

INSPECTION REPORT

St John Fisher RC First and Middle School

Pinner

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102232

Headteacher: Mrs A Lyons

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 5th to 8th June 2000

Inspection number: 197296

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and Middle
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Melrose Road Pinner Middlesex HA5 5RA
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body of St John Fisher School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Billiet
Date of previous inspection:	4 th to 6 th February 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Terry Elston	Registered inspector	Information technology, Design and technology, Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language.	How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards?
Susan Thomas	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Bob Cross	Team inspector	Science, Geography, Physical education, French, Equal opportunities.	How well are pupils taught?
Hilary Ring	Team inspector	Children under five, English, Music.	
Robert Lever	Team inspector	Mathematics, Art, History.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John Fisher First and Middle School is of average size, with 264 full time pupils from four to twelve years old, nearly all of whom are of the Roman Catholic faith. There are 133 boys and 131 girls. The numbers have increased steadily over the past four years. This is a favoured area in social and economic terms. A greater than average proportion of adults in the area have higher educational qualifications, and most families own their own homes. The attainment of pupils on entry is average overall compared with children nationally, but varies widely from a significant proportion of pupils with marked learning difficulties to a similar number who are above average in many areas. Over 18 per cent of full time pupils are designated as having special educational needs, which is about average, and 13 pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is a very high proportion compared with other schools. Over five per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups, and over 12 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language; both of these figures are high compared with other schools. There are five pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school, which develops pupils' academic and personal skills well. Lessons are often exciting, and pupils respond enthusiastically. The leadership provides clear direction towards how pupils' standards can be raised further, and places considerable emphasis on pupils' spiritual development. The school shows a great commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in all activities, and this policy benefits all pupils in the school. Pupils make good progress in this school, and, with the effective use made of extra funds to raise standards, it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are working well. Consequently, standards found in this inspection in mathematics by Year 6 are well above average, and in English, they are above average.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and pupils make significant progress towards their targets.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality, and its effects permeate the school's work.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, and ensures that pupils make good progress through the school. Lessons are planned well, and nearly all teachers have effective ways of managing pupils' behaviour without stifling their enthusiasm.
- The procedures for assessment are very good; they give teachers clear ideas of pupils' progress, and are used well to plan future work.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a good team, and lead the school well. They show a clear commitment to raising standards, and support the highest and lowest achieving pupils equally well.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in the national assessment tests at Key Stage 2 do not reflect those found during this inspection.
- The provision for information technology at Key Stage 2 does not meet the statutory requirements: the school has too few computers, those that exist are used too infrequently, and there are too many gaps in the range of computer programs to teach the necessary skills fully.
- There is no systematic monitoring of teaching, and this helps to explain why some teaching in Key Stage 1 is not as good as in the rest of the school.
- Some parents are unhappy with the way the school handles their complaints.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. The leadership's response to the main issues arising from the last report has been good. Weaknesses in teachers' assessments of pupils have been addressed successfully by introducing a common format, the results of which are passed on to the next teacher. The marking of pupils' work has improved considerably, and is now good. All schemes of work are now in place, and these have helped improve the quality of teachers' planning, and the standards that pupils achieve. Provision for higher achievers has improved significantly: teachers' planning now gives the higher achievers good opportunities to extend their skills, and extra funding is used well to provide special classes taught by the deputy headteacher. The allocation of time for the subjects of the National Curriculum has been revised, and all subjects now have an appropriate distribution. The health and safety issue has been resolved. Pupils' standards in last year's national assessment tests were not as good at Year 6 as in the previous inspection, but this inspection finds them significantly higher in English and mathematics, and similar in science. The quality of teaching is significantly better this time, with fewer unsatisfactory lessons, and more lessons that were good or better.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	A*	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	C	D	
science	B	C	C	E	

The table shows that, in 1999, pupils' standards by Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. In detail, the

school's results in all three subjects combined show an upward trend, in line with that for schools nationally. Matched against schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils attained well below average scores in English and science, and below average scores in mathematics. The figures comparing St John Fisher with 'similar' schools should be read with caution, however, as the 1999 cohort included four pupils who entered the school in Year 6 with English as an additional language, and a high number with significant special educational needs. The findings of the inspection show that the current Year 6 attains much higher standards than those pupils last year; overall, standards are above those found in most other schools in English, and well above in mathematics. The school is making good progress, therefore, towards its targets agreed with the Local Education Authority. Standards in information technology by Year 6 are too low. By Year 6, pupils' work is well above standards found in most other schools in music, above those usually found in art, design and technology and physical education, and similar to those standards found in most other schools in science, history and geography. In Year 7, pupils' work is above standards found in most other schools in art, design and technology and music, and similar in all other subjects. By Year 2, pupils' work is above standards found in most other schools in reading, writing, mathematics, music and art. It is similar in all other subjects apart from geography, where standards are below. Children make a good start in the Reception class, and, by the time they reach Year 1, nearly all are on course to reach above average standards in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's physical, personal and social development are generally as expected in these areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils generally have very positive attitudes to their work, although those in Year 2 often take a while to settle. Pupils enjoy school, and take part in lessons enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Their behaviour is good, both in the classrooms and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other, respect each others' differences and support one another when necessary.
Attendance	Very good, and significantly better than schools nationally. Pupils are punctual to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years	Aged 11-12 years
62 lessons observed	Good	Unsatisfactory	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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but there are significant variations between different parts of the school. The quality of teaching was good or better in two thirds

of lessons, and very good in nearly one lesson in five. There were three lessons out of 62 that were unsatisfactory, all in Year 2 where the control of pupils in practical sessions was sometimes ineffective, and expectations of them were too low. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is particularly good. The quality of learning reflected these figures very closely. The quality of teaching seen represents an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection when less than half of the teaching was 'good or better' and, in almost one lesson in ten, it was 'less than satisfactory'. The quality of teaching and learning is good for children aged under five, and helps them make good progress in all areas of their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sufficiently broad, and is planned well so that teachers can use the schemes of work easily to plan lessons. The curriculum for information technology does not meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 2, and is one of the school's targets for development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are very well served by good planning of lessons, and expert support by two specialist teachers and many classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision ensures that pupils soon develop their use and understanding of English. All pupils with English as an additional language attain, or get close to, national levels by Year 7.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good – a strength of the school. Very strong spiritual provision teaches pupils much about the place of God in their lives, and this works very well alongside the teaching of clear moral values. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their social skills. Very good cultural provision gives pupils many experiences of art, literature and music, and enables them to appreciate the richness of other cultures of the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers support pupils' personal development very well, and keep useful information about their behaviour, personal strengths and academic progress which they pass on to the next teacher.
Partnerships with parents	The school provides good information for parents on the curriculum, and pupils' annual reports are helpful. Some parents, however, feel that the school does not always handle their complaints and concerns well, and many are unhappy with the school's provision of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership and vision by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They show a clear commitment to the raising of pupils' standards, and support the provision for pupils with special educational needs particularly well. The monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body works closely with the school, and takes a keen interest in the work done by pupils. They are often in school, and give good support to the financial management of the school's resources.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good, and identifies where pupils are doing well, and where they can improve. Pupils' writing has improved directly as a result of the school's analysis of their work in the national assessment tests.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The funds are managed well, with especially effective use of extra money to support pupils with special educational needs. The school secretary works hard, and effectively, to secure the best value for the school's spending. The good accommodation is used efficiently. The school's resources are generally good, apart from in information technology, where the school is short of equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good teaching. • Their child's good progress. • The way children are taught to respect others' views. • The provision for pupils with special educational needs. • Good, useful information about the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school handles their complaints. • The lack of extra-curricular activities for the infants. • Too much, or not enough, homework is set. • They would like more information about their child's progress.

The inspectors endorse the positive comments made by parents. There is evidence that the procedures for handling parents' complaints do not always work, and there are no extra-curricular activities for the infants. Homework is set regularly, and builds up appropriately as pupils move through the school. The information about pupils' progress is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 7 is broadly similar to that found in most other schools. This small class is the residue of a larger group, which lost pupils to local secondary schools at the end of Year 6, and this makes overall judgements of pupils' progress through the school inappropriate. In addition, Year 7 has a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, and significant special educational needs, and this helps to explain why the attainment of the class as a whole is lower than the current Year 6.

2. In Year 7, pupils' standards in English are similar to those found in most other schools. They engage in conversations readily, but often need support to develop their points of view in more depth. They read a good range of material that covers both factual and fictional works. Their reading is usually accurate, although not always expressive, and pupils have clear ideas of their reading preferences. Pupils spell accurately, and set their work out well, taking good account of paragraphs, but their writing is rarely extensive or lively in content. Work is usually neatly presented with a good style of fluent and consistently joined handwriting.

3. In mathematics in Year 7, pupils' attainment is similar to that found in most other schools. They investigate a range of challenges with reasonable skill. They conduct good searches for relationships when they investigate triangle and square numbers. They have average recall of mental number facts and computation methods. Most have a sound understanding of negative numbers in everyday situations, and order, add and subtract them. They make accurate three-dimensional models by linking faces and edges, and find perimeters of simple shapes. They collect and explore data methodically, and represent it in a variety of ways, including scatter graphs.

4. In science, pupils' attainment is similar to that found in most other schools by Year 7. They use balloons and other simple apparatus well to investigate static electricity. They predict and attempt to measure the outcomes of their work, but, although they are able to identify some of the variable factors in their investigations, they do not always ensure that the tests they apply are fair tests. The pupils recognise differences between animal and plant cells, know that pH is a measure of a solution's acidity and are aware of some of the effects caused by the earth's movement.

5. In information technology, pupils' work in Year 7 is similar to that found in most other schools. Although their word processing skills are sometimes slow, their monitoring of changes using sensors is well developed, as is their designing of computer programs to create a moving picture.

6. Pupils' work is above that found in most other schools in Year 7 in art, design and technology and music. In art, pupils work accurately, produce exciting pictures and have a good knowledge of the work of artists. In design and technology, they work carefully to design and produce attractive CD holders, and pay good attention to the quality of the finish. In music, pupils make perceptive analyses of pieces of music, and many play instruments to a good standard. In all other subjects, including French, pupils' work is similar to that found in most other schools for Year 7.

7. The national end of Key Stage 2 tests for St John Fisher School in 1999 show that, compared with all schools, standards were below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Caution should be used when analysing these figures, because four pupils with English as an additional language were admitted to that class in Year 6, and there were four pupils with significant special educational needs. When matched against their results in the Key Stage 1 national assessment tests, pupils made good progress overall. The trend in the school's results over the last four years rose broadly in line with that nationally. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

8. The school has set challenging targets for 94 per cent of its pupils to reach, or exceed, the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests in English this year, and for 80 per cent of pupils to meet or exceed this level in mathematics. The school is on course to exceed these targets in mathematics, but not to meet them in English.

9. The findings of the inspection are that the standards attained by Year 6 pupils are well above those found in most other schools in mathematics, including numeracy, above in English, including literacy, and similar to other schools in science. The current Year 6 is, therefore, performing far better than last year's group.

10. This inspection finds that, in English, by the age of 11, the pupils ask sound questions building upon the contributions of others, but few pick out the main points of issues easily. They are interested in books and read with enjoyment. Many pupils predict what will happen next in stories, and have firm opinions about their favourite author. A good proportion of higher achievers write effectively for a wide range of purposes and readers, and most use punctuation well.

11. In mathematics, in Year 6, pupils' numeracy skills are well above those found in most other schools. They have very good strategies for solving problems, and have a good knowledge of multiplication tables up to ten. Their recall of facts is accurate, and they respond quickly to mental mathematics questions fired at them. Pupils convert currencies quickly using calculators, and use information technology well to complete data handling exercises.

12. In Year 6 in science, the pupils use resources they are given for experimental work reasonably well, but lack skill in devising and investigating their own activities. They produce sound descriptions of the functions of some important human organs, classify materials accurately as solids, liquids or gases and use symbols appropriately to draw an electrical circuit. In information technology, pupils' attainment is below average. They have sound, although slow, word processing skills but their knowledge of other aspects of the subject, such as control technology, monitoring and modelling, is limited.

