw upon. In some cases this causes frustration when pupils are trying to explain their feelings, or tell their news, and can not find the right words. In the Nursery class, pupils often choose to listen to the story tape, and respond well to what they hear. Nearly all of the under-fives listen well to stories and in the Reception class, take an active part in discussions about the 'Big Book' in the literacy hour. Pupils converse well with one another and enjoy talking about their work. Good adult intervention when pupils are playing in the sand or water helps them to develop mathematical and scientific vocabulary, and enables pupils to clarify their understanding of important concepts such as floating and sinking, or to make comparisons of size.
63. Pupils are encouraged to take an interest in books, and most enjoy sharing books with each other and their teachers. Good emphasis on phonic skills in the Reception class prepares pupils well for their first reading books, and pupils are making good progress in recognising basic key words. Book corners in classrooms are attractive, and encourage pupils to choose books. The under-fives quickly learn to identify their own names, and the highest attainers use labels on trays to find particular learning resources.
64. The school encourages pupils to develop their writing skills through emergent writing, where pupils use their own form of marks to convey their thoughts on paper. This ensures that pupils understand the purpose of writing, by 'writing' shopping lists in the home corner for example, before they learn the conventions of writing with alphabet letters. Pupils make good progress, and by the age of five, many copy-write accurately, and a few are beginning to express their own ideas using recognisable spellings of simple words.

### **Mathematics**

65. Pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in their mathematical development, and by the age of five, attain the desirable learning outcomes in this area of learning. The teaching of mathematics is good, and there are many very good opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding through free and structured play activities.

66. Throughout their day in school the under-fives use numbers in many of their activities. They often begin the day with counting at registration. They participate in choosing the sequence of tasks for the day, and match and sort the equipment and toys being used. In the Nursery class, pupils know that only a given number of pupils can work on an activity at any one time, and match the number shown on the label for the task with the number of pupils taking part in the task. By the age of five, most pupils count forwards and backwards to ten and sometimes beyond, and are starting to understand that there are some much larger numbers, such as one hundred or one million.
67. By the time they reach the age of five most pupils compare, sort, match and sequence equipment, activities and objects, and they are able to address practical problems using their mathematical understanding. When playing in the sand or water, they investigate capacity and weight, and use mathematical vocabulary such as full/empty, more than/less than when filling containers. Pupils divide objects into simple sets, according to given criteria such as colour or shape, and make simple repeated patterns. Pupils take part in a good range of musical activities, and number rhymes and songs effectively promote mathematical understanding and language development.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

68. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and attain the desirable learning outcomes in this area of learning by the time they reach the age of five.
69. They benefit from good quality teaching and have many very good opportunities to explore their immediate environment. Staff are particularly adept at linking tasks to the pupils' own lives. Through looking at items of clothes pupils learn the difference between manmade and natural fabrics. They describe their journey to school, and observe weather conditions. Fantasy play allows pupils to explore their own thoughts and feelings, and shared activities with their classmates allow them to experience the hurts, frustrations and pleasures that relationships engender.
70. Pupils use a wide variety of materials in many forms, and as they learn to cut, join and make objects they begin to develop a basic scientific vocabulary. In the process they learn to hypothesise and solve problems and become confident in their use of equipment such as computers and programmable toys.
71. Reception pupils have religious education lessons and are starting to become familiar with some of the stories Jesus told. They have a good sense of morality and understand friendship and caring, the two main values that have been promoted throughout the school in the last two months.

### **Physical development**

72. By the age of five most pupils attain beyond the desirable learning outcomes in terms of their physical development. They use space well, and move purposefully around the classroom. Most are well co-ordinated and accurate in their movements. In physical education lessons, Reception pupils jump, hop, walk, run and balance with increasing control.
73. Pupils develop fine motor skills through their use and control of pencils, paintbrushes, the computer keyboard and mouse, and programmable toys. Through their use of large play equipment such as bicycles and climbing frames, and in their physical education



sessions in the school hall, they also become more proficient in their use of gross motor skills

74. In class, pupils become proficient in pouring, and learn to balance items on a tray at snack time. They move and tidy equipment and learn the basic safety rules which require sensible use of space and an awareness of the presence of others. Nursery pupils have access to a secure outdoor play area in good weather and are able to use a range of apparatus and equipment. Through their work with materials of varying consistency, and through the construction of a variety of models, pupils become very confident in their use of manipulative skills, such as rolling, cutting and sticking.
75. The quality of teaching is good for all of the under-fives, and pupils make good progress as they are encouraged to practise and refine the skills they have been taught. Lessons are well planned and teachers are secure in their understanding of the physical needs and development of young children.

