

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHRIST CHURCH, CHURCH OF ENGLAND VA
PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117473

Headteacher: Mrs. Kerry Scripps

Reporting inspector : Dr. Alan Jarvis (2711)

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th September 2001

Inspection number: 218996

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 with Nursery

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: New Road
Ware
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Tim Swindell

Date of previous inspection: November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team Members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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Geraldine Osment OIN 9646	Lay inspector		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?
David Speakman OIN 20086	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Jackie Johnson OIN 24891	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
Ian Tatchell OIN 27243	Team Inspector	Science History Geography Special Educational Needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ Church, Church of England aided primary and nursery school educates boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven. The school is above average in size, with 295 pupils on roll. Pupils come from homes that, overall, are more socially and economically advantaged than average. The school admits children into the nursery at the age of three and into the reception class in the six months before they are five. Most pupils live locally but some parents elect to send their children to the school because of its religious affiliations.

The majority of pupils are white but some do have other ethnic origins: five pupils speak English as an additional language, which is a little higher than most schools. An average proportion of pupils are on the register of special educational needs with most having specific or moderate learning difficulties. Eight per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals, which means that the school's results can be compared with other schools that have this average proportion of pupils eligible. Slightly more pupils than normal enter or leave the school during the school year and this is rising. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is a little above average; since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils with lower attainment. A newly appointed headteacher has been in post since the start of the term and this is accelerating the school's rate of development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school. Standards have risen since the last inspection in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. They are poised to rise even further across more subjects because of the strong leadership and management and good teaching that is now in place. A good climate for learning has been established. The most important weaknesses have been addressed and the school is now heading in the right direction. It is an effective school that provides a satisfactory quality of education and gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The new headteacher, governing body and teaching staff are leading the school forward decisively and are building on the improvements made since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good across all year groups, due to the monitoring provided by the headteacher and senior managers. This is reducing the amount of underachievement in the school.
- Above average standards are now being attained in English because of the strong teaching and good start made in the early years.
- Attendance is good, pupils behave well and they are keen to learn.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this ensures that they are mature and have a responsible attitude to themselves and others.

What could be improved

- Standards in science, particularly by age eleven.
- The roles and responsibilities of staff who lead subject development and special

educational needs and how they identify what needs to be done to further raise standards.

- The way teachers plan and deliver the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection found serious weaknesses in aspects of teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management. The school no longer has serious weaknesses. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. More pupils are achieving well as they move through the school because of the recent improvements in teaching. Curriculum planning has also improved. Although improvements did not filter through to improved results in last year's national tests, standards seen in the inspection are much improved. However, the longstanding issue of how to provide challenging teaching for all pupils in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6 in subjects other than English and mathematics has not been fully resolved and is holding back standards. The improvements in leadership and governance now mean that there is a very good capacity to improve and a positive climate for further improvement is strongly evident. Pupils are currently on course to meet the more challenging targets that have been set for next year's national tests.

STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils enter the nursery with a range of attainment that is a little above average. They achieve satisfactorily through the foundation stage and by the end of the time in the reception class, most have met and some exceed the early learning goals, particularly in the important areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The 2000 national tests results for pupils aged seven were above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. Although their attainment was above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics compared with similar schools, their progress from the reception class indicates satisfactory achievement in reading and some

underachievement in mathematics. Results in 2001 were similar. Over recent years, boys have performed slightly better than girls in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils have reached the higher levels in science and their attainment is well below the average for similar schools.

Standards at age eleven have historically been much weaker and national test results show that pupils have been underachieving for some time. This has been because of inadequate curriculum planning, some unsatisfactory teaching, weak subject co-ordination and unsatisfactory management of the provision for pupils on the register of special educational needs. For example, in 2000, standards in English, mathematics and science were below average. Pupils performance compared with similar schools was below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science and well below overall. Over time, girls have generally performed better than boys. Provisional results for 2001 are only a little better because improvements in provision were only just starting to take effect.

The current pupils' standards of work are now much improved and inspectors are pleased to see that levels of attainment in the school are now rising. This is because of the better teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6. By age seven, standards of the current Year 2 pupils are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. By age eleven, standards of the current Year 6 pupils are above average in English and pupils of all abilities are now achieving as they should; standards in mathematics are average and achievement is generally sound. Standards in science remain the weakest of the core subjects, and standards here are still below average. However, underachievement is now reducing throughout the school and limited to the lower attaining pupils. Standards in other subjects remain mostly average and achievement is satisfactory in all years. However, achievement in information and communication technology is good and standards are now at the level expected. The performance of boys and girls is much closer. Despite the improvements so far, standards are still not high enough in mathematics and science and there is the potential to improve standards in most other subjects. The school's modest targets for improvement have been recently reviewed and made more challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Maintained at this standard since the last inspection.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour makes a significant contribution to the good learning, especially in literacy. There is a marked absence of bullying or racism.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good and reflect the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils, however, could show more independence in their learning.
Attendance	Consistently good.

Pupils' attitudes and values are supported well by the good ethos of the school. Currently pupils are being consulted on ways in which their learning can be improved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good, much improved since the last inspection, and more consistent across all year groups; they are having a positive effect on standards. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is good in the foundation stage, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The teaching of English and literacy is a strength of the school and consistently good or better in quality. Good teaching is also generally evident in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art, history and PE. The teaching of swimming also remains strong because of specialist instruction. Some improvements have been made to the teaching of pupils in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6. Setting arrangements in English and mathematics have improved pupils' learning and teachers plan work that suits the needs of all pupils in these classes. In the remaining subjects, further work is required to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given appropriately challenging work in Years 3 to 6.

Teachers now share their expertise and plan together much more effectively. Expectations of good behaviour and the warm and purposeful relationships that exist between the teachers and the pupils have established a good ethos for learning. Lesson objectives are put over well and this helps pupils gain a clear view of what they have to learn in lessons. The basic skills of reading, writing and

numeracy are also taught well and this helps to provide a secure foundation for future learning in other subjects. Homework is set regularly and is of a better quality than most similar primary schools.

There are some weaknesses in teaching which have a negative impact on pupils' learning. There are insufficient opportunities for children in the foundation stage to learn through well-structured play. Some teaching time is lost because some lessons start late in the afternoon. Learning is satisfactory rather than good in some lessons because opportunities for independent work are limited and the activities are not challenging enough. The teaching of mental mathematics and experimental and investigative science needs strengthening. Teachers are meeting the needs of all pupils well in Years 1 and 2 and the foundation stage. However, in Years 3 to 6 the needs of a range of pupils, particularly the lower attainers, are not yet fully met in subjects other than English and mathematics although inspectors are confident that the improvements currently being undertaken by the school will soon rectify this.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Much improved but unsatisfactory because work does not always meet the needs of all pupils in Years 3 to 6. Opportunities for ICT across the curriculum need strengthening. Good extra-curricular provision, especially in games and physical education. More opportunities for learning through play need to be incorporated in the Foundation Stage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good in English and mathematics but unsatisfactory overall because of insufficient classroom support in science and the foundation subjects and timely advice being made available to class teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Appropriate provision is being pursued and provided for the small number of pupils who require additional support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in all areas. Cultural development is better than the last inspection. Circle time, assemblies and PSHE lessons are all valued, include all pupils and develop mutual respect. Pupils are prepared well for living in our diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good steps are taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. A happy, purposeful and disciplined learning environment is provided.

The curriculum is broad and balanced but unsatisfactory in quality overall because of the improvements still needed in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6. Curriculum planning and schemes of work are much improved. The partnership with parents is satisfactory but requires further strengthening.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good and improving. The new headteacher has the vision and skills to lead a very effective school. She is well supported by a new senior management team who are keen to develop further their managerial effectiveness. Subject co-ordination has improved but staff need to gain a better understanding of how to improve standards in their subjects. The management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The work of the governing body has been overhauled and they now have a very effective role in shaping the future direction of the school. Satisfactory

	information is now provided to parents in the annual report.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Improved procedures for monitoring the work of teachers has led to better quality teaching and a clearer understanding of strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision. Performance data is now analysed more rigorously but there has been insufficient evaluation of the impact of the development plan on raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants such as those for special educational needs, staff training, computers, and accommodation have been used very well. The school works closely within its budget and the principles of best value are being increasingly applied. The quality of strategic planning is now good.

There are adequate levels of suitably qualified staff. Accommodation is adequate and will be enhanced when the new buildings are completed. Curriculum subjects are reasonably resourced, but the library stock needs to be replenished.

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 are happy at school. • There is good behaviour in the school. • There is good teaching. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities. • The amount and frequency of work their children are given to do at home. • Good information about the progress their children are making. • How the school works with parents. • The degree of challenge, especially to higher attaining pupils, provided in Years 3 to 6.

The inspectors support the positive view parents have of the school. The inspectors do not generally agree with what they would like to be improved. Extra curricular activities, particularly sporting activities, are good and the level of provision is better than similar primary schools. Homework is set in accordance with the school policy and is of a good quality. Some good information is given in annual reports on their children's progress but the targets lack written guidance on how the children will achieve them. The new headteacher agrees that the school needs to work much closer with parents and has started to initiate new forms of home school contact. Higher attaining pupils are generally well catered for but children of all abilities are not always fully challenged in some lessons in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the last inspection, which took place late in 1999, there was little concern about standards in the foundation stage or at Key Stage 1. Standards in the foundation stage were above average as were those at age seven, where standards were average in science and above average in English and mathematics. However, there was much concern about standards and achievements at Key Stage 2 because of too much weak teaching and ineffective planning for lessons in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6. Standards at age eleven in the 1999 national tests were average in English and science but below average in mathematics and there was underachievement amongst many groups of pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils and those on the register of special educational needs. Standards were also low in information and communication technology across the school because of a lack of equipment and teachers having insufficient subject knowledge to teach the subject well. In the other subjects of the curriculum, attainment was average and achievements satisfactory in all years.
2. The school has taken many initiatives to address these issues which have taken some time to make an impact. Although only small improvements were evident in the 2001 national tests the inspection evidence is that standards are now much improved mainly because of the much improved teaching. Where steps have been taken to address weaknesses in provision in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6, such as in English and mathematics, they are now bearing fruit. However, there is less impact in other areas although action is now planned.
3. The findings of the current inspection are that children in the nursery and reception classes receive a good start to their education. They achieve satisfactorily but do well in their personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematical development. At the last inspection, attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes was above average. It is a little lower now; baseline assessment indicates that attainment on entry now is just a little above average with children starting school with a wide range of previous experiences and achievements. The strong emphasis given to communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, and good teaching in these areas, continues to ensure that the children make a strong start in Year 1. Most exceed the goals that apply in these areas. They also make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development where they exceed the early learning goals, and are on line to meet the goals in the other areas of learning in the curriculum.
4. By the age of seven pupils standards in English are above average and achievement is satisfactory; in mathematics and science standards are average but there is some underachievement in both areas. The good standards in reading and writing in the reception class are consolidated and

extended at Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven pupils continue to attain standards that are above the national average. Reading is a particular strength. Both the 2000 and 2001 results in the national tests indicate that attainment is above average in reading and average in writing. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Over recent years standards in mathematics have reflected changes in the ability of each year group, and have never been below average. In the 2000 national tests attainment in mathematics was average but standards were below average compared with similar schools. This was because of some underachievement amongst the lower attaining pupils. Standards could thus have been higher as the above average attainment on entry to Year 1 was not maintained through the key stage. Standards in science were well above average in 1999 but since then have been average with a smaller number of pupils than expected reaching the higher Level 3. Standards seen in the inspection are also average because too few higher attaining pupils are on line to reach the higher level. Past results indicate that standards in “experimental and investigative science” and “life and living processes” are weak.

5. Standards at age eleven in the 2000 national tests were below average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with their prior attainment at age seven, pupils’ achievement was lower than it should have been in English and well below the expectation in mathematics and science. Provisional results of the 2001 national tests show that attainment was below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The low results last year were because pupils had previously received three years of weak teaching and only one year of much improved teaching in their final year. Also, more pupils than normal joined or left the class in the final year, which although in the end did not affect overall standards, did nevertheless unsettle the dynamics of the class. However, there were some encouraging signs. The English results were much closer to the national average, the higher attaining pupils made better progress than expected and more pupils achieved the higher levels in mathematics and science.
6. Inspectors are pleased to note that the pupils in the school are now doing better than in previous years and the school’s results in national tests are likely to improve over the next two years. This is because:
 - the causes of the underachievement in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 are known and steps are being taken to address them;
 - the quality of planning and teaching in English and mathematics has improved, the setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are working well and the lower attaining pupils are getting good support;
 - the quality of teaching in science has also improved at both key stages, more classroom support is being made available to the lower attaining pupils and there are good plans to address the shortcomings in experimental and investigative science;
 - much better use is being made of all the available data and particularly in setting realistic but more challenging targets and taking the action needed to ensure they are met;
 - staff plan to scrutinise pupils’ work more thoroughly to identify the action that needs to be taken on any areas of weakness.