13. Pupils' work is above that found in most other schools by Year 6 in art, physical education, and design and technology, and well above in music. In art, pupils show a good capability to experiment with different skills and techniques, using tools and materials effectively and safely. In design and technology, they evaluate their work well as it develops, considering the purposes for which it is intended. When making models, they produce good step-by-step plans, and demonstrate increasing accuracy, with good attention to the quality of finish and function. In physical education, pupils' work is above average in dance and

swimming, and average in gymnastics and games. In music, pupils' skills in reading musical notation are good, and many play instruments very well. Pupils' work is similar to that found in most other schools in history and geography.

14. When the averages of the school's 1999 end of Key Stage 1 test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards were average in reading and mathematics, and well above in writing. Compared with similar schools, standards are below average in reading and mathematics, but above average in writing. When these assessment results are compared with the previous three years, they show a rising trend in standards overall, but, in reading, standards have remained broadly the same.

15. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards in English are above those found in most other schools. Standards are average in speaking and listening, but above in reading and writing. Pupils speak well, and are eager to tell the class about their treasures, but many struggle to listen for long in Year 2. Pupils read accurately at their own levels, and many do so with fluency or good expression. In writing, pupils' work is generally interesting and well constructed into sentences, but few move on to write in a joined style.

16. In mathematics, in Year 2, standards are above those found in most other schools. Pupils' numeracy skills are good. They add and subtract confidently, and know odd and even numbers. They name two-dimensional shapes accurately, and know how to tell the time.

17. By the age of seven in science, pupils' standards are similar to those found in most other schools. They conduct simple experiments with average skill to record the growth of beans in different conditions, but their written work is sketchy, and few predict the outcomes of their investigations. In information technology, the pupils show average word processing skills, and use the mouse and keyboard confidently. In geography, pupils' work is below average. They produce too little work, and few develop average geographical skills or knowledge. Pupils do well in music, singing with good control, and picking out soft and loud sounds in recorded music before applying these changes to their own performances. In art, pupils' work is above average. They draw and paint with good imagination and control, and have a good knowledge of the work of famous artists. Pupils' work in history and physical education is average.

18. Children aged under five enter the school at average standards overall, but they have a wide range of abilities, varying from those who are already starting to read and write, to those with significant special educational needs. Children make good progress, and nearly all are on course to reach above average standards in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time that they are five. Standards on entry in relation to the elements of physical and personal and social development are generally as expected in these areas and most children are on course to reach average standards for five-year-olds.

19. Overall, pupils achieve well given their starting points. The good quality of the teaching of children under five ensures that they make significant improvements in all areas of their development, and enter Year 1 with good basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

20. By Year 2, pupils have made steady progress. They do well in Year 1, where the teaching is consistently good, and pupils make the most of their time in school. They build well on their basic skills, and improve in all areas except geography. In Year 2, pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy, when lessons benefit from the tight structure of the respective national

strategies, but often make modest progress in other lessons when the teacher's control of their behaviour is less effective. As pupils move through the school, their progress quickens as the quality of teaching improves. In particular, their literacy and numeracy skills develop well. Only in information technology is progress slow, as the shortage of computers and software limit pupils attainment. The demanding teaching in Year 7 ensures that pupils make good gains here, as shown by their higher levels of attainment at the time of this inspection compared with their results in the national assessment tests last year.

21. Pupils with special educational needs do very well. They profit from good teaching, clear targets for improvement and valuable help from the two co-ordinators for pupils with special educational needs and classroom assistants. They develop their reading skills well, and the literacy hour provides good opportunities for them to develop their phonic skills, and work briskly towards their reading targets. The numeracy hour is equally successful at improving their grasp of number, and nearly all are working towards national standards by Year 6.

22. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and attain very good standards for their previous attainment. They receive good specialist support and are well integrated into the work of their class in all subjects. Most achieve national levels by Year 7, and a few exceed them in mathematics.

23. Higher achievers progress well, particularly in mathematics where a significant number of pupils exceed the standards found in most schools by Year 6. In both English and mathematics, the 'booster classes' and specialist groups taken by the deputy headteacher provide very good opportunities for these pupils to develop their skills to the full.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Pupils' attitudes to their work are usually very good. They concentrate very well in class and work hard. They listen carefully to their teacher and show respect when other pupils are answering questions. In a few lessons in Year 2, pupils' attention wanders and, as their behaviour begins to deteriorate, their work suffers. As lessons are usually very structured, there are few opportunities in class for pupils to develop their learning at their own pace. Apart from Year 7 pupils, few use computers or reference books independently for research.

25. Pupils' behaviour is good overall, and often very good when teachers have high expectations and pupils are absorbed in their work. There have been no exclusions. Most parents feel that standards of behaviour are high. Pupils are generally courteous and polite. They show respect for each other and treat each other as equals. At break, they ensure that pupils in wheelchairs are not left to play on their own.

26. The personal development of children under five is good. They settle down well to tasks when they feel involved, but occasionally lose interest when they are sitting on the carpet for too long. Behaviour is good for this age, and individuals are learning that they are a member of a class and cannot gain an adult's attention to the exclusion of others. Children show their independence by dressing themselves, selecting materials and activities and joining in with the clearing away process. They take turns well, and most of them show that they are learning to consider others when they share toys in the sand or water. Children using construction equipment often help each other to find the correct piece for the next stage of the building. They join in with prayers and know what it means to be a good friend. They are able to express their feelings and are developing an understanding of what is right and right.

27. The attendance and punctuality of pupils are very good. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school, and unauthorised absence is below the national average.

28. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Staff demonstrate a great respect for the pupils, and value each as individuals. This is a strength of the school. All pupils with special educational needs are included in as many activities as possible, and are integrated well into the class. Pupils of different races mix well together. There was no evidence of racial disharmony, and the feelings and beliefs of others are accepted and valued.

29. There are good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take responsibility outside of lessons. The school council consisting of two representatives from each class allows children to make contributions to the development of the school. Councillors are proud of their achievements, particularly of their efforts to raise money for the people of Mozambique. The council organised a 'bring and buy sale' involving the whole school, and raised the sum of £285.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

30. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall when judged on a whole-school basis although there are significant variations between different parts of the school. For children under five and those in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good, but in Key Stage 1, it is unsatisfactory overall. The needs of boys and girls are met equally well by the teaching. During the inspection, 62 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was very good in nearly one lesson in five, good in nearly half, and satisfactory in nearly one lesson in three. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson in 20. The quality of learning reflected these figures very closely. The quality of teaching seen represents an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection when less than half of the teaching was 'good or better' and, in nearly one lesson in ten, it was 'less than satisfactory'.

31. The good quality of teaching and learning for children aged under five is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection, which judged the quality of teaching for these children to be satisfactory. During the inspection, 80 per cent of the teaching and learning observed for these children was at least good and 40 per cent was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching or learning was seen. Teaching and learning of this quality results in the children making good progress in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. The Reception teacher has particularly high expectations of what young children can achieve, and organises a rich variety of activities to stimulate their learning. The only shortcoming is when the teacher occasionally talks too long to the whole class, when it is evident that some children have limited concentration spans. Support staff are very well briefed and are provided with their own planning sheets that indicate the expected learning outcomes for each activity. As a result, the planning is extensive and detailed and makes clear reference to the recommended curriculum for children of this age in all the areas of learning.

32. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and does not promote rapid enough progress in the pupils' learning. At this key stage, well over one third of the teaching and learning seen was good but almost a quarter was unsatisfactory. This judgement is not as good as that made by the school's previous inspection which stated that 'the quality of teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory but is mainly satisfactory or better'. In Year 1, no unsatisfactory teaching or learning was observed and nearly two thirds of the

teaching and learning observed was good. This promoted good progress in Year 1. For example, a Year 1 literacy lesson exemplified the strengths of the teaching in that year group and illustrated the effectiveness of the school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The lesson and the resources needed for it were well prepared and organised. The teacher's very detailed planning revealed a thorough knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and an accurate match of work to the pupils' competencies. The teacher worked hard to teach basic skills, asked individual pupils pertinent questions to which they responded appropriately and gave them positive feedback which indicated high expectations of them. The teacher's high expectations, and the pupils' response to these, were also evident in the work in pupils' books, and in the range and quality of work produced by pupils of different ability during group work in literacy. The teacher managed the pupils well and they responded by working hard. Very effective support was given for pupils with special educational needs. The teacher also noticed where individuals needed help and provided it quickly.

33. At Key Stage 1, the major strengths of the teaching are the good quality of the teachers' planning and the effective use made of support staff and learning resources especially for pupils with special educational needs. The strengths in the pupils' learning are their acquisition of basic skills and the way they apply themselves when appropriately challenged and controlled. Although the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Year 2 there are some good features, for example, interesting subject matter and thorough preparation. The weaknesses are mainly insufficient control of the pupils, a slow pace to learning and a failure to develop subject matter in depth and thus fully challenge the pupils, particularly the higher achievers. For example, in a physical education lesson, pupils did not listen to instructions or to watch the demonstrations by other pupils. In addition, a geography lesson ended with all pupils undertaking a drawing task which failed to extend many of them and did not make use of their literacy and numeracy skills. These factors meant that the pupils made unsatisfactory progress. The literacy and numeracy lessons observed in Year 1 were satisfactory but, in both cases, a lack of attention by some pupils was noted. In the key stage as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, design and technology, art, and music. It is satisfactory in science, history, information technology and physical education and unsatisfactory in geography.

34. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good and gives rise to a similar rate of progress in the pupils' learning. Over two thirds of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good, about one quarter was very good and none was unsatisfactory. This judgement is broadly the same as that made by the school's previous inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be 'mainly good or better'. The major strengths of the teaching at this key stage are the quality of lesson planning, the management of the pupils and the high expectations that the teachers have of them. Strengths in the quality of learning are the way the pupils work hard and productively for long periods and the interest that they show in the tasks that they are given. There are no significant variations in the quality of teaching or learning at this key stage.

35. The school's previous OFSTED inspection judged that some higher achievers were not always fully challenged at Key Stage 2. This issue has largely been addressed although it still applies in experimental and investigative activities in science. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, design and technology, art, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in science, history, and

geography, and no judgement was made about teaching in information technology because too little was seen. A Year 4 numeracy lesson illustrated the general strengths of the teaching and how well the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The lesson was very well planned and had relevant teaching points which challenged pupils of all abilities. The mental mathematics session was brisk and demanding and made all pupils think. The teacher showed good mathematical knowledge when setting pupils problems appropriate to their understanding, for example, '6 x ? = 36'. The concept of perimeters was introduced well so that all the pupils understood it. Very good use was made of questions, such as, 'If you were to measure the perimeter of your book, what would you use?' Very good class control meant that the question and answer sessions were very effective because all the pupils raised their hands to answer, took turns well and listened carefully to the answers. A good focus on basic skills helped the pupils to make good progress in this lesson.

36. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 7 is good and the pupils progress well. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Year 7. Nearly ten per cent of the teaching observed was very good. The school's previous OFSTED inspection did not make a separate judgement about the quality of teaching in Year 7. The teachers in Year 7 manage the pupils very well and their use of time, resources, support staff and homework is good. Strengths in the quality of learning are the speed with which pupils gain new knowledge and skills and their independence. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, art, French, history and music. It is satisfactory in information technology and physical education. A French lesson exemplified the strengths the teaching in this year group. The lesson moved at a quick pace which was demanding for all the pupils. The teacher used repetition well to reinforce words and pronunciation and this gave the pupils confidence to respond in French. Effective use of games (remembering which coloured pencils three pupils had held up) motivated the class well. The teacher shows a good knowledge of the subject and a good French accent, which encouraged the pupils to speak the language without embarrassment. The teacher explained the influence of gender on spelling well. The pupils made good progress in their learning.

37. Throughout the school, since the school's last inspection, the quality of teachers' marking, their planning and the provision of homework have improved compared with the findings of that inspection. There are some opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work but this skill is still not sufficiently developed, for example, in physical education.

38. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall. It is good at Key Stage 1 and very good in the remainder of the school. Teachers' planning of lessons takes good account of pupils' special educational needs, and pupils' individual targets provide a very clear direction for specific work on their basic skills. The two co-ordinators for pupils with special educational needs provide very good support for pupils and teachers and pupils in lessons, and this enables all pupils to make significant gains in their skills, understanding and knowledge. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with statements of special educational need. They work closely with teachers and the two co-ordinators, and ensure that pupils keep up with the rest of the class, and take a full part in question and answer sessions.

39. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils who have little English is very good overall. It is good at Key Stage 1 and very good in the remainder of the school. When necessary, specialist staff are brought in from the Local Education Authority, and they work closely with

teachers to develop pupils' use and understanding of English. An illustration of the effectiveness of the school's provision can be found in last year's Year 6, when four pupils who entered the school during that year all made very good progress.

40. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning for gifted and talented pupils.

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

41. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum where these apply, except in information technology where the full programme of study is not taught in Key Stage 2. It reflects the religious aims of the school and the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school is successful in offering a good range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils that interest and motivate them.

42. Issues raised in the previous inspection report regarding the development of schemes of work for all subjects have been addressed. At the previous inspection, design and technology did not fulfil National Curriculum requirements, but this is much improved and the provision is now good.

43. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children under the age of five are good. The school has a clear policy and well-structured curriculum, which show good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children, and this provision enables all children to make good progress.

44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils' individual plans are precise, and give clear, achievable targets for pupils and teachers to aim towards. Pupils with statements of special educational need are very well served by the school. Their progress is reviewed regularly, and the support made available to develop their learning is very effective. As a result, these pupils take a full part in all school activities, as was illustrated when pupils in wheelchairs joined the rest of the class playing tennis, and performing country dancing. The school has made a conscious decision to admit pupils with significant special educational needs into each class. This policy has proved enormously successful for all pupils in the school, and has created an atmosphere where all pupils are valued, and value each other, because of their qualities and successes.

45. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Although the time allocated to these is lower than in most schools, particularly in the older classes, the implementation has raised standards of attainment across the school.

46. Although a significant number of parents believe that there are insufficient extra-curricular activities, the findings of the inspection are that a good range is available for pupils in the upper part of the school, which enrich pupils' learning outside the school day. Pupils participate in football, cricket, netball, and hockey and have opportunities to join school teams for these sports. They take part in competitions against other schools and enjoy success. Music clubs include recorder, orchestra, tin whistle, choir and a musical ensemble, which accompanies assemblies. There are no extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2. A significant number of parents see this as a shortcoming in the school's curricular provision, and the inspection team echoes their concerns. Educational visits and school visitors are

important and regular features of the curriculum and the school makes a good effort to provide a rich variety of experiences for pupils. Year 7 pupils take part in a residential visit and all classes have planned opportunities to visit places of interest beyond the school.

47. The school has a commitment to equality in education, and there is a good policy for this aspect of its work.

48. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, and is a significant strength of the school. This was also the finding of the previous inspection, and the quality of provision has been maintained.

49. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual development through assemblies, special times when pupils discuss their feelings, and through religious education and other subjects. Themes in assemblies have led pupils to learn about their faith and think about and pray for others not as fortunate as themselves and those suffering in world disasters. Opportunities are given for reflection in acts of collective worship and in lessons. In class, there are regular times for reflection and prayer. Spirituality is fundamental in the curriculum. There are opportunities to show their appreciation of the beauty of the world around them when they paint landscapes, draw flowers from direct observation and learn about the workings of the human body. They listen to music and appraise pictures painted by famous artists and people in different societies around the world. They learn to express their emotions through writing or reading poetry. In Year 1, one pupil wrote "...the sea roars like a hungry bear", and, in Year 4, pupils expressed feelings of loss graphically in their writing. One pupil, for example, when reflecting in her story about a dog run over, wrote "I never forgot her. I always went to her grave and I never wanted another dog". In history, pupils wrote letters from home to an absent loved one in the war. These showed great sadness and sensitivity. Pupils displayed their lighter side when they wrote about the benefits of being old: "...you can wear top and leggings in the summer when you're old".

50. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct is promoted effectively through the school's well implemented and maintained policies. Pupils are secure in knowing what the boundaries are and the positive use of rewards promotes the school's supportive ethos very effectively. A constructive system of rewards and sanctions underpins the rules for behaviour through the school's special 'Golden Time' sessions. Some parents reported that this was not valued but this is not the finding of the inspection. Year 6 pupils all enjoy it, explain how it works, think that it is a good idea, feel it is fair and would hate to give it up. In a Lower School assembly, the presentation of 'Golden Time' certificates gave real pride and enjoyment to the pupils. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong at levels appropriate for their ages, and know that there is a need to respect the rights and property of others. The sporting activities help pupils to realise the importance of keeping the rules of games and fair play.

51. There is very good provision for pupils' social development, and parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Very good relationships within the school help to form positive attitudes towards social behaviour and self-discipline. Everyone is valued highly, and pupils are given good opportunities to work together in pairs and groups, and to take responsibility for tasks appropriate to their age and development. Social development is very well promoted by pupils' participation in a very good range of sporting activities and by opportunities to perform in front of others in productions and music

festivals. Pupils are encouraged to form links with the community through the parish and to support local projects. They are given good opportunities to raise money for charities such as the Catholic Children's Society, the Blue Peter Premature Baby Appeal, Mozambique, and the British Legion poppy and the National lifeboat appeals. A great strength of the school is the way in which pupils with special educational needs are extremely well integrated into all activities offered by the school.

52. The cultural provision for pupils is very good. The school provides many suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures through their work in religious education and other subjects. The Summer Fair has an international food stall, and the school celebrates a strong Irish background. There have been visits by an African arts and theatre group, and an exchange of art-work with a Japanese school. Educational visits are an important and regular feature of the curriculum and have included outings to the parish church, St. Albans, Hampton Court, Dover and a local environmental centre. They study the works of Shakespeare, and last year's Christmas concert was on the theme of Romeo and Juliet. The ancient cultures of the Aztecs and Egypt are studied in history. Pupils hear about the life of the Tudors and look at artefacts that reflect different times and places. In addition to their work on Christianity, the religious education programme of study teaches pupils about other faiths.

53. Provision for pupils' personal education is good. Special times for reflection on the timetable provide good opportunities for pupils to explore a range of feelings and issues. A good emphasis is given to teaching about health issues, the misuse of drugs, an awareness of medicines and sex education, and these elements are treated sensitively. The work is taught within various relevant themes and within the science curriculum. The school has good resources to support this work, and themes are taught appropriately according to the ages of the pupils. A very well-taught and sensitive lesson on human reproduction was observed in Year 5.

54. There are good links with the local community through the parish, and these contribute positively to pupils' experiences and their subsequent learning. Pupils are encouraged to learn to consider the needs of others when they visit elderly people and welcome them into the school.

55. There are very constructive relationships with partner institutions. There are good links with local playgroups, and liaison with two local Catholic secondary schools and the High School is effective. There are valuable exchanges of teachers and pupils. In sporting activities, pupils enter into matches with other schools. Further education college students and those from teacher training institutions are welcomed into the school for the practical elements of their courses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school continues to provide the caring and supportive environment in which pupils can learn as was reported in the previous OFSTED inspection. This has a positive effect on the standards that pupils achieve. The value of all pupils is celebrated, and it is a part of the Christian ethos of the school that they are expected to give of their best and to be supportive of others. The school works hard to ensure that pupils are happy in school and that any problems are overcome. Close liaison between home and all staff ensures that pupils with special educational needs or particular problems are well supported. Those with statements of special educational need are especially well served by the high quality of the school's

provision. They are integrated into all school activities, and benefit from some excellent support from their classmates.

57. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are very good. The deputy headteacher monitors assessment practice thoroughly. Procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are very good, and the school makes effective use of assessment to inform planning, both on an individual basis and to influence the curriculum that is planned for each year group. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when assessment was not used to focus on the pupils' future learning needs. The school complies with statutory requirements regarding the testing of pupils at the end of each key stage and optional tests are used in other years in Key Stage 2. Information regarding every pupil's attainment over the year, which includes teachers' assessments and standardised tests in English and mathematics, and also refers to their standards they achieved on entry to the school, is carefully fed into a computer program to produce individual profiles. From these, projected targets for attainment are produced. These are reviewed half yearly and adjustments are made to the targets according to the progress that is made. In several instances, the identification of good progress has led to the targets being raised.

58. There is a clear policy for carrying out end-of-year assessments and day-to-day judgements. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are carefully recorded at the end of each year in all the subject areas, and this information is passed on to the next teacher. It is also shared with parents in the annual reports, and is useful to the school in indicating those who achieve highly and others who encounter difficulties. The use of common procedures allows teachers to identify consistently what pupils know and understand. This is often shared with pupils both in the marking and by being noted in the front of their exercise books to help them to know what they need to do in order to improve. Although some inconsistencies still arise in the marking, based on the different expectations of teachers, there are clear guidelines in the policy.

59. Analysis of the school's results is conscientiously undertaken but the information is not always broken down sufficiently to show in detail where pupils made specific mistakes in the tests so that the teaching can be adjusted accordingly. Some of the teachers' assessments, especially at the end of Key Stage 1, are different from the actual test results, indicating some inexperience in judging standards. Collections of pupils' work that show examples of the different levels of attainment in writing, mathematics and science have now been completed, and are useful reference points for teachers so that levels of work can be assessed more accurately.

60. Assessment procedures for children aged under five are good. On entry to school, helpful information relating to personal, academic and social development is documented and the necessary curriculum is provided to enable pupils to develop accordingly. When the children are settled in the Reception class, they are assessed according to the Local Education Authority's scheme for children of this age. This indicates individual strengths and weaknesses and is also analysed according to the averages achieved by pupils in the borough. At present, there is no system of re-testing children according to the original scheme to assess the progress that has been made.

61. An appropriate range of policies is in place to monitor and promote pupils' attendance and behaviour, and to ensure their health and safety. Children value their special 'Golden Time' and welcome the opportunity it gives for new activities. There is no written child protection

policy for this school, but the school follows the Local Education Authority's guidelines. Staff are alert to possible problems and know the procedures to be followed well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. Parents have mixed views about the school. Those who attended the parents' meeting before the inspection felt that communication between the headteacher and parents was not as good as it might be. Seventeen per cent of those who returned the questionnaire felt uncomfortable about approaching the school with any questions or problems, and eighteen per cent considered that the school does not work closely with parents. Inspectors judged that since the last inspection, communication has improved. The school works hard to establish an effective partnership with parents. The quality of the information that parents now receive is good. Pupils' annual reports are very good, and give a clear picture of a child's strengths and weaknesses. Parents were pleased with the recent changes introduced into the reports. At the beginning of each term, parents receive useful and informative curricular newsheets, with details of what their children will be studying during the term. Parents welcome the governors' annual meeting, but do not always feel that they have sufficient time to discuss issues. Parents maintain a keen interest in their children's work and progress. They have worked closely with teachers to raise pupils' standards of achievement in the national tests. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement.

63. Some parents are regularly involved with the work of the school. A significant number help in class regularly, and provide valuable help to teachers and pupils. There are fewer volunteers to help in the middle school. Other parents assist on school trips or with transporting children to educational events outside school. The parent governors have recently introduced a 'drop-in' session where parents can meet them to raise questions or concerns, and this system works well. The active Friends' Association raises large sums of money each year for the benefit of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The quality of the school's leadership and management is good overall, and of a similar standard to that reported in the previous inspection. Most parents feel that the school is well led, but a significant number in the parents' questionnaire said that they are unhappy with the way that their comments, suggestions and complaints are dealt with.