### **Creative development**

76. Pupils make good progress in their creative development and are attaining the desirable learning outcomes by the time they reach the age of five.
77. Creative development is encouraged through role-play, a range of making and modelling tasks, computer technology and musical activities. In their art work pupils are able to explore texture, shape and colour and can experiment with combinations of materials and methods. They make and match objects using different materials of varying degrees of compatibility and often demonstrate high levels of creativity in their work. Pupils' imaginations are fired through the use of music, stories and poems, and the senses are heightened through activities involving touch, taste and smell.
78. As their imaginations develop, the pupils play increasingly sophisticated games and manipulate relationships within their activities such as dressing up or in the home corner. In the Nursery, creative play and planned activities are especially successful in building self-confidence and self-awareness, and this is particularly noticeable in the pride with which pupils share the outcomes of their efforts with others.
79. The teaching of creative skills is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes, and staff make good use of ongoing discussions with pupils engaged in art and craft activities to enhance the pupils' spoken vocabularies.

### **ENGLISH**

80. Overall, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with the national average. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are often good. Standards in writing have improved over the last year, and are now satisfactory, but there is still room for further improvement in this aspect of the English curriculum. The inspection findings closely mirror the findings of the last inspection report.
81. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is now having a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment, although in the early stages of its implementation, insufficient time was given to extended writing, and this is reflected in the dip in the National Curriculum test results between 1998 and 1999. The school has in the past two years given a large proportion of time to the teaching of English, and whilst this has had a positive impact in the short-term, some valuable opportunities for pupils to use

their literacy skills across the curriculum have been lost. The school is aware of the need to ensure that pupils use their reading and writing skills more to support their work in subjects such as science, geography and history.

82. Speaking and listening skills are successfully promoted, and pupils make good progress as they move through the key stage. Pupils in all classes listen attentively to their teachers, and to one another, and follow instructions carefully. Shared reading sessions are particularly successful in enhancing speaking and listening skills, and in all classes pupils are keen to take part in these activities. Pupils make especially good progress in the development of their spoken vocabulary in class discussions, especially when teachers give them time to formulate their answers. By the end of the key stage, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average, and many pupils are confident and articulate speakers. Pupils benefit from hearing teachers use specialist vocabulary, and use it themselves when explaining a science or mathematics task for example. In assemblies, pupils have good opportunities to speak to the whole school, and do so with poise and enjoyment.
83. By the end of the key stage, standards in reading are above average, and pupils make particularly good progress in this aspect of their English work. A good range of attractive books, representing different cultures and traditions, is freely and widely available throughout the school, encouraging pupils to become interested in books and keen to read. Apart from the regular reading of their graded reading books, pupils choose from a wide variety of reference books and other literature, and are familiar with the organisation and layout of the library and reading areas outside the classroom. Pupils in all classes are attached to their books and treat them with great care and respect. They derive much pleasure from sharing their reading achievements with one another, and it is a reflection of the quality of teaching that they read to visitors without fear or hesitation. The reading successes of those pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are also shared with the same degree of enthusiasm and encouragement. As they progress through the key stage, pupils develop a range of strategies to help them when they encounter unfamiliar words. There is a constant flow of books between home and school, and most parents are in active partnership with the teaching staff in the promotion of reading.
84. By the end of the key stage, pupils attain average standards in writing. The highest attainers have some good ideas which they express clearly and in sequence, but many pupils do not write sufficiently lengthy pieces. Nearly all pupils have good recall of stories they have heard, and have written accurate accounts from memory of the tales of Snow White, Cinderella, and Hansel and Gretel. Most pupils have a secure grasp of how to use basic punctuation such as full stops and capital letters, and the highest attainers understand when to use speech marks and paragraphs in their work. Handwriting is well formed, and from an early age pupils learn to use joined script. Workbooks and class compendiums contain examples of writing from all genres including diaries, poetry, reviews and letters. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress from a low baseline, but could do even better if they had more opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
85. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is very good and teachers are fortunate in being able to rely upon a dedicated and proficient team of support assistants and volunteers. Progress is carefully monitored and the outcomes are used in planning future teaching.
86. The quality of teaching in English is good and some excellent examples were observed during the course of the inspection. Lessons are well planned and prepared and the

organisation of literacy hours is very good. Teachers give very clear explanations, enabling pupils to know exactly what is expected of them, although some introductions are too long, leaving little time for pupils to complete their written work. Teachers involve pupils fully in discussions, giving them practice in developing their speaking and listening skills, and encouraging them to express their opinions and ideas. Teachers are often very enthusiastic in their presentation of 'Big Books', and really motivate the pupils to want to learn. Tasks are always well matched to pupils' levels of ability, enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential. The 'weekly literacy targets' are a very positive way of focusing pupils' attention on specific teaching points, and pupils respond well to this weekly reminder. The one minor area of weakness in teaching is the organisation of pupils' work which is not always effective. Some of the writing books for older pupils are too small, and do not encourage them to write lengthy pieces, or to take enough pride in the setting out of their work.

