

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOODHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117194

Acting Headteacher: Mrs S. Westmoreland

Reporting inspector: Miss M. A. Warner  
OFSTED No: 17288

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 191828

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Woodhall Lane  
South Oxhey  
Watford  
Hertfordshire

Postcode: WD19 6QX

Telephone number: 020 8428 3447

Fax number: 020 8421 4765

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A. Stopford

Date of previous inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17288	M. A. Warner	Registered inspector	Geography History English as an additional language	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9619	R. Miller	Lay inspector		Attendance The school's care of pupils The school's partnership with parents Accommodation
30075	M. Duggan	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum	Curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils
31786	V. Howells	Team inspector	English Art and design Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
7084	J. Haslam	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Assessment

The inspection contractor was:

*PkR* Educational Consultants Ltd.  
6 Sherman Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 3JH

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Woodhall is an average sized primary school with a part-time Nursery class in the south Hertfordshire area of South Oxhey. The estate was built in the late 1940's by the local county council to re-house 1,500 people from the East End of London. There are now seven primary schools but no secondary school in the area. Almost all the pupils come from the immediate area, which is mainly mono-cultural although the number of pupils from the ethnic minority groups, six per cent, is increasing. One per cent has English as an additional language. The socio-economic intake, overall, is below the national average. There are 201 pupils on roll, including 21 children who attend part-time in the Nursery. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Twenty-five per cent of pupils, which is close to the national average, have been identified as having special educational needs and 0.5 per cent of pupils, which is below the national average, have formal statements of need. When children enter the Nursery class their attainment in all areas of learning is generally below national expectations. By the end of the Reception year some higher attaining pupils have reached all the Early Learning Goals. However, the majority of children's literacy and language skills and their personal and social development are still below what is expected of children of this age.

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

Woodhall is an improving school. The weaknesses noted in the last report have been addressed. Substantial improvements have been made over the last year through the very good leadership and management of the acting headteacher supported well by the governing body. Because of good teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes to learning, standards are now mainly average, in spite of the contextual factors of the school being below average. The cost per pupil is high but the school uses funds effectively. This improvement is reflected in the fact that the school now gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The teaching of the Foundation Stage is consistently good.
- The teaching of mathematics and information and communication technology is good.
- The management of pupils in class and around the school is good.
- The use of teaching assistants is good.
- There is clear educational direction for the school with appropriate areas identified for development, supported well through very good financial planning and use of specific grants.
- There is very effective monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress.
- Pupils are given very good support and guidance and many opportunities are given for them to take initiative and demonstrate personal responsibility.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in science at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are below average: investigations and experiments are not used often enough to help pupils with their learning.
- Standards reached by more able pupils are too low: teachers' expectations of these pupils are not high enough.
- Too little use is made of homework to extend and complement the work that pupils complete in lessons.
- The school has tried to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning but this partnership is still insufficiently developed.
- Pupils' attendance, which is 92 per cent compared with the national average of 95 per cent.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Considerable improvements have been made since the school was last inspected in February 1997, although most of these improvements have been made within the last year.

- There have been noteworthy improvements in the introduction of policies and schemes of work, assessment and in financial management and some improvements have been made in the other four key issues listed in the last report.
- Within subjects, the improvements made in information and communication technology are particularly worthy of note. There have also been considerable improvements in mathematics, design and technology and geography. Standards in science have varied over the years. Standards in physical education in Key Stage 1 are not quite as high as judged in the last inspection.
- Whilst teaching, overall, is similar to the last inspection, in many more lessons this time teaching was judged to be good or better.

In many other aspects of the school's life there have been improvements: provision for pupils' personal development, the curriculum, the care of pupils and the monitoring of their academic and personal development, the quality of information provided for parents, the effectiveness of governing body and the monitoring of teaching.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	D	E	E	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
Mathematics	D	E	C	B	
Science	D	C	E	E	

On entry to the Nursery children's attainment is generally below national expectations. By the end of the Reception year some higher attaining pupils have reached all the Early Learning Goals. The majority of children's literacy and language skills and their personal and social development are still below that expected of children at the end of their Reception year.

In the national tests in English in 2000, at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was well below the national average. It was below similar schools in reading and well below similar schools in writing. At the end of Year 6, standards were well below the national average and similar schools. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment in English at the ages of seven and eleven is now in line with national expectations. In the national tests in mathematics in 2000, at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average and was better than similar schools. At the end of Year 6, standards were in line with most schools and above similar schools. Inspection findings are that standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In teachers' science assessments, at the end of Year 2 standards were close to the national average and above those of similar schools. At the end of Year 6 they were just below the national average and below similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in science at the end of both key stages is at present below the national average, mainly because of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The overall trend in results is broadly in line with the national trend. The school set targets in 2000 for English of 64 per cent and for mathematics of 72 per cent neither of which they met. Pupils achieved 61 per cent in English and 67 per cent in mathematics. Lower, more achievable targets have been set for this year to match the abilities of the pupils, many of whom have special educational needs.

Standards in foundation subjects are in line with expectations in art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education in both key stages and in geography in Key Stage 1. No judgement can be made about standards of geography in Key Stage 2 because of the limited range of work seen. Some of the history work in Key Stage 2, however, is above average. The progress and achievement of pupils is satisfactory, overall, in all subjects and is good in Key Stage 1 in geography.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils generally show positive attitudes and maintain very good levels of concentration. These attitudes have a positive impact on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around school is good. Pupils play happily together. In isolated cases, where pupils test the limits of acceptable behaviour, lessons still proceed with the minimum of disruption.
Personal development and relationships	Good. There are many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. The children relate very well to adults and their peers.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. The authorised absence rate is high. These absences limit the progress pupils make. Six per cent of all pupils arrive at school late to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.*

During the inspection three student teachers were taking classes. All full-time teachers were observed teaching and percentages refer to their teaching. The quality of their teaching was excellent in 5 per cent, very good or better in 14 per cent, good or better in 79 per cent and satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson. Teaching is good, overall, in all three key stages with 100 per cent of lessons in the Foundation Stage judged as good and a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 1 judged as very good or better. The proportion of good teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. The quality of pupils' learning is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. The difference in teaching and learning grades reflects the fact that teaching grades are only recorded for teachers but learning grades include lessons taken by student teachers. The main strength in learning is the pupils' effective acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding of different subjects. The teaching of English and literacy skills and mathematics and numeracy skills is satisfactory. Teaching by the special educational needs support teacher and support assistants is good.

The main strengths in teaching are the teachers' management of pupils, the use of support staff and the effective methods used, planning, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and assessment. Teaching is good in the majority of subjects in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics, design and technology, information technology and physical education in Key Stage 2. Weaknesses in teaching are the lack of pace in some lessons, an inconsistent approach to teaching literacy skills, the teachers' insufficiently high expectations of more able pupils and the lack of well-planned homework.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Curriculum initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' progress across the school. Excellent booklets have been produced to keep parents informed about the curriculum. The range of extra-curricular activities is broadly typical of what happens in most schools nationally.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound overall. Teaching is good. These pupils are integrated effectively into a caring and supportive school environment. Classroom activities meet the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers are aware of the needs of the small number of pupils in their class with English as an additional language and the headteacher monitors their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school fulfils requirements for the daily act of worship. Other opportunities for spiritual development tend to happen naturally rather than through planned activity. A strong sense of morality underpins the aims and ethos of the school. In many subjects pupils have the opportunity to work collaboratively and develop good interpersonal skills. Celebrations based on cross-cultural links raise pupils' awareness of their local culture and other prevailing cultures in Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Substantial improvements have been made in monitoring pupils' academic performance and welfare. There are sound procedures for monitoring attendance but unexplained absences are not always followed up quickly enough.

Parents are generally satisfied with the school and the school has many effective links with them; for example, the school provides useful curriculum information for parents. Few parents, however, are involved in their children's learning, either by helping in school or through their children's homework.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall good. There is very good leadership by the acting headteacher who is knowledgeable, has a very clear sense of direction for the school and has given a strong and sensitive lead over the last year, during which time many improvements have been made. She is in the process of building a supportive senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Many of the governors are new to their roles and are taking a strong lead in ensuring the development of the school. Many of the weaknesses listed in the last report have recently been addressed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is evaluating its performance and taking appropriate action to help raise pupils' levels of achievement, mainly through a clear school development plan, assessment of pupils' work and target setting.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has addressed the concerns about the financial systems of the school by buying in expert assistance and training. The school now uses its resources strategically. The school applies the principles of best value well.

Staffing and learning resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is good.