7. Standards in English are now a strength of the school, whereas they were not at the last inspection. At age seven, standards in reading have been above average or better and have been maintained since the last inspection; in writing, standards have been consistently average or better and are now above average. At age eleven, the average standards have dipped since the last inspection but standards seen during this inspection are now above average. At age eleven pupils' achievement declined to unsatisfactory in 2000 from the sound achievement seen in 1999 but pupils are judged to be now achieving well. Standards in speaking and listening are strongly developed and pupils can express themselves well with clarity and expression. Reading is a consistent strength and pupils show good progression in their reading skills as they move through the school. Handwriting is good but there are lapses in spelling which affect the quality of pupils' work.
8. Standards and achievements in mathematics have also shown much improvement since the last inspection, particularly at age eleven, but the fruits of good work have only recently emerged. The national test results for pupils aged seven were average in the Year 2000 with pupils achieving satisfactorily compared with similar schools. Over the past five years pupils' attainments in mathematics have never been less than average, but have reflected the changing abilities of the different year groups. However, the picture at age eleven has been much less favourable with standards being below average for the past five years and achievement being unsatisfactory or poor. The results for pupils aged eleven in 2001 were also well below average with achievement poor but this represents an improvement on the previous year when the achievement over time was very poor. Standards have been low for far too long and these have been a direct consequence of past management, which neglected to adequately tackle the very weak teaching and planning for the subject. Standards seen in the inspection in Years 3 to 6 and particularly for those pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age, which is much higher than in the past. Very encouragingly, the much improved curriculum and quality of teaching are now having a marked and very positive effect on standards of pupils of all abilities and this is borne out by their results in tests that are done at the end of each year. In addition, the availability of adequate levels of classroom support are also considerably helping standards. However, standards in 'Using and Applying Mathematics' remain the weakest area of mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and strategies to develop mental mathematics also require strengthening.
9. Standards in science at age eleven have been resistant to improvement, but there are signs that they too are now rising. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen year by year. They were average in 1999, below average in 2000 and the provisional results for 2001 show standards were well below average. Standards in the past two years have been well below average compared with similar schools. The improvements set in place by the governing body are also starting to bear fruit in this subject. Standards seen during the inspection for pupils in Year 6 were below average but they are not as weak as those seen in recent national tests at age eleven. Only the lower attaining pupils are showing any signs of underachieving and because there are proportionately quite a number of these this is depressing the target result for next year's national tests. The new headteacher and science co-ordinator

are tackling this vigorously and have already set more challenges for staff and allocated additional classroom support to the lower attaining pupils. As a result pupils' learning is much better and improving.

10. There is much less underachievement at Key Stage 2 than in previous years. For example, pupils are making good progress in writing (especially in Year 6), satisfactory progress in reading in Year 5 and good progress in Years 3 and 6. Progress in mathematics is generally satisfactory through Years 3 to 6. In these two subjects there is now little evidence of underachievement at all. This is because much effort has gone into improving the teaching of literacy and numeracy and good support is given to pupils on the register of special educational needs. There is also less underachievement in science in the present Year 6, although some lower attaining pupils could be doing better, and this is continuing a pattern of improvement over the past three years. Underachievement in science is now being targeted with extra classroom support and other measures being put in place.
11. The differences in performance between boys and girls have narrowed, particularly at Key Stage 2. Over the three years 1998-00 the boys did better than the girls in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests at age seven and in the test at age eleven the girls did better than the boys in English, mathematics and science. Much smaller differences were seen in standards between boys and girls during the inspection but there is evidence that the girls are achieving slightly better than the boys in reading in Year 4 and writing in Year 5 with the boys achieving better than the girls in reading and mathematics in Year 6.
12. The previously low standards in information and communication technology have shown marked improvement, largely as a result of the introduction of the new computer suite and staff training which has improved the confidence of teachers to use the equipment and software. Standards are now average in all years; they were well below average at age seven and below average at age eleven at the last inspection. Teaching of the subject as a discrete area is good and given time, standards should show further improvement. However, the use of computers is not yet having a sufficiently strong impact in helping to raise standards in other subjects.
13. Some parents believe that not enough challenge is given to the higher attaining pupils and they underachieve, particularly in the national tests at age eleven. There has undoubtedly been some underachievement in the past. For example, in the 2000 national tests although achievement for the higher attaining pupils at age seven was above average in reading and average in writing it was well below average in science. At age eleven in the 2000 tests achievement was below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The inspection evidence is that there is now very little underachievement amongst this group of pupils in English, mathematics and science, although there is a need to focus on ensuring that more of these pupils reach higher standards in the national tests in science at age seven. Higher attaining pupils generally achieve in line with their capabilities in the other curriculum subjects but could do even better if some teaching was more challenging in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6.

14. Although the pupils on the register of special need make sound progress in the foundation stage and at Key Stage 1 they have underachieved at Key Stage 2 for a number of years. This has been one of the main causes for low results in the national tests at age eleven and has been caused by insufficient additional support being made available in class and a lack of planning for pupils' individual needs across a range of subjects. Better support has recently led to them making better progress in English and mathematics, but underachievement in science remains. The recently appointed headteacher has taken a strong grasp on this matter and has introduced the early literacy strategy, appointed more learning support assistants to help in science classes and given clear direction to all staff to monitor the progress of these pupils very closely and this is having a positive effect.
15. There has been little need to monitor the standards of the small numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language as very few pupils have required additional support to help develop their skills in speaking English. This year there are four pupils. The school has immediately sought specialist advice in this area so that relevant support can be provided and their standards and progress and being closely monitored. No analysis has been undertaken in the past of the performance of pupils from any ethnic minority or any gifted and talented pupils. The school intends to rectify this matter.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils come to school with good attitudes and this has been maintained since the inspection of November 1999. Ninety two per cent of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children like school. The pupils enjoy coming to school, they settle to set tasks and want to learn. There were many lessons in every year group where this was so. For example in a Year 3 literacy lesson on predicting a newspaper story from a headline, inspectors noted how well the pupils moved quickly and sensibly into the group activities.
17. Ninety three per cent of parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, feel that behaviour in the school is good. The inspection team supports the parents as it judges behaviour to be good both in lessons and around the school and this has been maintained since the inspection in November 1999. Good behaviour is contributing positively to the standards of learning. This was observed in many lessons including a Year 6 information communication technology lesson when the pupils were learning about the language used in databases. There are other instances; however, when lessons are not well planned and some pupils lose concentration. For example in a Year 3 and 4 music lesson the activity was mundane and did not fully engage all of the pupils. The pupils move around the school sensibly and respond readily to the requests of teachers, learning support assistants and mid-day supervisors. They are polite and courteous to each other, to teachers, other staff and visitors. They are trustworthy and show respect for property, treating the resources they use with care. Play at both break and lunchtimes is boisterous but it is well supervised. No incidents of bullying or racial abuse were observed during the inspection and records show that there is a marked

absence of these forms of unacceptable behaviour. There have been no exclusions from the school for several years.

18. The personal development of the pupils is good overall. The pupils form very good relationships with fellow pupils and adults, built on tolerance for the work, ideas, beliefs and values of others. Parents, at the pre-inspection meeting, said that they are very impressed with the inclusiveness of the school. The staff are good role models in the way they conduct themselves. The pupils work well as individuals; this was evident in a Year 4 history lesson when the pupils were studying Ancient Egypt and good learning took place. Many are able to work in pairs or small groups. For example in a very good Year 1 information communication technology lesson the pupils helped each other when using the computers to create scenes from 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. In all year groups, except for Year 6, very few opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility in the daily life of the school. However, this has been recognised and the headteacher has appropriate plans to set up a school council. A significant number of parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, do not feel that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team does not agree with this view as many pupils, at Key Stage 2, participate in the extra curricular activities provided by the school. These include sports clubs, choir and scripture union. Pupils also visit the Imperial War Museum, St. Albans Abbey and Cuffley Camp and Year 6 pupils take part in a residential trip to Burwell in Cambridgeshire. There are opportunities provided for the pupils to develop personal study skills using computers in the information communication technology suite in English lessons, but ICT is used too little across the whole curriculum for the further development of these skills. Pupils enjoy experiments and investigations in mathematics and science lessons but there are too few opportunities provided for them to select their own materials for investigations. Given the high levels of maturity and attitude shown, pupils might be granted further responsibilities for their own learning. Overall, the opportunities provided satisfactorily promote the pupils' personal development.
19. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or learning assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions.
20. School attendance rates have been consistently good over the past five years and this is having a positive impact on standards and learning in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching was unsatisfactory at the last inspection because around one in six lessons were weak. This was a serious weakness in provision. There were also concerns about the consistency of teaching, the quality of teaching in information and communication technology and the effectiveness of teaching in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6.

22. The quality of teaching has markedly improved and is now good overall. Inspection findings show that nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory in quality. The good teaching has now been in place for long enough for it to have a positive impact on pupils' standards and there are firm indications of the improving link between the quality of teaching and standards in the school.
23. Teaching and learning are now of a much more consistent quality across the year groups. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is mainly good and has been maintained at the level seen at the last inspection. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is always good and often better; during the inspection, a high quality supply teacher taught pupils in Year 2. In the mixed aged classes at Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is more variable but also good overall. It is generally good in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory or good in other subjects but very good lessons were seen in art and physical education. In the two lessons that were unsatisfactory, teachers were following a newly adopted mathematics scheme too closely without adapting it to suit the stage in learning that the pupils in the class had actually met.
24. Teaching and learning in English has improved from satisfactory to good in both key stages and this has led to higher standards. At Key Stage 1, the teachers have very good subject knowledge that is backed up with thorough planning and preparation. The teachers use good starting techniques to encourage pupils and set a very good tone for the lesson. For example, in Year 1 the teacher asked the pupils to close their eyes, and waved a "magic wand" over them, telling them that they were now very clever. This helped set high expectations in a gentle and engaging way. The learning point of the lesson is also very clearly emphasised. At Key Stage 2, the teachers also have very good subject knowledge and a good understanding of the national literacy strategy. Lesson objectives are clearly explained and brisk pace keeps pupils on their toes. On occasions the teacher's contribution to lessons is too long and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently. Teachers use assessment information well to help plan future lessons. Learning is helped in English by the availability of classroom assistants and the setting arrangements used in Years 3 to 6.
25. The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved from satisfactory to good at Key Stage 1 and from unsatisfactory to good overall at Key Stage 2. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of most areas of the subject, the use of lesson objectives, planning and use of classroom assistants is good. The introduction of sets in the mixed aged classes at Years 3 to 6 has led to improved learning and more focused teaching but the work needs to be further refined to better suit the learning needs of the higher and lower attaining pupils. The teaching of mental mathematics is a general weakness that needs to be addressed by all teachers. Overall, the improved teaching in mathematics has now enabled pupils to achieve satisfactorily in the subject and underachievement has been reduced.
26. Teaching has improved in science from being unsatisfactory to good. At Key Stage 1, work is carefully planned and the pupils are told very clearly what they have to do. They become involved with a range of experiences that

introduce them to the idea of scientific testing. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is also generally good and the classes are managed well. Although pupils enjoy the tasks they are set more emphasis needs to be given to the teaching of whole investigations so that they become better scientific investigators. Improvements in the learning of the lower attaining pupils are needed to address their underachievement in this subject; the recent introduction of more classroom support should help in this respect.

27. The quality of teaching in information and communication technology has also improved. At the last inspection, teaching was mainly unsatisfactory with weaknesses in teacher's planning and confidence to deliver the curriculum. This, and a lack of computers, led to pupils' standards of attainment being below average at age seven and well below average at age eleven. There is no unsatisfactory teaching now; teaching is good in the foundation stage, very good at Key Stage 1 and sound or good in equal proportions at Key Stage 2. Teachers are much more confident in their use of computers and related equipment and now have dedicated time to teach the subject in the newly established computer suite. Their planning has improved which has helped them to provide an interesting range of learning opportunities in lessons. Although some information and communication technology is taught in other subjects, there are gaps in provision that need to be addressed.
28. Teachers are more acutely aware of the need to provide good quality learning experiences of all their pupils regardless of their prior attainment. They have gone some way to improving their effectiveness in this area. The higher and average attaining pupils are now making satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science commensurate with their past achievements. Although given challenging work in Years 1 and 2 in all subjects, these pupils are not always highly challenged in other subjects in Years 3 to 6. There is no accurate register of the truly gifted and talented pupils and teachers are not alerted to providing them with a suitable range of enrichment experiences. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally sound and when they are given appropriate support within well-planned lessons much is achieved. This, and gentle encouragement and warm relationships, enables these pupils to satisfactorily extend their knowledge and understanding. However, in many lessons seen tasks were insufficiently challenging and not always suitable for these lower attaining pupils. The school is satisfactorily taking into account the learning needs of pupils from ethnic minorities and others who have recently joined the school whose mother tongue is not English.
29. Learning is also good overall. The principle features of this good learning are the effort pupils put into their work, their own knowledge of the learning and their sustained concentration. The overall rate at which they learn new skills and knowledge is satisfactory and would be better if more challenge was given in some lessons. In the very best learning, such as that seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson on counting in groups of ten, a very good pace was set from the start to which pupils responded positively and a very good range of activities and resources was used to stimulate learning. Similarly very good learning was seen in a mixed aged 3 and 4 class who were reading "Sir Winter". Learning here was very strong because of the high expectations that

were set, the promotion of individual thought and independence and the pupils already good understanding of books. The main weakness in learning is that pupils are not given sufficient time or opportunities to work independently because teachers spend too much time explaining the work.