65. The headteacher gives strong direction to the school's future development. The high quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, for example, has resulted from her determination that the school should offer places to pupils with significant learning and physical difficulties whenever possible, and that their particular needs would be met by extra staffing. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, fundamental in the school's aims, stems from the headteacher's leadership, her high expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves and her good knowledge of the pupils and their parents. The headteacher has created a very strong team spirit within the school, and this encourages all staff to work closely together towards a common purpose.

66. The leadership's response to the main issues arising from the last report has been good. Weaknesses in teachers' use of assessments of pupils have been addressed successfully by introducing a common format, the results of which are passed on to the next teacher. The deputy headteacher proved very effective in this area, working closely with staff to create a

very clear and appropriate system for assessment, and monitoring its use carefully. The marking of pupils' work is greatly improved. The headteacher and deputy conducted a useful audit of pupils' books, and discussed with teachers how to make marking more consistent, and of greater help to pupils. As a result, teachers' marking is now good, and tells pupils clearly how best they can improve their work. All schemes of work are now in place, and these have helped to improve the quality of teachers' planning and the standards that pupils attain. Provision for high achievers has improved significantly. Teachers' planning was monitored to see how it could be improved for this group of pupils in each class, and this now gives the higher achievers good opportunities to extend their skills. Extra funding is used well to provide special classes taught by the deputy headteacher, and these are proving very effective in extending higher achievers. The improvement in their results in the national assessment tests show how well these new arrangements are working. The allocation of time for the subjects of the National Curriculum has been revised, and all subjects now have an appropriate distribution.

67. The headteacher is committed to raising standards, and the school's analysis of the value added by the school, from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, provides useful data to raise standards further. Pupils' writing by Year 6 has improved significantly as a result of this analysis. The headteacher and deputy conduct an audit of pupils' work each year to see how standards can be raised in English, mathematics and science. This is good practice, and directs staff towards specific work to address pupils' weaknesses.

68. The school's development plan details appropriate action to improve pupils' attainment in literacy, numeracy and information technology, but, this year, it details targets for only the next 12 months. The reason for this rests with the changes ahead relating to the provision of an extra Reception class by next year, but it places restrictions on the school's forward planning.

69. The deputy headteacher make valuable contributions to the leadership and management of the school, working closely with the headteacher, and sharing a common purpose. She sets a very good example by the high quality of her own teaching, and supports staff very effectively with her work on assessment and the development of the curriculum.

70. Subject co-ordinators give good support to teachers. They monitor standards effectively by scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' work. Co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have monitored the introduction of their respective national strategies, and this has helped the school make a good start with these initiatives. There are no co-ordinators for history and geography and this has a particular effect on the teaching of geography in the infants, where teachers are unsure of the curriculum to be taught. The two co-ordinators for pupils with special educational needs form an effective team, and support teachers and pupils very well, both in the planning of work and in the teaching of basic skills.

71. The weakness of the leadership lies in the monitoring of teaching. There is no formal system of monitoring, and the headteacher relies on the open plan nature of the school to observe lessons in an informal way. This is unsatisfactory, and denies teachers the opportunity to improve their practice through a structured review of their work, and targets to work towards.

72. The governors are enthusiastic, and provide good support to the staff. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and visit the school often,

sometimes observing lessons. They are keen to raise pupils' standards, and analyse the national assessment tests to see which subjects are priorities for further development. The governor responsible for pupils with special educational needs takes a keen interest in the role, and attends many reviews of pupils' progress.

73. The finance committee works hard to keep the school's funds in good order. They analyse spending carefully, and are keen to achieve the best possible value for the school's money. They are very well supported by the school's secretary, who keeps very good records of expenditure, and fully informs the headteacher and co-ordinators of the progress of the budget.

74. The school makes good use of its resources overall, and recognises the need to improve the provision of computers and equipment. A computer suite is planned for next term, and the school has made a bid for extra computers from the National Grid for Learning fund. The school uses its funds very well to support pupils with special educational needs. A large number of classroom assistants provide cost effective support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, and the school's provision is very good in these areas as a result.

75. The school's teaching staff is a good mix of youth and experience who work well together as a team, supporting one another well. Teachers are well deployed as classroom teachers and co-ordinators have a keen interest and appropriate expertise in the subject they manage. All staff have detailed job descriptions which clarify roles and responsibilities. Learning support assistants work assiduously in the interests of those pupils who have special educational needs, and others who do not have English as their first language. The appraisal of staff is sound, and takes place by way of 'professional development discussions', where teachers meet with the headteacher to discuss their successes of the last year, and decide upon a focus for their further development. There are good procedures in place to support teachers new to the school. These include adequate time away from the classroom for training and observations, and a mentor to provide everyday support.

76. The school's accommodation is adequate to support the teaching of the curriculum, which is the same judgement as that made by the school's previous inspection. The boundary fence which the last report said should be repaired as a matter of urgency is now fixed. The school's accommodation has some strengths, such as its specialist music room, and its attractive grounds, including the pond, which are well used to assist the pupils' learning. However, as the previous inspection reported, some rooms are cramped and the open plan nature of the building can cause distractions for pupils. The most significant weaknesses are the lack of a fenced outside area for children aged under five to play and develop in. In addition, as the previous inspection noted, Year 7 pupils do not have access to the facilities which pupils of their age would normally have in science, but good links with the local secondary school mean that pupils have some access to appropriate equipment. A major extension to the school's accommodation which will virtually double its size by adding an additional storey to the building and which will increase its facilities is due to commence soon.

77. The school's provision of resources is satisfactory overall, and supports learning well. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last OFSTED inspection. In music, resources are very good and, in art and physical education, resources are good. In most other subjects, resources are adequate, but in geography, there is a shortage of maps. The Local Education Authority's loan service is used effectively to supplement resources. Information technology resources are not sufficient to maximise the pupils' progress, although a computer

suite will be included in the new accommodation, and the school has a wide range of programs to support learning in most subjects of the curriculum. The school's stock of books has been updated and improved since its last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the school further, and raise standards to higher levels, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- 1. Ensure that the improved standards found in this inspection are reflected in the national assessment tests.**
- 2. Raise standards in information technology, and meet all of the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 by:**
 - building up the supply of computers to at least nationally average levels;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work on adventure simulations and to monitor changes using sensors, and
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient time in the curriculum to develop their skills and confidence to the full.
- 3. Raise the quality of teaching further, particularly in Year 2, by introducing the systematic and rigorous monitoring of teaching, which shows teachers clearly how their work can be improved, and gives regular reviews of their progress towards any targets.**
- 4. Develop a more effective way of responding to parents' suggestions and complaints.**

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

improve the teaching and learning of geography in Key Stage 1, and appoint a co-ordinator for the subject, and
provide a longer term view of the school's future priorities by extending the term of the school's development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	69

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	47	29	5	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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		264
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
		1999	17	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	14
	Girls	16	18	16
	Total	30	34	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (81)	97 (86)	86 (88)
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	13
	Girls	17	12	16
	Total	32	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (89)	74 (86)	83 (89)
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87[86]

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
		1999	21	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	18
	Girls	12	10	13
	Total	26	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (94)	79 (74)	91 (85)
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	15
	Girls	10	12	10
	Total	25	29	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (71)	85 (71)	74 (85)
	National	68 [65]	69 [65]	75 [72]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	8
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	25

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33
Average class size	34

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	353

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	531766
Total expenditure	543147
Expenditure per pupil	2057
Balance brought forward from previous year	63682
Balance carried forward to next year	52301

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	86

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	47	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	42	14	3	0
The teaching is good.	45	50	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	47	15	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	42	5	10	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	47	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	47	12	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	40	37	10	10	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	48	6	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	33	17	14	1

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

78. The provision for children under five is good, and prepares them well for work in the National Curriculum. When children aged under five enter the school, their overall attainment is generally higher than expected for their ages in their capacity to speak and express opinions, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their mathematical, creative and early reading skills are around average on entry. Most children make good progress and are on course to exceed the nationally agreed outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time that they are five. Some of the children have limited skills in listening, sitting still and relating to others when they first enter the school. They have to learn to give and take and acknowledge that the teacher cannot give them undivided attention when she has 35 other children in the class. Standards on entry in relation to the elements of physical and personal and social development are generally as expected in these areas and most children are on course to meet the desirable national level for five-year-olds. These findings represent an improvement on the last inspection when it was reported that children in the Reception class made a sound start to their education and progress was steady. At that time, their attainment was satisfactory in all areas of learning and they achieved levels appropriate for their age group.

79. This section of the report relates to the eight children in the Reception class who are still four years of age. The provision for children who are aged under five is good. They receive good quality teaching and a well-organised curriculum. These factors enable children to make evident progress. Children with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress, and are fully integrated in all areas of learning.

80. The quality of teaching and learning are good with some very good features. Strengths relate to particularly high expectations of what young children can achieve, competent management of the activities and imaginative approaches and experiences throughout the year that encourage children to become involved. Occasionally, the time given to some discussion periods and whole-class activities is too long, and children with limited concentration start to lose interest.

81. The teacher is experienced, and usually adapts the work according to the children's needs well. Support staff are very well briefed, and are provided with good planning sheets that indicate the expected learning outcomes for each activity. As a result, the planning is extensive and detailed, and makes clear reference to the recommended curriculum for children of this age in all the areas of learning. If the children are capable, they are able to follow the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 1 pupils. The school acknowledges that the early years' policy is due for review in the light of the introduction of the national Early Learning Goals that are scheduled for September.

82. Induction procedures for children aged under five are good, and they make a happy start to their full time education. The staff who work with the children who are aged under five are well qualified and sensitive to their needs. Good use is made of students who are training in areas of childcare. There is no dedicated enclosed area for children who are aged under five. Resources for children in the Reception class are generally good, but there are insufficient toys and equipment for physical outdoor play.

Personal and social development

83. Most children make good progress in their personal and social development. They soon become aware of school routines and adapt accordingly. Many show good attitudes to learning, and are happy and secure in their surroundings. By the time that they are five, most are on course to meet the standards expected of children this age. The children settle down well to tasks when they feel involved, but a few begin to lose interest when they are sitting on the carpet for too long. Behaviour is good for this age and individuals are learning that they are a member of a class and cannot gain an adult's attention to the exclusion of others. Children are encouraged to develop independence by dressing themselves, selecting materials and activities and joining in with the clearing away process. They are taught to take turns, and most of them show that they are learning to consider others when they say please and thank you and share toys in the sand or water. Children using construction equipment often help each other to find the correct piece for the next stage of the building. They join in with prayers, and know what it means to be a good friend. They are able to express their feelings, and are developing an understanding of what is right and wrong. A few individuals have strong opinions, and do not always believe that the 'golden rules' that relate to listening to others, sharing, being polite and well mannered, always apply to them. Well prepared role-play situations, in the class 'library', for example, enable them to work co-operatively with each other. In physical education lessons, they also have good opportunities to practise social skills when they learn to play fairly and throw a quoit to a partner.

84. The quality of teaching is good in this area, and, as a result, children learn quickly. The teacher and support staff plan carefully to help children to develop social skills. They have a very encouraging, consistent approach, and value each child's contribution. Children participate in a wide range of activities throughout each day, and the many chances provided for them to achieve success help to build confidence.

Language and literacy

85. On entry to the school, the attainment in language and literacy of most of the children is around the national average. Although many children are articulate, their skills in listening to others are not so well developed. The teaching of this element receives a high priority. The teacher and staff concentrate on providing an environment that is rich in language to ensure that children extend their vocabularies. As a result, children make good progress.

86. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Staff have high expectations and children respond accordingly. They enjoy listening to a story about 'The Enormous Turnip' and are encouraged to identify with the characters and predict what will happen. They remember the sequence of events, and place pictures in order to represent the various happenings. Other activities are well planned to reinforce learning. They make stick puppet characters from stories they have had read to them, and play out the conversations between them. In the listening corner, they hear taped stories, and their favourite is one about a tiger who came to tea. The provision of good role-play areas was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. This has been rectified, and children were seen acting as 'librarians' and evidently following the example of adults they had seen in their recent visit to a public library. The intervention of support staff in such a situation enhanced the learning, and children were helped to relate to each other and understand the particular conventions of conversation in a library. The good focus on the importance of books is developed when children make their own books with help from the teacher. They write their names and carry out emergent

'pretend' writing alongside the model being shown to them by the teacher. Good play opportunities enable them to 'write' postcards and letters. They are encouraged to write stories or diaries in their own words, and, when appropriate, they are provided with words to help them spell correctly. They are helped to write captions about their paintings of holidays. Several children are beginning to form simple words, select word cards to make a sentence and read it with a friend. When reading, they know that print gives meaning, and that the pictures usually help them to tell the story. Several can pick out initial letters of words, and nearly all know the letters of the alphabet. Higher achieving children accurately pick out whole words and read them, whilst those in the early stages of learning have difficulty in showing interest in books. Handwriting is carefully taught, and the teacher tries hard to incorporate the teaching of letter sounds and the reading of simple words when this activity occurs.

Mathematics

87. Children's attainment is broadly average when they enter the school. They make good progress, and many are on course to exceed the expected standard by the time that they are five. Children begin to use mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'longer than' and practise counting on and back, making number patterns, and adding on and taking away from specific numbers. Higher achieving children have a good knowledge of numbers to 20, and refer to a number line when carrying out calculations. They are usually accurate when assessing how many numbers are in a set, and their recognition of written numbers is good. Adults make good use of incidental opportunities to reinforce learning in mathematics. They alert children to the properties of shapes when they are rolling out clay, for example, or help them to calculate how many children are present if two are absent when there are 36 children on roll in the class. Children's understanding of numbers is reinforced by the use of number apparatus and games. Those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous attainment.

88. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good. Open-ended questions are used well to encourage children to think and answer clearly before the adult reinforces their understanding by careful explanations. The teacher assesses each child well by close observations to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is planned and taught, and to enable the children to make further progress. Expectations are high, and those who are capable are encouraged to cover work that is planned for children who are covering the National Curriculum programmes of study. As a result, some of the Reception children have advanced skills in carrying out and recording simple addition and subtraction. Opportunities to use sand and water and to allow children to explore capacity and measures are often well structured but do not always include sufficient intervention by adults for pupils to apply their developing mathematical skills in these activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. Many children have a good level of general knowledge and experience when they start school and good progress occurs in this area of learning as a result of particularly effective teaching and excellent first hand experiences. By the age of five, most are on course to exceed the nationally agreed outcomes.

90. During the inspection, the theme of 'growth' involved children in examining different types of seeds, describing them and planting sunflower seeds in soil. They checked on the progress of cress seeds and predicted how the bean seeds would grow. Children know that certain elements, such as light and water, are necessary for successful growth. They accurately name the parts of a plant, and know that roots grow underground and that stems and leaves grow above. Careful questioning and clear visual aids enable the teacher to assess pupils' understanding and to deal with any misconceptions. The work is reinforced when they produce a corporate picture of 'Jasper's beanstalk'. They investigate what happens to substances when they are cooked, and observe the changes in ingredients when making soup, cake and pizza, for example. Children know that different clothes are worn in winter and summer, and name the different days of the week. They talk eagerly about where they have been on holiday, paint and write about where they have been and look at souvenirs that are special to certain places. They make valid comparisons between the present and the past. This is helped when children look their own growth since they were babies, and compare old and new toys. Stories such as 'Rosie's Walk' help their learning of early geographical skills, and enabled one child to write 'She went across the yard, around the pond and over the haystack'. Work on minibeasts and pond life has involved the children in exploring how materials are joined together when they made mobile bees with card and string, frog mobiles with open mouths, and collage butterflies. They make good cars with constructional equipment, and record the result by drawing. Many children read confidently and independently, use the computer mouse to click on an icon, and, with support, carry out simple word-processing. They use the tape recorder sensibly when listening to stories through the headphones.

Physical development

91. Standards attained in physical development are average for the children's ages although there are a few with good physical skills. A few children are below the expected levels with regard to physical control when they enter the school. Children with special educational needs make particularly good progress as a result of individual support, and, by the time that they are five, most are on course to reach the expected level. The quality of teaching and learning is good, both in relation to physical education lessons, and to the many opportunities provided for pupils to develop skills within the classroom.

92. Children who are aged under five are learning to control their small physical movements, and several use small tools with precision. They cope with buttons and fasteners with few problems. Good opportunities are given for them to learn to use writing and drawing implements, apply glue spreaders and mould clay and play dough. When placing small-scale construction toys, play characters or jigsaw pieces in position, they show reasonable accuracy. During physical education sessions, children run, jump, walk and move in various ways and attempt to work with a partner. When using quoits, they balance them imaginatively on their head and shoulders, and hop with a quoit round their other ankle. They throw and catch using two hands, and show good development in hand and eye co-ordination as they watch closely. In this respect, children are above average.

93. There is ample provision for the support of growing manual dexterity, but the provision for appropriate and frequent free physical play outside with push and pull toys, wheeled vehicles, climbing equipment and clambering apparatus is inadequate. Although there is an attractive patio area for Reception children, there is no designated enclosed play area for

children who are aged under five and there are insufficient large resources. This hampers the development, control and refinement of some larger scale physical movements that involve balance and co-ordination.

Creative development

94. Children make good progress in creative development and many exceed the nationally agreed outcomes by the time that they are five. They mix paints well to produce other colours, and make close observational drawings of flowers using pastels. Their black and white pictures show maturity for their age, and the detail in the paintings of holidays is particularly good. They paint freely with their own choice of subject, with one child, for example, producing 'Mummy giving me a piggy back'. They learn about Monet's picture of water lilies, and create their own vivid version. Excellent skills in the use of clay and tools were taught when pupils produced their own sunflower head after looking at a real sunflower, and learning about Van Gogh's picture. Collage work is well featured. Occasionally, this is prescriptive, when, for instance, children simply stick on tissue paper into a shape, but other examples show good investigations when children have torn different types of paper to produce a collage.

95. Children enjoy singing and know a good selection of hymns, simple songs and rhymes. Reception children are not daunted when their class is asked to sing a chorus during an assembly with the whole school. Some musical and artistic activities reinforce the learning of numbers and counting skills. For example, the children have produced a large picture to represent '1,2,3,4,5... Once I caught a fish alive... 6,7,8,9,10... then I let him go again.'

96. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in this area. There is constructive support for children and good demonstrations enable children to acquire skills. High expectations lead children to produce work of quality. This is valued and displayed attractively in the classroom. Where intervention by adults is particularly well judged during imaginative play situations, children make rapid progress.

ENGLISH

97. The pupils in Year 7 achieve standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing that are similar to those found in most other schools. This represents good progress, as, in the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999, pupils' performance was below the national average. Compared with similar schools, standards were well below average. Over the last four years, there was a steep drop in standards in 1999, because of the high proportion of pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs and English as an additional language, but trends before that had been rising. The school has set a target for 94 per cent of pupils to reach or exceed the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments in English this year. This target represents a good degree of challenge. All teachers are committed to developing the language skills of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. These pupils are integrated well into mainstream classes, and often receive additional support. They make very good progress in their acquisition of English as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in relation to their previous attainment, and individuals often make very good progress because of the attentiveness of teachers and support staff to their needs.

98. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to attain above average standards in the tests. The averages of the school's end of Key Stage 1 test results show that compared with all schools the pupils' performance in reading is average but well above in writing. When compared to similar schools, standards in reading were below average and writing was above average. Discrepancies between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 test results in 1999 and the inspection judgements are due to the overall higher standards in the current Years 2 and 6 compared with the low achieving groups last year. The school is aware of apparent differences in the performances of boys and girls that have occurred in the past, and is looking closely at present attainment levels to detect any reasons. Improvements have been made since the last inspection when standards were broadly average.

99. In Year 7, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Many pupils readily engage in conversations, and offer ideas and relevant information when asked. Their reading is usually accurate, although not always expressive, and pupils have clear ideas of their reading preferences. When writing, pupils' spelling is usually accurate, and they set their work out well, taking good account of paragraphs, but their work is not always extensive or lively in content. In a few cases, pieces of work with inventive use of vocabulary to express feelings or give descriptions contain several inaccuracies in grammar and spelling, whilst more accurate work sometimes lacks imagination.

100. By Year 6, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening and their progress is satisfactory. Their ability to listen to text being read to them is good, but they often struggle when asked to extract relevant points and organise their ideas so that they can explain them to the rest of the class. An excellent example was seen when Year 6 pupils were asked to work in pairs and discuss Williams Blake's view of God, as expressed in the poem 'Tyger, tyger, burning bright...'.

101. Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in reading and writing. Most pupils are competent readers, and talk about their choice of reading material with interest. They mention favourite authors and discuss aspects of biography referring, for example, to the life of Anne Frank. They make good, perceptive analyses of aspects of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' and, following from this, write good descriptive poems of Narnia. They have a good knowledge of famous authors of today and in the past, including the work of Charles Dickens. Most pupils refer to characters and events in books, and make reasonable predictions about their reading. Higher achievers make thoughtful comparisons with books that they have read, and identify features that they particularly appreciated. Pupils know how to find books in the fiction and non-fiction sections of the library. They have sound research and reference skills overall, but, because opportunities are not always provided to develop these strategies, they take a long time to locate the required information.

102. In Year 6, pupils put forward their written ideas in a clear sequence, and use punctuation appropriately. They write well in a variety of styles and for different purposes, including letters, a prospectus for the school, reports about favourite outdoor activities, the pros and cons of deer hunting and historical stories. They develop a good understanding of verbs, adjectives, and nouns and become increasingly able to use these conventions within their writing to convey interest and illustrate ideas. Pupils write perceptive poems and passages indicating how they feel about specific issues, using complex sentences and unusual adjectives to create atmosphere and to develop their initial ideas. Handwriting is of a good standard.

103. In Year 2, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening, and make satisfactory progress. As a result of the good teaching and clear expectations that are conveyed in the Reception class and Year 1, pupils make good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills in these year groups. They expect to 'show' items they have brought and 'tell their news'. During the literacy hour, they listen attentively to the teacher and to one another, and follow instructions well. Although several pupils in Year 2 are confident speakers, have broad vocabularies and willingly express opinions, they are not such good listeners. The management of lessons is such that they are not always helped to acknowledge that they must not chat when all the class is reading a big book together, guided by the teacher, or when other pupils are replying to questions or volunteering information.

104. In Year 2, pupils attain above average standards in reading and writing. Most read simple texts accurately and fluently, and make good progress. They have a secure knowledge of the range of simple strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. Some higher achievers read confidently and independently, and use content pages and indexes well. Pupils with special educational needs are not always able to talk about their favourite books, but they show an enjoyment of reading, and take books home regularly to read to parents. Literacy hours enable pupils to read for information, and a good example occurred when pupils made noticeable progress while reading a book called 'All Kinds of Toys' in a Year 1 lesson. Pupils had to use contextual, phonic and graphic clues to guess some of the words. The teacher made this into a game that the pupils enjoyed. In their writing, higher achievers convey meaning in simple sentences, and arrange words well to make stories and descriptions. The work of average and below average pupils often lacks sufficient imagination, and their spelling is inaccurate. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops appropriately. Teachers do not teach a joined style of handwriting to pupils until they enter Key Stage 2.

105. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good throughout the school, and this is an improvement on the last inspection report. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, but there are generally lower expectations in the extent and quality of work produced over the year by pupils in Year 2. A factor in the overall improvement in standards is the structure of the literacy hour, secure subject knowledge of the teachers, and their understanding of how to teach phonics and basic skills. Teachers' planning is very detailed, and most use every opportunity to reinforce existing skills. Where teaching was very good, there were thorough introductions, strong management of pupils, frequent praise to reward pupils' contributions, a range of strategies and high expectations of what could be achieved. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher taught the pupils how words are shortened such as 'I will' to 'I'll' and 'they have' to 'they've' and referred to these as contractions. She alerted them to newspaper headlines that pick up on this style of conversational writing and this captured pupils' interest very well. The lively, purposeful lesson went on to enable a group of pupils to look at examples around them, and discover what phrases such as 'salt 'n vinegar crisps' actually mean when they are written out fully and not contracted. Following on from this, they analysed a police report, where there was formal writing with no contractions at all, and discussed where these could be substituted if the writing was to become informal. Some good lessons are very imaginatively planned and ambitious with regard to the content, but the pupils' lack of vigour and pace of productivity sometimes mean that all the elements cannot be achieved in practice.