## 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>• Their children like school (98%).</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best (92%).</li> <li>• The teaching is good (90%).</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible (90%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like to see a more interesting range of activities provided outside lessons (49%).</li> <li>• Parents have different views about homework but the majority of those who commented would like to see more given (38%).</li> <li>• They would like to be kept better informed about their children's progress (27%).</li> <li>• They would like the school to work more closely with parents (17%).</li> </ul> <p><i>Percentages refer to the responses on the parents' questionnaires.</i></p>

Fifty-three questionnaires were returned. Ten parents came to the parents' meeting. The inspection team agree with the positive views of parents. With respect to their concerns the findings are that: the school provides a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities including visits locally and further afield. Homework is inconsistent across the school and is not used sufficiently to further their children's progress. The school is putting a great deal of time and effort into developing stronger links with parents but has not been as successful as it would have liked. Many parents have little involvement with the school and the contribution that they make to their children's learning is unsatisfactory and could be better. Meetings organised to explain aspects of what is being taught have been poorly attended. This has a negative impact on the progress that children make. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good and indicate an improvement on the previous inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children enter the Nursery class their attainment in all areas of learning is generally below national expectations. By the end of the Reception year some higher attaining pupils have reached all the Early Learning Goals. The majority of children's literacy and language skills and personal and social development, however, are still below that expected from children of this age. Overall children's learning is good and they achieve soundly due to time invested wisely by teachers and all other adults. Children with special educational needs are identified early and, with effective support, make good progress.
2. In English, in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was well below the national average. It was below similar schools in reading and well below similar schools in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards were well below the national average and those of similar schools.
3. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment in English at the ages of seven and eleven is now in line with national expectations. This indicates that standards are now at the same level as reported at the previous inspection and also represents an improvement, as standards plummeted during the intervening three years. The main reasons for this improvement are the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, increased resources to support teaching and learning in English throughout the school and improved strategies for assessment and target setting.
4. In Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils have appropriately developed speaking and listening skills. When pupils read together, they listen attentively to the teacher's explanations and to contributions made by other pupils. By the time they are eleven pupils join in discussions confidently and answer teachers' questions clearly.
5. Standards in reading are satisfactory, overall and there are some very able readers in all year groups. Although lower attaining pupils are supported through the additional literacy strategy by teacher assistants and special educational needs support tuition, there are a number of pupils (mainly those who do not have planned additional support) in each class who make unsatisfactory progress with their reading.
6. At the ages of seven and eleven the quality of writing is satisfactory, overall. In Key Stage 1, this is as a result of the school's increased awareness of the need to improve the quality of the extended writing of all pupils. Whilst all pupils communicate adequately at the end of Key Stage 2, many do not sustain enough interest to write at an appropriate length and to complete the task, as outlined in their plans. The presentation of their work is often unsatisfactory in this key stage.
7. In mathematics in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average and was better than that achieved by similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was below the national average. In the National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-old pupils in 2000 standards were in line with most schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was in line with the national average. When compared only with similar schools, standards were above the average.

8. In mathematics in Key Stage 1, standards over the last four years have been variable ranging from just below to above the national average. In Key Stage 2, standards over the four years have also been variable but only ranged from below to in line with the national average.
9. In teachers' science assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 standards were judged to be close to the national average and above those of similar schools. The percentage reaching the higher level was well below schools nationally and below similar schools. In the National Curriculum test in science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 the number reaching the expected level 4 was just below the national average and below those of similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was well below the average.
10. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in science at the end of both key stages is at present below the national average. This differs from the judgement of the previous inspection, which reported attainment to be in line with the national average. The main contributory factor to this difference is the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. The school recognises the need to raise standards in science, is determined to do so and has set challenging but realistic targets for each year group in both key stages. A good start has been made recently on improving pupils' skills in scientific enquiry and in the acquisition of specific technical language. Inspection findings confirm an improving picture in both key stages but there is still insufficient application of investigative and experimental work and the importance of fair testing being made clear to pupils.
11. Results in all three core subjects: reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 1, have fluctuated over the last four years but have remained below and well below the national average, except in mathematics in 1996, when standards were well above the national average, and in 2000, when they were in line with the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2, results have again varied in English, mathematics and science and remained well below, below and sometimes in line with the national average, except in science in 1997 when they were above average. The overall trend in results is broadly in line with the national trend.
12. The targets, relating to the percentage of pupils expected to reach level 4 or above in the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, were not met in 2000. In English the target was 64 per cent and 61 per cent of pupils reached level 4 or above and for mathematics 72 per cent was the target and 67 per cent reached level 4 or above. Lower, more achievable targets have been set for this year to match the abilities of the pupils, many of whom have special educational needs.
13. Standards in foundation subjects are in line with expectations in art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education in both key stages and in geography in Key Stage 1. No judgement can be made about standards of geography in Key Stage 2 because of the limited range of work seen. Some of the history work in Key Stage 2, however, is above average.
14. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, overall, is similar to their abilities but standards in reading are unsatisfactory for most of these pupils. The Additional Literacy Strategy is beneficial and, as a result, progress overall is satisfactory. Significantly, these pupils make progress in reading and writing in both key stages through good use of in-class support assistants and ten pupils receive additional literacy tuition from a special educational needs support teacher. Pupils

with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress, relative to their abilities, in all subjects. Their Individual Education Plans for use in classrooms are suitably related to individual literacy targets and at times to mathematics targets, where there is a need.

15. At present there are no identified gifted or talented pupils. However the special needs co-ordinator has attended training for gifted and talented pupils and expects in September to identify the top five per cent of pupils in each class, following the local educational authority's guidelines, so as to provide appropriately challenging work to raise their standards in relevant areas.
16. Class teachers make suitable provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language but there are no formal procedures in place to record and monitor their progress.
17. The progress and achievement of pupils is satisfactory, overall, in all subjects and is good in Key Stage 1 in geography.

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

18. The school has maintained pupils' positive attitudes and standards of behaviour since the previous inspection. Parents appreciate the traditional values and high expectations that this school promotes.
19. Pupils arrived punctually with their parents during the inspection and they enter their school happily. Registration is taken with the minimum of delay and allows lessons to commence immediately. This has a positive impact on the pupils' learning as pupils quickly settle into the daily routines and conform to the codes of behaviour.
20. During class, pupils show good attitudes to learning, maintaining very good levels of concentration. They come with a very positive approach and are eager to learn. They relate very well to adults and their behaviour is very good. Older pupils share resources or ideas without squabbling. During question time they are eager to answer questions. These attitudes have a positive impact on their learning.
21. Behaviour in and around school is very good. Movement between classes and when going to lunch is very orderly. Pupils' good standards of behaviour and good attitudes in class are a reflection on the quality of teaching. Where good teaching occurs, the pupils respond equally well. However, in a small number of lessons where teaching was less satisfactory, the attitudes and standards of behaviour were less well developed. In isolated cases, where pupils tested the limits of acceptable behaviour, the very good classroom management by the teacher ensured that lessons were able to proceed with the minimum of disruption.
22. Standards of very good behaviour are maintained during breaks and lunch-time and pupils play happily together. There were examples of younger pupils playing with older pupils and no anti-social or aggressive behaviour was observed. Many pupils were inquisitive and confident with inspectors but never rude or impolite. Courtesy and consideration for others were frequently observed.

23. The vast majority of parents expressed their support for the school in maintaining good levels of behaviour and in the values promoted by the school.
24. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. There are opportunities for nominated pupils to take responsibility as monitors, supervising others during break and lunchtimes. There are also regular meetings of the school council led by the headteacher. Pupils take part in circle time where they discuss issues related to their attitudes, values and personal development. Golden rules are displayed in each classroom and in the dining rooms. Pupils co-operate well with all the support staff and there is an absence of litter. Children will also alert staff to anti-social behaviour and members of staff take appropriate action.
25. Attendance at around 92 per cent is well below the national average and is unsatisfactory. The authorised absence rate is high and due, in the main, to sickness and holidays taken by families during term time. These absences limit the progress pupils make. There are procedures to follow up poor attendance but these are not rigorously applied. Six per cent of all pupils arrive at school late but this is not allowed to disrupt the start of the school day and lessons start and finish on time.

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

26. During the inspection three student teachers were taking classes either as a graduate teacher in training or as final teaching practice students. Their lessons were observed and graded but their grades for teaching have not been included in the overall grades for the school. All class teachers were observed teaching.
27. The quality of teaching by teachers was excellent in 5 per cent, very good or better in 14 per cent, good or better in 79 per cent and satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson. Teaching was good, overall, in all three key stages with 100 per cent of lessons in the Foundation Stage judged as good and a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 1 judged as very good or better.
28. In the further 16 lessons observed, when student teachers were taking lessons, the large majority of lessons were satisfactory or better and over a quarter were good or better. In one English lesson teaching was unsatisfactory where there was inadequate understanding of the literacy strategy.
29. The proportion of good teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and there is much less unsatisfactory teaching.
30. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, in each area of learning, is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The teachers provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop socially, through play, structured learning routines and by making choices. Very good relationships exist between teachers, Nursery nurse, key workers and parent helpers. The work is planned well to ensure that children have opportunities to develop language, mathematics and literacy skills through a good balance of well-organised, teacher-directed and child-centred activities. Provision also includes appropriate activities through which children can develop their physical and creative talents and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world.

31. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language satisfactorily. The school has identified the fact that more could be planned to extend the work of higher attainers. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in classes and, overall, support is targeted well to their needs. A support teacher works at the school for two days each week, liaising well with the special educational needs co-ordinator and individual teachers. She will take up the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator from September 2001. Her teaching is very good and teaching by support assistants is good. Relevant up-to-date assessment notes are kept and monitored by class teachers. Generally, work is well matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and enables them to take part in all class work.
32. The main strengths in teaching are the teachers' management of pupils and the use of support staff to help pupils. The best English and literacy lessons are characterised by teachers' enthusiasm, the promotion of learning through purposeful and meaningful tasks and by teachers and classroom assistants working closely together to ensure that lower-attaining pupils are fully included in all aspects of lessons. Teachers generally make effective links between reading, writing and spelling. Where marking is good, teachers relate pupils' achievement to individual targets and offer points for development. Teachers' recording and assessment is good in mathematics. Planning is now good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and effective methods are being used to gain pupils' interest in these key stages. Overall, teaching is good in the majority of subjects in Key Stage 1. It is good in mathematics, design and technology, information technology and physical education in Key Stage 2.
33. Weaknesses in teaching are in the lack of pace in some lessons, particularly in science in Year 2 and in some lessons in geography, history and physical education. Teachers' also have insufficiently high expectations of more able pupils. Additional work that higher attainers are given, does not take them to a higher level but repeats what they already know and can do. There is a lack of well-planned homework, which is affecting the overall standards that the pupils can reach in Key Stage 2. Pupils' literacy skills are appropriately used in some other subjects, but there is not yet a consistent approach to the acquisition of literacy skills in all subjects.
34. The quality of pupils' learning, overall, is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. The main strength in learning is the pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding in different subjects.