30. There have been improvements in the teaching of some of the remaining subjects of the curriculum. Better planning, improved understanding of the subjects and brisker teaching have brought this about. This is evident in art and history and physical education where the quality of teaching is now good compared with the sound teaching which was observed at the last inspection. In physical education teaching is now good in all years and sometimes very good. However, in these three subjects, the stronger teaching has still yet to feed through to improved standards but there are emerging signs of this starting to happen. The quality of teaching in the other subjects remains satisfactory and the average standards identified at the last inspection are being maintained.
31. There are some important strengths in teaching and a strong will to further improve. Expectation of good behaviour are made clear in all classes, which together with very good relationships leads to the establishment of a good ethos for learning. There are now no lessons where pupils' behaviour is a cause for concern as a result of ineffective classroom management, as there were at the last inspection. Teachers now as a matter of course set clear objectives in lessons which ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to learn. The planning of lessons has improved and teachers share their experiences and work together to improve their teaching; this has been a major reason for the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Teachers are now making more effective use of information they pick up in lessons to help plan the next lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. Assessment information and the targets that are set for pupils are helping them to gain a good understanding of their own learning. The teaching of literacy and other basic skills is consistently good and this helps to provide a secure basis for future learning to take place. The strong teaching in swimming that was present at the last inspection has been sustained, because of specialist instruction.
32. However, further improvements can also be made in:
 - reducing the slippage in time that often takes place at the starts of lessons, particularly after children return to classrooms at the end of the lunch break;
 - improving the strategies used in the teaching of mental arithmetic;
 - shifting the equilibrium in lessons towards more pupil activity and less teacher talk in lessons in Years 3 to 6.
33. The setting of homework is much improved and of a good quality. Parents are of the strong opinion that there are deficiencies in homework. These were evident at the last inspection, particularly as there were large differences in setting homework between different classes. Homework is now provided regularly in accordance with the school's policy and generally has a positive effect on pupils' learning. It is better provision than in many similar primary schools. A good range of tasks are set which help generate interest and

motivation and there is not over-reliance on set exercises. Reading at home is encouraged from an early age and this is carefully monitored.

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

34. The curriculum is unsatisfactory, although it has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and well balanced in that all the required subjects are taught for appropriate amounts of time at both key stages but it is unsatisfactory in quality because it does not always meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6. Appropriate and relevant schemes of work are now in place for all subjects.
35. The plans teachers make for each lesson and the pattern of work over the two years cycle in Years 3 to 6 do not ensure progressive development skills, knowledge and understanding of each subject, apart from English and mathematics. Teachers in these years plan the whole curriculum, other than English and mathematics on a two-year cycle. Although the curriculum guidance used by the school is designed to develop skills, knowledge and understanding progressively year on year it is not yet fully effective. Therefore, there needs to be a secure adaptation of the topics so that these are developed within a continuous and progressive structure and that each subsequent year group has the same opportunity to develop these skills. Currently the school cannot guarantee that this is the case and in practice, there are shortcomings. For example, in science, Year 6 pupils learned about the human body and planets in Year 3 and have not had the opportunity to develop this knowledge since then. In music, the scheme is designed so pupils study rhythm one year, rhythm, and pulse the year after. This provides a natural progression of skills. However, because there are mixed age classes, alternate year groups visit these topics in the wrong order. This is a weakness and has a negative impact on the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils build.
36. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy is satisfactory and supports standards of numeracy expected for pupils at this age. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively introduced and developed and supports the above average standards in English. The introduction of setting arrangements and planning has also helped to raise standards success in English and mathematics. There is no setting in other subjects and teachers planning is not sophisticated enough to cater for the wide range of abilities in the mixed aged classes. It may be helpful now to explore ways in which setting may help elsewhere.
37. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for junior pupils. These provide pupils with a greater range of experiences and enrich the quality of the curriculum. Activities include netball, football, cross-country, basketball, short tennis, Kwik-cricket, athletics, rugby, and rounders. These sporting activities lead to competitive meetings with other schools. Non-sporting activities include choir and scripture union.
38. The school has good links with the local community, for example, the choir entertains senior citizens at Christmas, and Christ Church is used to celebrate special festivals including Harvest and Christmas. The school also makes good use of visitors and visits. For example, the police and fire service, the vicar and curate, and senior citizens talk to the pupils about their experiences of the Second World War. Glaxo-Wellcome continues to support the school through decorating the hall and providing coaching for the cross-country club. A short-tennis and a basketball coach also visit to support the pupils. Pupils visit well-chosen places of interest that link to their learning in subjects such as history; for example, Hatfield House and Kentwell Hall. These opportunities and the residential visit make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

39. The school has good links with other schools and teachers work together on assessment procedures to ensure they are accurate and consistent. Year 7 staff from Chauncy School visit to meet the transferring pupils and there are many sporting fixtures and opportunities to meet other pupils in music festivals. Year 5 pupils are invited to Chauncy School to use information technology equipment and for a 'French' day.
40. The curricular needs of pupils identified by teachers and the special needs co-ordinator are discussed with parents who agree targets as part of the pupils' individual educational plans, which comply with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Pupils are fully integrated and those that receive additional support generally make good progress. This works particularly well during literacy and numeracy hours where very efficient use is made of the special learning support assistants but less well in other subjects of the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 2. Pupils' individual education plans match the needs of individual pupils. However, targets are not always sufficiently specific or easy to measure. The national Code of Practice is fully met in the identification and assessment of pupils' special educational needs and continuing assessment is satisfactory.
41. The school makes satisfactory provision for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum, and teachers make sure that all pupils are involved, as far as possible, in the full range of activities. Satisfactory provision is also made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with aspects of sex and drugs education being fully covered within lessons. The school is supported in this area of the curriculum by the local Police liaison officer, who also makes a good contribution to the pupils' awareness of citizenship. Satisfactory provision is made for the five pupils who have English as an Additional Language. All are new to the school and require extra support in order to access the curriculum. The school has already taken appropriate steps to see that their needs will be fulfilled; in the meantime the class teacher, class support assistant and other pupils in the class are extremely supportive.
42. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, similar to that indicated in the last report. The provision for spiritual development is good. The theme of the assemblies this term is how to be the best, encouraging pupils to try, to persevere, and support others in their personal goals. The legal requirements that collective worship be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' is being met fully. School assemblies make a positive contribution to the vision of the school, in which Christian values are reinforced through regular worship. Once a week a 'sharing assembly' enables pupils to show their work and this also contributes effectively to pupils' development. The vicar and his staff team from Christ Church regularly leads the school in worship and parents are also invited to those assemblies. In many lessons, pupils learn to appreciate and understand what is special and worthy of respect, for example, in a Year 3 and 4 music lesson when the pupils responded to images of underwater life.
43. The school takes positive measures to promote moral development and its quality is good. There is a high priority placed on developing a clear moral

code in the school. The Christ Church code of conduct is displayed prominently around the school and this helps to promote pupils' self-discipline and co-operation but there are still a few pupils who show challenging behaviour. Staff deal with these pupils calmly and create positive attitudes through emphasising the good behaviour of others. All staff remind pupils of what is good and unacceptable behaviour towards others and their property. The consistency of approach through the school is an important factor in its success.

44. Provision for social development is good. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the need to look after each other; a good example of this is the inclusive way pupils play together at break and lunchtimes. Older pupils have some responsibilities for providing for the school community, for example, helping to prepare equipment for assemblies. The new headteacher has recognised that there is a need to further develop this important aspect and is planning to introduce a school council. Arrangements in the playground provide a variety of recreation activities and help pupils learn to play together co-operatively. The pupils relate well to all the adults in the school. The personal and social education programme and the good community links help the pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and share their experiences in class discussions that contribute to personal and social development. A good example of this was a Year 3 and 4 circle time in which the class discussed ways a child could be helped to settle into a new school.

45. The cultural development of pupils is good and has improved since the last inspection. The pupils do not come from a range of different cultures but the school makes good provision to ensure that they are prepared for living in our diverse society. In religious education the pupils study Christianity and another religion every year and in geography years 3 and 4 pupils are currently studying different countries in Africa. Pupils have also visited the Jewish Centre in St. Albans. Through penny collections the pupils have raised funds to purchase football kit for a school in Africa and they are collecting money for a school in India. However, there are too few books in the library that reflect and celebrate our cultural diversity. Pupils learn about their own culture through visitors who come into school, and visits to museums and other places of educational interest. For example, pupils have visited Waltham Abbey Church and the Founders' Weekend celebrations is an important date in the school calendar. Messages from circle times and assemblies to treat all people with love and compassion are helping to make inclusion and respect a natural process within the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. As reported at the last inspection, the school takes good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. There is an appropriate health and safety policy based on the local authority model. The governor's premises committee has responsibility for health and safety and the headteacher has been involved in risk assessments. There are suitable arrangements in place for first aid and medical support and appropriate records are kept. The pupils are supervised appropriately at break and lunchtimes. The school has good

arrangements in place for child protection issues. The headteacher is the named responsible person and has been trained for this role. The school has established provision for pupils' personal and social education (PSE). There are opportunities for pupils to discuss relevant issues and aspects of the work are integrated into other subjects of the curriculum. For example sex and drugs education are delivered through science.

47. There are very good relationships throughout the school and all staff work hard to maintain positive relationships, they know the pupils well and are able to monitor personal development informally. The general comments that teachers make on the annual reports to parents show that they have good knowledge of the pupils.
48. There are good procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour and eliminate oppressive behaviour. As reported in November 1999, the school places a strong emphasis on good behaviour and monitors it well. Many teachers use praise very well as a reward and pupils appreciate that their efforts are noticed. Celebrations of achievement during assemblies are having a positive impact in raising pupils' self-esteem. The code of conduct is displayed in corridors. Ninety two per cent of parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, feel that the school is helping their child become mature and responsible. The school is successfully meeting one of its' aims 'to provide for each child a happy, purposeful and disciplined environment '.
49. There are satisfactory procedures in place for the monitoring and improving of attendance. Teachers check the attendance registers and instances of unexplained absence are reported to the headteacher. The school receives support from the Education Welfare Service. Registers are called at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions but they are not always taken promptly enough to ensure lessons start on time.
50. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive satisfactory support within the school, from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Their progress is monitored and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively.
51. The school has made sound progress with the key issue, to improve procedures for curriculum by making effective use of assessment information in planning, identified in its 1999 report, and assessment overall is now satisfactory. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment and has developed satisfactory systems to monitor progress through a range of tests, from entry to the school to the end of the Key Stage. This includes the use of non-statutory assessment tests at the end of Years 3,4,and 5 in English and mathematics. The school has other tests particularly in English and mathematics to provide further measures of pupils' progress.
52. The school makes good use of the information from assessment to set clear attainment targets for pupils' work in English and mathematics and effectively groups pupils in Years 5 and 6 for those subjects to ensure that they are working at an appropriate level. This is an improvement since the last

inspection, but assessment is still not used as effectively or as consistently in science and the foundation subjects. Assessment procedures for those with special educational needs are satisfactory. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored, regular reviews take place and information from ongoing assessments is used appropriately to form targets for future improvement. Recording systems for pupils with special needs provide a useful overview of their progress.

53. The school is beginning to analyse data from National Curriculum tests in order to set clear targets for pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science as well as identifying pupils for additional literacy support. The quality of teachers' marking is improving; pupils are given feedback on how to improve their work as well as receiving support and encouragement. Assessments of work for school portfolios are less developed and have yet to make a significant contribution to teachers' assessment practise. Assessment has been identified as a priority by the senior management team and is included as part of the present school development plan.
54. Overall, satisfactory provision is in place in most areas of this aspect which are having a sound impact on rising pupils' standards of achievement. There has been some improvement since the last inspection but there is clear scope to further enhance provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. There was a satisfactory response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and parents' meeting and the majority of parents and carers indicate that they have positive views of the school. For example, nine out of ten feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that parents have a more positive view of the school than they did at the time of the last inspection. However, a significant number of parents still do not feel that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection team agrees with this view and although it judges the quality of information provided for parents about the progress their children are making is satisfactory, there is still more that can be done to improve this. Annual Reports to parents provide good information about what pupils know and can do and satisfactory information on progress. They also indicate the levels that the pupils could achieve but there is no useful guidance on how pupils could improve their performance in English, mathematics and science to meet these targets. However, the recently appointed headteacher has introduced home/school books and the 'Celebrate my Work' weekends to provide parents with more information about the progress their children are making.
56. Three out of ten parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire do not feel their children get the right amount of work to do at home. The inspection team does not support this view as appropriate amounts of homework are set consistently to support the curriculum. The 'supporting your child's learning' booklets contain clear homework timetables for all year

groups. The good help that many parents give to their children with homework is a valuable asset to the school.