87. The school's procedures for target setting in English are excellent and enable teachers to make very accurate predictions about pupils' attainment at the end of the key stage. Good use is made of assessment information to guide teachers' planning. Teachers mark work regularly, but most work is not annotated to show how much of the work was done by the pupil and how much by an adult. This makes it difficult to measure pupils' progress by scrutinising the work in their books.
88. The headteacher and co-ordinator have a good overview of the teaching of English, and teachers have a good subject knowledge. The National Literacy Strategy is now fully and successfully implemented across the school, and initial snags have been addressed. Resources for English are good, and help capture pupils' interest. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and there are many occasions in lessons when pupils are able to express their thoughts and feelings, and share special moments with their classmates.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. The inspection findings indicate that by the end of the key stage, pupils' overall attainment in mathematics is in line with the national average. Many pupils attain above average standards in aspects of number work, but although most have a secure grasp of elements of shape, space and measure, some pupils are not sufficiently confident in this aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Standards have generally improved since the time of the last inspection, especially in relation to number.
90. As they move through the key stage pupils acquire a broad mathematical vocabulary which they use to good effect to explain their work. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good understanding of how mathematics is used in their everyday lives, such as when shopping, telling the time, or weighing cooking ingredients. They solve number problems with confidence, and the highest attainers are starting to make generalisations about pattern in number, based on given information.
91. By the end of the key stage, most pupils attain good standards in number. They count forwards and backwards with ease in twos, fives and tens, and know a variety of number facts which help them check the reasonableness of their calculations. Pupils complete written calculations which require them to find the missing number, and higher attainers confidently add and subtract three digit numbers. Pupils halve and double numbers quickly, and some pupils have grasped that subtraction is the inverse operation to addition. Pupils have a good understanding of fractions and divide shapes into halves and quarters. The highest attainers use their knowledge of fractions well when working

with money, and know for example that fifty pence is half of one pound. Pupils are responding well to the recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, and particularly enjoy taking part in the daily mental mathematics sessions. Without exception, these are used well in all classes to help pupils become faster in terms of their mental agility.

92. Although most pupils have a secure grasp of two dimensional shapes by the end of the key stage, their knowledge and understanding of the properties of three dimensional shapes is shaky. Pupils are not consistently accurate when asked to describe the features of cubes, cuboids and spheres for example, and are not always clear about the difference between a two and three dimensional shape. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of measure, and use both standard and non-standard units of length and weight with a reasonable degree of confidence and accuracy. From an early age pupils become familiar with the notion of estimating, and by the end of the key stage, many pupils make accurate estimates of up to one metre in length, although they are not as accurate when estimating weight or capacity. Pupils have experience of telling the time using both analogue and digital displays, and most are accurate when using 'o'clock' and 'half past', but are less reliable when using 'quarter past' and smaller divisions.
93. Pupils make good use of computers to support their mathematical work, especially when presenting data as graphs and charts. Pupils collect their own information which they load into a database for retrieval at a later stage. Work with programmable toys helps them to start to understand the notion of angle as a measure of turn, and reinforces their knowledge and understanding of position and direction.
94. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress as they move through the key stage, especially in terms of their number work. There are many good practical opportunities which enable pupils to practise and consolidate their learning, and to extend their thinking. Tasks are carefully matched to pupils' levels of ability, enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential. The higher attaining pupils are catered for very well, and the results of the National Curriculum end of key stage tests confirm that an above average number of pupils attain the higher Level 3.
95. The quality of mathematics teaching is good throughout the school, and there were some excellent features in the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers are particularly effective in the way in which they use the mental mathematics introduction in numeracy sessions. Teachers are so enthusiastic when presenting mental mathematics tasks that pupils clamour to give the answer, and become totally involved in the session. The most effective teachers recognise the need to give some pupils 'thinking time' in these fast paced sessions, and ensure that all pupils have the chance to give an answer. This ensures that pupils of all abilities remain well motivated and keen. Tasks are very well matched to pupils' levels of ability and appropriately challenge the highest attainers. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' number work and for presenting and interpreting data, but there is not enough regular use of calculators to help pupils explore large numbers. Teachers provide a good range of open-ended problem solving activities which require pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding, but they are mostly only related to aspects of number. One of the main strengths of mathematics teaching is the way in which teachers help pupils to develop mathematical vocabulary, and frequent use of key words helps pupils to become familiar with different ways of asking the same question. For example, pupils know that 'find the difference between', 'subtract', 'take-away' and 'how much more than' are all instructions for performing the same mathematical operation. The unsatisfactory organisation of worksheets is the only minor weakness in teaching. The loose papers