106. The curriculum in English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and literacy is taught daily. The National Literacy Strategy framework forms the basis of the good scheme of work, and this incorporates a planned approach to all the elements. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers are using the information gained to improve standards. This was a weakness at the last inspection. A collection of work is proving useful in showing examples of levels of writing. Pupils usually know their targets for improvement, and can refer to them when they are written on in the inside cover of their books. Teachers' comments in pupils' books are supportive and encouraging, and often show them how to improve on their work.

107. There is a positive ethos for the subject and the teachers have implemented the literacy hour effectively. Not all teachers, however, use the end of lesson time consistently to reinforce the earlier learning, and to help pupils to review what has been learned. Guided reading sessions have been taken out of the literacy hour so that a good focus can be given to writing. This strategy works well, and is helping to raise standards in writing throughout the school. However, opportunities for reading, and the emphasis on the direct teaching of more advanced reading skills, vary between classes. Pupils begin to join their handwriting in Year 3, which is later than generally occurs nationally. Standards in literacy reflect those found in English. Opportunities are appropriately taken to broaden the range of pupils' writing experiences in other subjects when they give accounts of events linked to the French revolution, pretend they are writing for the 'Detroit Daily' newspaper, make notes in connection with observations of scientific experiments and debate fact and opinion in connection with the fate of the crew of the Marie Celeste.

108. The English co-ordinator manages the subject well, and gives clear direction. Books have been sampled to gauge standards, but the co-ordinator's monitoring role in classroom observation is insufficiently developed to enable her to have a comprehensive overview of the subject. With the support of the deputy headteacher, the results of both national and school-based tests are carefully analysed. Using this analysis, the school has implemented a range of strategies to raise standards in writing and these are proving to be effective. The additional literacy strategy programme is also having a positive impact on raising standards and particularly supports the development of reading, writing and spelling skills of below average pupils. Those who are learning English as an additional language also find this type of specialist input to be beneficial. A good analysis of where pupils can move up to the next level of learning has informed teachers as to where specialist targeted help is necessary, and this has been applied to pupils who can attain even more highly and to those who need a boost. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, and a group of Year 5 pupils benefited enormously when they used individual word processors, and were introduced to information technology techniques such as a spell check to help them to write accurately. Resources are adequate although some library areas in classrooms are not extensive. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development when they express their feelings in poetry, and describe the calmness and strength of the sea in terms of different animals, analyse the writings of Chaucer and empathise with characters in stories who encounter loss or experience anxiety.

MATHEMATICS

109. The findings of this inspection indicate that, by Year 7, standards are broadly similar to those found in most other schools. Only about two-thirds of the pupils transferred from Year

6 to Year 7, and there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. To have maintained average standards, represents good progress for these pupils. No judgement was made about the standard of attainment in Year 7 at the previous inspection.

110. By the age of twelve, pupils investigate a range of challenges with average skill. They look at different ways of paying car parking fees and the perimeters of differently shaped sheep pens. They conduct good searches for relationships when they investigate triangle and square numbers. They have average recall of mental number facts and computation methods. Most have a sound understanding of negative numbers in everyday situations, and order, add and subtract them. They make accurate three-dimensional models by linking faces and edges, and find perimeters of simple shapes. When constructing models, they measure accurately, draw angles to the nearest degree and use appropriate geometrical language. They collect and explore data methodically, and represent it in a variety of ways, including scatter graphs.

111. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are well above those found in most other schools. In the end of key stage national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the pupils' results were average compared with all other schools. When compared with those of similar schools, the results were below average. Trends in performance over the last four years indicate a steady improvement in standards in line with the national trend, despite the dip in 1998. In the present Year 6, standards of attainment are high. The percentage of pupils reaching and exceeding the national expectation is well above last year's average, and shows a significant improvement, particularly in the number reaching the higher Level 5. This improvement results from skilled teaching in line with the National Numeracy Strategy, and well-targeted additional support for the higher achieving group. This judgement shows a good improvement on the findings of the last OFSTED inspection, when it was judged that attainment was above average. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive well targeted support, and are making very good progress as a result. The school has set challenging targets to continue to improve standards.

112. By the time they are 11, most pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of the multiplication tables up to ten, can convert percentages to fractions and use and explain their mental strategies very well. They divide numbers easily by 10s, 100s and 1000s, and have a good understanding of the use of the decimal point. Pupils use their knowledge of percentages well in relation to everyday life in, for example, their work on value added tax payable in various countries on a range of goods, and in converting currencies. They use a probability line confidently to state how likely events are to happen. They construct common two-dimensional shapes with good skill, and identify rotational and bilateral symmetry confidently. Pupils show a good understanding that a kite has one line of symmetry whilst a rhombus has two. They collect data and use a range of graphs to display the data. Pupils make good use of information technology in data handling work, and measuring heart rates in Year 7. They measure accurately in design and technology, and in using thermometers in science. Pupils use time lines in history, and measure weather features in geography, using barometers and anemometers.

113. Evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and interpretation of available data during the present inspection shows that pupils attain standards in mathematics, and also in numeracy in Year 2 which are above those found in most other schools. The implementation of the daily mathematics lesson is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. This judgement shows an improvement on the findings of the last OFSTED inspection when

standards were judged to be average. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' results were average compared with schools nationally but below the average of similar schools. Trends over time indicate above average performance dropping to below the national average in 1998. Since then, there has been a steady rise.

114. By the age of seven, pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally with average skill, and have a sound understanding of the place value of numbers up to 100. Pupils recognise halves and quarters of two-dimensional shapes and numbers. They show a good understanding of odd and even numbers, either individually or as part of a sequence. In their work on shape and space, they identify most two-dimensional shapes and have a good understanding of rotations. They indicate a sound awareness of time, using both digital and analogue clocks, and identify half and quarter hour times. Most pupils measure well using standard units such as centimetres. They collect data, and use simple tables, charts and graphs with good skill to communicate their findings. Most pupils are developing the ability to explain their methods of working in mental work.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. Teachers show a good commitment to improving pupils' numeracy skills, and work conscientiously to promote high standards. The findings of this inspection are an improvement on the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be mainly satisfactory, and pupils made satisfactory progress. In most lessons, teachers explain the purposes of tasks clearly, indicate that they have high expectations of what can be achieved and make skilful use of questions to probe and extend pupils' understanding. In Year 6, for example, the teacher keeps pushing " what do we do now?... be more accurate...use the right words". In these lessons, pupils learn well. All teachers now plan for the full range of ability within their classes, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. Throughout the school, the teachers' management and control of pupils are generally good, and these approaches help all pupils to concentrate and take advantage of the skilful introductions to lessons and the thorough evaluations of what has been learned. These elements are good features of most lessons. Resources are carefully prepared, and provide pupils with good opportunities to practise skills and consolidate their understanding. Teachers build on what pupils already know and understand, give a consistent emphasis to practical calculations and work hard to help individuals to develop the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and to explain their strategies. This is a result of more sharply focused teaching in line with the Numeracy Framework, which has been successfully implemented. Information technology is used adequately to practise basic skills and handle data. Clear planning ensures that work is well matched to the needs of all pupils. This is particularly evident for those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. These pupils receive very good additional support and make very good progress. As a result of criticism at the last inspection, the school has successfully targeted the higher achievers. The extension sessions for small groups of these pupils work well, and are raising pupils' standards significantly.

116. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She monitors planning and work conscientiously, and has time to monitor teaching formally and give feedback. She has successfully ensured the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and has seen an improvement in teaching and learning and a raising of standards. Effective assessment procedures are now in place.

117. National Curriculum requirements are met.

SCIENCE

118. In Year 7, the pupils make sound progress and reach standards that are similar to those found in most schools. During the inspection, one science lesson was observed in Year 7 and judgements are also based on the analysis of pupils' work, the examination of teachers' planning and on discussion with pupils and teachers that occurred at all key stages. In Year 7, pupils use balloons and other simple apparatus well to investigate static electricity. They make sound predictions, and attempt to measure the outcomes of their work, but, although they are able to identify some of the variable factors in their investigations, they do not always ensure that the tests they apply are fair tests. Pupils recognise differences between animal and plant cells, know that pH is a measure of a solution's acidity, and are aware of some of the effects caused by the earth's movement.

119. The pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2, and standards are similar to those in other schools in Year 6. There is evidence of higher standards in aspects of the subject other than investigative and experimental science. This finding is in line with the school's results in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests. Over the past four years in these tests, standards have generally been similar to those in other schools although, in 1997, they were above this level. In Year 6, pupils undertake experimental work effectively when directed by the teachers, but lack skill in devising their own experiments to investigate their activities. They have a good knowledge of food chains, are aware of methods such as filtration for separating simple materials and understand how motion is affected by friction.

120. Satisfactory progress is made at Key Stage 1, and, in Year 2, standards are similar to those found in most other schools. This finding is in agreement with the assessments made by teachers at the end of the key stage in 1999. In Year 2, pupils draw sound conclusions from watching demonstrations of objects to see if they float or sink, but their understanding of prediction and their recording skills are lower than those of most other pupils of their age. Pupils understand the basic conditions which plants need to grow, know how some materials are changed by forces, such as stretching and twisting, and understand that an electrical circuit must be complete to light a bulb.

121. The findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection were similar to the findings of this inspection and judged that 'standards of attainment in science meet national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress'. The school's previous inspection also judged that some higher achieving pupils underachieved at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. This inspection finds that higher achievers in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 underachieve in experimental and investigative science, which was also noted at Key Stage 2 by the previous inspection. Opportunities for pupils to undertake independent investigations have improved at Key Stage 3.

122. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in Year 3, but there are weaknesses in Year 2. This judgement is similar to that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection that said the quality of teaching 'is satisfactory overall'. A Year 5 lesson about the human reproductive system illustrated some of the strengths of the teaching of science throughout the school. The teacher introduced the lesson very well, and reminded the pupils about what they had learnt in earlier lessons and how sensible they had been. As a result of this sensitive teaching, the pupils responded very maturely. They all

behaved well and listened carefully to the contributions of others. The teacher dealt with subject in a very matter-of-fact manner, and used appropriate vocabulary which was soon adopted by the pupils. A well-prepared worksheet was used to reinforce their learning, and all pupils made very good gains in their knowledge. In Year 2, the strengths of the teaching include thorough preparation, interesting ideas and good use of support staff. The weaknesses are a slow pace of learning. There is unnecessary repetition of simple ideas whilst more challenging concepts are not developed. Control is not good enough to ensure that pupils work consistently hard. Expectations of the way in which pupils, particularly the higher achievers, should apply their literacy and numeracy skills are too low. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress.

123. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. The pupils frequently do the same work as the other pupils and, although this is demanding for them, the quality and nature of the support they receive enable them to complete it successfully and to make good progress. Information technology is often used well to help these pupils to learn. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress for their previous attainment.

124. The management of the subject is good, and it has improved markedly since the last inspection when the quality of management was judged to be 'good in terms of informal support but needs to be developed into more formal systems'. Particular strengths of the management are the knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, the way pupils' books are monitored, the way in which the national assessment test data is analysed and the use of assessment information to track the progress which the pupils make and to set targets for them to achieve. A good plan for the further development of the subject is in place. All these factors promote good progress in the pupils' learning. Resources generally support learning well but, as the school's previous OFSTED report noted, the accommodation places some constraints on curricular provision at Key Stage 3. Science plays a good part in promoting the pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example, when they learn about human reproduction and when they gasp with astonishment when the results of a scientific demonstration involving the floating of a block of ice surprised them greatly. During the inspection, no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were noted. National Curriculum requirements are met.