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

35. The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of broad, balanced and relevant activities. The school's general aims are supported by its work, providing a solid basis for pupils to become life-long learners and caring and useful members of society.
36. Judgements in the previous inspection report identified a number of areas for improvement, including more cohesive schemes of work and policies. These have been introduced or updated this year. These issues have now been addressed to a satisfactory standard through the implementation of a well-structured system of long, medium and short term planning. Particular emphasis is placed on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, due mainly to the good leadership of the

acting headteacher since her appointment in September. The knowledgeable curriculum governor, who is aware of the importance of translating policy into practice, is also influential in this area.

37. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It provides opportunities for the full range of experiences as recommended to reach the Early Learning Goals.
38. Personal, social and health education is promoted soundly throughout the school, with Circle Time and Golden Time used to discuss moral issues and raise self-esteem. Sex education and drugs awareness are dealt with in Year 6, mostly during science and religious education lessons, with an input from the school nurse. Parents' views are sought during an annual meeting about the subject. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and the school has adopted the Local Education Authority's Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The schemes for all subjects set out clearly what pupils need to know and understand by the ages of seven and eleven. They incorporate effectively the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance regarding the teaching and planning of the National Curriculum. These initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' progress across the school. Sound links have been established with the local secondary schools and this ensures smooth transition. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects.
39. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include football, rugby, cross-country, Australian-rules football, dance and choir. Planned educational trips include residential visits to the Isle of Wight and days to St Albans to study life in Roman and Victorian times. Younger pupils visit the local shops and farms as part of their educational research.
40. Satisfactory links within the community have been established. On a fortnightly basis a group from South Oxhey Christian Churches visits school to tell Biblical stories. Parents and grandparents visit school regularly, either to help in class or recount descriptions of life when they were younger. A recent initiative was an Easter week of football training and English, mathematics and information and communication technology activities at Watford Football Club, which was part of a New Opportunities Fund, Study Support Project. The pupils also visit the local church, when appropriate, as part of their learning.
41. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Their learning is linked closely to their individual education plans, which is an improvement since the last inspection. They receive good support from all teachers and teacher assistants and there are good withdrawal arrangements from class as needed. A special needs part-time teacher who supports one pupil with a formal statement of need, still assists in this class if the pupil is absent and so gains an idea of what will need to be covered on the pupil's return. The school demonstrates good practice in the inclusion of its pupils who have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated effectively into a caring and supportive school environment. Teachers are generally aware of the needs of the small number of pupils in their class with English as an additional language but the school has no formal procedures in place to assess their needs.

42. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. This is similar to the judgement of the previous inspection.
43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. The school fulfils all requirements for the daily act of worship. It provides pupils with opportunities to contribute in assemblies through answering questions and singing. Pupils also have time for reflection on the themes of the day or stories told during assemblies. Such an example was noted in a Key Stage 2 assembly when answers to prayer and coincidence were considered. Elsewhere, with the exception of religious education lessons and to a lesser degree art and music, there are fewer planned opportunities for spiritual development. When it does occur, it happens naturally rather than through planned activity.
44. Throughout the school, provision for pupils' moral development is good. All adults and pupils work hard at achieving the overall high standards of behaviour observed during the inspection. A strong sense of morality underpins the aims and ethos of the school, which ensures that pupils distinguish readily between right and wrong. They are well aware of the responsibility they have for their own actions and show concern for the well-being of others. Effective opportunities are provided in lessons, assemblies and Circle Time to discuss moral issues. Such examples were observed in Year 2 and Year 4 lessons when a small number of pupils behaved inappropriately. Pupils are taught the value of honesty, fair play and truthfulness, which are enshrined in the school's code of conduct, Golden Rules, to which they have contributed.
45. The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. Adults provide good role models and pupils are treated with unflinching courtesy. From an early age they are given some responsibilities, for example clearing tables and acting as monitors in the dinner hall and cloakrooms. The foundations for a school council have already been laid. Initiatives include the setting up of an 'Enterprise Venture' by Year 6 who, having been given £1.00 per pupil, have to find ways of increasing it. The profits accrued will be donated to charity. Other fund-raising activities have included 'Jeans for Genes' for Great Ormond Street Hospital and for the National Children's Homes. During lunchtimes older pupils often sit with younger ones who might be ill or upset. In many subjects pupils have the opportunity to work collaboratively and develop good inter-personal skills, for instance in design technology, science and physical education.
46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. Nearly all pupils share a common cultural background and have ample opportunities to appreciate their local heritage by exploring the area in which they live. In their study of history they consider a range of life-styles and cultures. For example, younger pupils learn about life now and in the time when their parents and grandparents were young. Older pupils study Ancient Greece and how its architecture influenced other civilisations. In Year 6, pupils compare Victorian children's recreation to present-day entertainment. Classroom displays include texts and symbols from different world cultures, including artefacts from Muslim, Sikh and Jewish faiths. Multi-cultural experiences have included visits to the local mosque while festivals such as Diwali and Hanukkah are celebrated annually. Such celebrations based on cross-cultural links raise pupils' awareness of other prevailing cultures in Britain.

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

47. The provision the school makes for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is good and has a positive effect on the quality of education provided. Pupils' academic performance and welfare is monitored and supported well. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and behaviour are good and an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has done a lot of work this year to agree and implement strategies for behaviour management and continues to review and monitor their effectiveness. These strategies include very good use of outside support agencies and training for teaching assistants. The recently introduced merit award system encourages sound behaviour and attitudes from the pupils and these are reinforced through assemblies. The school is working well towards its aim to create a community in which behaviour is based on mutual respect and consideration for others. There are sound procedures for monitoring attendance but unexplained absences are not always followed up quickly enough. Registration is carried out quickly and efficiently and records of attendance fulfil statutory requirements.
49. Good child protection procedures are now in place and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There is a policy and staff have undertaken training to ensure they are aware of the issues. There are now good systems for monitoring health and safety by the headteacher and staff, including the site manager and by the governing body. Formal written risk assessments are carried out and the school has responded well to the issues raised in the previous report.
50. The caring ethos of the school ensures pupils' well being. Good procedures are in place for dealing with illness, accidents and for administering medicines. A number of staff, including mid-day supervisors, are trained in first aid.
51. The systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are very good. Regular assessments of standards and learning are undertaken in the Foundation Stage and the information gained is used to set appropriate work. Statutory requirements such as baseline assessment and end of key stage tests are in place. Staff make very good use of the initial assessments to group pupils and direct their work. Careful records are kept of their progress, which are used to help staff plan future work. This ensures that the wide spread of needs and abilities are well catered for. Standards have been improved since the last inspection. There is very good analysis of key stage tests to build up a picture of the school's current level of success and to set future targets for end-of-key-stage results and for each year group. Targets are set for groups of pupils in Year 1 and Year 5 to meet the overall targets for the school at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Staff have been given training on levelling and moderating pupils' work to ensure consistency in assessing progress and attainment. The school is aware of the need for an assessment portfolio and the production of this has been given priority. There are opportunities for samples of pupils' work to be analysed and matched to National Curriculum levels and there are specific objective measures to support teachers' termly assessments. Procedures ensure consistency in assessment across all classes in the school. Overall targets are set for the school and target setting has been introduced for individuals and small groups; for example, in English and mathematics. Opportunities are given for pupils to assess their work in mathematics lessons in Year 5 and Year 6, from which they are aware of the progress they have made. The system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress has improved since

the last inspection. The school has adopted a programme of target setting and is predicting likely trends of attainment in the coming years. The school increasingly uses careful data analysis to identify areas of relative weakness for teachers and this is beginning to have a positive effect upon pupils' attainment and the quality and pace of their learning.

52. Ongoing records and regular assessments are recorded for pupils with special educational needs, which ensure that the progress they make is satisfactory. The school liaises well with outside agencies. Overall the school cares well for pupils.