57. The school prospectus is informative and the newsletter, re-named, the 'Christ Church Contact' keeps parents up to date with the day-to-day life of the school. The new headteacher feels that the home school agreement needs updating and is planning to review it. Parents are invited to assemblies and some parents help with swimming lessons and on visits. During the week of the inspection, a mother made a very valuable contribution to a PSE lesson when talking to a year 2 class about the twins her family had adopted. The parent school association (PSA) organises successful fund raising events including the Christmas bazaar, Dickensian evening, and a Valentines disco. They also produce their own newsletter. A number of parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, do not feel that the school works closely with them. The school has recognised this and taken positive steps to remedy this situation by producing the home/school books, new style newsletters and the supporting your child's learning booklets. These factors show that the school is making good efforts to establish a partnership with parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is having a satisfactory influence on standards of learning.
58. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review; contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have access to class teachers, who have good communications with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This maintains a steady flow of information.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The previous inspection report found serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. There was a lack of effective leadership in practice. Responsibilities of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators lacked clarity, systems for monitoring and supporting teaching and the curriculum were ineffective, and there was no long-term strategic plan to support developments. There was little vision of where the school was going or how to raise pupils' standards. Leadership and management is now good overall and having a positive impact on standards and teaching. The will to improve further is very strong and there is a very good capacity to succeed.
60. Over the past two years, the governors have been very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have drawn up a robust action plan following the last inspection and with the support of the local education authority, have effectively implemented this plan. A monitoring visit by two of Her Majesty's inspectors in February 2001 confirms this and indicates that reasonable to good progress was being made in removing weaknesses. The governors have not shirked their responsibilities and the difficult decisions they have made are now bearing fruit. Over the past two years the school has satisfactorily evaluated its performance and taken the appropriate action.
61. There have been many changes in personnel to the governing body and their ways of working since the last inspection. These have been very beneficial to

their work and effectiveness. Importantly, they now have a much more effective committee structure and a very well thought out programme of work for each year. This is involving all governors and ensuring that the full governing body receives the right information at the right time. All governors now have a much clearer view of the big picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a regular pattern of visits to lessons and to discuss progress with teachers. This has proved mutually beneficial to both teaching staff and governors and in further promoting teamwork. The governing body has ensured that it meets all its legal, financial and reporting obligations.

62. The governors have recently appointed a new headteacher. She has a first class vision and understanding of how the school now needs to move forward. Her views agree with those of parents in that the school should embrace new approaches to teaching and learning whilst retaining what is best of its traditional values. She has immediately gained the full confidence of all teaching and non-teaching staff. The pace of change has quickened. Week by week she is addressing weaknesses and giving a very clear steer to the future direction of the school. She places a premium on using methods of self-evaluation to improve practice. Although it is too early for such a system to be developed at whole school level, in one assembly she discussed with all pupils ways in which she could be judged by the end of the term and conversely how she and the staff could evaluate how well they had done.
63. The most important change since the last inspection has been the improvements in the quality of teaching which has resulted from some staff changes and a much more rigorous system of monitoring classroom teaching. The monitoring has been carried out by the headteacher and senior management team with the support of the local education authority's attached adviser. Classroom observation of teaching is now a regular feature of termly work and as a result teachers are much clearer as to what they need to do to get better. Clearer identification of individual teaching targets and some monitoring by subject co-ordinators would further help to strengthen the system.
64. The school has successfully implemented a system for the performance management of teachers and all eligible teachers have performance objectives in place. Further steps are being taken to embed individual teachers' objectives into the development plan and to broaden the initiative to non-teaching staff. In addition the school hopes to move towards implementing the quality mark "Investors in People" to reflect the importance which it attaches to staff development.
65. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has established a new senior management team from experienced and knowledgeable staff. Their responsibilities are clear and they too have very high expectations for the future. They have played an important role in supporting new members of staff and their contribution to the monitoring of teaching has led to improvements. However, their managerial skills need to be further enhanced if they are to be fully effective.

66. Better management has also led to the co-ordination of the curriculum being improved. Two years ago there was little effective management of each subject curriculum. Now each subject has a co-ordinator, there is a clear policy for teaching and learning to guide work, monitoring and evaluation of teaching is good and has led to much improvement and there is greater sharing of schemes of work and planning for individual lessons. The work of the subject co-ordinators is also starting to impact on pupils' standards. This has been particularly successful in information and communication technology where standards are no longer weak. However, the distribution of overall responsibilities for subjects, the foundation stage and special educational needs would benefit from a review to ensure that there is even better match between areas of responsibility and experience. Subject co-ordinators also need to gain a much clearer understanding of where standards lie in their subjects and work with other staff to improve them, using all available data to assist them in this task. A key role remains to ensure that planning in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 -6 is secure and promotes challenging learning to all pupils.
67. Development and strategic planning are good now and have improved since the last inspection. The previous headteacher and governing body have correctly identified the major strengths and weaknesses in standards and provision and the new headteacher has already revised the plan to ensure that the objectives it contains are realistic but more challenging. The development of pupils' standards is also being better targeted, through a recently enhanced development plan. The governors and headteacher evaluate the plans much better and managers put together clear information on how far the plans have progressed. There is a good longer-term plan. There are good plans to review this once the vision for how standards will be improved to a very high level and other longer-term management goals have been formulated.
68. Management has taken satisfactory action to meet last year's targets in external tests. Since the last inspection booster classes and setting have been put in place in English and mathematics, pupils have been given learning targets based upon the expectations of the national curriculum, some new resources have been purchased and teachers indicate to pupils what they are aiming for in each lesson. The result last year was that the targets were nearly met in English, mathematics and science. However, the targets themselves were not challenging enough. The new headteacher has quickly revised the targets upwards for the coming year, based upon a more incisive analysis of data on pupils' progress and, in particular, plans to give more support to science and mathematics.
69. The overall management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Although sufficient time is allocated to the role, the special needs co-ordinator is part time and as a result, timely information and support is not always available to class teachers. The co-ordinator is also not part of the senior management team, and so does not contribute to essential curriculum and management decisions, and is limited in her vision of how to best meet pupils' needs. As a result the pupils on the special needs register have underachieved as they have not always benefited from well targeted support.

The special needs co-ordinator has not yet monitored and evaluated the impact of their individual education plans, use of classroom assistants and other provision has had on raising standards. This weakness, which was identified at the last inspection remains. There is a need to monitor that targets set are being followed by class teachers. The administration of the records and procedures associated with special educational needs is satisfactory. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly. The part time special educational needs co-ordinator administers the day-to-day organisation of pupils with the involvement of the headteacher and class teachers. The governing body supports and monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs. It reports the schools provision for these pupils, including how resources have been allocated to and amongst pupils with special educational needs in its annual report to parents, in order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

70. The school has a satisfactory number of suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff who have sufficient knowledge to teach the National Curriculum. The school also has a small team of hard working non-teaching assistants. When they are well deployed they make a good contribution to the progress of lower attaining and special educational needs pupils. All teaching staff have job descriptions, procedures for staff reviews are good and the school has taken the necessary steps to put in place arrangements for the performance management of teachers. Following the staff reviews professional and personal training needs are met in line with priorities identified in the school development plan. Support procedures for teachers new to the school are good. The school has had no difficulty in recruiting qualified staff.
71. The school has sufficient accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum. A major rebuilding programme is taking place and due to finish this term. This will have a significant impact on the accommodation provided and enhance the feeling of community within the school. The classrooms in the main building are bright and airy and throughout the school there are some good displays of pupils' work. The availability of brand new accommodation in a few months time will provide much better indoor and outdoor space for the nursery. The hard play area for the pupils is of an adequate size and easily accommodates the numbers and ages using it. The playground is a stark area but the school has introduced play equipment to liven up the environment.
72. The overall quality and range of resources to support and enhance teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum is satisfactory. The information communication technology suite is an important improvement since the last inspection is greatly enhanced the learning in the subject. The room is poorly ventilated and gets very hot when a whole class is working in there. Resources for teaching numeracy are satisfactory and teachers have made equipment to support the subject. For English there is a good range of big books but many books in the library are out of date and need replacing. There are also too few books that depict and celebrate different cultures. Staff report a shortage of resources for teaching the woodwork aspects of design and technology and in art more resources are required to fully meet the demands of the curriculum. Subjects of the curriculum are adequately resourced.

73. There is good use of management information systems to help with financial control and manage records. Assessment information and analysis of data on standards and pupil's progress is starting to be analysed using spreadsheet analysis but wider use of information technology would be beneficial in this area. Although the level of bureaucratic demands has diminished during the past year, information is requested by the local education authority and the Department for Education and Skills on pupil numbers in different formats causing frustration and duplication.
74. A number of weaknesses in financial planning were identified at the last inspection. Some improvements are now evident. For example, the development plan is costed much better and income and expenditure are kept under much scrutiny. There is satisfactory use of funds for special educational needs pupils and monies that have been spent on literacy and numeracy have generally been spent well, although the newly bought scheme for mathematics is currently not being used well. There are now more support staff to help teachers in classrooms and their deployment is sound but being kept under review. The governors and headteacher have a secure and growing understanding of the principles of best value and apply this to curricular developments, such as in information and communication technology, raising standards and the award of external contracts.
75. The improvements in pupils' progress so that they are now mostly achieving in line with expectations, curriculum provision, teaching and management now mean that the school is reasonably effective and providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to further raise standards and improve the quality of education offered, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- (1) Improve standards in science, particularly at age eleven by:
 - providing more support to pupils with special educational needs;
 - set more challenging targets for the national tests;
 - review the emphasis given to experimental and investigative science;
 - raise the level of challenge in lessons for all pupils;
 - ensure that more pupils attain Level 3 in the national tests at age seven, and more attain Level 5 at age eleven;
 - continue to focus on raising the attainment of boys.

Paragraphs:- 9, 52, 113, 114, 116, 117, 118

- (2) Review the roles and responsibilities of staff who lead subject developments and provision for special educational needs and identify what they need to do to further raise standards, by:
 - helping staff to gain the necessary skills so that they can to implement developments and ensure that improvements result;
 - review the management and provision for special educational needs;
 - systematically review standards within subjects and take the necessary action to raise standards.

Paragraphs:- 40, 52, 66, 68, 69, 112, 118, 128, 134, 140, 152

- (3) Further develop the way teachers plan and deliver the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, by:
 - ensuring that they plan the curriculum so that, in all subjects, all pupils build year by year on their knowledge and skills;
 - ensuring that teachers provide more difficult work for the older pupils in mixed aged classes;
 - introduce more innovative setting arrangements within subjects.

Paragraphs:- 34, 35, 36, 66, 118, 128, 146

The following minor areas should also be considered by the governors for improvement in the action plan:

- Develop pupils' initiative and personal responsibility
- Further strengthen the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum
- Enhance the opportunities for children to learn through structured play in the reception class.

Paragraphs:- 18, 44, 79, 82, 85, 102, 118, 123, 146

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	32	14	2	0	0
Percentage	2	21	51	23	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6	N
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	251	44
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	22	
Special educational needs	YR– Y6	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75	
English as an additional language	No of pupils	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5	
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5	
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6	

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.15
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.24
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 Year 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	21	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	19	20	19
	Total	40	41	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	93 (94)	91 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	41	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	93 (100)	95 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Year 6

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	21	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	14
	Girls	15	15	20
	Total	29	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (81)	67 (69)	76 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	8
	Girls	14	13	16
	Total	25	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (86)	53 (78)	53 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	245
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	578,755
Total expenditure	555,714
Expenditure per pupil	1,904
Balance brought forward from previous year	-16,381
Balance carried forward to next year	6,660

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

322

Number of questionnaires returned

103

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	56	9	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	66	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	50	25	4	8
The teaching is good.	30	59	7	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	61	17	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	30	56	7	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	30	56	7	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	17	59	20	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	19	45	10	2	25
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	63	7	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	28	35	13	16

Other issues raised by parents

More than nine out of ten parents agree that their children like school; they are making good progress as a result of good teaching; they feel comfortable with approaching the school about problems and that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve his or her best. They also agree that the school helps their child to become mature and responsible.

Around one quarter have no view on how well the school is led and managed because a new headteacher has recently been appointed at the start of this term.

A significant proportion of parents have concerns about the amount of homework that is given, the extent to which the school works closely with parents and the range of extra curricular activities.

