

INSPECTION REPORT

ROUND DIAMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stevenage

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117299

Headteacher: Mrs D Godbold

Reporting inspector: Mrs T Chakraborti
12603

Dates of inspection: 7 - 10 May 2002

Inspection number: 198830

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mildmay Road
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
Postcode: SG1 5SR

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Rosemary Last

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12603	Tusha Chakraborti	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Design and technology English as an additional language English	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17852	Lawrence Moscrop	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology	How well is the school led and managed?
24091	Emanuel Shaw	Team inspector	Science Geography Music Special educational needs	
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	Art History Equal opportunities	
20457	Brian Fletcher	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Round Diamond Primary is a bigger than average sized school for pupils aged 3 to 11. It is situated in the Stevenage area of Hertfordshire. Most pupils are drawn from the immediate area which is regarded as economically disadvantaged and the majority of pupils live in rented accommodation. The school has 343 pupils, including the 42 part-time and 49 full-time children in the nursery and the reception classes. Sixteen per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is above the national average. Attainment on entry, in the nursery class, is below the average for this age group. There are 13 pupils who speak English as an additional language and six of these are at the early stages of learning English. Main languages spoken, other than English, are Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Shona and Filipino.

The school is a fully inclusive school, educationally and socially. It has a special unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties, in Years 3-6. The current provision within the unit is for 12 pupils and will increase to 15 next year owing to the closure of another similar facility within the county. Each pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Since last September pupils are integrated into the mainstream school in the afternoon as part of a new, closely monitored county initiative. Pupils receive intensive support in speech and language in the unit during the morning and access to the remaining curriculum during the afternoon. Several pupils from this unit return to mainstream education fully as the school meets the needs of these pupils effectively.

The school's roll has increased significantly over the last five years and it is due to move to an area near a new private housing estate, within a year. As a result, new pupils from the private housing estate are joining the school, while many existing ones are leaving because of the distance of the new school from the present area. This means that the school experiences a high level of mobility. In addition, the provision for the unit results in many new pupils joining the school in Years 3-6, leading to even higher pupil mobility.

The school is an Investor in People and was awarded the Quality Mark by the Basic Skills Agency. It has also received the award for significant improvement between 1997 and 2001 from the Department of Education and Science. The school celebrates pupils' achievement and is strongly committed to providing good quality education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Round Diamond Primary is a good school which does very well by all its pupils. It provides a good quality education which meets the academic, social and emotional needs of its pupils well. The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress across the school. The overall standards have improved further over the past years. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction and is supported well by the senior management team and the governors. The school promotes the wellbeing of its pupils very effectively through its well-organised support system and its caring ethos, and ensures that each child is supported well in both personal and academic development. It is an effective school and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very successful in including all its pupils in all aspects of learning and in the life of the school. The leadership and management are very good.
- The headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other senior managers as well the governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching. As a result pupils across the school make good progress.
- The school's provision for promoting pupils' moral and social development is very effective.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Relationships between the adults and pupils and among pupils themselves are very good.
- The school works very effectively in partnership with parents and the wider community, sustaining a very strong link between home and school and a shared commitment to support pupils' learning.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development and welfare.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and enriches pupils' learning experiences in all areas of the curriculum.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing in Year 6 are below average.
- Assessment procedures are not developed in the foundation subjects.
- The indoor accommodation is overcrowded and inadequate for delivering all areas of the curriculum.

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 November 1997. Good progress has been made since then and the key issues identified by the 1997 inspection have been addressed successfully. Considerable attention has been given to improving pupils' handwriting and speaking and listening skills and, as a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school in these aspects of English. Curricular organisation is effective and all subjects, including mathematics and science, are taught regularly and in sufficient depth. This is reflected in the improving standards in most areas of the curriculum despite a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and high pupil mobility. The roles of the senior management team have developed and are now effective. An effective and appropriate programme for staff development and the strategies for performance management are being implemented successfully. The quality of teaching is monitored and evaluated very effectively, leading to improving standards in Year 2. This is clearly reflected in the quality of teaching observed during the current inspection. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. All these improvements and effective teamwork, involving the staff, headteacher and the governors, indicate that the school is well placed to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	D	D
mathematics	B	C	B	B
science	B	C	C	C

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The standards in English are below the national average at the end of Year 6. This is because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs, including those who arrived in Years 3-6, taking the national tests. Some of these pupils achieve the national average in all three subjects. An analysis of the test results shows that, although the overall results are depressed for the reason stated above, high attaining pupils do achieve the standards of which they are capable consistently. This is reflected in the high number of 27 pupils, who do not have special educational needs, reaching average and higher levels. The analysis also shows that the percentages of pupils achieving in line with the national average has risen over the past two years in mathematics and science, even though the average point scores remain same. Compared to similar schools, the test results are similar. The trend of improvement in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend. Attainment in the national tests exceeds the school's own targets in mathematics but for English, it is just below the set target.

Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 in the 2001 national tests are above average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. In comparison to schools with similar characteristics, standards are similar. The percentage of pupils achieving at a higher level is above average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics.

The current inspection also finds that at the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are average in English, mathematics and science. Although standards in writing in Year 6 are slightly below average,

the overall standards show an improvement over the 2001 national test result. Attainment in Year 2 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress over time across the school.

At the end of Year 6, standards are above those expected of pupils of similar age in information and communication technology, art and history. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected of these age groups, at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Inspection evidence also indicates that pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress during their time at the school.

Pupils achieve well because of the school's very effective strategies for including all pupils in every aspect of the school life and the good quality of teaching.

Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average in comparison with that expected for three-year-olds. Children make good progress in nursery and reception classes and, by the time they enter Year 1, most of them are likely to reach the level of attainment that is at least in line with what is expected for children of this age, in all areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils tackle all learning challenges enthusiastically and they really enjoy school life. They are keen to learn, take pride in their work and respond to class discussions and tasks very well. Pupils feel valued and happy.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in the classroom and on the playground. They are friendly, courteous and co-operate with their teachers to establish a positive learning environment.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships within the school are particularly strong and have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and learning. They take responsibilities seriously and carry them out sensibly.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is low.

Pupils' attitudes to learning have been maintained at the same level since the last inspection. There was no evidence of any poor behaviour or bullying seen during the inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good, overall, with some very good teaching. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when some lessons were found to be less than satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the current inspection. Approximately four out of every five lessons were good or better and one in every four lessons was very. This improvement in the quality of teaching reflects the hard work and commitment of the headteacher and the staff.

Teaching is consistently good in English and mathematics, with a large proportion of lessons being good or very good. This indicates that National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching is good in most subjects. As a result of the overall good quality of teaching across the school, all pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.

Teachers' planning is good and is securely based upon schemes of work, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Learning objectives are shared with the class and they are reviewed and revisited at the end of each lesson. As a result, pupils are making good progress in the gaining of knowledge and understanding in these areas. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy is good throughout the school. The planning for numeracy and literacy, overall, reflects the national strategies, which have been implemented effectively.

Management of behaviour is a strength and teachers take very good care to ensure that all pupils are included in the activities in the classroom. Questions are used well to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to contribute and to gain in understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of how children learn are consistently good and they use assessment information satisfactorily to check their progress, in the core subjects.

Teachers ensure that the learning needs of pupils are met. They have high expectations of pupils and challenge them appropriately. As a result, most pupils concentrate well and gain in knowledge and understanding in most subjects progressively.

Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well in their learning. They have appropriate individual education plans that are understood by their class teachers. They also receive effective and skilful help from classroom assistants who work in partnership with class teachers and ensure that these pupils participate fully in all lessons. The teaching in the unit is good. The school's policy of integrating the pupils in their mainstream classes in the afternoon enhances the quality of these pupils' learning and, as a result, they achieve well. The few pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by their teachers and classroom assistants. They make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school offers pupils a good range of interesting and stimulating opportunities for learning. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The curriculum gives very good opportunities for all pupils with special educational needs, including those in the unit, to benefit from all the school provides. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are met well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision made for moral and social development is very good. It is good for promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' personal development is supported very effectively through the personal, social and health education programme.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Secure procedures are in place to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of the pupils. The school has a very good range of procedures to promote good attendance and behaviour.

All National Curriculum requirements are met, and the curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is planned according to national guidance. There are very good procedures to monitor the progress of pupils, in core subjects. The information is used well to plan the next stages in their learning. The school has developed very effective links with parents, which makes a positive contribution to children's learning at school and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, supported very well by the deputy headteacher, other senior managers and the governors, provides very effective and strong leadership in developing and managing the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The strategic role of the governors is very well developed. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school uses its development plan very effectively to evaluate its performance. The analysis of test results and the monitoring of teaching are used well to see where improvements could be made.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of all its staff and resources. The inside accommodation, although totally inadequate for the increasing number of pupils, is used very creatively to enhance pupils' learning. Grants and other funds are used very effectively for their intended purpose.

The staff are well trained. The school applies the principles of best value well in all spending decisions and monitors its impact on financial planning closely. The outside accommodation is very good and supports pupils' learning in many parts of the curriculum very effectively. Accommodation inside is totally inadequate to deliver all subjects effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Children are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school promotes good behaviour. • The school works closely with parents. • Parents feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that their children do not receive sufficient homework. • Some parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of extra-curricular activities.

An overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the school and parents acknowledge the improvements made in recent years. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments.