make it difficult for pupils to look back on their past work and see the progress they have made, and do not encourage pupils to take enough pride in the presentation of their written work. Overall, the good quality of teaching has a positive impact on standards and ensures that pupils learn to the best of their ability.

96. The subject is currently led by the headteacher who maintains a very good overview of teaching and learning through her general monitoring activities. The school is very successfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, and has purchased a variety of attractive resources to support the mental mathematics activities which introduce the sessions. Time in lessons is well used, although there is not as much time as there was for pupils to carry out problem-solving activities. Pupils' numeracy skills are effectively developed in mathematics lessons and in some other subjects of the curriculum, but further cross curricular opportunities would be beneficial to the pupils. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' learning and the school is building up a good range of appropriately challenging software.

## **SCIENCE**

97. The inspection findings indicate that standards are below national expectations at the end of the key stage. Insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of science, and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding by carrying out investigations and experiments. Science is identified as the next major curriculum priority in the School Development Plan, and steps have already been taken to increase the opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and experimentation. Standards in science have dipped since the time of the last inspection when they were in line with the national average.
98. By the end of the key stage, the highest attainers make sensible predictions based on their previous knowledge, and most of the pupils have a growing, but not firmly established, understanding of what constitutes a fair test. Pupils have recently started to record their findings in different ways, but few pupils are capable of devising their own recording sheets. Pupils are not able to independently carry out investigations, and have come to rely too much on adult help when carrying out practical work. Pupils build up a good scientific vocabulary as they move through the key stage, and most are keen and careful observers who show good levels of interest in their science work.
99. Pupils have a secure knowledge of living things, and by the end of the key stage know that all living things have common basic requirements if they are to survive and flourish. To investigate the conditions for healthy growth, Year 2 pupil recently carried out a controlled and extended experiment where they planted beans, and left some without water, some without air, some without warmth and some without light. They monitored the beans' growth over a period of several weeks to see which were the most favourable growing conditions, and recorded their observations. Most pupils understand that living things change as they grow, and explain clearly how babies start from a seed, and move through childhood and adulthood into old age. Older and higher attaining pupils understand the difference between things that are living, things that once had life but are now dead, and things that have never been living. Through their studies of their own bodies pupils learn about the senses and become aware of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and eating a well balanced diet. Pupils consider the use of drugs, and explore the idea that controlled doses of prescribed medicines can have a positive effect if someone is ill, but that misuse of any drugs can cause harm.

100. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of materials and their properties and use a good range of vocabulary to describe the appearance, feel and suitability of a range of materials. Younger pupils have recently considered the best materials for building a house for the 'Three Little Pigs' and carried out an experiment to find out which of three suggested materials was the strongest. Pupils sort materials according to their properties and understand that some are better suited for some purposes than others. Few pupils are confident about explaining how materials change when they are heated or cooled, and pupils have not had enough opportunities to consider how some materials change their shape when force is applied.
101. By the end of the key stage most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of physical processes. Nearly all of the Year 2 pupils know that a complete circuit is needed to light a bulb, and explain the component parts of the circuit model they have made. They identify household appliances that are powered by electricity, and know that some sources of light, such as the sun, are natural. Pupils understand force as pushes and pulls, but, because of the lack of investigative opportunities, they have not explored this phenomenon in as much depth as they could have done, and do not understand, for example, that squashing an empty carton demonstrates the application of a force. As part of their music work pupils have considered the sounds that instruments produce and know that as sound sources become closer to the ear, so the sound becomes louder.
102. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those who have special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, and the higher attaining pupils, is satisfactory in terms of their knowledge and understanding, but unsatisfactory in terms of the development of their investigative and experimental skills. Insufficient time is currently allocated to the subject making it difficult for teachers to plan practical activities which can be time consuming to organise, carry out and record.
103. In the lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was of a consistently high standard, but it is only recently that teachers have focused on developing pupils' investigative skills, and therefore, overall, teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared and tasks are often presented in an imaginative manner which captures the pupils' interest and maintains high levels of involvement and motivation. Coverage of the curriculum is good, ensuring that pupils gain a broad and well balanced scientific knowledge. The practice of revisiting topics throughout the key stage is helpful in consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding, and all teachers make effective use of scientific vocabulary. There are times in most lessons when pupils are given too much direction by their teachers and other adults, and this prevents them from solving problems themselves and using their imaginations to the full. Good planning between teachers in the same year groups ensures that pupils in different classes receive the same learning experiences, but in Year 2, there is too much difference in the way in which tasks are presented, with one teacher really challenging the pupils in their thinking, and the other directing their learning too much and not providing enough challenge in some of the tasks. The presentation of written work is unsatisfactory as much of the work is presented on individual sheets of paper which are not properly collated. This makes it difficult for pupils to look back on previous work. In one Year 2 class, large books are used very effectively to organise the pupils' work, and additional worksheets are neatly secured.
104. At the time of the inspection there was no co-ordinator for science and the headteacher had assumed this responsibility. Science is the next major development focus for the school, and the headteacher is very much aware of what needs to be done to raise standards. The school has an adequate range of good quality resources, but their