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

77. The nursery admits children on a part time basis at the start of the term after their third birthday. After one half term they increase their attendance moving onto five full morning or afternoon sessions. Children transfer or are admitted into the reception class either in September or January up to six months before they reach the age of five. Most children in the current reception class have transferred from the school nursery whilst others have experienced pre-school provision elsewhere in the town. After Christmas, an extra reception class will be available because of demand. Good induction programmes help the children settle quickly on entry into both classes with parents receiving good information about routines and ways in which they might help their children at home.
78. Children are assessed regularly throughout their time in the nursery and reception classes. In the nursery internal information and testing using baseline assessment indicates that children start with knowledge and skills that are a little bit above average overall. This is a little down on the last inspection. A more comprehensive system of assessment has been introduced this term into the nursery, but not the reception class, which aims to assess all areas of learning more thoroughly, using the foundation stage "Stepping Stones of progress". Assessment in the reception class, using the local baseline assessment scheme, is carried out very well. This enables very accurate information to be gathered, especially on pupils' language, mathematical and personal development but not on other areas of the curriculum. Strengthening assessment in the reception class with an improved policy and scheme, like that introduced into the nursery would help identify learning priorities and motivating experiences for each child. However, an overall strength is that pupils now have targets set each half term to help develop their learning based on existing information.
79. The curriculum has been changed since the last inspection with children now working towards the new Early Learning Goals instead of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Teachers have revised their planning accordingly and are ensuring that children are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum and are doing the right work at the right age. There are a number of strengths in the planning and it is carefully structured. For example, in the nursery good attention is paid to provide a range of learning experiences that build on what the children can already do based upon real life situations. In the reception class good emphasis is given to developing children's language, literacy and mathematical development which stands them in good stead for later learning. However, the curriculum in the reception at the start of the year is, overall, too formal which has the result of impairing its effectiveness. For example, the children already do full one-hour sessions on literacy and numeracy each day that, although they are taught well, is limiting the opportunities that might be available for more creative learning in these areas through structured play.
80. As the inspection took place early into the term when the children were just being introduced to full time schooling, little recorded work was available for scrutiny. Judgements are therefore based on observations of lessons, work on display and on talking to teachers and children. As a result, the evidence shows that children are achieving satisfactorily. The strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the emphasis on pupils' personal, social and emotional development ensure that most children will exceed the early learning goals in these areas. Children are in line to meet the early learning goals in the other areas of the curriculum.
81. The nursery and reception classes allow children to make a secure start to their education and there are strengths in the:
- good provision for special educational needs, with pupils receiving well targeted support;
 - strong teamwork in the nursery class which allows children to settle in quickly;
 - a strong emphasis on daily routines in each class.

Personal, social and emotional development

82. Strong emphasis is given to this area of the curriculum and it is taught and assessed well. The children who have just joined the nursery class are interested in what they do and have already formed positive relationships with other children and with familiar adults. In the activities seen they maintained their attention, concentrated on their work and sat quietly at other times, when this was appropriate. They feel safe and secure within their learning environment and show signs of seeking out other children to share their experiences. They talk freely about their home and world in which they live. Children in the reception class show more confidence, have settled quickly into the more formal routines and longer working day and have a positive attitude to their work at all times. More opportunities are provided for children to initiate and direct their own learning in the nursery than in the reception class. Afternoon sessions in reception often involve children planning what to do in an activity and this is a good approach. However, they do not work long enough on their own activities or take risks and be spontaneous in their learning. The lower attaining children are given good support and develop their social and emotional skills well. In PE lessons, many children showed a good ability to dress and undress independently. Most children are on course to exceed the goals set in this area of the curriculum and children are achieving well.

Communication, language and literacy

83. Language and literacy are generally taught and planned for well in both the nursery and reception classes. Children enter the nursery with average skills in listening, vocabulary and a knowledge of stories, songs and rhymes. They are starting to extend their vocabulary as was seen in a lesson where they were discussing what kinds of things fly. They talked about daddy long legs, birds and aeroplanes and used appropriate words such as wings and feathers to describe what flies. They listened carefully when hearing the story "Mr. McGee goes to Sea" and asked sensible questions about what they had heard. They are starting to handle books with care. Children in the nursery and reception listen attentively to stories and respond well to music, songs and rhymes which are used to develop their language skills. Children in the reception class have a literacy lesson each day and the basic skills of phonics, letter formation and reading are taught well. Children are currently learning how to link sounds and letters and most can recognise that the words cat and caterpillar both start with the letter "c". The higher attaining children know their alphabet and can recognise objects that start with the letters c, h, s, n, r and p. They enjoyed listening to "Mr Grump's Boat" and later could recall it. Most children are beginning to learn that sentences always start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. There is a wide range of reading ability in the class, with the higher attaining children reading a range of suitable books with confidence, to those who handle books carefully and understand how they are set out. They are starting to develop their handwriting and, for example, can make the letter "d" using anticlockwise movements and retracing vertical lines, using a pencil or paintbrush correctly. Children are satisfactorily developing their speaking and listening skills in the reception class but insufficient time is provided to enable them to use language to imagine or to clarify their thinking, ideas or feelings. Most children achieve as well as can be expected and are on course to exceed the early learning goals at this stage by the time they enter Year 1.

Mathematical development

84. Mathematics and numeracy are also taught well in both the nursery and reception classes and this area is well planned. Children in the nursery are starting to recognise and use the numbers 1-5 and some can spot when the number 5 is missing from a set of numbers 1-10. In the reception class, mathematics is currently taught for one hour per day. At the start of the year, many children can count beyond 5 and some well beyond 10. They can use terms such as shorter and taller to compare two lengths. Songs such as "Little elephant balancing" and "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" are used as starters to lessons to teach the children mathematical ideas. When looking at a big book showing different numbers of animals nearly all children could identify the correct numbers of different animals that were present. Daily routines such as counting the numbers of packed lunches and school dinners are used well as opportunities for counting. They undertake a variety of counting activities by themselves and achieve well in these. The children are working at levels appropriate to their age and most are on course to exceed the early learning goals at this stage by the end of the foundation stage.

Knowledge and understanding of the World

85. Most children are achieving satisfactorily and are on course to meet the goals set in this area of the curriculum because of sound teaching and planning. Through the teaching week due attention is given to providing a suitable range of tasks in both the nursery and reception to provide a broad range of work. In the nursery, children show an interest in why things happen and how they work, show an interest in computers and use all their senses well. The children in the reception class make sound gains in their learning whilst joining construction pieces together and setting up a train set and farm to create their own environment. They are showing good progress in the development of their computer skills in the computer suite with most able to “log-on” to a computer and perform simple functions such as using a mouse. They are developing a sense of time through discussing what they were like as babies and what they think they might be like when they grow up. The class teacher worked very effectively with a group of children to develop and share enjoyment of how we celebrate. Together they discussed how we celebrate birthdays putting together the ideas of sending cards, putting up balloons, lighting candles on a cake, playing games and eating special food. Later on in the term the children will learn more about the cultures and beliefs of other people. During lessons seen, few opportunities were taken to use the classroom computer to aid learning in the role-play area and this is a weaknesses in provision.

Physical development

86. Most children are achieving satisfactorily and are on course to meet or exceed the goals set in this area of the curriculum because of good teaching. In the nursery, children move spontaneously whilst playing within the available space in the outdoor play area and they are starting to use a range of equipment that require use of eye-hand co-ordination and fine motor control. In the reception class most pupils use movement well to express feelings such as when pretending to be rain or twinkling stars. Good teaching in the hall, where the children experienced a range of progressively more difficult tasks, led to them showing good levels of control when pushing, throwing or catching balls. In this lesson, the learning support assistants played a very positive role with one following the work on a pair of pupils very carefully and helping them to negotiate space in a better way. The higher attaining children showed good anticipation and worked well in pairs whilst completing these tasks. The children clearly enjoyed this hall based activity.

Creative development

87. Most children are achieving satisfactorily and are on course to meet or exceed the goals set in this area of the curriculum and attainment is similar to that reported at the last inspection. During the inspection week, this area of work was under-represented. The nursery children were joining in favourite songs, showing an interest in what they hear and touch and starting to explore colour and shape. One child was making a chocolate box and using her imagination well. In the reception class children made hand prints for display, and here the classroom assistant made a good contribution to their learning. The children are starting to learn a repertoire of songs. Work on display indicates that over time past pupils have received a secure curriculum which is well taught but that there is scope for pupils to express their work more imaginatively. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of the curriculum.

ENGLISH

88. Pupils have made satisfactory progress up to age seven in recent years and have reached above average standards in the national tests. Standards seen in the inspection confirm that these standards have been sustained. However, at age eleven standards have been historically much weaker and pupils have underachieved through Key Stage 2. For example, in 2000 standards in the national tests at age eleven were well below average and attainment was below average compared with similar schools. Standards seen in the inspection are much improved and are now above average with pupils of all abilities are achieving well in all areas of the subject. Previous differences between the performance of boys and girls have significantly narrowed. Pupils on the register of special educational needs are achieving well because of good use of classroom assistants. The reduction in underachievement at Key Stage 2 and better standards is a result of much improved teaching.

89. Attainment in reading and writing is now above average at both age seven and eleven, and builds satisfactorily on the good start made in the foundation stage. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school in English lessons and in other subjects.
90. The successful introduction of the literacy hour is having a significant impact on standards throughout the school. Pupils are making good progress in their literacy lessons, which are well organised and provide skilled direct teaching. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in other situations such as historical research, debate, writing in different styles and reading for pleasure.
91. Speaking skills are developed well in class discussions, during the introduction to lessons and in the final summing up and revision of progress at the end of literacy lessons. In the infant classes pupils use questions appropriately to explain what they have learned. Pupils use correctly structured sentences in oral sessions in the literacy hour and many have readily transferred their knowledge of simple grammar to their normal speech patterns. They use a good range of vocabulary, explaining themselves concisely. For example they can explain lights appearing upside down because they are "reflected" in a pool.
92. The good level of achievement in speaking and listening is continued throughout the junior classes, where standards in speech remain above average. Pupils explain themselves clearly in complete sentences and use vocabulary that is well suited to purpose. For example in music lessons older pupils use correct terminology accurately. They show high levels of clarity in personal and social education discussions, when they talk about their thoughts competently. They are also expressive in their conversation. When talking about the reading text in literacy lessons, pupils often talk in an animated way, adding expression when they quote what a character has said. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate good listening skills. They listen carefully to teachers and to other pupils when working within groups. Teachers do not have to repeat instructions. Pupils show that they understand what is said to them.
93. Younger pupils are making good progress in learning to read through shared and guided reading. They pay close attention to print and are alert to spelling patterns and the structure of sentences. Pupils are responding well to a range of fiction and non-fiction and this is developing their competence in both reading and writing. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading has been stimulated by the introduction of the literacy hour and by the good supply of attractive new books. By the end of Year 2 most pupils read fluently with expression, although a very small minority are as yet unable to attain the required standard. Most pupils read regularly and frequently to their parents or carers at home and this is effective in building confidence and an interest in reading. Pupils have good levels of appreciation of both literature and non-fiction and are beginning to show a developing interest in poetry.
94. In the Years 3 to 6, pupils read a suitable range of books and higher attaining pupils read independently, with expression and understanding. Higher attaining readers in Year 6 read a wide variety of texts and refer to other parts of the stories when talking about their books. Average attaining pupils are still expressive in their reading of books that they choose themselves. The introduction of the books associated with the literacy hour is beginning to have a significant impact on pupils' interest in reading at this stage as they experience a wide range of literature in a variety of forms, including lots of poetry and some Shakespeare text. The school has a satisfactory library facility and books are appropriately classified and displayed. However some books in the library are becoming outdated and some are getting worn. Pupils show a good appreciation of the value of books and express pleasure in reading.
95. The introduction of the literacy hour is having a significant impact on the development of pupils' grammatical knowledge and understanding of language. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge effectively in their spellings and many are beginning to use simple punctuation in their sentences. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are better than expected for their age. They write for a range of purposes and in a good range of styles in other subjects. They spell simple words accurately and most use capital letters and full stops accurately. Usually, pupils shape letters clearly and handwriting is mostly legible and tidy. Higher and average attaining pupils write in sentences. They use punctuation such as capital letters, full stops, speech marks, question and exclamation marks accurately. Spelling is accurate and they know a good range of rules for spelling, for example spelling different verb tenses such as cry, cried, cries.