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

53. Parents consider Woodhall to be a satisfactory school. They are happy, overall, with what the school provides and achieves. The induction arrangements into the Nursery are good. Positive links, including home visits, are established with parents who support fully the work in the Nursery and Reception classes. Good exchange of information and on-going liaison means that the Reception class teacher is aware of children's attainment and achievement prior to entry. Parents appreciate these smooth transition arrangements.
54. Parents feel that their children make progress across the school, reach acceptable standards and generally behave appropriately. The parents are correct, however, in their perception that homework is inconsistent across the school. This has been recognised by the school and steps are being taken to ensure that this is rectified. The school is currently putting a great deal of time and effort into developing stronger links with parents and seeking ways of actively involving them in the education of their children but has not been as successful as it would have liked. Many parents have little involvement with the school and the contribution that they make to their children's learning is unsatisfactory.
55. Meetings for parents, organised to explain aspects of what is being taught, have been poorly attended. This has a negative impact on the progress that their children make.
56. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good and shows an improvement on that reported in the previous inspection. Information includes a monthly headteacher's newsletter, which has been welcomed by parents. The end-of-year academic reports for pupils have also improved since the last inspection. They are clear, well written and clearly outline the academic and personal targets for the pupils to achieve in the ensuing period. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both informative and comprehensive and meet legal requirements. Curriculum information is now provided in excellent, well designed leaflet form to all parents and these have been found to be useful. There are sufficient opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to discuss their child's progress with the headteacher and staff.
57. There is satisfactory liaison with parents. The vast majority of parents, including those with English as an additional language, consider the staff of the school approachable. Parents feel confident that any concerns that they have will be listened to and acted upon. This is an improvement on the situation reported in the previous inspection.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The acting headteacher is knowledgeable, has a very clear sense of direction and provides very effective leadership and management for the school. She has given a strong and sensitive lead over the last year, during which time many improvements have been made rapidly. The headteacher is aware of the need to develop the role of the deputy head and, together with other senior staff, is in the process of building a supportive senior management team, with more time being given to carry out management duties. The headteacher is laying secure foundations from which the school can build.
59. The role of the co-ordinator is also being developed but many co-ordinators are relatively new to their roles and the school. The monitoring of teaching in foundation subjects has yet to take place. The school has good procedures in place for performance management and this is empowering teachers throughout the school to improve their teaching. The school supports student teachers satisfactorily and provides them with many opportunities to take responsibility. Induction procedures are satisfactory.
60. Many of the governors are new to their roles and have only recently been made fully aware of the expectations of a governing body. They are, however, now taking a strong lead to ensure the development of the school and many of the weaknesses listed in the last report have recently been addressed. The governors are very concerned that they were not made fully aware of their responsibilities in the past and are keen to make up for lost time. Whilst their leadership is now good and expertise is improving, training is still needed to ensure governors can fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and respond accordingly. They are fully aware of their statutory duties, however, making reference to published materials as appropriate.
61. The school is now evaluating its performance well and taking appropriate action to help raise pupils' levels of achievement. Although this is a significant improvement on that reported in the last inspection it is, however, a fairly recent development and has yet to make an impact on the standards that pupils achieve. The school has a clear, well-thought-through, costed school development plan, pupils' work is assessed regularly in the core subjects and targets are now set for pupils to aim for. Pupils are aware of their academic and personal targets and parents are slowly beginning to become involved in this process. Greater parent involvement is essential if pupils are to achieve as well as is possible.
62. The school's educational priorities are now supported very well through good financial planning. The school uses its resources strategically and applies the principles of best value well. The concerns about the financial systems, reported at the previous inspection, have been addressed. The school is buying in expert financial assistance from the local educational authority, which includes up-to-date training at the school for both the experienced and relatively new office staff who carry out the day-to-day planning and financial recording. New technology is being used well to support office administration. Monthly accounts are scrutinised by governors and the finance committee is fully aware of income and expenditure and takes an active part in the financial management of the school. The headteacher is proactive in ensuring the school makes full use of specific grants. These are used well to improve the quality of education for the pupils.

63. The school meets statutory requirements with regard to pupils with special educational needs. The special needs co-ordinator has an overall view of provision within the school and keeps the up-to-date special needs register, which is reviewed regularly. Transition arrangements to other schools are good.
64. The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified teachers with a range of experience. The accommodation is well maintained and has been re-arranged since the previous inspection. This year the Nursery has been relocated next to the Reception class in the Foundation Stage, the library has been re-sited in a much more convenient location to make it more accessible to all pupils and the information and communication suite has been refurbished with sixteen new computers. All these improvements are of considerable benefit to the pupils' learning. The grounds include ample space for playing as well as a field for sport and a separate area for the children in the Foundation Stage. The school does not have disabled access or facilities except that there is now a ramp outside to enable a pupil in a wheelchair to move more easily from one playground to the other. The school has a satisfactory level of learning resources and these are being built up to match the new curriculum and schemes of work.
65. Overall, Woodhall is an improving school. The weaknesses noted in the last report have been addressed. Substantial improvements have been made over the last year through the very good leadership and management of the acting headteacher supported well by the governing body. Because of good teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes to learning, standards are now mainly average, in spite of the contextual factors of the school being below average. The cost per pupils is high but the school uses funds effectively. This improvement is reflected in the fact that the school now gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. In order to continue to raise standards and improve the quality of education for the pupils the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Raise standards in science in both key stages by:
    - applying more rigorous application of investigative and experimental work with due attention being made to the importance of fair testing;  
(Paragraphs 10, 100.)
  - (2) Raise the standards of higher attainers and teachers' expectations of them by:
    - analysing their diverse and specific needs;
    - providing work that challenges and extends them to a higher level;  
(Paragraphs 31, 33, 85, 110, 112.)
  - (3) Use homework more consistently and effectively, to extend and complement what is done in class, by adhering to the policy.  
(Paragraphs 33, 83, 116, 112.)
  - (4) Further develop the school's partnership with parents by:
    - seeking advice and further devising and implementing the school's own strategies to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's learning;  
(Paragraphs 54, 55.)
  - (5) Improve pupils' attendance, which is 92 per cent and below the national average of 95 per cent, by improving the school's procedures for following up absences especially on the first day of absence.  
(Paragraphs 25, 48.)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

58

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

39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	10	64	19	2	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	190
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	90

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	1.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	11	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	14	19
	Girls	10	8	11
	Total	26	22	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (77)	71 (61)	97 (84)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	17
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	23	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (77)	84 (87)	90 (81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	12	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	19
	Girls	9	8	11
	Total	22	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (61)	67 ((48)	83 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	14	15
	Girls	5	9	8
	Total	11	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	31 (42)	64 (52)	64 (74)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	180
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	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	492214
Total expenditure	482033
Expenditure per pupil	2398
Balance brought forward from previous year	62644
Balance carried forward to next year	72825

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	53

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	43	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	49	11	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	51	6	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	32	25	13	0
The teaching is good.	26	64	8	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	47	23	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	43	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	43	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	58	13	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	40	47	9	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	60	4	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	21	36	13	9

*Where numbers do not add up to 100, parents did not answer all the questions.*

## **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**

67. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children are admitted to the Nursery in September and January for morning sessions only. Following three terms in the Nursery they transfer to the Reception class on a full-time basis. Baseline assessment is carried out in both the Nursery and Reception classes within the first six weeks of entry. When children enter the Nursery class their attainment in all areas of learning is generally below national expectations. By the end of the Reception year some higher attaining pupils have reached all the Early Learning Goals. The majority of children's literacy and language skills and personal and social development, however, are still below that expected from children of this age. Overall, children's learning is good and they achieve soundly due to time invested wisely by teachers and all other adults. Children with special educational needs are identified early and with effective support make good progress.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

68. Children's personal and social development is given a high priority with good effect. Learning in this area is generally good. Children are encouraged to be independent and make choices about their activities, such as role-playing in the 'Vets' Corner' or constructing jigsaws. They know what is expected of them and behave well. Nearly all are interested and responsive, enjoying all the activities provided for them. All adults act as good role models for children, helping them to form positive relationships and to care about each other. Higher and some average attaining children reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year but many are still working towards them. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

69. Children make good progress, overall, in relation to the low base on entry, in developing communication, language and literacy skills. This is often due to effective dialogue between adults and children during introductions and lesson endings but also during group work. Pupils are provided with a wide range of activities to encourage speaking and listening, an interest in books and in the written word. Most children listen attentively and higher-attainers are becoming confident speakers, use appropriate vocabulary and construct sentences soundly. Such an example was noted during a shared reading session in the Reception class about Elmer, the Elephant. Many, especially in the Nursery and some of the younger cohort in the Reception, are still at the early developmental stages. The majority know that print carries meaning and many, especially in the Reception class, are able to read simple words and recognise their own names. During lessons they enjoy listening to stories and sharing and handling books. Children are beginning to learn letters and sounds in a variety of purposeful activities such as matching initial sounds to a variety of picture cards or identifying end sounds with the teacher and Billy, the puppet, on the whiteboard. Most are aware of the purpose of writing and many write their own names, especially in the Reception class. In the Nursery the younger children attempt to form letters correctly. By the time they finish the Reception year many have reached the Early Learning Goals but, overall, attainment is still below national expectations for their age. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good.

## **Mathematical development**

70. Attainment in mathematics at the end of the Foundation Stage is close to that which children of this age are expected to reach nationally. Suitable activities are provided for the development of their mathematical skills and learning, overall, is good as a result of well-planned lessons and realistic teacher expectations. The children recognise colours and sort objects and some identify shapes using appropriate mathematical vocabulary; for example, in the Reception class children were able to identify and name correctly two- and three-dimensional objects in a feely bag. They know the terms 'longer' and 'shorter' and higher attaining children can count to beyond 20 and add to 10. A good foundation is being laid for future mathematics work through organised play activities and games with apparatus involving counting, sorting and matching, as was observed in a Reception class where children categorised cards according to colours, shapes and designs or a combination of each. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good.

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

71. Children make good progress in learning about the world in which they live and the majority have reached the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class. In the scientific aspect the outside school environment provides good opportunities to observe and predict when looking at seasonal foliage, colour changes and habitats for mini-beasts. Water activities begin to arouse curiosity about why certain objects float and others do not. They talk about their route to school and identify some of the main features. They learn about weather and explain regularly what it is like. In both the Nursery and Reception classes they begin to understand how the computer works and some children use the mouse accurately to move pictures around the screen. These are important concepts which will continue to be developed during later work in science, geography and technology. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good.

## **Physical development**

72. Children's physical development is in line with what is expected from this age group nationally. They have appropriate opportunities to use a good range of indoor and outdoor equipment and resources for control and balance. In the playground they respond well to instructions and are developing an awareness of space and consideration for others when moving around. In physical education lessons they interpret music well, linking high, low, fast and slow movements into basic sequences, as was observed in a Reception lesson. Resources such as large wheeled vehicles, outdoor swings and climbing frame help to develop gross motor skills and balance, as well as establishing confidence. They use small equipment with increasing accuracy to develop co-ordination during throwing and catching activities. Through play with table-top games, modelling materials (for example Play-Doh), pencils and brushes they are beginning to improve their control while manipulating small items. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in movement and co-ordination skills during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good.