The team concludes that all pupils receive sufficient homework, which is used effectively to extend pupils' learning. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' opportunities for learning and physical activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils in Round Diamond Primary achieve well. The results of the national tests, at the end of Year 6, are above average in mathematics, average in science but below the national average in English. When these results are compared to schools that have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards are similar. The pupils with speech and language difficulties join the school in Years 3-6, leading to an increased number of pupils with special educational needs taking the national tests at the end of Year 6. Although these pupils make good progress over the years and some of them attain the national average in all three subjects, the overall results are affected adversely. For example, in 2001, 12 pupils with special educational needs who joined the school in Years 5 and 6 took the national tests, increasing the total number of pupils with special educational needs to 17 at the end of Year 6. Three of these pupils attained the national average in all three subjects and one achieved a higher level in science. The results have to be seen in this context. Further analysis of the results show that out of the remaining 27 pupils a high proportion reached higher levels and almost all achieved the national average. This indicates good achievement across the school.
2. The results of the 2001 national tests for Year 2 pupils are above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. In the same year, standards in science for Year 2, based on the teacher assessment, is average.
3. The current inspection finds that standards are average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This indicates some improvement in standards over the 2001 test results. In comparison to the last inspection, standards in English have improved in Year 2 and remained similar in Year 6. The standards in mathematics in Year 6 show some decline because of the high proportion of pupils with speech and language difficulties who have joined the school in the past two years. At the end of Year 6, standards are above those expected of pupils of similar age in information and communication technology, art and history. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected of these age groups, at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6
4. Attainment of children on entry to the nursery is below that expected of three-year-olds. They make good progress in the nursery and reception and most of them are likely to achieve in line the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year.
5. In English, pupils make good progress throughout the school in the development of their speaking and listening skills. Pupils listen carefully and respond well, and in the plenary sessions they are keen to share what they have learned. Standards in reading are satisfactory and pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils use a range of strategies to support their reading, including phonic and picture clues. Most pupils in Year 2 are able to read simple passages accurately and they can talk about the plot and the different characters. Most pupils in Year 6 enjoy their reading and are keen to investigate new authors confidently. Many are fluent and enthusiastic readers and have satisfactory knowledge of different authors and their styles of writing. They read information from the Internet to support learning in other subjects. The standard of writing of pupils in Year 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils learn standard English, the use of punctuation and simple sentence structure effectively. At the end of Year 6, the standard in writing is below the national expectation. The staff are providing a number of opportunities for pupils to improve and extend their writing. Pupils write for many different purposes across the curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced effectively.
6. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of number and use number bonds to calculate numbers to 100 and beyond in mental and oral work. They use a wide range of strategies for adding and subtracting and count confidently in multiples of 2, 5 and 10. This gives them a good understanding of counting coins. They have good knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes and are able to present their findings in investigative work and in Venn and Carroll diagrams. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress and have a wide range of strategies for making written, mental and oral calculations. They use correct mathematical

vocabulary in their work and check their answers to addition or multiplication calculations using money, time, weight, and length. They solve money problems correctly and have a good understanding of probability. They are able to identify which number operations are required in mathematical investigations.

7. In science, pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a good understanding of plant structure and know about the properties of a range of different materials. They use scientific vocabulary well to describe their investigative work. They show an understanding of the importance of making their tests fair and present their findings in a chart. In Year 6, pupils conduct a wide variety of experiments and have a good understanding of the need for fairness in their scientific investigations. Throughout the school, all aspects of the science curriculum are carefully taught and with an emphasis placed on providing suitable practical activities, pupils are developing a questioning approach that deepens their understanding.
8. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), at the end of Year 2, are in line with the expected levels. Pupils are taught specific computer program skills but it is not always effective when taught in the classrooms using one computer. Pupils have the opportunities to do research work and homework using encyclopaedias on CD Rom and searching the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are above that expected of pupils of this age. They use the computer language HTML and have produced their own web pages that they have animated and linked. The younger pupils use computerised toys and robots to learn how to program their direction.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the teaching they get in lessons is well matched to their needs and they have suitable additional help from support staff.
10. Overall, the level of attainment of pupils in the speech and language unit is understandably below national expectation in English. Their attainment in other subjects varies according to their ability. In mathematics, science and all other subjects, due to the careful support being given, pupils are able to join in the lesson and contribute fully. Progress is good, as work is carefully differentiated. Pupils can read at their own level and are able to write sentences reflecting their individual abilities. They are able to take part in simple role-play activities, as was shown by enacting a visit to a vet, with one group member being the cat.
11. There is a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Most are fluent English speakers who flourish with the good teaching in many lessons. On a tiny minority of occasions teachers' lack of instruction or inadequate support causes pupils, who are at the early stages of learning English, to struggle.
12. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school sets targets for its pupils and reviews them every year to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging. It exceeded its set targets last year. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well because of the school's very effective inclusion policy, strategies for including all pupils in every aspect of the school life and the good quality of teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. This is similar to what was reported at the last inspection, though attitudes are even better than they were. This area is a strength of the school, which is an inclusive and supportive community and where relationships throughout are very good. Pupils obviously enjoy school and parents are very pleased that their children are so happy.
14. Children in the nursery and reception year classes behave very well and are developing confidence, independence and good social skills. They work well together, share ideas and resources and show enjoyment in the success of others. They listen and answer questions to the best of their ability and are eager to please their teacher with their good efforts.
15. Pupils elsewhere have very good attitudes to learning and respond well when expectations are high in lessons. They follow instructions well in physical education and respond well to praise and encouragement; this helps pupils work harder and improve their skills. Pupils relish challenge, they are keen to learn, have good concentration levels and answer questions

eagerly, especially in history, where the topic of Ancient Greece has inspired some very good learning. The making of Greek masks in art and a multi-media presentation on Greek gods in ICT really motivated older pupils to produce some high quality work that they were justifiably proud of. Pupils have the best attitudes when they know precisely what to do and are given tight time limits to carry out tasks. This was seen in a very good Year 2 geography lesson when comparing the town of Stevenage with the village of Datchworth.

16. The attitudes of the pupils in the unit are good. They are able to work at the task set and take advantage of the support being offered. Generally they concentrate well with adult support. In afternoon lessons when they are in the mainstream classes they join in the activities with interest and always behave well.
17. Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is usually good. No unsatisfactory behaviour was observed during lessons. Pupils show good levels of self-discipline and circle times were successful because pupils stick rigidly to the rules. In the playground, older pupils have fun playing football and younger pupils amuse themselves happily. There are occasional boisterous moments but most behaviour is good-natured and not aggressive. Pupils behave very well in assemblies and show reverence, especially at prayer time. Lunchtimes are pleasant, sociable occasions. When pupils travelled to the swimming pool, their behaviour was exemplary and they were a real credit to the school. The rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with very well when all the facts are investigated and followed up with parents. The two short fixed term exclusions in the past year were justified for persistent unsafe misbehaviour.
18. Relationships throughout the school are very good and are based on mutual respect for all in a caring, family-orientated school community. Pupils' personal development is very good and pupils are friendly, well mannered, helpful, and welcoming to visitors. They really enjoy and appreciate the extra-curricular activities, the visitors and the many school trips they take that enrich and extend their personal development so well. The residential trips to a Devon farm, Norfolk seaside and to the Peak district were aptly described by pupils as "the most brilliant experiences." Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and usually have respect for each other's feelings and values. As pupils move up through the school, they become more responsible, more independent and show greater maturity and growing confidence. There was overwhelming agreement by parents on this aspect in their questionnaire. The school council gives pupils a "voice" in the school and a way of channelling pupils' views and ideas very effectively. The "buddy" system of inducting new pupils works very well and older pupils keep a protective eye on their younger peers and help them whenever help is needed. The new "buddy" bench was seen working when a tearful pupil sat down: she was quickly whisked off by older pupils who cheered her up and helped her smile again. Pupils enjoy taking part in school productions, leading assemblies, doing jobs and often choose to spend their "Golden Time" helping out in younger classes. Pupils' independence in learning is well developed when they research their work in history and geography and when they have greater freedom of choice and opportunities to really stretch their thinking and creative impulses in science and art.
19. Attendance is good and is above the national average. Authorised absence is attributable to genuine illness and some special extenuating circumstances but a large and significant proportion of absence is accounted for by holiday taking. Up to half of the pupils in some classes are taken on holiday during term time, which seriously disrupts and hinders learning. Unauthorised absence levels are lower than the national average and reflect the school's efficient following up of absence. Punctuality on arrival at school is generally good. However, a very small number of pupils are persistently late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good, overall, with some very good teaching. It has improved significantly since the last inspection, when teaching in some lessons was found to be less than satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the current inspection. Approximately four out of every five lessons were good or better and one in every four lessons was good. This improvement in the quality of teaching reflects the hard work and commitment of the headteacher and the staff.

21. Teaching is consistently good in English and mathematics, with a large proportion being good or very good. This indicates that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching is good in most subjects. As a result, pupils across the school make good progress. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy is good throughout the school. The planning for numeracy and literacy, overall, reflects the national strategies, which have been implemented effectively.
22. Teachers' planning is good and is securely based upon schemes of work, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Learning objectives are shared with the class and they are reviewed at the end of each lesson. Teachers use appropriate strategies to ensure that pupils build on previous learning and develop the concepts systematically. This was evident in many lessons, especially in English, where lessons begin with evaluating learning in previous lessons.
23. In many lessons, teachers maintain a brisk pace so that pupils remain active and learn well. These features contribute positively to pupils' attitudes to learning and their progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher maintained good pace, providing pupils with a range of stimulating activities and, as a result, pupils were able to consolidate their understanding of basic fractions effectively.
24. Management of behaviour is very good. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included in the activities in the classroom and, as a result, pupils concentrate on tasks well. A very good example of this was seen in an ICT lesson in Year 6: the teacher's high level of competence in managing pupils' behaviour meant that pupils made an effective presentation about Greek gods, using power-point technique successfully. Teachers treat all pupils with respect and as individuals, but, at the same time, expect high standards of behaviour. Praise is used very effectively to make pupils feel confident about their ability to learn and to reinforce good behaviour.
25. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that the learning needs of pupils are met. They have high expectations of pupils and challenge them appropriately. As a result, most pupils concentrate well and gain in knowledge and understanding in most subjects progressively. For example, in a geography lesson in Year 3, teacher's high expectations of pupils and the challenging activities provided meant that pupils learned about the safety regulations at the seaside and the role of the coast guards within a short time and achieved above average standards in this lesson.
26. Teachers use assessment information well to check pupils' progress in lessons. They use this information for future planning satisfactorily, especially in the core subjects. Questions are well used to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to contribute and to gain in understanding, as was observed in many lessons. Teachers' understanding of how children learn is consistently good. Marking of pupils' work is used satisfactorily to suggest how they can improve. However, in some subjects, where teaching is not so good pupils' progress is not assessed effectively and, as a result, teachers are not always able to plan effectively to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress in lessons and over time.
27. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources to a good effect to support pupils' learning. They have high expectations of all pupils and ensure that pupils make good progress as they move up the years. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher's knowledge of the literacy strategies enabled pupils to gain very clear understanding of report writing skills.
28. Relationships between staff and pupils are always very good. This means that the learning atmosphere in lessons is good where children feel safe and valued and learn well. Pupils respond positively by valuing their teachers and what the teachers have to teach.
29. The activities provided for the children in the nursery and reception classes are very appropriate, offering them challenges and ensuring that their attention is captured, so that they remain interested and involved in their learning for a considerable time. This was seen in a literacy lesson in reception where the children rose to the teacher's challenge and demonstrated very good understanding of rhyming words and developed good reading skills. Activities are

well linked, supporting the acquisition of basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and independent learning. The very good relationships between the adults and the children provide a safe and rich learning environment for the newly arrived children.