96. By the end of Year 6, standards in writing remain above expectations for eleven-year olds. Higher and average attaining pupils' writing is often imaginative and clear. Good writing is seen in many in many different writing situations such as extended story writing, diaries, poetry, biographies and autobiographies. Writing is interesting, imaginative and suitable to the intended reader. They use the same level of good vocabulary that appears in their good quality spoken word. Pupils write in complex sentences and use paragraphs to good effect. Grammar is used well; full stops, capital letters, apostrophes, commas, speech marks, exclamation and question marks are all placed accurately in their sentences and add to the overall effectiveness of their writing.
97. Spelling of even more complex words is generally correct. However, pupils occasionally slip tenses in writing, but this does not present a major weakness. Handwriting is neat and legible with good style, with standards a little lower than spelling, but they are still good when compared to their prior attainment. Some spelling is careless and there are mistakes over commonly confused words such as witch and which. Writing sometimes lacks thought and structure and handwriting is less neat and legible. However, free writing is sustained and ideas are well developed. The sequences in writing are satisfactory, appropriately organised and contains some graphic, imaginative vocabulary, at a more basic level. Poetry is structured well. The writing of lower attaining pupils contains many spelling mistakes and they tend to spell as the word sounds, even in simple words. Handwriting is good. it is clear, joined fluent and accurate.
98. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic to answer questions and take part in lessons, responding well to challenging activities. Although sometimes lacking confidence when tasks are difficult, they soon overcome this and respond well. Behaviour is good and often very good, with pupils receptive to their teachers encouragement of high standards of work and behaviour. There are good relationships between pupils and they were seen to spontaneously applaud others' success. Older pupils have a mature and sensible approach to their work. Pupils at all ages work without the direct supervision of the teacher within group work sessions, enabling the teacher to work with the focus groups without interruption. Pupils enjoy their work and their pleasure is evident when reading poetry and when in class discussions.
99. The quality of teaching is mainly good throughout the school, with some very good teaching and this results in the pupils making satisfactory progress through the school. The teaching in almost all of the lessons seen was either good or very good. This is an improvement on the teaching judgement made at the time of the previous inspection, when the quality was satisfactory.
100. All teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and their lessons are based on secure planning backed up by thorough preparation. Learning objectives are stressed at the beginning of lessons so pupils are clear about what they have to do. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are fully involved. These pupils also receive good quality support in lessons, which supports their good progress. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and the interesting activities, together with the challenge, successfully engage pupils' interest and involvement. Occasionally, the teacher's input at the beginning of the lesson is too long and pupils become unsettled. This also leaves too little time for pupils to develop the work independently. The pace of what was good learning slows down slightly at this point. Teachers use a good variety of methods; games, discussion, group work, whole class reading, question and answers and combine these different styles to make interesting and stimulating lessons. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils and lots of positive encouragement is used to build the confidence of pupils. Assessment is used well to plan work. Difficulties from previous lessons are identified and planning includes work for the groups having difficulty, with good support for teachers' focus groups. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to the lessons and to the achievement of pupils, especially those with special educational needs. They are thoroughly briefed and know what they have to do. They meet their responsibilities well and provide good support for the teacher also. Through good teaching, good learning takes place and this is helping to raise standards.
101. The coordination of English is good and has now succeeded in addressing many of the weaknesses at Key Stage 2 that were holding back standards and causing pupils to

underachieve. This has taken some time as much needed to be done. Now that teaching is much better, planning in the mixed aged classes has improved and adequate support given to pupils on the special needs register pupils are making satisfactory progress. Inspectors are confident that the additional initiatives that are underway will further strengthen standards in the future.

102. Assessment in English is thorough and the results of national tests are rigorously analysed. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress in reading and are consequently able to match books generally effectively to the required level. However, some pupils, particularly average and lower attaining pupils have inappropriate books that do not help the development of their reading. The classification of some books in the reading scheme is not appropriate. Assessment data is used systematically to inform planning and to support areas of weakness, such as a difference in the attainment of boys and girls, which has now been addressed. The results of individual and groups of pupils is carefully analysed and pupils who are not achieving appropriately are identified. There have been many improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and ensures progression in what pupils learn. Almost all staff are trained to teach literacy and this is reflected in their confidence when teaching lessons in the literacy hour. More opportunities to use information and communication technology need to be included throughout all years. The previous criticism about the effect of mixed age classes the last report has been addressed. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now taught in sets. This ensures that pupils at different levels of attainment are given work at an appropriate level.

MATHEMATICS

103. Standards and achievements have also improved considerably, particularly at age eleven. The national test results for seven year olds in 2000 were average but there was some underachievement because the area of 'Using and Applying Mathematics' was weak. These average standards have been maintained over time, and although there is still a little underachievement, most pupils are now making sound progress through Key Stage 1. Standards at age eleven have been below average for the past five years and there has been much underachievement. However, standards seen in the inspection were much better and the now average standards represent a good advance on the below average standards seen at the last inspection and well below average standards achieved in the 2001 national tests. There is now little significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Standards have improved because of much better teaching and clearer curriculum planning. The good use of classroom support in lessons is ensuring that pupils on the special needs register make sound gains in their learning.
104. The standard of work at age seven is now in line with that expected nationally in all the areas of mathematics; overall progress is lower than expected from their above average attainment on entry to Year 1. In some lessons, due to very effective teaching, pupils standards are now better than expected for their age. Most pupils of average ability have a secure knowledge of the language of mathematics and are beginning to use the number bonds of ten in addition of larger numbers. In Year 2 lessons, for example, pupils after recapping the number bonds of ten, went on to find out what number bonds they could find for a number slightly larger than ten. They recognise odd and even numbers and can double units and small two digit numbers but not with total accuracy. They have an understanding of simple fractions and measure straight lines using whole number standard units. They know the names of simple plane shapes and solids. More able pupils add two two-digit numbers by partitioning

accurately and understand the strategy of adding twenty and taking off one when adding nineteen to another number. They understand the place value of three digit numbers and build up and have some recall of the five times table. They understand the concept of line symmetry and can apply this, for example, to the capital letters in the alphabet.

105. The attainment of pupils at age eleven is now in line with the standards expected nationally and the achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils of average ability have a sound understanding of number and the four operations and work accurately when dividing two-digit numbers by units, recording remainders where appropriate. Their understanding of decimals is developing and they add and subtract numbers with two decimal places. Most pupils know the names of the simple solids and describe their properties. They understand that data can be represented in various ways and that the likelihood of an event occurring can be ascribed a numerical value. Higher attaining pupils can find the areas of parallelograms and trapeziums. They can follow through an investigation like finding all the nets of a cube from "hexominoes", for example.
106. The pupils' competence in numeracy is supported satisfactorily across the curriculum by measuring and weighing in science; estimating and measuring lengths in design and technology and the use of force / mass graphs in science, for example.
107. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 seen in lessons was very good and sometimes excellent. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good overall but during the inspection two lessons were seen that were unsatisfactory. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the key skills required and plan effectively for pupils in year group teams in order to ensure that work of an appropriate level is provided for the pupils. In Years 1 and 2 this is done for groups within the classroom, where teachers in the Year 1 class and the two Year 2 classes provide work of suitable challenge for the range of abilities within the classes. In a Year 2 lesson based on number bonds, for example, lower attaining pupils worked with the teacher and used counters to help with their calculations. Higher attaining pupils not only found the number bonds of a larger number between ten and fifteen, but also included other calculations which resulted in the same answer, providing a more open ended challenge that these pupils found motivating. In Year 4, in a lesson based on converting metric units of length, lower attaining pupils measured lines and recorded the answers in millimetres, some pupils in centimetres and millimetres, while the middle attainers did a range of more challenging questions based on the same theme. Higher attainers worked with the teacher doing conversions that ranged from millimetres to kilometres.
108. At Key Stage 2 pupils are put into sets in order to provide appropriate learning opportunities for the whole range of abilities. Pupils from the six mixed age classes are put into sets, producing four sets of average and above average single age pupils and two sets of mixed age lower attaining pupils, one for Years 3 and 4 and one for Years 5 and 6. This has enabled teachers to provide more focussed teaching and is helping to raise the attainment of pupils but never-the-less does not yet totally meet the needs of the range of

pupils within each set. This results in tasks that are sometimes lacking in challenge for the higher attaining pupils in each set, or tasks that are too challenging for the lower attainers, despite the hard work of classroom support assistants when provided

109. The National Numeracy Strategy, with its three-part structure for lessons is well established but teachers' effectiveness in developing appropriate mental strategies in the pupils is variable. Some effective whole class sessions contain a good variety of activities that engages the whole class or groups within it. In Year 3, for example, the teacher set the pupils the task of adding and subtracting ten from different starting numbers, chanting together as a class. This was followed by the 'All Change Game', where groups of pupils were given different starting numbers dependent on their different achievement levels. They counted on in tens until the teacher called "Change" and then counted backwards. This enabled higher attaining pupils, for example, to develop skills with numbers greater than one hundred. Some mental arithmetic sessions however are still of the form one question to one pupil at a time, not making good use of time, engaging sufficient pupils or extending the mental strategies of the range of pupils in the class. Some of these question and answer sessions are too long and pupils' concentration lapses.
110. All sessions have a clear structure and learning objectives for the lesson are clear. In most of the lessons these objectives are communicated clearly to the pupils, in appropriate mathematical language, and referred to again in the review session at the end of the lesson. In two lessons unsatisfactory learning took place because the teachers tried to follow a newly purchased scheme instead of identifying themselves what skills their pupils needed to have in order to complete the individual tasks. In most lessons observed the quality of learning was usually good. This indicates that the strategies put into place by the school are having a positive effect in the classroom and have now been in place long enough to have an impact over time, particularly by the age of eleven.
111. Teachers use the allocated time efficiently. Lessons are suitable structured and well-organised with relevant resources and instruction/task sheets ready to hand so that minimum time is spent during lessons on unnecessary organisation. This maintains the motivation of the pupils and encourages purposeful activity as the norm. In general, teachers question pupils well, being aware of their differing levels of attainment. Consequently pupils of all abilities are involved in class question and answer sessions, and this they do with appropriate confidence. Very good relationships are evident in classroom and pupils work collaboratively together when required. Classroom assistants are used effectively and make positive contributions to the pupils' learning by their competent reinforcement of the teacher's objectives, as in Year 5 and 6 for example, where the support assistant worked competently with a group of lower attaining pupils helping them to partition two-digit numbers. Generally pupils' written work is marked appropriately and is helpful to the learner. Homework supports learning well. The support of the subject by information and communication technology, while not yet at a sound level is developing satisfactorily.

112. The assessment procedures are good and the results are monitored and analyzed well in order to ascertain pupils' progress. A well-organised co-ordinator monitors teaching, planning and pupils learning appropriately, but her role has not yet been fully developed to include the consistent monitoring of assessment in order to improve the quality of teaching and curriculum planning further. Assessment procedures and their use have improved since the last inspection. Parents are kept regularly informed about their child's progress and target levels are included in the school's reports to parents. However, there is no indication given on how these targets can be achieved. Resources have been upgraded and are satisfactory in quantity and quality.

SCIENCE

113. Standards in science have generally not improved since the last inspection but there are signs that they are doing so now. Standards in past national tests at age seven have been average with too few pupils achieving the higher levels and some decline evident. At age seven, standards seen in the inspection remain average, with fewer pupils still not achieving the higher levels; there are also weaknesses in experimental and investigative science. At age eleven results in the national tests have been very weak; for the past two years they have been below average with achievement being well below average. Standards seen in the inspection at age eleven have improved; but more can be done as they are now below average whereas at the last inspection they were average. The results achieved by pupils over the last three years at age eleven although variable, show that fewer pupils are underachieving with the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 by the age of eleven increasing.
114. In Years 3 to 6, inspection evidence confirms that, standards achieved by the pupils are rising as a result of improved teaching, with some pupils now achieving standards close to those expected of pupils of their age nationally. However, they are still not as high as they could be. The factors that contribute to this are that:
- the curriculum delivered to mixed age classes does not always provide the progression of knowledge and skills required to raise standards further;
 - when pupils undertake practical investigations there is not enough emphasis on doing enough whole investigations and so they do not think sufficiently scientifically;
 - the lower attaining pupils, especially boys, have underachieved in recent years. This is still the case but more classroom support has recently been allocated, and;
 - classroom expectations are not high enough and work is not always matched to pupils' prior attainment.
115. The school management has set revised and more ambitious targets to raise standards further during the present school year and is showing the determination to root out remaining weaknesses.
116. Teaching is now good at Key Stage 1 in most areas of scientific knowledge and understanding. As a result pupils are beginning to learn well. The teachers put a great deal of effort into careful planning and always share their

learning objectives with the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers make good use of resources. For example, Year 2 pupils were keen to identify and sort the teacher's shopping into animal and plant based products. Year 1 pupils are introduced to scientific investigations by testing which hat would keep teddy dry, using different materials. Year 2 pupils set up a test to find out what makes seeds grow. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand and explain what makes a fair test. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress because of the teacher's good and careful explanations prior to pupils' investigations of sounds around the school, which helped them to develop a clearer understanding that many types and sources of sound exist. However, past teacher assessment indicates that the higher attaining pupils underachieve in experimental and investigative science and in learning about life and living processes.

117. Teaching has also improved and is usually good at Key Stage 2. During the inspection, pupil's achievements were judged satisfactory or good in lessons seen, and there are examples of teachers meeting the needs of pupils well. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson pupils study friction and are given the task of identifying the most effective shoes by checking a range of footwear before reporting back to the whole class. Pupils have positive attitudes to their lessons, which have a positive impact on learning. They are interested and concentrate well on the tasks. Year 5 and 6 pupils are keen to use a Newton meter to measure and record forces linked to different objects. Pupils at the beginning of their junior education are able to predict sensibly. For example, they compare the magnetic properties of everyday materials and record their results in a table. By the age of eleven pupils know about the major organs of the body and their functions. They are aware of what constitutes a fair test and investigate the insulation properties of different materials reporting their conclusions. They can also separate mixtures by dissolving and filtering. They are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they learn about the effects of certain drugs. However, scrutiny of pupils' previous work confirmed that many pupils have made unsatisfactory progress by age eleven due to work not being at a suitable level and insufficient attention being paid to planning for pupils of different abilities within classes containing two year groups. The lack of teacher confidence and expertise has had a detrimental effect on learning for these pupils. This results in limited opportunities for pupils, in particular more able pupils to make their own choices and plan their own experiments, preventing them from reaching the required standards in the investigative strand of the subject by the age of eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress because of insufficient work which suits their needs. However, inspection findings showed an improved awareness by teachers who are just beginning to plan work for pupils of different abilities.
118. The management of the subject shows sound improvement since the previous inspection and a new co-ordinator has been appointed. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a revised policy and a better scheme of work, which is in line with national guidelines for the subject. A programme of monitoring is planned, as part of the school development plan to ensure that teaching is consistent across the school in order to raise standards. The co-ordinator has developed new systems for assessing pupils' progress; she is beginning to

make better use of the information to inform planning. Assessment of pupils' everyday work and scientific understanding through regular testing is now developing alongside an analysis of pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests to identify areas of weakness in teaching and learning. However, the curriculum is insufficiently cohesive and balanced at Key Stage 2. The availability of an improved level of resources and interesting science displays promote an effective learning environment. The monitoring of teaching and standards of pupils' work is unsatisfactory but there are good plans to strengthen this in forthcoming months. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in science.