central location makes it difficult for pupils to access themselves, and limited space in classrooms means that there are few interactive displays to pique pupils' curiosity and stimulate their interest. At present only limited use is made of computers to support pupils' learning in science, and the information technology co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop the range of software. There are some good opportunities within science lessons for developing aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers are very sensitive to opportunities for promoting awe and wonder in the natural environment, and help pupils consider moral issues such as caring for animals and living things, and preventing the environment from becoming polluted.

## **ART**

105. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress within the limited range of experiences undertaken, and produce pieces of work which are of high quality. The amount of time currently allocated to art is less than at the time of the previous inspection, and this limits coverage. However, because of good teaching, standards have not slipped, and pupils learn a sufficiently wide range of skills and techniques during their time in school.
106. Most pupils have a good knowledge of colour and colour mixing, and enjoy experimenting with the additions of other colours to change the shade. Pupils talk about colours in terms of whether they are cold or warm, and know the effect of adding white or black. Pupils make good quality observational drawings, sometimes using magnifying glasses to search for the minute detail, and demonstrate a good sense of perspective in their work. Year 2 pupils have recently made some lifelike drawings of leaves which they collected themselves. This activity also usefully developed their sense of touch as they felt the leaves before drawing them, and described their appearance and texture.
107. The school's proximity to London has made it possible for pupils to visit galleries and to study the work of famous artists and they have used the experience to good effect in their own paintings and drawings. The influence of the work of Monet is very apparent in the paintings of some of the Year 2 pupils, and good links were made with literacy when pupils wrote about the artist and his work. Year 1 pupils have recently studied the work of Paul Klee, which led them to focus on the pattern created by lines in their local environment. Pupils have created some very original pictures based on lines, using paint and paper. Further work from this topic included printing with pipe cleaners and polystyrene tile presses. Because of the restrictions of time, pupils have little opportunity to work in any depth with three dimensional materials such as fabric and clay, although they do create attractive collages from paper and card.
108. The teaching of art is good, and teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to explore a variety of materials and to develop the necessary skills and techniques. Activities are well organised and long-term planning shows clearly how the pupils' knowledge and understanding are to be developed. Teachers throughout the school value pupils' work and make great efforts to display it attractively. Some of the best displays are characterised by interactive labels which remind pupils of what the skills they have used, and ask them questions to extend their thinking further.
109. The newly appointed co-ordinator is gaining a good overview of teaching and learning through the school, and is enthusiastic about moving the subject even further forward.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress within the limited range of experiences undertaken, and produce pieces of work which are of high quality. The amount of time currently allocated to design and technology is less than at the time of the previous inspection, and this limits coverage. However, because of good teaching, pupils' overall progress and attainment have improved.
111. All pupils discuss their design ideas with enthusiasm and they clearly enjoy the making process. Some of the products they make, and their evaluations, are very sophisticated for the age of the pupils concerned. Pupils of all ages take pride in the finished products, and are keen to talk about how they would complete the task in a different way if they



repeated it. Pupils use a variety of found and recycled materials in their modelling, and produce a good range of designs in three dimensions. They have access to a variety of methods of sticking, including glue and tape, and effectively assess the compatibility of these with the materials being used. They make both static and moving models, and older pupils speak knowingly of the problems involved in making the transition from fixed to moving objects. Pupils have good opportunities to develop skills of food technology, such as making porridge, and these activities often support their mathematical development as they weigh and measure ingredients.