30. The few pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by their teachers and classroom assistants. They make good progress. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are taught effectively with the higher attainers in the Year above. For example, two Year 5 pupils are taught mathematics in the top Year 6 set. Teachers are well aware of the learning needs of these pupils and challenge them appropriately.
31. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well in their learning. They have appropriate individual education plans that are understood by their class teachers. They also receive effective and skilful help from classroom assistants who work in partnership with class teachers and ensure that these pupils participate fully in all lessons.
32. Pupils in the unit are supported well both in the unit in the morning and in their classes in the afternoon. The school's policy of integrating the pupils in their mainstream classes in the afternoon has a very positive impact on these pupils' learning and, as a result, they achieve well. The literacy and numeracy strategies are used effectively to plan lessons with suitable adaptations. Teachers ensure that these pupils take an active part in the lessons. Marking is used effectively as an aid to assessment. The individual education plans are specific to each pupil and the targets are used effectively to develop pupils' learning and identify future needs. The support staff work closely together with the teachers and have established a very positive rapport with these children. In the single instance of difficult behaviour observed they worked as a team very well, enabling the pupils to have confidence and make progress in the unit and main school.

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

33. The school provides a good curriculum that gives pupils increasing opportunities for independent learning as they reach secondary school age. The curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of all the pupils. It is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and effective links with the local community and partner-schools.
34. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught including religious education (RE). Sex education is taught in accordance with the governors' policy and drugs awareness is part of a good personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The aim of the PSHE programme is to give pupils the knowledge and skills they need to lead confident, independent lives and to become informed and responsible citizens. This aim provides the background for all curricular planning. Wherever possible, teachers make links with other subjects and therefore pupils experience the curriculum as a whole, which makes a strong impact upon the quality of their learning.
35. There is good provision for English and mathematics. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced and have led to improvements in pupils' attainment throughout the school. The provision made for English and mathematics detracts a little from the time allocated to other subjects but, overall, pupils benefit by the emphasis placed upon the acquisition of basic skills that are the key to all learning. Occasionally, some subjects, such as music and physical education, are allocated insufficient time for the full development of the lesson. The development of skills in ICT is always satisfactory and often good for all age groups. Well-chosen computer programs are frequently used in the classroom to confirm and enhance learning. The whole curriculum is kept under constant review and moves forward, not only in response to Government initiatives, but also in response to the needs of the pupils.
36. The curriculum is very inclusive and, as a result, the needs of all pupils are met effectively. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teacher and the classroom assistant give pupils very good support in the classroom. The quality of individual education plans is good. The personal targets for literacy and numeracy are realistic and achievable. Pupils' progress towards them is carefully measured and recorded.

37. The current provision within the unit is for 12 pupils and it is very good. The curriculum for numeracy and literacy in the unit is adapted to meet their needs. Each pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Careful differentiation and support throughout the school ensures that unit pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum similar to that of other pupils in the school. Since September pupils have been integrated into the mainstream school in the afternoon as part of a new, closely monitored county initiative. This has the full support of all those involved with the school. Pupils receive effective support in speech and language in the unit during the morning and access to the remaining curriculum during the afternoon. There is very close co-operation with the speech and language therapist who visits the unit for two and a half days each week.
38. The school evaluates its own performance by clear analyses of test results and careful scrutiny of the planning. Where appropriate, adjustments in the content and structure of teaching are made and these have the effect of strengthening the curriculum and improving learning. For example, the grouping of pupils in Years 3-6, by prior attainment in mathematics, makes a significant impact upon achievement.
39. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include a choir, several French clubs and a mathematics breakfast club for higher attaining pupils, enriches the curriculum. Pupils also have the benefit of several sports clubs, such as football, netball and table tennis. A visiting teacher takes lessons in clarinet and keyboard. The school has increased the opportunities available to pupils by gaining good support from volunteers, including parents, and outside organisations. All activities, at lunchtime and after-school, are well attended by the pupils and this enhances the community spirit.
40. The school makes good contact with the local community. The choir sings to local senior citizens and other pupils donate Harvest gifts on behalf of the school. Pupils raise money for local charities and design Christmas cards for a hostel for the homeless. In the recent past, pupils have decorated the local church and have provided an attractive mural for the shopping centre. Round Diamond has good links with other primary schools in the area and shares training programmes with them. There is a strong link with a neighbouring special school and also with the secondary school to which many pupils transfer at the end of Year 6.
41. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is at the heart of this strong and cohesive school community. It is a school that values and cares for each of its members equally.
42. The assembly is the key focus for good spiritual development. Pupils are taught to respect and value each other and the world in which they live. The focus for assembly during the inspection week was care for the environment and there were several dramatic presentations that gained the pupils' immediate attention. Pupils are asked to comment during assembly and their views are keenly heard. There is always a quiet moment for reflection and a prayer is spoken. The themes of assembly are reflected in RE lessons, where pupils have the opportunity to talk about the beliefs of people around the world and the part they play in their everyday lives. Circle time provides a forum for pupils to talk in a safe and secure environment about events that are of most concern to them. Other subjects, such as English, art and dance contribute to spiritual development and allow pupils to express their feelings and creativity in words, paintings and movement.
43. The provision for moral development is very good. The school sets very clear guidelines for pupils' behaviour and has high expectations about the way in which they should respond to each other. The boundary between right and wrong is firmly set. Sensible rules are displayed in classrooms and these are applied consistently across the school. Pupils are invited to discuss their behaviour so that they develop a clear understanding of what is acceptable and helpful to the school community. A system of rewards, highlighted in the celebration assembly, gives high status to performance and effort across a wide spectrum of activity, so that all pupils have a chance to gain recognition for tasks well done. Pupils applaud each other's efforts. In conversation, pupils say they like the school because it is an honest and fair place.
44. The provision for social development is also very good. Relationships are often excellent and firmly based upon mutual respect. Teachers provide very good role models. Pupils care for each other and this is exemplified in the 'buddy' system where older pupils care for those

younger, often displaying a rare maturity. There is a school council, made up of elected representatives, that provides an opportunity for pupils to exercise initiative in making the school a better place for learning and living. In many lessons older pupils are encouraged to work independently of the teacher and in close collaboration with others, thus enhancing their social skills. Residential visits by pupils in Years 5 and 6 encourage independence and this further emphasises the importance of shared community values.

45. The provision for cultural development is good. All classes are named after world-renowned artists and the school is rich in artistic culture. There are many prints on display by Lowry, Matisse and Constable, for example, and many paintings of pupils in the style of these artists. The school prepares its pupils well for life in a multi-ethnic society. It provides regular workshops and performances from a range of artists from different cultures including authors, dancers, orchestras and theatre companies. Last October the school held an Arts Week in which, among others, Japanese, Caribbean and Italian cultures were celebrated. The school also makes good use of local culture and there are trips to theatres and museums. Pupils also visit local churches and shops. The school plays a lively part in the community and is proud of its good reputation.
46. The provision for pupils' personal development has been sustained and enhanced since the previous inspection. It is now a strength of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school takes very good care of pupils and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Staff know their pupils very well and pupils are confident in their approaches to their teachers and other adults in the school and this helps pupils to feel happy, safe and secure. The school gives a high priority to a good range of procedures to encourage good attendance, good behaviour and good work habits and to safeguard pupils' welfare.
48. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are outstanding. Registers are consistently maintained and absences are very efficiently followed up to encourage good attendance and minimise unauthorised absence. The school goes out of its way to encourage good attendance and awarded 75 pupils with 100 per cent attendance certificates last term. Despite the school's best efforts to discourage the taking of holidays during term time, parents seldom heed the advice to give education the greater priority. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. All staff are well trained to manage behaviour consistently and very effectively. Right from when pupils start school the staff instil very good guidance into pupils on how to behave and conform to daily routines. Pupils are very familiar with the school rules and high expectations for behaviour and they usually behave well. Rewards and sanctions are used well to encourage better behaviour and effort. The pupils who habitually behave and work hard are applauded with "Always" certificates. The procedures for eliminating any oppressive behaviour are also very good. When any bullying is reported it is fully and swiftly investigated and action taken in a joint approach with parents to stop it.
49. There are very effective induction procedures for new pupils who settle into school very quickly. The "Orchard" room provides a quiet alternative to the playground for more vulnerable pupils and pupils are given good advice for coping with some of the difficulties they have, which helps to boost their self-esteem. Special mentoring arrangements have been made to prepare more vulnerable Year 6 pupils effectively for the transition to their secondary school. The breakfast and homework clubs are good opportunities to support learning further. The school sets achievable targets and provides guidance.
50. The arrangements for child protection are very good and meet all the statutory requirements. The headteacher is the designated person and there has been recent training for all staff to update them on the latest changes in local child protection systems and procedures. When pupils are sick or injured they receive a high level of care and attention. All pupils' medical conditions are well known and catered for. The school has some very good systems for carrying out all the routine health and safety checking and risk assessments and there are no issues of concern. The arrangements for school security are also good for an open school site.

51. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal, promoted by teachers who know pupils very well and sustain very positive relationships with them. Teachers show a high level of support and commitment to pupils and are able to give them good advice for improving attitudes, social skills and encourage a good work ethic and good quality of school life. The arrangements for staff exchanging information as pupils move up to the next class are good.
52. The procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are good in English and mathematics and these are implemented effectively to chart pupils' academic performance. Assessment procedures in science are sound but are yet to be implemented effectively. In all other subjects assessment procedures are not consistently developed and teachers sometimes do not have any records of pupils' progress. Teachers maintain their own records of pupils' progress but no formalised assessment records are kept. This means that teachers do not always have a clear view of what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve in these areas. However, test results are collated and these data and statistical evidence are used effectively to help set targets and monitor standards in English and mathematics.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school continues to have a very good partnership with parents. Parents are very supportive and are pleased with the education provided, the approachability of staff and the welcoming and caring environment in the school.
54. Parents expressed some disagreement in their questionnaire about the type and amount of homework set. When this was investigated, it was found that the arrangements for homework are satisfactory. The current homework arrangements, for preparing pupils in Year 6 for the national tests, are good and also help to prepare pupils for what to expect at their secondary school. The school provided very clear evidence that parents were surveyed and homework issues were identified and addressed and the arrangements are very clear in a homework information leaflet. This is good practice. The school has good links with North Herts College and parents of the youngest pupils attended a literacy course to support their children's writing. Those who attended were very pleased with the outcomes.
55. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent. School reports for both the main school and reception classes are outstanding and contain a great deal of very individualized information on progress and some excellent advice for improvement. The arrangements for formal consultation are very good and staff make themselves available every day to see parents informally about any more immediate issues. The home-contact books are used very well for parents to comment on reading and other dialogue. The newsletters and curriculum newsletters are very good and keep parents fully in touch with all the latest news and events and inform parents how they can support learning at home a whole term in advance. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are well written, contain very good quality information and meet all the statutory requirements.
56. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. Parents are regularly asked to help and some volunteer to help each week. The nursery has a useful parent chart where they can sign up and help. They are given good guidance and are deployed well in a number of useful ways. They provide very good help in supporting reading and giving help in lessons. Parents always help when needs arise, for school trips and to support swimming. Parents support their children in large numbers when they are invited to the school to share school productions, class assemblies, meetings and sports activities. The Round Diamond PTA is an impressive, well-organised and hardworking group that raises large sums and provides the school with a busy social calendar. The school holds very successful events such as the big summer fete, Christmas bazaar, quizzes, discos, second hand uniform shop and the very popular present buying and wrapping service. Funds raised enabled the school to buy another computer, refurbish the library, buy many new books as well as science and geography equipment, some new furniture and funds for visiting theatre groups and the science week exhibition. In this way parents make a very good contribution to children's learning at school and help improve the quality of school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The leadership and management of the school are very good. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that the management of the school was good overall. There have been improvements since then in a number of areas, including the development of an effective senior management team. The governing body is providing good support and fulfilling its responsibilities well.
58. The headteacher provides strong leadership in leading the school forward. She supports her staff very well and provides opportunities for them to develop their own expertise and share this throughout the school. Staff are committed to raising standards and continuously evaluate their practice, identifying and sharing ideas for development. The school improvement plan is a very detailed and useful document, which clearly sets out how and when the improvements are to be achieved.
59. The governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and developmental priorities of the school and play a very effective role in monitoring the school's performance. They work closely with the headteacher, who keeps them fully informed about the school's work. The governing body has established several committees to cover all aspects of their work. Each committee has its own terms of reference and regularly reports to the governing body. Individual governors have taken responsibility for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and health and safety. Governors are also linked to specific classes which they regularly visit and which they "track" as the pupils move through the school.
60. There is an adequate number of teachers who are appropriately qualified to meet the needs of the pupils and to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The learning support assistants are effectively deployed and provide a very good level of support for teachers and the curriculum. The co-ordinators have been involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and have a clear idea about how improvements will be achieved in their subjects. Good procedures for the performance management of staff and staff development are established and this is having a positive impact in raising standards.
61. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by experienced members of staff and there is a comprehensive programme of induction for all new members of staff.
62. The speech and language unit is efficiently staffed with 1.2 teachers and 2 full-time equivalent learning support assistants. The current full-time teacher has a temporary appointment for one term.
63. The provision for special educational needs is co-ordinated and managed well. Pupils from the speech and language unit are supported very effectively both in a small group as well as in their classes alongside their peers. Money identified for supporting these pupils is well used for that purpose. The named governor is well informed and has a good working relationship with the co-ordinator. Teaching assistants have all been trained by the school to teach and support pupils with special educational needs well. The deputy headteacher monitors the work of the learning support assistants and the midday supervisory staff and meets them regularly. All these play a very positive part in providing the best possible educational opportunities for all pupils.
64. The school makes very effective use of new technology. In the school office, information technology is used to maintain the pupil database, to manage the budget and to communicate through electronic mail. In the school curriculum, full use is made of the hardware both in classrooms and in the information technology suite. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning.
65. The accommodation is unsatisfactory and it imposes many limitations on the curriculum in cramped classrooms where group and practical work is difficult, particularly for older pupils. The school makes the best use of what is available and has devised some peculiar arrangements to overcome some of the space constraints: for instance, classes are split so that half are studying ICT in the very small computer suite while the other half are able to do art comfortably. The multi-purpose hall has many resources stored around the periphery and these present a safety hazard in PE lessons. The school library, although well used, is inadequate. Some classes are thoroughfares for giving access to other classrooms, causing disruption to

lessons. Colourful and attractive displays help to disguise some of the classroom shabbiness and create a stimulating leaning environment. The school building is well maintained and kept very clean. The school benefits from a large play area and field.

66. Resources to support teaching and learning are generally of good quality and are well used. The improved provision for ICT has considerably enhanced pupils' learning opportunities. Although limited in size and in the number of individual computers, the resource is well used and staff have created a bank of easily accessible material for use in all areas of the curriculum.
67. Resources for the unit are good. The room is welcoming and there are interesting displays on the walls.
68. Very good procedures for financial planning and management are established. The budget process is efficiently managed and governors are kept fully informed of spending levels by the headteacher and the efficient office staff. Governors monitor the budget through regular meetings of the finance committee and ensure that they use finances successfully to support priorities in the school improvement plan. The school makes good use of specific funds for example, the standards fund and the special educational needs budget to support educational priorities. The balance brought forward from the previous year's budget is slightly over the average recommended figure. The school has already planned for the use of part of the fund as soon as it moves to the new site. Governors employ the principles of best value to ensure that the school makes efficient use of all its resources. For example, the decision to release the deputy headteacher and a senior teacher from class responsibility to teach ICT, mathematics and music across the school has had a very positive impact on the work of the pupils and on staff development throughout the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. To raise standards further and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - 1) Improve the standards in writing in Year 6; (paragraphs 5, 96)
 - 2) ensure that assessment procedures are developed appropriately in all the foundation subjects; (paragraphs 26, 52)
 - 3) ensure that the school moves to its new site as soon as possible in order to provide an accommodation with sufficient space and suitable for teaching all areas of the curriculum more effectively. (paragraph 65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

79

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

102

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	20	44	15	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	56	19	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1-6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	321
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1-6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	110

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	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	26	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	25
	Girls	24	23	26
	Total	45	44	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (81)	83 (76)	96 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	25
	Girls	24	23	25
	Total	46	47	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	89 (92)	94 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	23	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	19	22
	Girls	17	19	19
	Total	30	38	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (70)	86 (78)	93 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	20	20
	Girls	15	18	19
	Total	25	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (76)	86 (73)	89 (81)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	300
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.68
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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Total income	833962
Total expenditure	848022
Expenditure per pupil	2465
Balance brought forward from previous year	83389
Balance carried forward to next year	69329

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	343
Number of questionnaires returned	99

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	39	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	49	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	53	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	46	15	5	2
The teaching is good.	55	44	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	51	6	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	34	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	53	35	5	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	34	6	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	45	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	36	5	5	4

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very concerned about the limited accommodation in the school and the delay in the school moving to its new site.

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

70. There are one nursery class and two reception classes in the school. Children in the reception year are grouped according to age, younger children being in one class and the older ones in the other. Children enter the nursery with standards below the average for children of this age. They make good progress during their time in the nursery and reception. This means that, by the time they enter Year1, the vast majority of these children are likely to exceed the expected level in personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of learning, they are likely to reach the level of attainment that is at least in line with what is expected for children of this age. The standards and provision in these two years have been maintained at the same level since the last inspection. All children, including those of minority ethnic heritage, those who are learning English as an additional language, and children with special educational needs make progress that is equal to that of others in their class and the varied activities ensure that their needs are met.
71. Assessment procedures are very thorough in these classes and children are assessed very effectively. Teachers are fully aware of the progress each child makes. They track children's progress regularly and consistently and use the information well to predict their possible attainment as they go up the school. Baseline assessment is used well at the beginning of the reception year to assess children's progress in the nursery.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Children make good progress in this area in the nursery. Nearly all pupils enter the reception class with some confidence and settle in quickly to school life. Personal, social and emotional skills are developed effectively and the vast majority of children are likely to exceed the expected level by the end of the reception year. Most children settle happily and confidently to a variety of tasks. There is evident enjoyment and enthusiasm from the children and relationships are supportive. Many begin to concentrate well, persevering with their work and play. Most children play well together and are able to take turns, relating well to adults and other children. This was seen in a physical development lesson in the nursery, where children enjoyed the activity of floating the parachute together and took turns to run under the parachute following the teacher's instructions appropriately. Behaviour is good. There are appropriate opportunities to encourage independence and responsibility. Particularly good opportunities are planned for involving children in daily routines such as decision making. For example, children in the reception classes are given opportunities to choose different activities once they finish the set tasks and children were seen to decide independently which tasks they would like to do, such as reading the 'Big Books'. They do this very well, in a responsible manner. Children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves, as seen before and after a physical development activity, or in the class with aprons or dressing up clothes. The adults also promote children's personal development effectively, by ensuring that the equipment and resources that the children use are easily accessible to them and help them to become independent.
73. Teaching is good. Development of this area of learning is given high priority, and this makes a good contribution to children's achievements across the curriculum. Activities are well planned and specifically targeted to support children's development in this area. There is good planning for outdoor play where children learn how to collaborate and share toys.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Children make good progress in this area of learning. A significant minority of children enter the school with under-developed language skills. They develop their speaking and listening skills well during their time in the nursery and they are quite articulate by the time they are in the reception year. Children are encouraged to develop listening and speaking skills through reinforcement and appropriate use of whole-class sessions and most listen well in large or small groups. Most enjoy stories and poems and some talk readily about their experiences. They show good understanding of the stories that the teachers read to them during the story sessions. For example, in such a lesson in the younger reception class, the teacher read 'Let's Go Home Little Bear' and asked which parts they like most; many responded confidently: 'I like the big bear

plodding along the road', 'I like the bit where they sat down on the chair.' Many children are developing early reading skills well, handling books with care and talking about the pictures. The reading area has an appropriate selection of books; these are attractively displayed and inviting for children to make their own choices. They readily share books with each other and with adults.