ART

125. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on one lesson, a scrutiny of previous work, planning and discussion with teachers and the co-ordinator.

126. By Year 7, pupils' work in art is above that found in most other schools. Pupils use increasing accuracy and attention to detail. They experiment with a variety of materials, tools and techniques for a wide range of purposes and produce exciting work. They show good knowledge and understanding of a number of artists.

127. The quality of art work is above that found in most other schools, and pupils demonstrate a good range of styles and techniques for drawing, painting, investigating and making. In Year 1, they explore colour washing in the style of Van Gogh with good skill. In Year 2, they use contrasting colours imaginatively in the style of Paul Klee, and in Year 4, use a smudging technique to produce interesting cloud pictures. In Years 4 and 5, pupils use art

well to support their history topics on the Aztecs and the Ancient Egyptians. In Year 4, pupils make good use of sketch books to design and evaluate their work. They select appropriate materials and visual elements after their research into the Aztecs at the planning stage. There are many displays of pupils' work and the work of a wide range of artists is attractively mounted around the school to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding. The display in the hall shows good progression in skills across a range of printing techniques from each year group culminating with good quality silk printing in Year 7.

128. From the high quality planning for the full range of the curriculum and the work produced by pupils, the quality of both teaching and learning is good across the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work. They enjoy art, and their work shows great care and concentration. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in developing their skills and extending their knowledge.

129. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is skilled in the subject and is very enthusiastic. There is an effective policy and scheme of work in place. The co-ordinator shows a strong commitment to maintaining the high standards found at the previous inspection. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, particularly when pupils study the work of artists from around the world. There has been a successful exchange of work with a school in Japan resulting in an interesting and pleasing display.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

130. Pupils' work in design and technology is above similar that found in most other schools. This represents a significant improvement in Key Stage 2 from the previous inspection, which reported below average standards. By Year 7, pupils work well to gather information about a project, and generate a good number of ideas. Their CD holders demonstrate a good attention to detail, and a clear link to the purpose of their project. Their designs are good, and show how they have experimented with different ideas before starting a model. Pupils use an electric sewing machine effectively in Year 7 to produce neat stitches. Year 6 pupils make excellent slippers, taking great care with the finish. They show considerable imagination with their designs, and produce good, weekly 'design briefs' to evaluate their work. Year 5 pupils show their well-developed skills as they make working musical instruments with two functions from clearly labelled designs. Year 3's work is of a similarly high standard, illustrated by their good moving models of 'monsters' using pneumatics. Pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is also above average. They use construction kits well to make moving vehicles, and show a good understanding of how levers work as they design greetings cards with moving parts. The previous inspection criticised the lack of opportunities for pupils to evaluate the success of their projects, and the school has made good progress in this respect, as pupils make useful comments such as 'It would have looked better if my sewing had been neater'. Pupils with special educational needs do well in design and technology and produce work of good quality, even when they struggle to control the movement of their hands.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers' planning is comprehensive, and gives appropriate attention to the development of pupils' skills. Teachers make effective links with other subjects, such as art, history, geography, music and science. This works well, and gives a purpose to pupils' work such as

Aztec masks, bowls in the style of William Morris and Indian puppets. Teachers prepare resources well, and make full use of the time available. The teaching has high expectations of pupils, giving them opportunities to experiment and learn from their mistakes. Teachers produce good assessments of pupils' progress, and keep useful photographic records of their work.

132. A good policy and scheme of work provide appropriate guidance to teachers, and state clearly how pupils' skills should progress through the school. The co-ordinator for design and technology is knowledgeable, and has benefited from appropriate training and support from the Local Education Authority. She supports colleagues well, and conducts useful surveys amongst staff to see which projects worked best. Design and technology has adequate resources, and the school makes good use of the nearby secondary school to provide food technology facilities for Year 7. There are sufficient tools, which are easily accessible, and a sound range of books in the library.

GEOGRAPHY

133. In Year 7, pupils make good progress, improve their previous attainment, and reach standards that are similar to those found in most schools. This judgement is based on the one lesson of geography observed for this year group during the inspection and on the analysis of pupils' work, the examination of teachers' planning and on discussion with pupils and teachers which occurred at all key stages. The pupils in Year 7 identify the major geographical regions of France, and have a good awareness of some ways in which rivers influence physical and human geography. They understand the use of symbols on maps, and give and use four figure map references with accuracy.

134. At Key Stage 2, the pupils make satisfactory progress and their work in Year 6 is of a similar standard to that found in most other schools. In Year 6, pupils have an appropriate knowledge of aspects of the geography of India, reasons for the changes in its population and the names of the countries around it. They also have a sound grasp of the geography of rivers and use technical vocabulary such as 'confluence' and 'flood plain' accurately. In Year 5, pupils use a CD ROM effectively to research information about Italy. Year 3 pupils have carried out a good local study of Pinner but, apart from this, fieldwork is not used well to support the subject at this key stage or in Year 7. The school's previous inspection noted limited evidence of the use of 'real' resources.

135. At Key Stage 1, although pupils' progress is satisfactory in Year 1, it is unsatisfactory overall. As a result, standards in Year 2 are below those found in most other schools. In Year 2, the pupils are, for example, aware of the main features of seaside towns and show sound early map work skills. They have completed some sound homework about Ireland as part of their religious education work. However, the presentation of their class work, the amount they produce, their geographical vocabulary, their ability to identify the important geographical aspects of their work and, in particular, the application of their literacy and numeracy skills in the subject are unsatisfactory.

136. The school's previous OFSTED report judged standards in geography to meet national expectations overall with the pupils making steady progress. This judgement is broadly similar to that of the present inspection in Year 7 and Key Stage 2 but it is better than the current findings for Key Stage 1. In particular, the use of geographical terms at Key Stage 1 noted by the earlier inspection is less in evidence in Year 2.

137. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Year 7, it is good, at Key Stage 2, it is satisfactory and, at Key Stage 1, it is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in Year 2. This judgement is similar to the overall judgement of the previous inspection which was that teaching was 'generally satisfactory or better' but teaching at Key Stage 1 is not of that quality now. The pupils made good progress in a Year 7 lesson about France, which exemplified the strengths of the teaching throughout the school. The initial task, which built well on their previous learning, stimulated them. They were very interested in locating pictures of different regions of France on a map of that country. The teacher had very secure control of the pupils and used this control, and suitable resources, to maintain their concentration and to make sure that they used time to its best effect. The pupils, for example, watched a video tape about the river Rhone and were given questions to answer about this video as they watched it and this maintained their application and increased their understanding. The school's previous inspection noted that 'there is little variation in the tasks set according to ability'. This inspection finds that this is still the case. In addition, in Year 2, although lessons are thoroughly prepared and contain interesting subject matter, the pace of learning is too slow, the work given is too easy for many pupils and insufficient progress is made. For example, one lesson culminated in pupils being given a choice of how to record the work covered and they all decided to produce drawings of some features of a seaside town. The drawings were not of good quality and did not appropriately apply the pupils' literacy, numeracy or geographical skills.

138. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good, and promotes good progress for these pupils. They usually carry out the same work as other pupils but they receive good quality support that enables them to complete it successfully. Information technology was well used to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

139. There has been insufficient improvement in this subject since the school's previous OFSTED inspection. The management of geography is unsatisfactory. The school has not had a teacher in charge of the subject for some eighteen months although it is planned to give the responsibility to someone soon. Assessment procedures are not sufficiently developed and the scheme of work is due to be reviewed but there is no formal development plan for the subject. There is no rigorous monitoring of classroom practice and standards. These weaknesses in management do not promote high standards. Geography makes a suitable contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development through the study of other countries and their people, for example, India.

HISTORY

140. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection. Judgements are made on these few lessons, discussions with staff and an analysis of previous work.

141. In Year 7, pupils show knowledge, understanding and skills within the subject that are similar to those of pupils in most other schools. In their study of the Three Estates, pupils recall the feudal system in England and make appropriate comparisons. They are beginning to link causes and effects of events and changes leading up to the French Revolution, and show appropriate understanding of the events in the 1780s.

142. At the age of 11, pupils' work is of a similar standard to that found in other schools. A scrutiny of previous work shows that pupils have average knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. They show appropriate use of first-hand evidence in the form of the Schilley family documents, which they carefully researched and portrayed in a range of interesting ways. They have sound understanding of important events in Britain since the 1930s, and describe the characteristics of the period and recognise changes within them with reasonable historical awareness.

143. In Year 2, pupils' work is similar to that found in most other schools. They are beginning to use everyday terms pertaining to the passage of time, and show an increasing sense of chronology. By interviewing parents and grandparents, and looking at artefacts and photographs, they answer questions readily about the past.

144. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall, and in a Year 7 lesson, it was good. The teacher showed good knowledge of the period, and used text well as a shared reading experience. The pupils concentrated well on the lesson, and carried out appropriate research into taxes, borrowing and the selling of offices. Consequently, they made good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the long and short term causes of unrest. In a Year 4 lesson, where the quality of teaching and learning were very good, the teacher provided very stimulating artefacts and sources of information. Her excellent relationships with the class, and skilful management of their enthusiasm, led to a very good working environment where pupils displayed a thirst for knowledge and a real enjoyment of finding out about the past. Other evidence indicates that teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and have appropriate expectations of pupils. They plan their lessons well and generally make sound use of time and resources. As a result pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. In Year 1, pupils develop their understanding of 'then and now' in considering toys from the past. In Year 3, pupils show average knowledge and understanding of the Romans in Britain, and develop steadily their use of historical sources from their visit to St.Albans. In Year 4, pupils build well on their historical enquiry when studying the Aztecs. In Year 5, they continue to develop their key skills in their study of Ancient Egypt.

145. The curriculum is systematically planned to ensure a steady progression of learning through the school. The quality and range of historical resources are good, and the school makes good use of visits to museums and places of historical interest. The quality of the display to support the subject is consistently high across the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

146. By the time they leave, overall, pupils' standards in information technology are similar to those found in most other schools, but by the end of Year 6, they are below. This judgement shows a decline since the previous OFSTED inspection: the school's development of computers and software has failed to keep pace with schools nationally, and not all of the required aspects of the National Curriculum are taught adequately in Years 3 to 6.

147. By Year 7, most pupils use information technology methodically to organise, reorganise and edit text to ensure that their writing is clear, reasonably well presented and free of errors. A strength of pupils' work in Year 7 is their use of computers during residential

camps to measure and plot their heart rate after exercise. This gives pupils a good insight into how computers are used in everyday life. Pupils use modelling programs confidently to change variables in a motor racing simulation, and make good predictions of the likely results of their modifications. They write simple programs to produce animated cartoon stories, showing an average understanding of the computer language LOGO.

148. In Year 6, pupils' knowledge of the keyboard is variable, and dependent on how much practice they have at home. Although a few work confidently, many others work slowly, and still have to search around for the required keys. Not all pupils save their work reliably, and they have to be reminded about basic operations to do with locating files. Pupils use computers reasonably well to research work for their topics, producing sound family histories in their work on the Second World War. Year 3 pupils produce average work as they combine graphics and text to design a sandwich packet, and those in Year 4 conduct sound researches using CD ROM programs to support their work on the Tudors. They operate a robot device well, entering a sequence of three or four commands to achieve a predicted pattern of movements. The school has no facilities for pupils to gain access to the Internet, and little by way of control technology. The shortage of computers, and insufficient opportunities to use those that exist to support their learning, mean that, as pupils move through Years 5 and 6, they fall behind others of their age.

149. Pupils make a sound start in Year 1, and soon develop confidence in writing simple stories using word processors, and using delete keys to correct their work. By Year 2, they use computers well to find out about the parts of a flower, and to locate the main cities in the United Kingdom.

150. A significant strength of the school's provision for information technology is the way pupils with special educational needs develop their skills. Relishing the way computers generate attractive and accurate work, pupils with significant learning and physical difficulties quickly learn how to use computer programs, and they attain very good standards for their previous attainment.