112. The teaching of design technology is good and teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and activities successfully address aspects of making, designing and evaluating. Pupils are encouraged to be creative and imaginative in their work, and to develop independence through selecting their own materials and methods of working. Although the lack of time given to the subject restricts the number of tasks that can be completed, nevertheless, teachers have worked hard to ensure that the tasks provided cover the necessary skills and techniques.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in geography, and develop an appropriate range of geographical skills as they move through the school. Although only limited time is allocated to the subject, the teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has a positive impact on both standards and pupils' progress.
114. Older pupils have a very clear idea about the difference between towns and countries, and know that Great Britain is made up of four countries. They recognise that because Great Britain is surrounded by water, it must be an island, and realise that this is not the case for all countries. Most pupils give accurate directions when describing their journeys to and from school, and the highest attaining pupils explain the difference between the manmade features they pass, and the natural features of the local area. Older pupils are aware that atlases provide a great deal of geographical information. They are familiar with the notion of maps through their work relating to route planning, and Year 2 pupils have drawn 'bird's eye views' of a local park. Younger pupils have started to gain an understanding of the purpose of maps and plans and have completed pictures showing 'Red Riding Hood's' route through the forest. Most pupils throughout the school have a good understanding of climate, and correctly associate certain weather conditions with different seasons of the year.
115. Some Year 2 pupils have recently carried out a comparative study between Watford and Botswana. This has been an invaluable experience, not only because of the geography it has generated, but also because of the cultural links that pupils have made when comparing lifestyles and traditions.
116. The teaching of geography is good and promotes high standards and good progress for pupils of all abilities. Topics are carefully selected to ensure that pupils acquire a variety of skills, and although only a limited amount of time is given to the subject, coverage is good. Good use is made of the local area to enable pupils to develop practical skills, and there are some good links with literacy and numeracy. Information technology is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning in geography because of a shortage of suitable software.

## **HISTORY**

117. As they move through the school, pupils of all ages and levels of attainment make good progress within the limited range of work they study. However, because of the limited periods of history covered, pupils have no real sense of chronology, and know very little about ancient civilisations. The standards described in the previous inspection report have been maintained.
118. Pupils' recall of what they have learned is very vivid, and reflects the high levels of interest they show in the subject. Year 2 pupils have recently studied the 'Great Fire of London', and retell the progress of the fire with clarity, precision and accuracy. Through studying extracts from the diary of Samuel Pepys, pupils have gained a good appreciation of how historical evidence is documented and passed down from generation to generation. The highest attaining pupils recognise that the written word is more reliable as a source of evidence than the spoken word, and appreciate that today's events will become the history of the future.
119. Older pupils have a very secure grasp of the notion of change. They understand the differences between the past and the present when considering such features as clothing, housing and working conditions, and give well considered reasons for the changes they identify. For example, in discussion, Year 2 pupils recognised the impact of the introduction of electricity to the work place, and described how transport has changed over the past hundred of years. Some of the history work promotes high levels of empathy in the pupils, such as when one Year 2 pupil was considering the use of young boys to clean chimneys.
120. The teaching of history is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and move at a good pace. Effective use is made of introductory discussions to set the scene, and to enable pupils to think about why certain things happened as they did. Searching questions ensure that the highest attaining pupils are fully stretched. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, enabling them to present lessons in an enthusiastic manner which captivates the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. There are some good opportunities for Year 2 pupils to develop their literacy skills as they write diary extracts in the style of Samuel Pepys, but more could be done in encouraging pupils to use reference books to find out historical facts and information. The main weaknesses in teaching are the lack of opportunity for pupils to carry out extended pieces of writing, due to the lack of time currently allocated to the subject, and the ineffective organisation of pupils' written work on individual sheets of paper.
121. The co-ordinator for the subject has a good overview of what is being taught in the school through the scrutiny of colleagues' planning and through discussion. Resources are in short-supply, and there are no firm plans for developing the range of artefacts and books to support teaching and learning. At present there is insufficient software to enable pupils to use computers to enhance their learning, and very few artefacts on display to capture pupils' imaginations.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. By the end of the key stage, pupils attain standards that are above the national expectation in information technology. This represents a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.