75. Early writing skills are developing well. In the nursery, children listened to the story 'Whatever Next' and reviewed the book well by illustrating their favourite parts of the story and they predicted through drawings what happens next. Some children begin to copy their names. In the reception classes most children are able to write their own name independently and some of the higher attaining writing their own stories which they read clearly to the adults. Older children in the other reception class wrote stories retelling the story 'The Dream' that they read earlier. Here, most children show good understanding of the story structure, such as the beginning and ending of a story. Children make good progress throughout these classes and the vast majority are likely to achieve the expected levels and some are likely to exceed them.
76. The quality of teaching in this area is good in both nursery and reception. Lessons are well planned to foster enjoyment and to encourage speaking and listening skills. This contributes to improving children's attention to tasks. Teachers are very good at encouraging pupils to listen when whole-group activities are taking place and when new skills are being taught. Elements of the national literacy framework are introduced gradually in the reception classes and used well by teachers to meet the needs of the children. A good understanding of letter sounds is developed through both formal and informal activities.

Mathematical development

77. Children make sound progress in mathematical skills, which are promoted effectively through various activities, most of them practical.
78. In the nursery, children are able to sing songs and number rhymes with enjoyment. They count to five independently and count to ten with the help of the teacher and the nursery nurses. In reception, children count objects to 20 correctly, with some counting beyond 20 independently. Most recognise numbers to 20 and a few beyond this. They count in twos to 20 correctly and some can count to 50. They understand patterns of sequence, as was the case when a child identified the incorrectly sequenced number line of 8, 12, 14. They are beginning to understand 'mass' and 'capacity' through water where, for example, children find out which container is the 'heaviest' when filled with water. Resources are good and there are good opportunities for children to extend their understanding of size and number through role-play in the shop.
79. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good. The children are provided in both classes with a wide range of practical experiences such as building with bricks, printing simple patterns, counting games, matching activities and sand and water play. The more formal activities for mathematics are effectively introduced to the children in the reception classes through the framework for teaching numeracy. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which supports pupils' learning. Teachers encourage the use of mathematical language, such as 'addition', 'more than', 'less than'. The work is well planned and children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them. Classrooms are also used effectively to display numbers and give sorting and counting opportunities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children achieve the expected standards in this area. Both in the nursery and the reception classes, most children select resources and tools safely to construct and build complex structures, such as boats and steamers. In the nursery, children observe ladybirds closely with a magnifying glass and experiment with which ramp makes cars go farther. They learn to use computer programs like 'Millies Maths House' and 'TOGO' confidently to create bugs with 'three wings on each side' and their own 'spaceship to land on a planet'. In reception, appropriate activities based on different topics widen children's knowledge and understanding in other areas of the curriculum. For example, children recorded a 'weather watch' following their winter walk around the local area. They are developing an understanding of time, past and present, through looking at the old and new objects, as was recorded in the observational drawing of a 'new iron'. They made a good model of 'Percy' with moving hands and legs, after watching the video of

'One Snowy Night'. They are developing appropriate computer skills, such as mouse control when they move objects using the mouse or 'paint a picture' using a variety of colours and writing their names. They have a developing sense of how things join together and are willing to improve a design or construction. Children make good progress in this area of learning.

81. Teaching is good in this area. Teachers plan well to ensure that all skills are fully developed. Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their finer manipulative skills in both the nursery and reception, for example, in cutting and sticking paper to make pictures, modelling with scrap materials, and using different tools for painting. They are also provided with an appropriate range of modelling materials such as play dough.

Physical development

82. By the end of the reception year, most children attain the expected standards in this area. Good use is made of the school's outside play area for the nursery and the reception classes in developing co-ordination and an awareness of space, themselves and others. Children in the reception class also have access to the hall for PE lessons. Teachers ensure that children are able to run, jump, balance and climb, using a range of equipment and develop an awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. They learn vocabulary of movement, such as words like high, low, small, big, skip, fast, slow, flat and wide. They use malleable materials such as play dough to good effect. They develop appropriate skills for the handling of tools for cutting and shaping and gain safe control of these finer movements; for example, they cut wrapping paper and make a successful parcel or cut and shape a variety of materials when making a collage. They make good progress in their physical development. Teaching is consistently good.

Creative development

83. Children make good progress and almost all of them are likely to meet the required standards at the end of the reception year. In reception children sing tunefully and are developing a sense of rhythm. In the nursery, children sing a range of rhymes with enthusiasm and from their memory. All children were observed painting independently, selecting their own paper, colour and paint and painting what they wanted.
84. A good range of activities with well-focused adult support and encouragement means that children make good gains in learning and most reach the standards expected. Children start from a fairly basic level of skill when they enter the nursery and make good progress through a wide range of experiences in art, music, story making and imaginative play. The children learn how to play alongside others who are engaged in the same theme and use props and resources with imaginative skill; for instance, they put on a puppet show in a reception class. There are appropriate opportunities for role-play, based in the home corner. Adults join in role-play activities and help children to develop their ideas and gain confidence. Children use paint imaginatively and print with different objects. Children in reception sing a range of songs tunefully, learn to improvise freely and review rhythm appropriately. All children sing well from memory and sing with enthusiasm.
85. The classrooms provide a stimulating environment for children to work in and this aspect of learning is well supported by the sensitive intervention of all adults and the good teaching which children receive.

ENGLISH

86. By the end of Year 2, attainment in English is in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was reported to be below the expected standards in speaking and listening.
87. By the end of Year 6, attainment is average overall, although they are just below in writing. This is not as good a picture as was in the last inspection, when standards achieved by Year 6 pupils were reported to be in line with national expectations in all aspects of English. However, throughout the school pupils make good progress.

88. There are reasons for standards being lower than they were during the last inspection. Over recent years, national test data at the end of Year 6 has consistently shown the pupils to be achieving at a lower level than pupils in schools in a similar context. During the inspection, it was clear that the pupils make good progress across the school but that there are particular factors which affect the statistical data emerging from the national tests taken in English at Year 6. The most significant factor is the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in all classes in Years 3-6 as the unit caters solely for pupils of this stage. Added to this is the high mobility rate of pupils, with many more pupils with special educational needs entering the school than leaving.
89. The school, quite rightly, has developed a very good reputation for the support that it offers to pupils with special educational needs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are making good progress in English and this is demonstrated by the work of the more able pupils as well as the less able.
90. In recent years, considerable attention has been given to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers use the introductory parts of lessons so that pupils have time to share what they know and they use the vocabulary associated with the topic. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas in small groups and this gives all children confidence to articulate their ideas. Throughout lessons, teachers ask questions to determine pupils' understanding. Pupils listen carefully and respond well, and in the plenary sessions they are keen to share what they have done and what they have learned.
91. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk about how they feel and give examples of disappointment, selfishness, bossiness and sadness. They develop their speaking skills when they add "voice-overs" to a short video film made as part of a geography lesson. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and pupils are making good progress. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 clearly describe their ideas orally for planning an alarm system to protect something of value, and during a circle time, pupils described their feelings of loneliness and emptiness when they imagined being friendless. They confidently discuss about local and national government. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully and to take each other's views into account. The school council is an extension of this principle.
92. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading are satisfactory and pupils have made good progress. The school's approach to the teaching of letter sounds provides pupils with a good range of skills which they apply confidently in their reading. As a result pupils are able to use a range of strategies to support their reading, including phonic and picture clues. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds through a programme of structured teaching and this phonic work enables them to tackle new and unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 2 are able to read accurately simple passages and they can talk about the plot and the different characters. Average and above-average pupils have an understanding of how to find information in books. They know about and can explain the contents and index pages and they understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction.
93. Overall, by the end of Year 6, pupils attain a satisfactory standard in their reading. Most pupils are able to understand the ideas and events in a text and can infer meaning. They can locate and make use of information. For example, in Year 6, pupils confidently read information from the Internet in their study of Greek gods and were able to paraphrase it for their own use. Pupils enjoy their reading and are keen to investigate new authors. One boy was able to explain, in detail, the characters and plot of "The Hobbit" by JR Tolkien and other pupils had read the Harry Potter books, as well as books by other authors such as Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson and Enid Blyton. A Year 6 girl, reading "Robinson Crusoe," was able to read the words reasonably accurately but explained that she had difficulty with the style of language. There was less evidence of pupils reading poetry or non-fiction material for pleasure.
94. In all year groups, pupils use a reading log in which they record the books which they have read, with dates, and their parents are encouraged to add comments when they hear their child reading at home.
95. The standard of writing is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. In Year 1, pupils write a character profile of "Harry, the wolf" and they describe what they like about their

community and what they would like to change. In Year 2, pupils begin to write for a range of different purposes including letters and instructions as well as stories and poems. They begin to use language well in order to express their ideas. For example, "Dark is when the moon comes up and the stars twinkle" or "Lying on a beach in Spain, I can feel the raging waves crashing against the old rocks". Pupils make good progress in the development of their writing skills. Pupils learn standard English, the use of punctuation and simple sentence structure.