## **Creative development**

73. Attainment is sound in all aspects of the creative areas of learning and the majority of children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority has reached the Early Learning Goals. The teachers, Nursery nurse and teacher assistants provide interesting creative activities each day and there is a good balance between free choice and more structured work. Children have good opportunities to use different media and are developing skills in handling paint brushes, threads, scissors, glue-sticks and collage materials. They paint pictures of characters from stories, of themselves, their families and everyday objects and items such as fruit or flowers. In music, for example in assembly, they follow instructions well and join in simple action songs which they sing in tune. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good.

## **Teaching of the Foundation Stage**

74. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, in each area of learning, is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The teachers provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop socially, through play, structured learning routines and by making choices. Very good relationships exist between teachers, Nursery nurse, key workers and parent helpers. The work is planned well to ensure that children have opportunities to develop language, mathematics and literacy skills through a good balance of well-organised, teacher-directed and child-centred activities. Such good examples were noted in the Nursery class when children role-played a vet caring for animals. All members of staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and the manner in which they approach activities. This was well demonstrated in a Reception class lesson concentrating on the identification of final sounds in words. Adults listen to what children have to say and through careful questioning attempt to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They include scientific and technological activities to stimulate curiosity and guide the children in the right direction with their comments. This was seen to good effect in a Nursery lesson where children moved 'The Hungry Caterpillar' around the screen, using the mouse. Staff manage these young children well, making sure that they settle quickly and happily into the daily routines. Provision also includes appropriate activities through which children can develop their creative talents; for example, during a Reception class lesson children happily chose, cut out and pasted on a variety of fabrics while completing a picture of Elmer the Elephant.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is in line with national expectations for pupils of their age. This indicates that standards are now at the same level as at the time of the previous inspection but also represents an improvement for the school. In 1998 and 2000 standards plummeted to well below those expected nationally in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and in English at the end of Key stage 2. In 1999, results at the end of Key Stage 1 in writing were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Results in 2000 show that the number of pupils reaching the standards expected at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading was close that of to similar schools. Results in writing were well below those of similar schools. In Key Stage 2 standards in 2000 were well below those of similar schools. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing has improved and is now in line with that expected nationally at the end of both key stages. The main reasons for the improvements, overall, are linked to the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, increased

resources to support teaching and learning in English throughout the school and improved strategies for assessment and target setting.

76. In Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils have appropriately developed speaking and listening skills. They maintain concentration in listening to teachers' explanations and to other pupils' contributions. When pupils read together, they listen attentively to the teacher's explanations and to contributions made by other pupils. They are able to express their views and opinions clearly, as they explain the significance of the use of exclamation marks, discuss the use of contents and index pages and formulate questions to gather information from reference books. The achievement of the younger pupils is good, overall, and their progress is satisfactory. Pupils' continue to build upon the good foundations laid during their early years in school.
77. In Year 3 pupils use appropriate writing style and vocabulary when writing letters. They discuss their work with growing confidence and readily demonstrate their awareness of altering connectives to make writing more interesting. Pupils in Year 4 use dictionaries effectively to search for words with particular letter strings and recognise the hard and soft sounds for particular patterns. In Year 5, pupils discuss the use of persuasive language before writing advertisements and critical reviews of an imaginary pop concert, using specific vocabulary. They readily appreciate the difference between fact and fiction. By the time they are eleven, many pupils join in discussions confidently and answer teachers' questions clearly. Pupils in Year 6, make critical analyses of stories they read with their teacher and understand how literacy devices, such as cliff-hangers, metaphors and similes help stories to become cohesive. However, too many of the pupils in Year 6 respond in short simple sentences.
78. Standards in reading are satisfactory, overall, and there are some very able readers in all year groups. In Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils read accurately from the structured texts of the school reading scheme but few pupils extend their reading skills at home. By the age of seven, pupils in the middle- and higher-attaining groups read accurately and fluently and most have knowledge of punctuation, which they apply, when reading aloud, to create atmosphere. Lower-attaining pupils have a knowledge of the most frequently used words in texts and apply these to their reading but have less well developed phonic and other strategies to use when confronted by unfamiliar words. Their progress in reading is slow.
79. By the time they are eleven, most pupils have a wide range of strategies to help them understand what they read. They use contextual clues well and recount significant ideas, events and characters in stories. Whilst some higher-attaining pupils read children's novels of good quality with fluency and expression, most have insufficient experiences of a wide range of literature and few read for pleasure at home. All pupils are familiar with a range of literature that includes novels, poetry and non-fiction texts. In the Literacy Hour, pupils read together and this encourages an understanding of pace and expression. Pupils study vocabulary and sentence structure, which give them valuable practice in understanding texts and also enriches writing activities. Reading resources are up-to-date, of good quality and appropriate. Throughout the school only a few pupils use the local library, preferring to select reading books from the school or class libraries, which have not been systematically classified. Pupils' knowledge of library cataloguing systems, therefore, is underdeveloped. The majority of pupils use reference books well for research. Pupils' attainment in reading at the ages of seven and eleven is in line with that expected of pupils of their ages and the progress they make is satisfactory. However, although lower attaining pupils are supported through the additional literacy strategy,

teacher assistants and special educational needs support tuition, there are a number of pupils in each class who make unsatisfactory progress with their reading.

80. At the ages of seven and eleven the quality of writing is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, pupils' writing is satisfactory as a result of the school's increased awareness of the need to improve the quality of the extended writing for all pupils. By the age of seven, most pupils express their ideas in accurately formed sentences with an awareness of appropriate vocabulary. Many punctuate sentences using full stops and capital letters. They are encouraged to write prose for many audiences using appropriate style and vocabulary, and compose letters, book reviews and stories. Suitable attention is given to poetry.
81. By the age of eleven, the higher attaining pupils write using complex sentences to express shades of meaning and to add style to their writing. They are competent users of a variety of genres, including letter writing, for pleasure, to communicate in business and to send invitations for formal and informal functions. They use quite a wide vocabulary, for example, when writing advertisements and critical passages. Whilst all pupils communicate adequately at the end of Key Stage 2, many do not sustain enough interest to write at an appropriate length and to complete the task as outlined in their plans for the work. The presentation of their work in this key stage is barely satisfactory although by the age of eleven most pupils write using a cursive, legible, joined script that is well formed and of an appropriate size. Word processing is used for writing and to practise spelling. During the inspection pupils did not use the computers to extend their writing and develop skills in drafting and re-drafting.
82. Behaviour is good in all lessons. Teachers manage incidents of inappropriate behaviour well, employing the school's behaviour management policy swiftly and consistently. Pupils listen and respond with enthusiasm in lessons, although in all classes there is a significant number of pupils who do not readily offer ideas or answer questions. The majority of pupils work in a supportive way with each other and in groups. They enjoy their work in the literacy hour, are able to sustain concentration and produce satisfactory results.
83. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, with one lesson deemed to be very good in Key Stage 2 and another excellent in Key Stage 1. The contribution of the classroom assistants to pupils' learning in each class is also very good. Learning, overall, is good in both key stages. Most teachers pay appropriate attention in their lessons to spelling and punctuation, as when infant pupils used their wordbooks for spellings and wrote using full stops. Pupils' literacy skills are appropriately used in other subjects but there is not yet a consistent approach to the acquisition of literacy skills in all subjects. The best English and literacy lessons are characterised by teachers' enthusiasm, the promotion of learning through purposeful and meaningful tasks and by teachers and classroom assistants working closely together to ensure that lower-attaining pupils are fully included in all aspects of lessons. Teachers generally make effective links between reading, writing and spelling; for example, pupils were able to understand how words and phrases are used to persuade members of the public to attend the first performance of a new band. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not provided with sufficient challenge to extend their thinking and literacy skills beyond the average expectations of the class. The recently introduced whole school and class assessment procedures, however, will provide the much-needed information for teachers to establish suitably challenging activities for these able pupils. The majority of work is marked and in the classes where marking is good, teachers relate pupils' achievement to individual targets and offer points for development. Insufficient use, however, is made of homework to consolidate and

extend pupils' learning; during the inspection homework was not set in either key stage.

84. Additional resources have been purchased and classroom assistants have been trained, using the funds provided, to support the National Literacy Strategy. Effective use is being made of the additional literacy support provision, of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and of the support for the pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school has received good advice from the local education authority's literacy consultant to establish procedures for teaching and learning that contribute effectively to the recent raising of standards.
85. The subject co-ordinator and the headteacher have given a sound lead in analysing literacy problems and establishing good assessment and monitoring procedures to reverse the schools recent decline in standards. Steps taken to tackle weaknesses have been effective in bringing standards in line with national expectations. There is now a clear need to continue with the school procedures to further raise standards overall and to take steps, in particular, to raise standards for higher attainers in writing and for lower attainers in reading in all classes. Throughout the school, attention should be given to ensuring that pupils are aware of how they may improve the presentation of their written work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average and was better than that achieved by similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was below the national average. Standards over the last four years have been variable, ranging from just below to above the national average. In the National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-old pupils, in 2000, standards were in line with those achieved by most schools. The percentage reaching the higher level 5 was in line with the national average. Compared only with similar schools, standards were above the average. Results at the end of this key stage over the last four years also show that standards have been variable, ranging from below to being in line with the national average. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards in mathematics and the present system of target setting is having a positive effect on raising standards.
87. The inspection findings are that attainment is presently in line with the national averages at the end of Year 2 and at the standard expected at the end of Year 6 with an average proportion of high attainment. This is because the school is setting targets for numeracy and the good teaching seen in lessons, due to teachers' familiarisation with the National Numeracy Strategy, is having a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils respond well to the teaching in numeracy lessons.
88. The work of pupils at the end of Key Stage I is satisfactory and the majority can quickly recall the numbers that make ten. They have understood the operations of addition, subtraction and multiplication. In Year 2 pupils can count correctly to and from 200 in 2s, 3s, 5s, 10s and 20s and can also calculate mentally problems such as 37- 8 using appropriate strategies and explaining how they do it. They can recognise right angles from a number of shapes. They show a high level of awareness of numbers but their present level of skills is no greater than that expected for their age. By the time they reach Year 5, pupils can add and subtract numbers to two decimal places. They do this quickly and accurately and have a sound knowledge of place value and decimals. Pupils in Year 6 calculate confidently and quickly use a good

range of strategies to solve number problems such as those about the use of scales, when weighing and measuring. In number activities needing mental recall, lower-attaining able pupils can use multiples of ten whilst pupils working at a higher level can carry out addition sums, using multiples of ten in thousands.