123. Pupils make effective use of computers for word-processing and have a good knowledge of the keyboard. By the end of the key stage they know how to change the style and size of text, and know the functions of the main control keys. Most pupils move freely within programmes using the mouse effectively to scroll up and down a page, to click on icons and to activate a 'voice'. They access drop down menus to select the print command when they want to print their work. Pupils make effective use of a commercial programme to produce class, group and individual books, and some pupils have effectively imported graphics into their written work to add interest.
124. Most pupils throughout the school have a good understanding of the purpose and value of electronic mail. Year 2 pupils have set up an excellent link with a primary school in Botswana, and pupils from the two schools now communicate regularly via 'e-mail'. In addition to helping pupils to experience twentieth century technology, this opportunity has been invaluable in promoting aspects of pupils' social and cultural development.
125. Pupils make good use of database programmes to support their work in mathematics. This work in particular has given pupils a good understanding of the way in which computers store and arrange information and present it in many different forms. Pupils know that information can be held on floppy or hard disks enabling it to be easily retrieved and amended. Pupils produce a variety of graphs and charts which they use well to interpret data.
126. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to develop skills of control technology through the use of programmable toys and on-screen programmes. By the end of the key stage pupils know that devices can be controlled by giving a set of precise instructions, and are familiar with the notion of giving directions which include turns and pauses.
127. Pupils of all ages and abilities have made very rapid progress over the last three years. One of the most significant factors in raising standards and improving progress has been the introduction of whole-class sessions, which enable specific skills and concepts to be taught, and which are followed-up with practise sessions for pairs or small groups of pupils. The increase in the number of computers and range of software has also had a very positive impact on standards and progress, but the ratio of pupils to computers is still high at around fourteen to one, and this limits pupils' access. At present, because the school does not always have appropriate software, the use of computers across the curriculum is limited.
128. The teaching of information technology is good, and teachers plan and prepare all lessons carefully. Tasks are very clearly explained and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Pupils respond very positively and are always keen to take their turn on the computer. The clear focus on the progressive development of skills ensures that pupils' previous learning is built upon as they move through the school. Teachers have a secure knowledge of most aspects of the subject, although some are in the early stages of learning about the 'Internet'. In some classes very good use is made of computers throughout the day, enabling pupils to have regular access. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Overall, the good quality teaching has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress.
129. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise standards and to improve the status of information technology within the school. She has a very clear plan for the further development of the subject, and is aware of the need to develop a system for recording pupils' progress and attainment as they move through the school. The whole-school portfolio of samples of pupils' work is a valuable record, but at present pupils do not

have any written record of their own which shows the skills they have learned and practised. One of the governors is a regular visitor to the school and is very supportive of new information technology initiatives, and fully informed about what the school has achieved in this area of the curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

130. Very few music lessons were being taught during the period of the inspection. Within the limited range of activities seen, pupils are making good progress. The school has maintained the standards described in the previous inspection report.
131. Pupils throughout the school sing very well. They are tuneful and rhythmic and really enjoy the many singing opportunities that are provided. The weekly singing assembly, and the whole-school singing session are very pleasant occasions where pupils join to share their favourite songs, many of which are accompanied by appropriate actions. Some teachers make very effective use of short songs in class, to settle the pupils down after playtime, for example, or to reinforce their learning, such as when they use counting songs at the start of numeracy sessions.
132. Pupils have experience of using a limited range of instruments, which they use well to demonstrate that they are able to maintain a steady beat. Older pupils understand that sounds can be varied by altering the speed and volume, and know the type of sound that various instruments make. Year 2 pupils learn to play the recorder and achieve a good standard of performance. They enjoy sharing their talents with an audience and are confident players. Good use is made of recorded music at the start and end of assemblies to create a calm atmosphere, and pupils listen well.
133. The teaching of music is satisfactory overall, and pupils enjoy a suitably broad curriculum which addresses the main elements of composing, appraising and performing. However, in some classes, although aspects of composing and performing are taught regularly, insufficient time is given to the appraising aspect of the subject. In whole-school singing sessions the teaching is good, and pupils are encouraged to develop their breathing, articulate words clearly, and to sing tunefully. Good use is made of the talents of a part-time teacher who visits the school to teach recorders to the older pupils and to accompany the whole-school singing session.
134. The school currently has no co-ordinator for the subject, and the headteacher has assumed responsibility for this aspect of the curriculum. As there is no specialist teacher on the staff, teachers make good use of a commercial scheme to support their planning. Although the school has a satisfactory range of untuned percussion instruments, some are old and in need of replacement, and there are very few ethnic or tuned instruments, which constrains the creativity of the pupils when taking part in composing activities. The school provides a small range of musical extra-curricular activities for pupils, including a choir and recorder groups, and there are regular performances for parents.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135. Over the course of the year, the school provides a broad and well balanced physical education curriculum which enables pupils to make good progress, and to achieve high standards in their work. During the inspection only a limited range of activities relating to gymnastics and games was observed, and in these areas pupils made good progress and demonstrated the high quality of work described in the previous inspection report.