96. By the end of Year 6, the standard of writing is slightly below the national expectation. The staff of the school are very aware of this and are providing a number of opportunities for pupils to improve and extend their writing. The signs are that these strategies are beginning to bear fruit. There is a greater focus on writing during the literacy hour and teachers' plans identify opportunities for pupils to write in many other areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils write for many different purposes; they describe their investigations in science, write factual reports of events in history as well as continuing to develop their skills in writing formal and informal letters, written instructions and stories. Pupils are also encouraged to write poetry and to use words which express their feelings and emotions. For example, in Year 6, pupils wrote:

"The sun continues to set further into the mysterious ocean" and
"Many people wonder and chatter about the ice cold moon"

97. Teaching in English lessons is good. Teachers organise additional activities to support pupils with particular aspects of their writing during a breakfast club and during school time. Handwriting is taught as a specific skill. Pupils practise letter formation and how to join up their writing. The high standards of writing achieved in these lessons are not always apparent in other work done by pupils, as they do not always transfer these skills to their work in other lessons. The school has made effective use of the National Literacy Strategy. Through a modification to the programme, more time has been made available during the literacy hour for the development of writing skills, and teachers' planning now incorporates additional time for guided reading. The indications are that this is proving to be successful. The staff recognise that English language is also learnt through all subjects of the curriculum and opportunities are provided in all subjects for pupils to talk, to read and to write. Teachers show a good understanding of the work to be covered and their planning and lesson management ensure that pupils are interested and make progress in their learning. In Years 3-6, in particular, teachers are managing a wide range of abilities within their classes and sometimes this restricts the attention which they can give to individual or small groups of pupils. Pupils use computers effectively to write stories.
98. Pupils enjoy their lessons in English. Their behaviour is almost always good and they work well collaboratively in small groups, sharing their ideas and listening to each other
99. The subject is confidently and enthusiastically led by the co-ordinator who has particular expertise which he shares with staff across the school. He monitors the work of teachers by the scrutiny of plans and pupils' work as well as observing teaching and giving feedback to teachers about their lessons. This has helped to raise teacher confidence and is having a positive effect on the standards. Assessment procedures are good and implemented effectively.
100. The resources for English are good overall. Pupils have access to a wide range of reading material in their classrooms and in the library. The latter is well organised and managed by a member of staff with that responsibility. The use of the school library is severely restricted because of the school's inadequate accommodation. It is too small for the number of pupils now in the school and also it has to be used often for teaching classes due to the shortage of classrooms. However, staff make the best possible use of the library and, as a result all pupils are able to select a book and then use the barcode scanner to borrow it under their name. Older pupils are generally very familiar with the classification of books and how the Dewey system works. Staff resources are also good and teachers make use of the wide range of teaching materials available to them.

MATHEMATICS

101. Since the previous inspection, attainment in mathematics has been variable in Years 1-2, but usually in line with national standards. Attainment in Years 3-6, except in one year, has been above the national standard. The inspection evidence shows that almost all pupils make good progress and work hard to achieve the ambitious targets set for them.
102. The results of the national tests in 2001 were better than those in 2000 for pupils in Year 2. All but two pupils attained the national standard or above and the proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was above the national average. Overall, the results were in line with the national average and in line with the results of similar schools.
103. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2001 were significantly better than those of 2000. Almost nine-tenths attained the national standard or above. A good proportion of pupils, although less than the national average, attained the higher levels. The results overall were above the national average and above the average for similar schools.
104. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were attaining standards in line with those of the previous year. All pupils achieve well and make good progress. The higher attaining pupils in Year 2 who attend the twice-weekly mathematics 'challenge' class make very good progress. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language are given very good support and they too progress well towards their personal targets.
105. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well and building firmly upon their prior knowledge. Pupils with special needs continue to benefit from good quality support and have good access to the mathematics curriculum. Their progress is enhanced by the skilful use of carefully chosen computer programs. Prior to the national tests, pupils are given opportunities for investigative work and problem solving that enhances progress. Attainment overall, is not quite as high as it was last year because of the increased proportion of pupils with special needs and the high pupil mobility rate. Nonetheless, a good proportion of pupils in Year 6 continue to exceed the national levels of attainment.
106. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make good progress in counting, ordering adding and subtracting numbers. Some pupils find subtraction difficult but steadily gain in confidence through practice and encouragement. Most pupils know how to double and halve numbers. They have a good grasp of the number bonds for 2, 5 and 10. Most pupils apply their competence in basic number to solve simple problems. This enhances knowledge and progress. Most pupils know the names of two- and three-dimensional shapes, such as squares and triangles, cones and pyramids. They count corners, edges and sides of these shapes accurately. Year 2 pupils in the 'challenge' group make very good progress in learning how to collect information and how to illustrate it on a bar chart or pictogram. They also know how to reflect simple shapes and are able to draw the mirror image correctly.
107. Pupils continue to progress well in Years 3-6, where their previous knowledge of problem solving is developed and extended, often by the use of investigative work and computer programs. Pupils know about probability and chance. They correctly place events on a probability line. Pupils throw coins and dice to discover more about probability and plot the results on a bar chart. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 ably convert fractions to decimals and to percentages. Pupils correctly name different kinds of angles, estimate their size and check the estimate by careful measurement. They are developing confidence in manipulating numbers and shapes. Most pupils know how to plot points on a graph and how to join them to form simple shapes. They then measure the area and perimeter. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of coordinates to confirm algebraic expressions and plot the circumference of a circle against the diameter. This is very good preparation for the secondary school.
108. Many pupils competently use number skills in other subjects. In science, pupils record the results of an experiment on a bar chart. In ICT, a Year 6 pupil designed a graphic presentation of a residential trip including charts and symbols from the clipboard. In physical education, pupils use a metric measuring tape to chart their progress in a standing jump. In history, pupils chart events on a time line and in geography, use their knowledge of coordinates to read maps.

109. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. The best lessons begin with crisp and demanding mental work that is followed by precise, sequential and careful teaching where nothing is left to chance. Pupils respond very well to this approach. Open questions are used well and pupils are encouraged to explain their answers. This promotes good use of mathematical language that, in turn, helps pupils to understand and to remember what they have been taught. Classroom assistants work very closely with the teacher and give invaluable help to pupils with special needs. Relationships are very good and are based upon mutual respect. Pupils are taught in a secure and friendly environment in which they are given every possible chance to show what they know and to find out more.
110. The teaching and learning of mathematics are well organised. This has contributed significantly to the maintenance of good standards. Good use is made of test data to identify weaknesses and to develop strategies to correct them. For example, pupils in Years 3-6 are arranged in groups according to prior attainment. This allows each pupil to learn at his or her own rate and to progress confidently. Resources are used very well to support pupils' learning. Teaching is regularly monitored and evaluated. This enables teachers to share good practice. The teaching environment is calm and purposeful and provides a forum in which ambitious targets may be met.

SCIENCE

111. The 2001 teacher assessments show that the standards in Year 2 were close to the national average. The standards attained by the pupils in Year 6 in the national tests are also in line with the national average. Results taken over time show that at the end of Year 6 the school is achieving results in line with the national trends. The current inspection also finds that, at the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the national averages. Curriculum reorganisation has ensured that science is given priority in the timetable matching that of other core subjects and the comprehensive scheme of work ensures that the subject is taught in depth. The school has an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3-6. In addition there is high pupil mobility. These factors prevent the attainment of the Year 6 pupils reaching above the national average, although all pupils make good progress during their time in the school.
112. Pupils at the end of Year 2 are developing their scientific skills. They undertake simple investigations making appropriate observations and recording the results in graphical as well as picture form. They begin to question and predict the outcomes of the investigations. Pupils show a good understanding of experimental and investigative science, appreciating the need for fair testing and careful measurement. They understand how sound travels and correctly use words "wave" and "vibration". They know how loud sounds travel further than soft and can construct a graph of their results. They appreciate that some pupils may have sharper hearing than others and how this might affect the results of the investigation. They know the parts of a flower and can keep careful and accurate weather records. Through the use of an identification key they can recognise the characteristics of animals and insects.
113. At the end of Year 6, pupils are developing a wide range of scientific concepts. They show an understanding of the different properties of materials and can construct a range of experiments supporting their ideas. They are able to handle living creatures carefully with due regard to safety. They recognise the need for fair testing, showing an awareness that their results may not always agree with the initial hypothesis. Scrutiny of work shows that they are making accurate drawings of the parts of the body and spell and use scientific terms correctly. Pupils in Year 4 construct simple electrical circuits and recognise the symbols used in an appropriate diagram. They correctly explain the properties of magnets and their use. This knowledge is extended in Year 6 to explain how to separate a mixture of sand and iron filings. In Year 6 pupils develop a clear understanding of scientific definitions through the use of imaginative and interesting preparation for tests
114. Pupils' attitudes to science are positive, they listen well to the teachers' suggestions for investigations and are able to offer their own ideas. They show considerable enthusiasm in preparing investigative work and carry them out successfully.

115. The quality of teaching is good overall. This helps to sustain pupils' progress and interest. Lessons are planned thoroughly and clear learning objectives are displayed on the board for the pupils at the start of each lesson. They are summarised at the end and pupils reminded of the objectives for the next lesson. In the most successful lessons there is good management of resources and pupils, with skilful questioning techniques used to encourage thinking. Often a good pace is maintained. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and incorrect answers to teachers' questions are challenged fairly and with regard to the pupils' understanding. Expectations are generally high but not all activities seen were challenging, especially to the more able. In a small minority of cases, marking does not assist the assessment process and incorrectly spelt scientific terms are not corrected. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported with appropriate work and assistance where required. They make good progress in the lessons owing to the support provided both by the teachers and by the learning support assistants, who are actively involved in planning the lessons. At the end of the lesson support staff are encouraged to contribute to the evaluation with the class teacher.
116. There is a clear assessment policy in place for science and assessment results are recorded to show how well they understand the concepts taught. The results are used to predict the levels in the Year 6 tests. They are also used to identify pupil progress throughout the school. This is linked to the termly monitoring of workbooks.
117. The work in the classrooms is supported by clear displays around the school. These vary from the informative "how the digestive system works", to the investigative "how ice changes to water'. They are all marked by the imaginative use of ICT, especially the one in Year 5 showing an identification key for animals, which includes photographs from the Internet. Good use is made of ICT in science to prepare written work and make use of data handling and graphical representation. The school uses a digital camera as part of the recording process and photographs enhance the work seen in folders and on display.
118. There is a sound science policy linked to a detailed scheme of work. The science co-ordinator has yet to monitor work in the classrooms but has taken part in shared observations with a member of the senior management team. Assessment procedures are developing well. As part of the school's commitment to raising standards, pupils' work is monitored termly by the senior management team and a portfolio of levelled work is being established. There is a good range of resources available, effectively organised to support work in science.