151. Too little direct teaching of information technology was seen to make a judgement of its quality. The few lessons observed, and evidence of teachers' planning, show that teachers make adequate use of the school's limited resources. They make sound use of computers to support pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum, but although only two pupils can use the computer at any one time, the progress of the class overall is slow. Similarly, once a skill has been taught to the whole class, it may be two weeks before some pupils can apply their new knowledge. The school's recent acquisition of simple word processors is starting to make a difference, and these enable whole groups of pupils to work together. The best teaching takes place with pupils with special educational needs. Working with individual pupils, class teachers and the co-ordinators for pupils with special educational needs teach basic skills effectively, and pupils soon learn new work.

152. The school recognises the weaknesses in its provision for information technology, which is an area of priority in its development planning. There are plans for an information technology suite in the near future, and appropriate staff-training events planned. The subject co-ordinator has amended the scheme of work developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to fit the resources available, and this provides sound guidance to teachers. The school has an adequate system for assessment, which tracks pupils' progress through the elements of the scheme. In view of the limited resources for pupils aged 7 to 11, and

inadequate time available for them to develop their skills, the subject does not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

FRENCH

153. In Year 7, pupils make good progress and attain the standards in French which are similar to those found in most other schools. Pupils with special educational needs are well-supported in lessons and are included in all the activities. As a result of the approaches used, they also make good progress.

154. Pupils show an understanding of simple classroom commands, play a game of ‘Simon dit’ and read out their written answers to questions such as “Ou habite-tu?” They respond briefly with single words or short phrases, and generally make accurate attempts to replicate the teacher’s model of reliable pronunciation. Their understanding of simple nouns and adjectives presented in a familiar context is good, and at this stage is significantly better than their hesitant attempts to express themselves. Their vocabulary is developing steadily and pupils learn how to use everyday conversational French to pick out different coloured pencils, request a drink or items when shopping. They name fruits and vegetables with reasonable confidence, ask the time and join in enthusiastically when singing the action song ‘Tete, epaules, genoux, pieds’ (head, shoulders, knees and toes). In their books, they copy nouns correctly, label drawings and pay attention to whether they write ‘un’ or ‘une’ to denote whether the words are masculine or feminine.

155. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good. The teacher has evident knowledge of the subject and shares this well with the pupils. Lessons are thoughtfully structured to enable pupils to achieve success and to encounter a variety of experiences. The teacher takes an active role in presenting new vocabulary and provides a good framework in which pupils can have their new learning reinforced. The emphasis is on enjoyment and the clever use of games and songs develops pupils’ skills in memorising the words that they hear and allows them to practise using them. The teacher ensures that pupils are familiar with the sounds of the words before she introduces them to the spelling. This leads to the adoption of a secure French accent and pupils do not then speak the words as if they conformed to the English way of pronunciation. Lessons are lively and well managed. Resources are used imaginatively and pupils participate with enthusiasm. For example, after watching a programme where French children introduce their pets, they play a form of Kim’s game when they guess the order of pictures of the animals when they are turned the wrong way round. Instructions are given by the teacher in equal proportions of English and French and several pupils are now capable of listening to a greater amount of French conversation during the lesson and learning to reply in sentences.

156. Pupils begin the French course in Year 6 and specialist teaching occurs in both Years 6 and 7. The school closely follows the recommended guidelines produced by the borough and good links with secondary schools enable pupils to make a smooth transition when they move into the next phase of their education. The subject has good resources, with very good examples of videos, visual materials so that pupils can play games and learn accordingly, listening tapes and a wide selection of books. French dictionaries, however, are in short supply. Effective links are made with the work on France that occurs in geography in Year 6 and in history and music in Year 7.

MUSIC

157. In Year 7, progress is good and pupils attain standards that are well above those found in most other schools. They analyse pieces of music, such as the 'Paris Fanfare' which was written for the opening of the Channel Tunnel, and pick out interwoven tunes that are based on the French national anthem, and Rule Britannia. Pupils show a very good capacity to discuss its purpose and compare this modern composition with a medieval version of a fanfare. When they study a score of music and put in the dynamics, they make accurate reference to Italian musical terms. During the lesson seen, some pupils were self-conscious when singing but many showed the ability to sight-read music, and respond to the directions given in the notation at a very accomplished level. Around three-quarters of the pupils are learning to play an instrument.

158. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, make consistently good progress in music throughout the school, especially in performing. All pupils are taught to play the recorder and this begins in Year 3. By the time that they are 11, many attain standards that are well above those found in most other schools. They identify many instruments, have experience of playing some of them and have had the chance to listen to music from different times and places. Pupils in Year 6 for instance, appraise Indian popular music, hear the playing of a tabla and discuss the place of music in Indian life. During lessons, their skills in reading and responding to musical notation are evident when they perform with violins and clarinets and use percussion instruments, including a drum kit. They sing complex rhythms and improve the quality of their singing very effectively in a song such as 'Jamaica farewell' by varying the dynamics, sustaining notes at the end of phrases and pronouncing the words clearly.

159. In Year 2, pupils attain standards that are above those found in most other schools as a result of the music teacher's high expectations. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were average. Pupils listen for the crescendo and diminuendo in music such as 'Berne Patrol' and then apply this to their own performances. They learn a new song 'Caterpillars only crawl' linked to their work in science and add their own confident accompaniments. Many sing with good control of pitch, make expressive use of dynamics and recognise repetition and changes within pieces of music. Even the youngest pupils in Year 1 recognise soft and loud sounds, follow hand signals and when singing as individuals, accurately echo phrases back to the teacher such as 'How do you do?'

160. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features, as was seen in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher kept a close eye on individuals and helped those who encountered difficulties with fingering techniques while playing the recorder. Theoretical information was given without pupils losing the enjoyment of performing as they observed dotted notes, two beat rests and repeat signs. The lesson was well structured to provide a variety of activities and pupils sang 'The train is a-comin' with gusto to a spirited piano accompaniment. As a result of positive teaching, pupils have good attitudes to music throughout the school and enjoy their lessons. They are well motivated and are given the confidence to perform in front of others. Strengths in the teaching are apparent in the well-managed lessons and extracurricular activities, competent organisation of large classes and resources, and purposeful approaches. High expectations lead the pupils to rehearse their performances and improve the quality of them. They understand what is required of them and behave very well. Some of the lessons seen for the younger pupils were short and fairly

prescriptive. Because of timetable constraints, they did not always allow sufficient time for pupils to collaborate with each other and apply the imaginative theme of the lessons to their own exploration of sounds and compositions.

161. The music co-ordinator is enthusiastic and conscientious. Documentation is reviewed regularly, and pupils' developing skills are carefully assessed. As the co-ordinator teaches most of the classes for music, she has a clear idea of the progress and challenge that is necessary for pupils of different ages. The school has a very good selection of recorded music and percussion and other instruments including those from other cultures. Very good use is made of the dedicated music room for class and individual lessons. A group of younger pupils with special educational needs particularly enjoy their weekly music therapy sessions with two learning support assistants when they join in with taped songs, make the tambourine say hello, play loud and soft games and use 'Tigger bubbles' to enunciate words. All these elements are carefully chosen to help pupils to consolidate their learning. For example, they practise counting and taking away when they sing about buying eight hamsters at the shop and learn social skills when they follow instructions, take turns and throw and catch a beanbag in a 'goodbye' game.

162. Around 70 pupils receive instrumental tuition from four visiting teachers who provide skilled tuition. As a result, pupils learn to play the guitar, violin, viola, double bass, brass instruments, woodwind and percussion, often to a high standard. There are several school based extra-curricular musical activities that include a choir, a recorder group with descant, treble and tenor instruments, a flourishing school orchestra and opportunities to play the tin whistle. Importantly, pupils with special educational needs are positively encouraged to participate in the activities. Pupils also prepare for musical productions and concerts. An ensemble plays regularly in acts of worship. During the song assembly, pupils of all ages sing a variety of modern worship songs very tunefully with good diction, accurate rhythms and sensitive variations in the dynamics. Hymns and songs are chosen very carefully on these occasions so that even the youngest children and those with special educational needs can join in enthusiastically with clapping or the actions.

163. Instrumentalists from the local peripatetic music service perform annually. Pupils enjoy participating by singing at concerts and carol services. They take part in specialist festivals arranged by the borough for guitar, woodwind and brass instruments. The musical experiences that the school provides make important contributions to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. During the Arts Week in 1998, for example, pupils had good opportunities to hear performances of African drumming and Asian music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. In Year 7, the only aspect of physical education observed during the inspection was athletics. This observation indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are similar to those found in most schools. The pupils throw, for example, javelins and balls with appropriate accuracy and skill and measure the distances they achieve as a marker for improvement.

165. At Key Stage 2, the pupils make good progress and, in Year 6, standards higher than those found in most schools. This is because standards in swimming and dancing are good. In swimming, almost all of the pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres safely and unaided using a recognised swimming stroke. Many swim considerably further and show a good style in a

number of different strokes, for example, the crawl and breaststroke. The pupils have good dance skills. They vary the pace, height and direction of their movements and create and develop a story line well. Standards in gymnastics and games are similar to those found in most schools. The pupils throw with reasonable accuracy both over-arm and under-arm in games and, in gymnastics, they travel successfully on both floor and apparatus by jumping and rolling.

166. At Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory and, in Year 2, standards are similar to those found in most schools. The pupils balance effectively on pointed parts of the body, watch the flight of a ball carefully when it is thrown to them and catch it appropriately using two hands. They control a ball suitably, for example, when bouncing it. Dance was not observed at this key stage.

167. The school's previous OFSTED inspection found that overall progress was satisfactory and that attainment met national expectations. Gymnastics was under emphasised at Key Stage 2. The standards found in this inspection represent an improvement on those findings, particularly at Key Stage 2 where gymnastics now fully meets the pupils' needs. The previous inspection also found that pupils with special educational needs made particularly good progress. This is also the finding of this inspection.

168. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although it is good at Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, which described teaching as ranging from 'poor to good' but 'satisfactory overall'. In a particularly good swimming lesson at Key Stage 2 which illustrated the best features of the teaching throughout the school, the class was split into two groups based on the pupils' previous attainment and a pupil with special educational needs received individual support. This enabled the teacher who taught one group and the swimming instructor who took the other group in to tailor the work to the needs of the pupils who worked hard and with considerable enjoyment. Each group had clear objectives, and the lesson planning expanded these objectives and was very well implemented. The teachers showed great skill and knowledge in the advice they gave the pupils on how to improve. Resources were used well, the lesson had a brisk pace and the pupils made very good progress. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of physical education, particularly in the way that pupils' skills in evaluating their own and others' performance in order to improve it are developed. In addition, in Year 2, although there were strengths such as good planning, weak control was shown when the teacher did not insist that pupils put down their apparatus and, as a result, they failed listen to instructions or to watch the demonstrations by other pupils. Time was also wasted as too long was taken to put out apparatus, some activities were too complicated and an over-focus on the rules slowed the lesson and the pupils' progress down. Poor control was noted as a weakness in teaching at the time of the school's previous inspection which also noted a failure, where teaching was poor, to emphasise safety procedures sufficiently. Safe practice was fully stressed by teachers during this inspection.

169. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The support that they receive and the way that activities are structured enable them to take part in all work in a way that motivates and develops them. This finding is broadly similar to that of the school's previous inspection.

170. However, the subject is now well managed and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Curricular guidance, which was a weakness at the time of that inspection, is now good and supports very broad curricular provision which fully meets all aspects of the National Curriculum although there is currently no requirement for this. At the time of the school's last OFSTED inspection, curricular provision at Key Stages 2 and 3 was not regarded as full and balanced. These improvements are successfully promoting higher standards as are the good and improved range of learning resources available and the school's extracurricular provision. High standards in swimming are also promoted by well-structured and well-used assessment procedures although these procedures are not in place for other aspects of the subject. Good plans for the further improvement of the subject exist including the development of assessment procedures. Physical education supports the pupils' social and moral development well as they work together and learn to cope with the successes and limitations of their own and others' performance.