136. From an early age pupils show a good awareness of space and rarely bump into each other when moving in different directions around the hall. They travel in imaginative ways, making good use of different levels, speeds and types of movement to add interest to their work. Pupils have good skills of co-ordination and a good sense of balance. In a Year 1 gymnastics lesson observed during the inspection, pupils were able to hold a wide variety of balances, using different parts of their bodies, for quite lengthy periods of time. The highest attainers in all year groups are often fluid and agile in their movements, and show high levels of confidence and poise when performing their work to others. In games lessons, pupils have good control of the ball in terms of both direction and distance, and accurately send and receive balls when working in pairs. They learn skills of kicking, throwing and catching which they practise to a high standard. Pupils understand the need to 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' their bodies at the start and end of sessions, and know that their heart rate increases during exercise.
137. The teaching of physical education is good overall, and some very good and excellent examples of teaching were seen during the inspection. Teachers prepare well for lessons and present the main teaching points clearly and logically in a way that pupils easily understand. They have high expectations of the pupils, and encourage them to do their best, and to achieve high standards by practising and refining their movements. In most classes teachers make very good use of demonstrations, both by themselves and the pupils, to show examples of good practice and to help pupils develop the necessary skills. In some classes pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others, but this practice is not consistent through the school and could usefully be extended further. In the best lessons, pupils were made to work really hard and were quite exhausted at the end of the session. All teachers make very good use of key vocabulary to give precise instructions, and pupils respond very well, often using the specific vocabulary in their replies to questions. Teachers actively encourage the pupils to be imaginative in their work, and praise originality. A strength of all lessons is the way in which pupils are taught to set-up and put away apparatus in a safe manner. The good quality of teaching has a very positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment.
138. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who takes an active role in promoting high standards through the school by her own example. She has modelled lessons for staff in order to raise confidence and has a good overview of teaching and learning across the key stage. Resources for the subject are of good quality and well maintained and organised.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

139. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in religious education exceeds the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment make good progress as they move through the school and acquire a good breadth of knowledge and a secure understanding of the major world religions.
140. Pupils throughout the school have a good understanding of the notion of worship, and by the end of the key stage know that prayer is an important means of communication for the followers of most world faiths. They know that prayers can be private, collective, said or sung. Pupils know that different religions have different Gods, and show high levels of respect when their classmates talk about beliefs that are not their own. They have a good knowledge of some of the main Holy Books, including the Bible, the Torah and the Qur'an, and understand the importance of some signs and symbols relating to the various world faiths. Pupils' knowledge of the New and Old Testaments is very secure and they are fully aware that Jesus told parables as a means of teaching people

how to live their lives. They understand that the parables contain a moral, and recall some of those they have heard. Pupils' knowledge of Christian ceremonies and celebrations is good, and most Year 2 pupils understand the purpose of infant baptism, and clearly explain the symbolism of the marking of the cross on a baby's head.

141. The teaching of religious education is good throughout the school. Teachers ensure good coverage of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and give pupils a wide, varied, and well balanced programme of work that reflects the multi-cultural nature of the school and local area. Because pupils are so well informed about faiths other than their own, they show genuine curiosity in the beliefs of others, and high levels of respect and tolerance for different customs and practices. Teachers plan and prepare lessons carefully, and present abstract notions such as symbolism in a way in which the pupils can understand. Where possible, teachers draw effectively on pupils' personal experiences, and relate aspects of their teaching to the pupils' own lives. This ensures that pupils have a good level of understanding, and can draw comparisons between their own religious practices and those of others. There are currently some very attractive displays of pupils' religious education work which celebrate aspects of five of the main world faiths, and provide a useful point of reference for the Year 2 pupils who are currently learning about the importance of religious symbols. The one weakness in teaching is the organisation of pupils' written work. Occasional pieces of writing are not effectively collated and this makes it difficult for pupils to see their own progress and for them to recall their previous learning.
142. There is currently no co-ordinator for religious education, and the headteacher has temporarily assumed responsibility for this aspect of the school's work. The school makes particularly good use of the input of a range of visitors such as the local vicar to support pupils' learning, and staff are very willing to share their own religious customs with the pupils. At present the school has no consistent way of recording pupils' progress and attainment in religious education, and this is an area for future consideration. Resources to support teaching and learning in religious education are of good quality, and easily accessible to the pupils. The subject effectively promotes aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially in terms of teaching them tolerance and respect for the views of others.