ART AND DESIGN

119. Few lessons were observed during the inspection and judgments are therefore based on discussions with teachers and a detailed consideration of the displays and portfolios of pupils' work. The quality of work observed in classrooms and displayed around the school shows a sound level of achievement in Years 1 and 2 in many aspects of art including collage, drawing, painting, printing and the use of colours. Standards in Years 3 - 6 are higher than average, with many types of work being better than those expected of pupils of this age. The three-dimensional work on display is particularly good and clay work produced by pupils during the inspection shows that they have good skills in this medium.
120. Younger pupils have produced illustrations from stories used during literacy lessons, including some delicately coloured work on scenes from stories, such as 'The Ugly Duckling'. They are able to print using a variety of blocks and their work is particularly effective because they have been able to experiment and then choose the most effective printing blocks. The range of work is good and pupils are confident in a variety of types of work including splatter painting, observational drawing and work in clay. They know how to use sketchbooks and they show that they understand about mixing colours.
121. It is clear from the work on display that pupils develop techniques in painting, drawing and in observational work well. They produce interesting collage effects using tissue or organic materials, grass, twigs and leaves and are competent in using a range of styles and media. During the inspection they were observed working with clay to make Greek masks and urns to support their work in history. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the acquisition of skills in practical tasks. They use tools well and understand

that there are certain essential procedures like keeping clay moist but not too wet. Because of this at the end of the lesson there was a good display of tragic and comic masks ready for firing.

122. Pupils learn well because creative work is closely related to other subjects. They show a clear enthusiasm for the subject and a willingness to attempt a variety of activities in art as they progress through the school. They also talk about their work and relate it to other learning. They recognise that in ceramic work they need to follow the techniques accurately to ensure that the clay models survive the firing process in the kiln and therefore they thump the clay to get out the air.
123. The quality of teaching is good. Work seen and lessons observed during the inspection show that teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and that they promote a good quality of learning. Pupils are taught to use sketchbooks appropriately and there is a real focus on the teaching of skills. Art is planned in a way that meets the learning requirements of all pupils including those who have a real talent for the subject. It is very inclusive. Those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and the frequent availability of support staff improves the learning experiences of all pupils. Work is well mounted and displayed and because of this pupils are encouraged to value all aspects of creativity.
124. Basic materials and equipment are readily accessible and a range of art books, posters and prints are available. Some effective use of computer work was observed during the inspection, such as the drawing of a very colourful leopard. The resources are used well to ensure that the curriculum in art is rich and varied and that it makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school clearly values art. Each class has the name of a famous artist and pupils find out about and appreciate the work of their namesake. The school has a flourishing art club, a gallery of pupils' work and holds a regular Arts Festival.
125. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has real enthusiasm for the subject and a clear vision of the way forward. The school ensures that the expertise of support staff is used very well. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection particularly in the planning and development of resources for the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Only a few lessons were seen in this subject. The judgement of standards is, therefore, based on those lessons, pupils' work and displays and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of these ages. Standards in design and technology have been maintained at the same level since the last inspection.
127. Across the school, there is a systematic approach to the development of the full range of skills, processes and knowledge. By the end of Year 2, pupils gain experience of working with different materials and in planning and designing. They also work on planning how to make puppets. In a food technology lesson pupils tasted different types of bread to investigate preferences and recorded skilfully their findings on computers.
128. By the end of Year 6, they gain better understanding of the importance of packaging in selling products. They study a wide range of packaging techniques from various products and design their own, aiming at different users. They evaluate the effectiveness of their work very well. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils analysed their completed work on packaging in terms of the impact this could have on different users, providing a critical evaluation of their work with appropriate suggestions for improvement. Most showed very good understanding of the importance of including innovative slogans, humour and interesting information about the products in the text on the packaging to ensure that the marketing of their products would be sufficiently competitive. Pupils gained a great deal of knowledge about the level of competition involved in marketing products.
129. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good classroom management, and good subject knowledge. They know the specific skills which need to be taught in order for pupils to succeed. The good use of questioning by teachers allows pupils to think about their work and to work out

ways they can refine and improve their designs. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. Pupils enjoy practical activities and are well behaved, co-operating and sharing willingly when necessary.

130. There is a good scheme of work based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. There is clear planning which shows how skills are developed across the whole curriculum and in particular in relation to pupils' work in science. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Assessment procedures are not developed well but the new co-ordinator has begun to develop portfolios for each pupil to assess their learning effectively. Resources are not sufficient to support pupils' learning in this area and are in need of upgrading.

GEOGRAPHY

131. Standards in geography overall are as expected for pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in broadening their understanding of the locality in which they live and making comparisons with other areas. Standards have been maintained at the same level since the last inspection.
132. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress in learning about a local village and are able to compare it with Stevenage. They clearly understand the advantages and disadvantages of village life and recognise that they would not all like to live where there are few leisure facilities and a very small school compared to theirs. The fieldwork in the village is interesting and carefully presented. Good use is made of resources and computers are used well for photography to make a short video presentation highlighting the features of the village being studied.
133. In local studies pupils can show the route to school and identify the features that make it safe, including traffic controlling measures. Children in Year 1 design leaflets welcoming visitors to the village. Good use is made of drawings copied from photographs from the relevant fieldwork.
134. Years 3 and 4 classes are preparing for a field trip to the seaside. Children show a high level of awareness of the potential dangers at the seaside and make posters showing water safety. They know the role of the coastguard and the need to take note of safety regulations imposed during the forthcoming visit. Pupils with special education needs worked with a classroom assistant to produce a safety code, which the entire class shared. Another class prepared well for the visit by looking at maps and symbols relating to the seaside and the local area. They are able to recognise the majority of map symbols including those for the local hospital and cliffs by the seaside as well as those in common use.
135. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are well informed about the local area and show a good understanding of geographical themes. They use their knowledge well and are able to identify common features of rivers and deltas. Projects on Peru, as an alternative geographical area, show good use of ICT both to access the Internet for information and as an aid to presentation. They make use of graphical data comparing rainfall in Peru and England. They show a sensitivity and understanding of the plight of the rainforests and the people living there and an understanding of the effects of deforestation on weather conditions throughout the world.
136. The quality of teaching is good overall. The detailed scheme of work and good planning ensure that National Curriculum guidelines are followed using a two-year cycle and activities are appropriately differentiated to support all pupils, including those with special educational needs, effectively. As a result, pupils enjoy the lessons and respond positively and with enthusiasm. They are keen to learn and find out about their own and other areas. Pupils are given the opportunities to develop skills in a systematic way, building upon prior knowledge and attainment. There is an expectation of high quality work and pupils are proud of their work and want to discuss it with staff and visitors. They work well individually and in small groups. The subject is monitored carefully and effectively. The school makes good use of field trips, which are undertaken carefully ensuring that children learn about the local environment and places further away.

HISTORY

137. Only lessons in Year 5 were observed during the inspection. Judgments are made following an examination of pupils' work and discussion with teachers and pupils. Standards in Year 2 are as expected of pupils of similar age and achievement is good. Pupils in Year 6 have a good level of understanding of life in past centuries and of how historians find out about it. They attain standards that are above those expected of pupils of this age.
138. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to develop an understanding of past and present time through the sequencing of simple stories and making family trees and then continue with the study of some aspects of life in the past through a focus on famous people, such as Florence Nightingale or Neil Armstrong. Their work shows that most pupils are able to understand that life in the past was different and they can compare aspects of life today with life then. Pupils are being introduced to a good variety of sources of evidence. Work in history takes place over a two-year cycle and this year the focus is on change over time and the development of skills. All pupils are able to use photographs to compare old and new houses and they know that the Tudors built in a different way because they have made models of thatched houses. In geography, studies of Datchworth help them to understand that towns and villages were very different in past centuries. Higher attaining pupils write in detail about the way in which clothing has changed and lower attaining pupils are able to show their understanding by drawing pictures of clothes worn in 1911 and today.
139. Work in history in Years 3 - 6 is good, with the best work being very well presented and illustrated. Some work on the Victorians is impressive and all pupils show a good understanding of what Stevenage was like at that time. Pupils know about the key figures of the period such as Charles Dickens and William Morris and they understand the importance of the development of the railway in the nineteenth century. Studies of the Victorian period are particularly good in that pupils are able to find evidence from a school's log book and the higher attaining pupils used the information very successfully. All pupils are able to write about events during the Second World War in the context of family life and to understand the impact of rationing and of evacuation from the cities. Pupils in Year 5 have a very good knowledge of life in Ancient Greece and show a real understanding of the relationship between gods and mortals as told in the myths.
140. Learning is well managed. Pupils were seen to learn very well when they were given the opportunity to work on myths and religion in Ancient Greece in a very active way. This also made a very valuable contribution to development of their skills in literacy. From the lessons observed in Year 5 it is clear that the subject is taught in a way that ensures that pupils are able to progress at their own level and can access information readily which stimulates and challenges them. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress because teachers plan lessons with the special educational needs staff. Individual pupils with special needs are confident about work and can talk about what they have learned. Some pupils find written tasks more difficult and this does affect the standard of their work. The use of ICT to enhance work in the subject is well developed and pupils have frequent opportunities for independent research.
141. The quality of teaching observed in the two lessons seen was very good and pupils' work indicates that teaching is good overall. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and plan well to ensure that all pupils take part actively in lessons. Pupils enjoy the study of history and respond very well in lessons. They benefit from a variety of visits for example, to local National Trust properties. Resources are used well and the school has its own well-stocked museum. Links with other subjects such as art are good and the subject is used well for developing skills in extended writing. Teachers use questioning techniques in lessons well to test pupils' understanding. Appropriate formal assessment procedures are in the process of development.
142. The management of the subject is good. Resources are being developed. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection, especially in planning for the use of computers and in introducing new schemes of work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

143. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected of pupils of this age, with some achieving particularly well in some aspects of information technology. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment exceeds the level expected of 11-year-old pupils. The confidence of these pupils in using technology is a particular strength. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment at the end of Year 6 was reported as being satisfactory.
144. Since the last inspection, an ICT suite has been established. Although small in size, very effective use is made of this resource and it is in almost continuous use by groups of pupils from throughout the school. The combination of these networked computers and the stand-alone computers in individual classrooms provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their information technology skills as well as supporting their learning in other subjects. The subject leader, released from full-time classroom duties, has also played a considerable part in developing the subject.
145. Through a planned timetable, pupils in all classes have access to the computers in the suite over the course of a year. During these lessons, often in small groups, they learn particular skills and make progress in the use of these skills as they move up the school. These lessons are linked directly to work being done in class so, as well as developing ICT skills, they also enhance the pupils' learning in other curriculum areas.
146. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress in this subject. For example, pupils use the computers in mathematics lessons to practise and develop their understanding of number patterns. To do this they need to use their skills in controlling the mouse to click on and drag items across the screen. In English, they develop their keyboard skills in word-processing when writing simple sentences or practising their spellings or when using a particular program to support their learning. In Year 1, pupils use the computer to write words containing particular letter strings. They can also insert pictures from Clipart into their work. In Year 2, pupils write numbers in words and order two-digit numbers on screen and then print their work.
147. During a series of geography lessons in Year 2, pupils visited a nearby village and took photographs and video clips of various features. Back at school, they edited their still photographs into a sequence of their choice and decided on appropriate "voice-overs" as a commentary. This provided an excellent opportunity for them to work in small groups, to discuss their plans and to practise their skills of speaking and listening. Other pupils edited the video clips into a sequence and confidently discussed their ideas before programming the computer to insert "transitions" between one sequence and another.
148. In Years 3-6, pupils make good progress in information technology so that by the time they are 11 years old, they have good keyboard skills and confidently select items from menus and drop-down boxes.
149. In Years 3 and 4, pupils consolidate their skills, using the computers to support their learning in a variety of ways. In a Year 4 class, pupils had designed, on paper, a branching database which required them to identify questions which would elicit a "yes" or "no" response. Choosing a particular subject, such as animals, sports or famous people, they confidently logged into the computer, typed in their questions and then saved their work. They recognised the need for specific, well-worded questions in order for the database to succeed. Pupils in Year 3 confidently explained how they use information technology when borrowing books from the school library, using the barcode scanner.
150. In Year 5, pupils learn how to control a robot by developing a set of instructions. They learn how to control the forward and reverse movement of their robot as well as how to make it turn and stop. They begin to realise the significance of accurate instructions, as they explain, "Both wheels must be turning at the same speed or it will go round in circles". They confidently save their work and then download the instructions to test their device. They use computers to write a newspaper account set out in columns and with titles and sub-headings. They use a spreadsheet comparing the properties of two-digit numbers and they enhance their work with images taken using the digital camera.

151. Pupils in Year 6 are able to bring all their skills and knowledge together when they prepare fact sheets and multi-media presentations on a range of topics. During the inspection, pupils' work included some particularly good fact sheets linked to work about a village in Peru. The pupils had downloaded images and text from the Internet and supplemented these with their own writing and style of presentation. Particularly impressive work is produced using multi-media presentations. Their study of Ancient Greece provided opportunities for the pupils to search the Internet for information and images that they combined into animated presentations.
152. Teaching of ICT skills is good. Previously it took place incidentally in classrooms using the class-based computers, until the suite was established and the computers were networked. Teachers' confidence in their own skills has been enhanced throughout the school as a result of recent training and the support of the subject leader. Appropriately structured teaching of skills takes place in the ICT suite. Here, teaching is always of a good quality and teacher's competence and confidence are clearly evident, enhancing the work of the pupils and enabling them to move forward in their learning. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy their work, are keen to develop their skills and to demonstrate what they have achieved. During lessons in the suite, behaviour is always of a very high standard, resulting in good progress. The subject co-ordinator has provided excellent leadership and guidance for the staff. Enthusiasm and his own subject knowledge have made a significant contribution to the work of the school. The decision to release the co-ordinator from classroom duties has proved to be a very sound decision, allowing him to work with pupils of all age groups, supporting subject teaching as well as developing computer skills.
153. Resources are good, although the ICT suite is currently too small. The school makes full use of all its resources in this subject and staff have developed an excellent database of material for use in all the other curriculum areas. The assessment procedures are not fully developed yet.

MUSIC

154. In Years 1 and 2, pupils meet the expected level of attainment for their age and make good progress in the lessons seen. All pupils throughout the school are given opportunities to sing in assemblies and there is an active school choir. Pupils in Year 1 remembered the name of a composer and the title of the piece of music they had heard previously. They are able to compose a short piece of music based upon the Four Seasons, with each group taking a season. They work well together and listen carefully to the final performances in the class. Instruments are handled with sensitivity and care. They demonstrate how to make a sound from untuned percussion louder and softer, keeping in time with others. In Year 2 pupils listen to music and are able to explain why they like one piece compared to the other. They are introduced to a simple form of notation enabling them to record their attempts at composition. They work well in small groups to prepare short composition for later performance.
155. Pupils in Years 3 –6 attain standards that are average for their age and make good progress in lessons. Year 5 pupils work hard and correctly identify the terms used in music. They follow a two-part chant accurately and extend the work by writing their own words and performing in groups for each other. The work is challenging and they rise to the challenge successfully. In the lessons, pupils with special education needs are supported well and are able to join in confidently. Pupils in Year 6 sing in three parts accurately with a good sense of pitch and rhythm. The choir takes part in local festivals and other community events. The pupils sing well and contribute well to the school assemblies.
156. All pupils have the opportunity to perform for parents and the school produces three parents' events each year. The school makes good use of peripatetic music teaching; pupils learn keyboard and clarinet. They also learn the recorder and showed the ability to play simple tunes accurately. All of these activities feature in the musical presentations.
157. Teaching and learning are good due to the enthusiasm of the teaching staff led by the very able subject co-ordinator. She brings to the subject a very high level of musical skills and knowledge, which are communicated to all the staff. These are in turn communicated to the pupils, who show an enjoyment of the subject, responding well to the teachers' enthusiasm. The curriculum has been developed by the co-ordinator, ensuring that non-specialist teachers understand it and are confident in its use.

158. Resources for music are good and the PTA makes a generous contribution enabling tuned percussion instruments to be purchased. Instruments are used carefully and the school is developing a library of recorded music. Assessment procedures are not fully developed yet.
159. The allocation of time to the subject overall is in line with suggested guidelines however each lesson is short, only 25 minutes. This sometimes restricts the progress within the lesson. Increasing lesson time or combining the lessons in order to lengthen them will lead to pupils making greater progress and raise standards in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. Physical education has a firm place in the curriculum and is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities in football, netball and table tennis. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 is in line with that expected of pupils of these ages and is more secure than it was at the previous inspection. Pupils achieve appropriately for their age and make good progress in all aspects of the PE curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in swimming.
161. Pupils in Year 2 warm up thoroughly before practising hockey skills. They recognise and describe the changes that happen to their bodies during exercise. Under the teacher's clear direction, pupils perform the simple skills of hockey safely and show good control in linking actions together. Pupils work well together and visibly improve their performance during the course of the lesson. They talk about what others have done and make simple judgements.
162. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 visit the local swimming pool for a half-hour lesson given by qualified swimming instructors. Their behaviour on the way to the pool is exemplary and they bring great credit to their school. All pupils are confident in the water and greatly enjoy the experience. They learn how to float and how to submerge. They learn the basic strokes of swimming. One group already swims well and by the end of Year 4 most pupils are able to swim 25 metre unaided.
163. Pupils in Year 5 learn the skills of cricket. They learn how to control the ball when bowling and fielding. Hand and eye co-ordination is satisfactory but more practice is needed in ball control. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate their physical prowess by jumping from a standing start and measuring their own progress. Both groups work energetically and with enthusiasm. Most pupils respond imaginatively to the various challenges that are encountered and work with increasing control and accuracy. The lesson in cricket is too short to allow for structured development in ball skills.
164. On balance, teaching throughout the school is good and more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. The best teaching is characterised by a methodical approach to physical exercise. The lesson objectives are clearly explained in the classroom so that when pupils reach the hall they already know what is expected of them. Teaching is precise and sequential. Safety rules are carefully explained. The lessons have pace and pupils have no opportunity to become bored. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. All teachers manage their classes well and relationships are good. Teachers expect hard work and good behaviour. Pupils respond well, working within the rules and helping each other. Teachers are aware of what pupils know, understand and can do but formal assessment of pupils' skill development is not yet good enough.
165. Physical education at Round Diamond is a positive experience for all pupils. The school year ends with residential trips for Years 5 and 6 where pupils have the opportunity to meet the challenges of vigorous outdoor pursuits. All resources are well used to support pupils' learning. The large field is an excellent facility but the multi-purpose hall is too small to be used safely for gymnastics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. By the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in RE matches the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and is a little above that of the previous inspection. Pupils are taught RE from a multi-faith perspective. This helps them to understand the similarities and differences in world religions and the effect that people's beliefs have on everyday life. RE has a more secure place in the curriculum than at the time of the previous inspection, although the time allocated to some lessons does not always allow the topic to be fully explored.
167. Pupils, including those with special needs, make sound progress throughout the school. The rate of progress will increase as teachers become more familiar with the teaching of world religions. For the majority of pupils, knowledge and understanding grow steadily and they achieve all that could be reasonably expected of them. In lessons where pupils' learning is supported by the opportunities to see and touch the symbols of religion, such as holy books and prayer mats, pupils' learning is enhanced. Pupils progress more readily when they are given practical things to do.
168. Pupils in Years 1-2 learn about the creation story from the Bible and contrast this with a similar story from West Africa. They learn that people of different colours are the same but believe different things. They make a paper chain of children from around the world holding hands in friendship. They hear stories from the Bible, such as The Good Samaritan and learn about its meaning. Pupils visit the local church and learn about the customs of baptism and marriage.
169. Pupils in Years 3-6 listen to stories about leaders of world religions and talk about their authority and influence. They compare the rules of Christianity with those of Hinduism and Sikhism and learn that they have many similarities. Pupils discuss the reason for prayer and write their own prayers. One pupil wrote of international disputes, 'I want the fights to stop - they don't resolve anything'.
170. The overall quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory and has a number of good features. It is more consistent than at the previous inspection. The quality of pupils' written work is good. Classes are sensitively managed and all pupils are given a chance to express their views and feelings. Teachers listen carefully to what pupils say and make use of it in their teaching. Pupils respect each other's beliefs and learn from each other. Teachers plan satisfactorily but not always in sufficient detail. The assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in RE is not as good as it might be. Teaching methods are sound and plans for the term indicate a variety of approaches. During the inspection week too little use was made of role-play and videotape. The teaching of RE makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
171. There is little formal monitoring and evaluation of RE teaching. This means that teachers have too few opportunities to share good practice with each other. Resources to support the teaching of a wide range of religions are available in the school but little use was made of them during the inspection.