89. In both key stages pupils' learning is good overall. The target setting in each class is having a positive impact on the progress of all pupils. All the pupils benefit from sessions of mental number work based on the National Numeracy Strategy because the oral questions challenge pupils at several different levels. The work of the pupils in both key stages shows good rates of achievement because of the good teaching. For example, higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 progress from completing sums such as doubling numbers to 20 to the calculation of two- and three-digit numbers. Their work is neat and well presented. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils learnt well how to decide which information was necessary to answer mathematical problems and in a similar lesson the Year 6 pupils quickly used their greater knowledge of estimation to make these decisions and answered easily with good explanations.
90. The quality of teaching is good overall and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. At present teachers are not always using the higher levels of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to challenge pupils further. This especially affects the standards the higher attaining pupils reach and results in their consolidating their knowledge rather than extending it leading to rates of progress being inconsistent. In oral work, however, this is not the case, because pupils are effectively challenged. For example, in the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 the teachers challenged pupils well in giving examples of estimation, used strategies to challenge pupils thinking and maintained very positive relationships, so that a positive learning environment was created within which pupils could learn effectively. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and give clear explanations.
91. In both key stages, teachers question pupils well, helping them to articulate their thoughts. Time is used effectively, especially in the mental mathematics sessions and this contributes to the pupils making good gains in their learning. In mental number sessions, teachers, in each class, pay good attention to pupils' different levels of attainment. This usually provides appropriate challenge for all the pupils. In lessons, different worksheets were given to children according to their previous attainment. Teachers use data from assessments to help match the work correctly. For example, pupils of Year 2 could easily use number bonds to ten and thereby complete the number calculations they were given.
92. Teachers' planning takes sufficient account of what pupils have already learnt and teachers use higher objectives on occasions from the National Numeracy Strategy based upon pupils' prior attainment. Learning objectives are clear, for example, a lesson for the youngest pupils was planned for learning at three different levels of addition: counting on, counting two more and counting numbers to 50. The methods used are generally good; for example, the use of the board with pupils helps them focus on significant issues they need to take into account and they are able to demonstrate their mental reasoning well, showing how they have worked things out. In a minority of lessons, the pupils lose interest when they are not sufficiently challenged but, overall, discipline is well kept. Pupils with special educational needs are offered effective individual support and make good progress. Teachers' marking is good and suggests ways to improve. There are sufficient opportunities provided for pupils to use computers to support their learning

93. Key support staff are well trained and qualified. A good system to chart the progress of pupils, following the results of their National Curriculum assessments at age seven through Key Stage 2, has been established. This is beginning to have an impact on monitoring and target-setting across the key stages. It is used diagnostically to identify the needs of groups of pupils with different prior attainment. The National Numeracy Strategy is providing helpful developments such as oral number work. The school provides an appropriate balance of time for teaching the subject. There is sufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor the pupils' standards and the quality of teaching. Teachers set targets for individual pupils' improvement.
94. The school has improved standards at the end of both key stages and is well placed to raise standards further, using target setting in each year group and the good quality of teaching.

## **SCIENCE**

95. Attainment for seven year olds in the 2000 teacher assessments was close to the national average for pupils gaining the expected level 2 or above. In comparison with similar schools it was above the average. The six per cent reaching the higher level 3 was well below the national average and below schools in a similar context. At the age of 11, in the National Curriculum tests in the same year, 83 per cent of pupils gained the expected level 4 or above, which was just below the national average. Of these, six per cent reached the higher level 5, which was well below the national average. Standards were below those of similar schools. Since 1996, standards have fluctuated from below to above the national average, mostly due to the attainment potential of cohorts. During this period girls have slightly outperformed boys.
96. Lesson observations, discussion with pupils and an analysis of past and present work indicate that attainment at the end of both key stages is at present below the national average. This differs from the judgement of the previous inspection, which reported attainment to be in line with the national average. The main contributory factor to this difference is the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. The school recognises the need to raise standards in science, is determined to do so and has set challenging but realistic targets for each year group in both key stages. A thorough analysis of strengths and weaknesses has enabled the school to target appropriate resources and training. A good start has been made recently on improving pupils' skills in scientific enquiry and in the acquisition of specific technical language. Inspection findings confirm an improving picture in both key stages.
97. In Key Stage 1, pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is sound in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. All pupils achieve satisfactorily over time, due to consistently sound teaching and willingness to learn. By the end of the key stage they know that light comes from a variety of sources, including the sun. They explain in simple terms how force makes things speed up, slow down or change direction. Pupils recognise that different creatures require a specific type of habitat and that they adapt to an environment. Many know the components of a balanced diet and are beginning to understand about healthy eating. They learn about the conditions necessary to grow seeds and why magnets attract some materials. They occasionally carry out investigations to a simple format; they predict, test and record their findings, reinforcing their literacy skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 during an experiment on friction, discovered that the smoother the surface, the further the model car travels, given a constant starting point

and gradient. Because of well-planned tasks, pupils talk readily about seasonal changes and explain how a variety of sounds can be placed in similar groups.

98. Throughout Key Stage 2 all pupils' learning continues to be sound. Achievement in relation to prior attainment is satisfactory, partly due to pupils' sound attitudes and teachers' appropriate planning. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of scientific facts including the representation of series circuits in drawings and diagrams, and balanced and unbalanced forces. Pupils use precise scientific names for the skeleton, major body organs and the function of the solar system. In the study of materials and their properties, pupils identify the changes which take place when materials are heated or cooled and suggest ways in which solids might be separated. They classify creatures such as carnivores, herbivores and omnivores correctly in working on life processes and living things. Many recognise when a test is fair or unfair and understand why, as was noted in an analysis of Year 5 work on growing plants with reference to types of soil and drainage. In such investigations they understand the need for accurate measurements and use their numeracy skills well in their calculations and interpretations of data. Pupils in Year 5 know about the part played by evaporation and condensation in the water cycle and in Year 6 pupils understand the process of filtration and reversible and irreversible changes. They learn to record their work in a variety of ways including simple tables and graphs to represent their results.
99. Pupils' attitudes to science are sound overall. In Key Stage 1 they are often good, especially when they are motivated to sustain concentration by appropriate assignment of tasks. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 1 lesson investigating how pitch can be changed in sound, using a variety of instruments. They enjoy the lesson especially when interesting tasks are organised, as was the case in the lesson on friction in Year 2. In the best lessons they listen well to the teacher and to each other and work purposefully both in collaboration and independently throughout the session, which supports their social skills. Many answer questions thoughtfully as was observed in a Year 5, lesson when pupils constructed keys to identify animals in a habitat. However, only relatively few seek to extend their knowledge independently or show the curiosity needed to understand scientific phenomena more fully. Even at the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils find it difficult to put appropriate ideas forward and test and evaluate them. In the majority of lessons pupils are polite and respect peers and adults alike. Only on the odd occasions, when too much time is allocated to undemanding tasks, are some pupils restless, boisterous and inattentive.
100. In the lessons observed teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. However, overall teaching is sound in both key stages. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations, display good scientific knowledge and plan well, with a good balance between practical and written work, as was witnessed in a Year 2 lesson studying forces. In all lessons good use is made of recapitulation to establish previous knowledge, to highlight discoveries and reinforce teaching points, as illustrated in a Year 6 lesson on sound. In nearly all classes lessons are planned well and pupils are managed effectively. However, investigative and experimental work is underdeveloped and not enough attention is made to the importance of fair testing.

101. Owing to staff changes, science has been managed by the senior management team since January this year. From September 2001 a current senior teacher will assume responsibility for the subject. Since her appointment at the beginning of the academic year the acting headteacher has provided solid support for the staff. She ensures that the curriculum is planned well and that good balance, coverage and continuity ensue. This is an appreciable improvement since the previous inspection. Together with the senior management team she has drawn up a policy and scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place. Teaching and learning is monitored on a regular basis with written and verbal reports to the teachers. From September 2001 plans are in place to release the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in all classes. Pupils' work is matched against planning on a weekly basis by the headteacher but levelling of work against the National Curriculum attainment targets is in the initial stages. The curriculum governor reviews the policy and plans on a regular basis. Resources are sound and easily accessible. Overall the subject is managed soundly, and there is a firm commitment to raising standards throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. Opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection were limited but there was range of evidence from displays, photographic records and teachers' planning. All of these indicate that pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is broadly in line with that expected nationally. Standards in art are the same as at the time of the last inspection.