ART and DESIGN

119. The attainment of pupils at ages seven and eleven is in line with national expectations, maintaining the standards shown during the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily overall. The good teaching that is now in place and improved curriculum have not yet fed through to even higher standards because staff are not yet clear of how to achieve these.
120. At Key Stage 1 pupils experience a range of activities and media enabling them to explore pattern colour and shape. They use paint, brush, crayon and pencil and learn to control these effectively, becoming skilful in a range of techniques. In Year 1, for example, pupils of all abilities use paint or collage techniques with appropriate skill to portray the 'Three Little Pigs'. In Year 2 they experiment using clay and paint to produce self-portraits and the use of an appropriate computer programme to produce prints in the style of Mondrian. By age seven, pupils have a sound appreciation of the work of this and other famous artists.
121. At Key Stage 2 pupils gain further experience of colour mixing and their skills of observation become more refined. This was indicated clearly in a Year 3 and 4 lesson where pupils worked hard and concentrated well, when using a grid to enlarge an Egyptian picture. By age eleven pupils have a sound understanding of the techniques that can be used to produce certain effects. A good example of this is the use of tonal effects in the Year 5 and 6 pictures of autumn trees on a misty morning. Pupils work competently in three-dimensions and this is enhanced effectively for Years 3 and 4 by an environmental art day, where pupils produced a range of art work from natural woodland materials. Pupils across Years 3 to 6 have a good knowledge of the work of a wide range of artists from old masters to modern day artists. Pupils can, for example sketch patterns in the style of William Morris.
122. The teaching overall is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and in the most effective lessons, model the skills and techniques competently. This was shown to good effect in a Year 3 and 4 lesson where the teacher produced a sketch of two seated pupils. This enabled them to understand what aspects to include in a preliminary sketch and what was not required. Art lessons overall are well

organised and teachers encourage a purposeful working atmosphere in the classroom. The pupils respond well to this and motivation is maintained throughout lessons. Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils are very good, enabling learning to proceed with minimum disruptions. Teachers have clear learning objectives, the ability to communicate these effectively and, by skilful questioning, enable pupils to suggest ways of improving their own work thus encouraging the pupils to work with increased involvement. Some teachers use a review session at the end of lessons effectively to highlight good practice evident in a range of pupils' work, thus sharing good ideas as well as motivating the chosen pupils. Most teachers display a range of pupils' work well, even this early in the academic year and classroom and corridor displays are of good quality. The pupils display good attitudes to learning. They show interest in the topics they cover and take a pride in their completed tasks. Teachers encourage pupils of all ages to be responsible about equipment and to clear up efficiently after practical sessions. Thus most pupils display responsible attitudes even when not under the direct gaze of the teacher.

123. The curriculum is broad, suitably balanced and based on a national scheme. It has improved since the last inspection. The school has consulted a local education authority art advisor about the two year rolling programme it runs to cater for the mixed age classes in Years 3 to 6. Provision is being continually monitored to ensure that there is continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The support of the curriculum by relevant visits and visitors is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils for example, do tie-dyeing and photography as part of their three day residential visit. However the support of the subject by information and communication technology is capable of further development. Assessment procedures have been developed since the last inspection, initiated at the start of this term, and these are now satisfactory. However the use of these assessment procedures in forward planning is not yet evident. The subject co-ordinator is well organised but her role has not yet widened to include the total monitoring of teaching, learning, curriculum and standards. As a result she is not in a position to advise other staff on what needs to be done to further improve classroom practice and pupils' standards. Accommodation and resources are adequate. Art contributes well to the pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards are at the level expected at age seven and eleven and achievements are satisfactory for pupils of all abilities. Standards are similar to the last inspection as a result of satisfactory teaching and secure management of the subject area.
125. By the age of seven pupils understand the process of plan, do and review. They have experienced working with an appropriate range of materials and use relevant tools adequately. In Year 1, for example, pupils plan and make a playground. They explore fruit and vegetables, cutting and evaluating them for taste and smell. They understand that by the use of levers, for example, parts can be made to move, as in Year 2 where pupils link together parts of a miniature crocodile using split pins and use wooden splints to make the

crocodiles move. They develop an understanding of mechanisms through the construction of simple vehicles with wheels and axles. They develop their skills with needle and thread, planning and constructing 'Joseph's Coat'.

126. By age eleven pupils' skills and knowledge have developed to the stage where and they successfully design and make a prototype and then the actual article. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils plan and make their money containers in paper before attempting the final textile product. Pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of package design and graphics to the appeal of everyday products. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson the pupils considered the use of colour and graphics on everyday items like cornflakes before designing a product cover themselves. Pupils use their design and construction skills well in support of other curriculum areas. In Years 5 and 6 pupils plan and construct Tudor houses, effectively linking design and technology with history. The development of pupils' skills in food technology is hampered by the lack of cooking facilities until the school moves into its new building later this year. However, the follow up to the Year 5 and 6 evaluation of a variety of breads is planned to include a visit to a retail outlet where some hands on experience may be possible. Overall, pupils including those with special educational needs make sound progress.
127. Only one design and technology lesson was observed during the week of the inspection so no overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. The lesson observed was of good quality producing appropriately good learning on the part of the pupils.
128. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now based on the national scheme. However at Key Stage 2, teachers have not adequately addressed the issue of continuity and progression of skills with the mixed age classes and so this is not ensured for these pupils. Planning and evaluation sheets are designed by individual class teachers and are not structured to encourage pupils to be progressively more analytical in the appraisal of their own designs. Effective links are made with other curriculum areas as with history in Year 2 where pupils plan and make models of an Anderson Shelter, but the support of the subject by information and communication technology is still limited. The assessment procedures have been limited to the annual report to parents and, as at the time of the last inspection, no whole school approach to this has yet been initiated. The role of the subject co-ordinator in the monitoring of teaching, learning and the development of the curriculum is also under-developed as at the time of the last inspection. Resources are adequate, however they are housed in a variety of cupboards around the school and the contents of these are not clearly labelled making the teachers' access to relevant items difficult. One set of tools is kept in each classroom, which does not make the best use of these resources.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Pupils' achievements in geography are satisfactory and by the age of seven and eleven they acquire sound knowledge and skills and attain the standards expected for their age. Standards are similar to the last inspection and reflect the satisfactory teaching and secure curriculum planning.
130. By the age of seven most pupils have made sound progress in knowledge and understanding of their own environment, and are developing an awareness of the wider world. They take a keen interest in Barnaby Bear's travels highlighted on a world map. Pupils in Year 2 compare two localities, the Scottish island of Struay and their own town of Ware, listing the differences between the two places. Year 1 pupils recognise some of the features of their own locality and illustrate their homes as part of a class project.
131. By the age of eleven pupils build on their knowledge and understanding of places. A strong feature in developing pupils' interest in the subject is the good use of varying locations in the area of investigative fieldwork. Pupils can apply their skills and methods they have learned when they study overseas locations such as Kenya and Egypt. These studies contribute strongly to the pupils' understanding of other countries and give rise to good work in other subject areas. Pupils develop an understanding of physical processes such as the stages of a river and they compare different types of settlements. They demonstrate that they are familiar with the location of continents and can name countries around the world.
132. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour enhance learning in geography. The majority are keen to contribute to discussions about the topics studied and work hard to produce well presented topic folders. They cooperate well when working in groups so that such sessions are productive.
133. The quality of teaching seen is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. Teachers' secure knowledge of the subject ensures that the pupils acquire sound factual knowledge, while skilful questioning encourages geographical enquiry. Teachers manage the lessons well and support pupils' learning by effective monitoring of activities. They have high expectations of their pupils in terms of behaviour and use of correct geographical terms to compare locations they are studying. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils compare facilities and life in Bombay with their own surroundings. Teachers ensure that there is appropriate emphasis on environmental issues. Year 5 and 6 pupils study the impact of a new cinema in Ware and using maps of the town suggest suitable locations for this facility. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when work is planned and supported to meet their needs. Lessons contribute to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. An example of this is shown when they read about local, national and international issues and use their good map reading skills to place these events in context using a variety of maps. Teachers ensure that lessons are well planned and that good use is made of resources, although further use could be made of information and communication technology to research and report on the topic set.
134. The new curriculum co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well. The developing stock of learning resources stimulates pupils' interest and promotes learning. The coordinator has been given time to

monitor the quality of geography teaching and has identified areas for development . Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in both curricular planning and assessment of pupils' progress. The geography curriculum is broad and well balanced and in line with National Curriculum Programmes of Study. However, the planning for pupils of differing abilities and the lack of work at a suitable level for higher attaining pupils is still an area for development in the mixed aged classes at Key Stage 2.

HISTORY

135. Standards in history at age seven and eleven are in line with the expectation for their age and pupils achieve satisfactorily in all years. The standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Good teaching is now in place but is being counteracted by weaknesses in planning which limits the challenge given to pupils in Years 3 to 6. As a result standards have not yet risen further.
136. During the period of the inspection history lessons were observed mainly in Years 3 to 6 and the Year 1 class. Further judgement on the quality of provision, standards and achievement are based on an analysis of teachers' plans, pupils' work, displays and discussions with the co-ordinator.
137. By the age of seven, pupils compare life in the past with life now, they learn about famous people such as Florence Nightingale and events such as World War two. They begin to appreciate the importance of looking at first hand evidence and carefully handle items such as photographs and artefacts from the school's collection. For instance pupils look at buildings in Ware and pictures of buildings now and in the past and identify differences and sequences into time periods. This has also added to the development of their sense of chronology as they locate people and events on the class time line. Year 2 pupils make good use of the visit to the Imperial War Museum in London, discussing the need for rationing and the evacuation of children from the cities to the country.
138. By the age of eleven, pupils in Year 6 demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and other countries. In Year 3 and 4 classes pupils' enquiry skills develop as they engage in a study of aspects of life in Ancient Egypt and Greece. Pupils develop skills in researching historical facts from books, artefacts, pictures and use computers to interrogate CD-ROMs. The results of pupils' work are shared with other pupils through presentations and displays. The understanding and knowledge they acquire in Years 3 and 4 are then well used in Years 5 and 6 where pupils look at the lives of the Victorians. They research and write about child labour and the impact that significant individuals made in both work and transport on the lives of men, women and children. They use a range of secondary resources, accounts and pictures of Victorian working conditions and the use of child labour – writing their accounts of how children were exploited. They explore malt making in Ware as part of a local history study, talking to older residents to add to their knowledge of past events effectively promoting their research skills.

139. Since the last inspection the school has produced a history scheme of work based on recent national guidelines, which has improved the continuity of Programmes of Study across the school. Teachers plan together and have high expectations; although planning does not always have clear objectives for learning at different levels in mixed age classes.
140. The teaching of history is good, as is teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils' attitude and behaviour in lessons reflect the good relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils. Classrooms are well managed and resources are used well to support pupils' learning. Teachers value pupils' contributions to questions and mark and assess their work well. However, some teachers make insufficient use of pupils' previous work to plan for specific learning objectives in lesson plans. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when planning provides the support needed, although this is not always achieved. The pupils' presentation of work is usually good. For example, Year 6 work on Tudor kings and queens within folders containing a range of work including some information obtained from CD-ROM.
141. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The last inspection identified progression and assessment as areas for development, which are being addressed. The school has adopted the scheme of work from the Qualification and Curriculum Authority, which provides a good basis for teachers' planning and progression in pupils' learning. Assessment is now undertaken at the end of each topic. Resources are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. At the last inspection, standards were well below expectations at age seven and below expectations at age eleven. Standards are much improved. The provision of a computer suite just over a year ago and in-service training, which has raised the level of expertise of some of the class teachers, has had a profound impact on pupils' learning with them achieving well during this period so that the pupils at age seven and eleven attain standards in line with the expectation for their age.
143. By age seven most pupils access the relevant systems, understand that a variety of information can be entered and stored on the computer and save and print out their work. Pupils in Year 1, for example, produce 'Class News', which contains their reports of a visit to St Albans. They enter and organise text, using the shift key to produce capital letters and colour change to enhance their work. They use an appropriate art program to produce simple designs and pictures. Pupils in Year 1, for example, produce a scene from 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and Year 2 produce their rainbow fishes and pictures in the style of Mondrian, making appropriate choices and showing reasonable mouse control in the process. Pupils understand that information technology can be used to control movement but no use of the floor turtles was evident during the time of the inspection. Pupils understand that situations can be practised and explored during simulations.
144. By age eleven pupils use a variety of fonts and sizes of fonts in the presentation of their texts and can combine appropriate text with pictures, as

for example in the presentation of the results of their research on Henry VIII. In Years 5 and 6 they can save and print out their work. Pupils understand that information can be stored in a database as in a Year 3 and 4 lesson where pupils became detectives and used a multiple search in order to identify a particular dog from information given in a short story. They can use appropriate software to present data in bar charts and pie charts as in Years 5 and 6 after a class survey on favourite items of food and drink required for a party. Spreadsheets are used to record data and find totals, for example, costs of items in a supermarket. They use a limited selection of CD ROMS to access information in other areas of the curriculum, for example, history and science and can instruct a screen turtle to perform simple movements. Pupils have their own e-mail addresses but have not yet used e-mail as a means of communication, although this is planned for later in the academic year, as is the use of sensors to gather data.