103. Inspection findings show that pupils use a range of materials and approaches to make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work with different materials to create colourful patterns and use collage to add a third dimension to their work. They learn to mix colours to create a variety of shades and tones, which they use when working in the style of famous artists including Van Gogh and Kandinsky. When studying the work of Seurat and Monet, pupils in Key Stage 2 use the computer effectively to create pictures using pointillism (the dot effect) preferred by each artist. Pupils follow lines of progression in skills, as demonstrated by the work featuring faces that is on display throughout the school. They use different media of expression in each year, so that by the age of eleven years they use decoupage to create depth in a face. The quality of pupils' work in sketchbooks varies from good to unsatisfactory, with the standard of work varying in each year. The best work shows good application of shading, using pencil and pastel and simple compositions of moving figures.

104. Art is used to complement work across the curriculum. Offset printing has been undertaken to create impressions of Greek vases and direct printing on fabric to provide the texture of ancient patterns. In this work colour has been used skilfully and subtly for effect. The only three-dimensional work seen during the inspection was again to support work in history and design and technology in the construction of Tudor buildings.

105. There are adequate resources for art. Pupils are experiencing a range of art activities and, with the support of teachers' planning through the scheme of work, pupils' progress satisfactorily as they move through the school.

106. Too little teaching was observed to make a judgement on its overall quality. Work on display signifies that the work of all pupils is valued. However, the subject co-

ordinator has only recently been appointed and monitoring the progression and development of pupils' skills and of teaching throughout the school is as yet underdeveloped. The subject contributes to the pupils' cultural development. There is as yet insufficient use of assessment information to give guidance to pupils on ways in which they can improve or to help the planning of activities that would challenge the pupils to achieve higher standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. Only two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. The pupils' work on display shows that a range of media has been used and appropriate skills have been taught. In discussions with the pupils they say they have opportunities to plan and evaluate their products. In the one lesson seen in Year 6, the pupils displayed sound skills in designing and constructing chassis frames for model vehicles and had opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination and produce designs for different types of models. They were taught about how they might improve their designs. The majority of pupils were successful and were confident when given the opportunity to discuss the skills and techniques used. Pupils, when designing and making lighthouses in Year 4, explained the choice of material and how the finished product could be improved upon. Annotated designs were seen for models and these were clearly labelled. Pupils were aware that both the function and appearance of a product are important. The scrutiny of work reveals that pupils are taught specific skills, processes and knowledge based upon consideration of the needs of consumers; for example, in Year 6, pupils designed slippers making use of different fabrics. In Year 1, they made greeting cards using sliding mechanisms to give animation and in Year 2 they explored the use of mechanisms to create rotary and linear motion.
108. There is a draft policy and the school has produced a scheme of work that outlines key elements of the subject and provides guidance. The co-ordinator has only recently been given responsibility for the subject. The work seen indicated that a range of activities had been taught, fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum. The pupils are well aware of the safety issues of using various tools and materials and this is stressed in teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are offered extra help if needed and make satisfactory progress. The school has a good stock of tools and materials to enable an appropriate range of techniques to be taught.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations and in Year 1 are above expectations. Pupils in Year 1 have a good knowledge both of their own environment and of a contrasting place such as Ohio in the USA. This is because very good contacts have been used to present geographical work to young children in a way that has meaning to them. The sending of a cut-out of Flat Stanley, linked to the story book began a continuing correspondence with a family and the two schools. The pupils are able to describe such a phenomenon as a tornado and how schoolchildren prepare for one in some detail. Nearer home they have recorded a walk to the Big Shops and have noted particular things that they see on the way. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to: complete a traffic survey, understand a plan of a classroom, make a graph of the holiday different people go on, draw an imaginary island, record their route to school and read maps in a progressively detailed way, from using pictures to changing to symbols.

110. Two lessons were observed in the lower Key Stage 2 classes. Little other evidence was available from these two years. However, plans show that they investigate physical and human aspects of settlement in Year 3 and study the local area of Watford in Year 4 and compare it with a coastal town in the United Kingdom and with St Lucia. In Year 3 pupils have been completing a study of the local area and were drawing conclusions for their graphs from information they had already gathered. Whilst they worked slowly in this lesson and attainment was below that expected, the work completed, which included the use of information technology, shows that standards overall, are average. More could be expected of the higher attainers in this year group. In Year 4 pupils were learning that people can make a difference to their environment and were considering the effect of noise pollution. Pupils had some imaginative ideas of how to create a quiet classroom or library. In Year 5, it can be seen that pupils can name seas and rivers of the world and have knowledge of places in the United Kingdom with high and low rainfall, through studying a topic on Water. By the end of Key Stage 2, in Year 6, the standard of the pupils' work completed is average but the amount of work completed is considerably less than expected of pupils of their age. They have studied mountains and written about the Austrian Alps, the Rocky Mountains and the Lake District. They have used temperature graphs to compare the three places. They have also compared the effect of weather, such as floods, avalanches and rain on mountains. However, much work is taken home at the end of a topic, and therefore a limited amount of work was seen in this key stage, so no overall judgement can be made on standards. From the planning, which shows that the school is now following the Qualifications and Curriculum Guidelines, the subject meets requirements, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when the school was not meeting statutory requirements for the subject. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well in Key Stage 1 but, from the evidence available, achievement is below that expected by the end of Key Stage 2.
111. Pupils' attitudes in Year 1 were very good. They showed considerable interest in what was being taught and enjoyed the different activities. From the work seen, however, more care could be given by pupils in Key Stage 1 to colouring of maps and pictures. Few pupils carefully coloured within lines. In Year 3, pupils' attitudes were satisfactory, although they took a long time to get started with their work and in Year 4 attitudes were good. The long lesson, divided by a lunch hour, in Year 4 is particularly successful in keeping pupils' interest while giving time for them to make good progress within a lesson.
112. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, as judged from planning and from the scrutiny of work, is very good. It was excellent in the lesson observed. It can be seen that teachers provide many interesting activities and recording is done in a variety of ways: using worksheets, drawing pictures and maps, making graphs and writing. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 2, teaching was good. Lessons are very well planned, teachers use questioning very well to encourage pupils to think for themselves, explain activities well and they keep pupils on task effectively. Teachers do not, however, plan sufficiently for higher attainers who tend to work at the speed of others.
113. The co-ordinator is new to the role and management of the subject is satisfactory. The school has adequate resources for the topics being taught but needs to match resources to the new curriculum. Information and communication technology is under-used. This has been identified as an area for development. The school uses the local environment well in the teaching of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

114. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with expectations. In Year 1, pupils think about homes and families and grandparents are invited to come and talk to them about the past. They also look at different toys from the past. In Year 2, they learn about famous people in the past and pupils compare holidays in the past with ones in the present. They study photographs and postcards of the seaside to consider what was different in the past. Wall displays show that pupils have found seaside places that they know on a map of the British Isles, linking their history and geography lessons. They also learn about different castles. From the work seen in pupils' files, standards are below average but much of the work is oral and practical and the work covered in the lesson in Year 2 was in line with expectations. Work is not sufficiently matched to the ability of pupils with special educational needs who produce very little recorded work in either key stage. In Key Stage 2, two lessons were seen, both in the upper key stage and pupils' attainment was in line with and slightly below average. However, the work seen in pupils' files and a small amount brought in from home on topics that they have covered, shows that the work of some pupils is above average. These included topics on sport since 1948, fashion in history and music across the decades (a presentation using long-playing records, cassettes and compact discs, as well as a video). A project, completed by two pupils as holiday work on Egyptians, was also above average. Standards at the last inspection were in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. From the limited evidence available, standards, overall, have been maintained and the achievement of some pupils is good.
115. Pupils' attitudes in Key Stage 1 are mainly satisfactory but the pace of their work is often slow and their work is sometimes a little careless. More needs to be done to help them to work more quickly and at the same time more neatly. They sometimes take a while to settle to work, taking too much time to organise themselves and find out what they should be doing. Attitudes in Key Stage 2 are good. Pupils have completed good holiday research on different subjects and show an interest in the subject, particularly when it is presented in a practical way. In class they handle Victorian toys carefully and with real interest. They find it more difficult when the subject is more academically presented, such as when learning about the Greeks, needing the teacher to explain facts on a one-to-one basis.
116. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, although the pace of questioning is slow and, because of this, opportunities are missed when pupils show enthusiasm for answering questions but are constantly reminded to put up their hands. There is insufficient balance between making the most of pupils' contributions while keeping satisfactory discipline. Teachers also often have to repeat what has been told to the class to individuals and this prevents a quick start to activities. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory but too little is achieved in some lessons, such as one on the Greeks, if the National Curriculum is to be covered in depth. More use should be made of homework to extend what is taught in class in Key Stage 2, as pupils tend to work slowly and need extra time to complete work and do further research. Teaching is good when artefacts are used well to add interest to the subject.
117. The management of the subject is satisfactory, with the co-ordinator new to the role. Topic boxes are being compiled and are a useful resource. There is no evidence that information and communication technology is used to enhance this subject. Little use is made of the historical roots of the people of South Oxhey, which is also a resource that is under-used.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

118. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages and pupils achieve as well as can be expected in relation to their prior achievement. An effective start has been made in using information communication technology as an integral part of learning. Standards are in line with what is expected nationally for 7 and 11 year olds and there is a coherent approach in the planning to provide rigorous opportunities for its use. By Year 6, pupils have experienced elements of the required strands of the subject and have sufficient opportunities to practise what they have learned in other areas of the curriculum.
119. Pupils are able to demonstrate word processing skills that are satisfactory. Most can load, save and retrieve information and use the Internet to seek further information. They describe how they have used particular programs to handle data and how they have used elements of control skills when creating pictures.
120. They also are aware of the uses of information technology in the wider world, such as e-mail and the Internet. Previous work includes examples of word processing, data handling, spreadsheets and the use of the programme Power Point, but these were limited in demonstrating the full breadth of the programmes of study. There was little evidence of information technology being taught or used to support other curriculum areas during the period of the inspection.
121. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the function of various keys. They know how to enter, delete and change fonts. In one lesson, pupils were asked to explore the use of a database, entering information and producing tables and graphs. They tried to do this with some degrees of success and most made sound progress, usually when assisted by a more able pupil. The pupils are able to use the mouse to select, drag and drop. Pupils have access to computers in each class, but they are not used as frequently as one would expect. There is very little work on display to celebrate pupils' achievements.
122. When given the opportunity, pupils show an interest in the subject and are very keen to use computers in their learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the computer and its uses. They also show a willingness to help each other. The school does not make full use of the skills pupils have acquired and the planned activities do not always ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged.
123. The teachers' own skills vary and several require further training to teach the whole of the programme of study effectively. Although variable, the quality of teaching overall is good; for example, in Year 4 the teacher successfully introduced the use of painting on screen to create pictures in the style of Georges Seurat. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were taught how to create a database and to access information from it. In Year 6, teachers use the computer appropriately to support other subjects such as history. Pupils could use the Internet to research information about Victorian England and use this to successfully prepare information sheets, combining text and images.
124. Some monitoring of planning, classroom practice and pupils' work takes place. The co-ordinator is, therefore, aware of the standards achieved in the school. At present the progression of specific skills is not identified and linked to ages and stages of development. Planning is satisfactory and has been developed to teach pupils progressive skills that they can then practise and use across the whole curriculum. Resources across the school are very good: there is a central computer resource area and a computer in each classroom. There is a good supply of software, printers,

scanners and access to the Internet. The Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidance has been adopted: this results in planning overall being satisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

125. During the inspection only one lesson was observed in each key stage. Other evidence was gained from attending assemblies and listening to pupils singing. As a result, inspection findings indicate that standards reached by seven and eleven year old pupils are in line with national expectations. This differs from the judgement of the previous inspection, which reported standards above national expectations.
126. Pupils in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 have already developed a good ear for hearing differently pitched sounds and can identify and sing in different styles. During the lesson observed, they enjoyed singing 'He gave me eyes' and 'Reach for the stars'. These songs were well chosen by the teacher as they provided a good basis for the pupils to reinforce their skills in keeping a steady rhythm. The appropriate use of backing tapes and piano accompaniment increased pupils' opportunities to sing in tune. This lesson was enhanced further by a group which played untuned percussion and accompanied the singers and pianist, keeping a steady pulse. During assemblies pupils sing sweetly and in tune but not always with passion and total involvement.
127. By the age of 11, pupils know the names of a range of instruments and the sections of an orchestra in which they are to be found. Pupils in Year 4 are able to recall that the piece of music 'If I were not upon the stage' can be accompanied by an 8-beat percussion beat. They can identify a range of percussion instruments such as tambourines, jingle bells and African drums and were keen to demonstrate which instruments were most appropriate to accompany the taped song. During the lesson the teacher introduced non-standard notation in the form of dots on the blackboard. This was effective in capturing the pupils' interest and helping them develop an early understanding of music theory.
128. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are sound overall. They listen carefully to pre-recorded music and to the work of others. This was notable in the two lessons observed. They work productively together and as a result of high levels of collaboration are able to produce finished compositions by the end of a lesson, as was observed in a Year 4 class.
129. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and some are skilled musicians in their own right, using their skills effectively to demonstrate teaching points, as was observed in the Key Stage 1 lesson. The lessons observed were generally well organised and teachers ensure that resources are ready for use before lessons start.
130. Detailed planning ensures that pupils develop their skills at an appropriate pace throughout both key stages. The co-ordinator, who has recently completed a music Curriculum 2000 in-service training course, monitors teachers' plans regularly. Additional tuition is provided occasionally by external teachers; for example, the organisation of a brass instrumental workshop. When time permits, a member of the London Symphony Orchestra teaches percussion in Key Stage 1. Resources are good and easily accessible and include a wide range of tapes and compact discs. The subject, which is managed effectively, contributes soundly to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131. In the lessons observed, the standards attained were in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The achievement of the pupils in both key stages is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below those reported at the last inspection when they were judged to be above expectations but are similar to the standards judged as 'typical of what is expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 2'.
132. Pupils in Key Stage 1 interpret music to express and communicate moods in movement. They travel effectively, linking dance movements with good co-ordination and enjoy demonstrating their work. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on their physical skills and are developing increasing competence in athletics and games. By the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils attain a basic qualification in swimming. Pupils work carefully to improve their technical skills for passing and receiving a ball and to achieve correct running techniques. They understand how exercise affects the body and are aware of the need for correct body movements to increase endurance, pace and power, to be better able to run fast or throw balls accurately and safely. During games lessons, pupils worked in pairs and small teams with a sense of fairness and honesty. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other; there is good emphasis on developing their speaking and listening in physical education lessons. During the inspection little athletics was observed, except in one lesson which focused on improving stamina for running.
133. Overall, the quality of teaching at both key stages is good. The school follows an appropriate scheme of work, following the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding to teach the subject. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and most teachers have good relationships with their pupils and their classroom management is good. Lessons consist of good warm-up sessions; teachers provide clear explanations for pupils and encourage them to have knowledge of their bodies in order for them to work safely. Peer demonstration is used to celebrate good performances but pupils' evaluation of their own and others' performance is generally underused to help them to improve their work. Where teaching is less than good, some teachers overemphasise the technical requirements, with the result that the lesson pace slows and there is an imbalance in listening and physical movement.
134. Resources are adequate overall, and for some areas are good, allowing for planned differentiation. They are in good condition and used well. The school has two good-sized school halls designated for physical education and outdoors there is a good-sized playing field and hard surfaced area. All are used well.
135. Pupils enjoy additional physical education activities through a small range of after-school sports clubs that include football and summer games.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

136. Only a limited number of lessons was observed during the inspection. Evidence includes an analysis of pupils' past and present work, scrutiny of teachers' plans and discussion with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. Standards at ages seven and eleven match the expectations of the Local Education Authority's Agreed Syllabus. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is sound and the majority achieves according level with ability.
137. The subject contributes satisfactorily to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, by widening their appreciation of beliefs of other religions. Older pupils are encouraged

to reflect on their own beliefs in relation to the work discussed in lessons. The best assemblies are thoughtful, reflective and provide opportunities for pupils to share ideas and present aspects of the Christian faith in interesting ways. Such examples were observed in two assemblies where the story focused on the importance of prayer as a means of communication with God.

138. In Key Stage 1 evidence in work shows that pupils know some significant facts and are developing a secure knowledge about the Christian and Jewish religions. They know that these faiths have special books, the Bible and Torah, which contain stories held to be important by their followers. They frequently link the messages in these stories to how they themselves should try to live, for example, the importance of saying 'thank you' reflected in Harvest Thanksgiving or being kind and helpful to others based on some aspects of Jesus' life. Pupils talk readily about the major Christian festivals such as Christmas or Easter and have a growing knowledge of what is involved. They are beginning to understand the significance of light and water as symbols in major world faiths. For instance, during a visit to the local church they learned that water is used during baptism as a sign of new life and that lighted candles are symbolic of Jesus being the Light of the World'. Written work contains a variety of descriptive, informative and reflective writings, most of which are of satisfactory standard.
139. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have increased their awareness of world religions. In Years 3 and 4 they demonstrate a deeper understanding of the main features of Islam and the Sikh faith. For example, they know why Muslims face Mecca while praying and why food is important during Sikh worship. Many know about some of the Biblical parables and the Five Pillars of Islam, but are not yet sure about the significance of these. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can recount some of Jesus' miracles; for example, the cure of the lame man and how Jesus reacted to the temptation in the desert. As a result, many offer ideas about how to avoid or combat modern temptations, thus emphasising the link between knowing about and learning from religions. Some higher-attaining pupils recognise the significance of ritual in religions such as the Five Ks initiation into the Sikh faith or the blessing of bread and wine during Christian services. The majority of pupils understand the importance of the Passover or Ramadan and Diwali in the Jewish, Islamic and Hindu faiths respectively.
140. In the lessons observed pupils' attitudes to the subject were satisfactory overall. The majority is keen to discuss questions such as 'what is the world?' or 'who made the world?' and in a Year 2 lesson on living together in harmony, pupils referred to the school's Golden Rules in relation to the teachings of Islam, Judaism and Christianity.
141. Teaching is sensitive and generally effective in helping pupils to develop an interest in the subject, as well as improving their knowledge and understanding. It is most effective when the teacher's own lively approach and good preparation combine with confident subject knowledge to enthuse pupils and hold their attention. Such an example was noted in a Year 4 lesson comparing samples of Sikh and Christian wisdom from their respective holy books. Teaching is less effective when the tasks and set discussions are not pitched appropriately to the level of pupils' needs.
142. Work is planned to match closely the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. This ensures that pupils receive a sufficiently broad range of learning opportunities. Satisfactory procedures are identified in planning. Teachers mark work conscientiously, making comments that are both appreciative and useful in helping pupils to understand what they have achieved. The co-ordinator, who has received training in respect of the new syllabus, monitors plans and pupils' work on a regular

basis. Resources are good and easily accessible to staff and pupils. Overall there is satisfactory management of the subject.