145. The quality of teaching seen in the inspection was very good at Key Stage 1 and sound and good in equal proportions at Key Stage 2. It has improved since the last inspection when teachers' knowledge and confidence was felt to be a major weakness. Teachers plan lessons well and explain and model tasks clearly. A good example of this was in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher showed the pupils how to choose the appropriate printer in order to print off their coloured pictures of rainbow fishes. This enabled pupils to copy a new skill, to print off their work before the end of the lesson and feel motivated by what they had produced. In effective lessons pupils are encouraged to experiment and try out different effects. In Year 1, for example the pupils were encouraged to try the spray can to see what effects they could achieve in their 'bear hunt' pictures. Pupils in general are motivated by their lessons, behave well and work hard at the prescribed tasks. Teachers make good use of their timetabled weekly lesson in the computer suit in order to raise the skills of the pupils, however tasks are not yet focussed sufficiently well towards the range of pupils in the mixed age classes in Years 3 to 6. The needs of the more able pupils or those with further advanced skills are not as well addressed and lower attaining pupils require much teacher support. Pupils are expected to work well together in pairs when this is appropriate and this they generally do well. However there is a marked restlessness in lessons towards the end of the day when the suite has become hot and ventilation is inadequate. Teachers use a limited amount of information and communication technology in support of other areas of the curriculum, but this needs further development before it is at an acceptable level. Over time the quality of teaching has been satisfactory resulting in sound learning and pupils achieving standards in line with their capabilities. However, the improved teaching seen in the inspection gives optimism that standards will show further improvement especially if staff develop a clear view of where standards ought to be with the pupils they teach.
146. The information technology curriculum is broad and balanced and based on a national scheme, covering all strands of work outlined in the National Curriculum well. However, the school has not completely addressed the problem of continuity and progression of skills in the mixed age classes at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator is well organised and has worked with the local education authority on an appropriate assessment procedure. This was

established within the school just before the inspection, so the use of the procedures in monitoring pupils' achievement or in teachers planning was not evident. Some samples of pupils' work are kept but these do not cover the range of pupils within the school and are not yet in an organised form. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed since the time of the last inspection but is not developed fully in its monitoring function. Resources have been improved and there is now a well-equipped information and communication technology area. The development of the subject in the support of other curriculum areas has already started and the stock of relevant software is being built up. Staff have worked hard to improve the subject provision since the last inspection.

MUSIC

147. Standards in music are in line with expectations at both age seven and eleven and achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the last inspection. Standards overall have been maintained because of the satisfactory teaching and secure curriculum organisation. Standards in singing have fallen because not enough effort has been given to maintaining standards as teachers have been concentrating on other areas of the curriculum.
148. In Year 2, pupils learn quickly the definitions of dynamics (loud/quiet), tempo (fast/slow) and pitch (high/low). They use their own voices, clapping and different classroom objects to explore these elements of sound. They are receptive, pick up these ideas well and develop on their understanding satisfactorily. They perform to satisfactory levels and follow the teacher's lead competently. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen to pieces of music such as "Reflections on the Water" by Debussy and Bizet's "Jeux D'Enfants". Whilst watching video scenes that match the music, they offer suggestions about the mood of the music and how it matches the movement of the animals; underwater scenes and penguins. This appraisal of the music is satisfactory but the pupils fail to use technical terms such as those introduced in the Year 2 lesson. In a follow up lesson only a few pupils were able to carry a short piece of music in their mind and suggest animal movements. Most found this imaginative and abstract idea difficult. Older pupils understand the concept of rhythm and repeating patterns. They clap out these rhythms accurately and their attainment is in line with expectations. They begin by repeating simple rhythms through clapping. They recognise patterns quickly and make up increasingly complex rhythms. By the end of the lesson they are able to follow a simple score in five parts and perform a short piece as a 'clapping orchestra'. This represents good progress within the lesson. They demonstrate, through their discussions that they know about rhythm, timbre and pitch.
149. Singing was reported to be a strong feature at the last inspection. The standards of singing by the choir are good in the choir practice and when performing in the acts of collective worship. The quality of singing by the whole school, for example in the daily acts of collective worship, is only of an average standard. This is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. Occasionally, singing in assembly is unsatisfactory. It lacks enthusiasm and not enough pupils join in. Standards of whole school singing in the hymn practice are satisfactory with some good features. When they focus on singing, pupils sing with expression and use dynamic elements well. Pitch is evident and pupils keep in tune when singing both high and low notes. Words to the songs are clear. However, they need encouragement to perform well when singing is a part of another activity and not the main focus.
150. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall. This is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection when pupils' attitudes were good and they enjoyed singing. There is now a general lack of enthusiasm for singing in assemblies, but the choir is enthusiastic and keen to perform. When lessons are interesting and stimulating, pupils show pleasure in their work, they listen to music carefully during listening and appraising sessions and are enthusiastic to answer and to contribute. They were disappointed when the session came to an end. Where the content of lessons is difficult and the pupils are not enabled to understand and are unclear about what to do, their behaviour becomes less satisfactory. They lose attention, begin to be mischievous and the quality of learning deteriorates. Older pupils are sometimes silly at the beginning of the lesson but soon settle down

into the activity and behaviour improves to good. Members of the choir have very good attitudes. They listen carefully, follow instructions and sing very well.

151. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good and very good teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers generally have a satisfactory subject knowledge on notation, rhythm and cyclic patterns for example and are able to explain clearly so that pupils understand. However, there are occasions when the teachers miss opportunities to introduce technical terms, especially when pupils have a clear idea in their mind and would be receptive to this information. Planning is satisfactory overall, although sometimes the scheme of work is not sufficiently adapted to be appropriate to these pupils' needs, age and capabilities. The task for a Year 3 and 4 class was not appropriate as it was presented and the abstract nature of the task made it difficult for pupils of this age. Where teaching is better, there is a clear opening to the lesson and learning objective made very clear. Teachers have high expectations which are made clear, for example in a Year 2 lesson, technical musical terms and subject specific vocabulary was introduced at an appropriate point in the lesson. This was a development on the content of a Year 3 and 4 lesson and this illustrates the lack of progression. Good opportunity was provided for pupils to experiment with sound. Good management of pupils meant that they did not take advantage of the freedom, but made good use of the opportunity and the quality of learning was good. There was some very good teaching Years 3 to 6. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, the lesson started with a lack of enthusiasm to learn. The teacher did not comment but made the activities, based on rhythm, beat and pitch interesting and challenging. No use was made of tapes or musical instruments but the teacher relied on her own enthusiasm and originality. Within a short time, the teacher had stimulated the pupils and they all took part enthusiastically. This is very good teaching and led to brisk learning.
152. At the time of the previous inspection, there were criticisms of the curriculum. There was an equal opportunities issue, which commented on choir members missing other elements of the music curriculum. This has been addressed. One choir practice takes place in lesson time and one in lunchtime. While the choir has practice in lessons, other pupils have singing with other teachers. All pupils receive similar learning opportunities. The curriculum is based on government guidance, which is organised to provide a progressive development of skills, year on year. The school has mixed-age classes at Key Stage 2 and the school schemes are set into a two-year cycle. The school's curriculum plan in this subject cannot guarantee that the skill progression written into the scheme is preserved. Alternate years have different order of topics, for example rhythm and then rhythm and pulse. Other years have these in a different order. The curriculum co-ordinator maintains that the teachers adapt the recommendations, but in the lessons seen all elements of the lesson are taught to all pupils, without any allowance for age. Progression of skill development is not therefore evident in practice. This is a weakness. The school has planned to use information and communication technology. They have a programme, Music Explorer for composing, but this was not seen in use.
153. There is a programme to enrich and support the curriculum, which makes a useful contribution to standards. Peripatetic specialist tutors offer lessons in violin and trumpet. There are extra curricular opportunities for choir and recorders. Some visitors such as a string quartet and a wind ensemble have visited and performed for the pupils. There are opportunities for performances, including the Thursday morning assembly to which parents are invited.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Standards in physical education are similar to the last inspection and in line with expectations at both age seven and eleven but some pupils achieve standards that are above this. Standards in swimming are well above expectations as a result of specialist teaching. Based on their prior performance, pupils now achieve well because of the good teaching and an improved scheme of work. Standards are, therefore, set to rise further.
155. Pupils in Year 1 control movements as expected for their age. This can be seen in dance where they attain satisfactorily. They imitate the movements of a caterpillar quite imaginatively. Some find this more difficult, but persevere and achieve in time. Pupils generally move with good regard for others in the hall and they use space well. Pupils in Year 2 develop their basic game skills satisfactorily. Most pupils are able to catch a ball with precision. Pupils, who find games more challenging, make a good effort but often fail to catch the ball. Pupils work in small groups and throw and catch the balls over varying distances and directions. This provides a sound basis for

developing pupils' games skills. Pupils' satisfactory achievement continues throughout the junior classes. By the time pupils are in the upper years they are attaining standards that are expected for pupils at this age. In gymnastics pupils are able to hold a limited range of balances satisfactorily. Most competently move from one balance to another with increasing fluency, but they tend to copy each other and their movements lack originality and creativity, but some are good. Some pupils move awkwardly and without sufficient control, but these pupils try hard. Pupils generally use space well and respond to prompts to change their movements with satisfactory control. Pupils' games skills are sound. Most have developed satisfactory levels of invasion skills for games such as touch rugby, football and netball and some pupils do this well. They are able to put these skills into practice effectively in large game situations.

156. The very high standards in swimming reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. In Years 3 and 4 pupils at all stages of development achieve very well and most have developed skills that are well advanced for their age. Pupils are confident in the water, and even those pupils who have never been in a swimming pool until a few weeks ago, are already confidently jumping into the pool and going under the surface without fear. All pupils feel comfortable in the water and they make very good progress in developing confidence and swimming skills at whatever level, achieving very high standards when set against their recent skill level.
157. Pupils' response in lessons is good; this has also been maintained since the previous inspection. These vary from satisfactory to very good. Occasionally some pupils, mainly older boys, take time to settle into the lesson and this affects their performance. However, they eventually respond well and soon get into the activities and take the tasks seriously. When pupils' response is better, they behave well, listen carefully and respond to instructions and directions well. They take their work seriously and they try to constantly improve their performance. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in swimming are very good. Pupils at all levels of attainment enjoy their swimming opportunity and they meet the challenging activities with determination and very good effort. Behaviour is very good; pupils listen intently, carry out teachers' instructions quickly and listen to their advice.
158. The quality of teaching is good. Some very good teaching was also seen during the inspection. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory. Good opening activities effectively focus pupils' attention on the learning objective of the lesson, which is clearly stated so pupils are clear about what they are doing. Teachers and the learning support assistants often provide a good level of support through demonstration. Vigorous beginnings to lessons set a suitable tone for the rest of the lesson. Pupils are controlled well and teachers' management of pupils establishes good levels of behaviour and pupil involvement. Teachers take care to involve all pupils in physical activity throughout the lessons and ask pupils at all levels of attainment to demonstrate their skills. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding in the subject and they use a good range of activities and quick pace to encourage. The teaching of swimming is very good. A professional swimming coach and the school's teaching and support staff teach pupils. All have high expectations and they help pupils to achieve very well. They are supportive to all levels of swimmers so pupils feel confident and comfortable in the water. The rapid pace to the lessons helps pupils to learn quickly.
159. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was criticised because there was no physical education scheme of work. This has been addressed and the school now works to Government curriculum guidance. The curriculum fully meets requirements and all aspects of the National Curriculum are provided. The curriculum is good, because there is a good level of enrichment, a wide range of sporting opportunities and a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils at Key Stage 2. The school is part of the Hertfordshire Action School's Initiative that extends opportunities and provides in-service training and development. Professional football and rugby coaches work with pupils to improve standards. This development is as a result of good management by the curriculum co-ordinator.