

INSPECTION REPORT

BOWMANSGREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Albans, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117187

Headteacher: Mrs S M Kirkbride

Reporting inspector: Mrs Ruth Frith
2490

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 December 2000

Inspection number: 224689

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Telford Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Heather Miller

Date of previous inspection: 27th April – 1st May 1998

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Mrs R Frith 2490	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it?
		English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
			School's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed
Mr J Baker 9770	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr R Willey 28320	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		Science	
		Design and technology	
		Information and communication technology	
Mr G Tompsett 30717		Mathematics	
		Geography	
		History	
Mr P Garner 31166	Team inspector	Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Religious education	

Ms H Rask 30266	Team inspector	English	
		Art and design	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bowmansgreen Primary School is a community school for boys and girls of all abilities aged 4 to 11 years. There are 351 pupils on roll including 17 children aged under five. The school is situated in the Hertfordshire village of London Colney on the outskirts of St. Albans. It serves families from a variety of backgrounds and most pupils live close to the school in either privately owned or social housing. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is broadly in line with the national average although not all families are claiming their entitlement. On entry to the reception classes, children's standards are broadly average in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social skills when compared with children nationally but below the Hertfordshire average. Most have had some form of pre-school experience either in a nursery or playgroup. Over 16 per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and over 11 per cent come from homes where English is not the first language. There is an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the majority of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bowmansgreen Primary School has many strengths and is popular in the local community. It offers a happy learning environment where children get on well with the staff and each other and are keen to participate. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have experienced some disruption to their learning over the last two years due to staff changes and this has depressed their attainment. Pupils in Key Stage 2 generally make good progress, particularly those in Year 6, and reached above average standards of attainment in mathematics and science last year by the time they left school. The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching whilst also developing the curriculum, has been very well managed by the headteacher and senior staff over the last two years and their leadership has brought about significant improvements. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good or better in two-thirds of lessons. Finances are well managed and used effectively to improve the quality of provision, including staffing, resources and the environment. Taking all these factors into account, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of their last year in school are above average in mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good in the reception classes and overall at Key Stage 2, with very good teaching in Year 6.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good, and this reflects the school's commitment to inclusive education.
- The school promotes and achieves very high rates of attendance. Staff display good levels of care and this, in turn, results in pupils having good attitudes to school. Pupils arrive on time and are keen to take part in school activities, including those out of formal school hours.
- The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education contributes to their good behaviour, relationships and personal development.
- Parents have positive views about the school and are very pleased with the education it provides. Communication with parents is good.
- Management and leadership of the school are very good. The headteacher, staff and governors are strongly committed to raising standards.

What could be improved

- Attainment in English at Key Stage 1, particularly in writing.
- The consistency and quality of teaching at Key Stage 1.
- The time allocated to teaching science at Key Stage 1.
- Accommodation for outdoor play and resources for those pupils in the reception classes.
- Location of the school library and the provision of books.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last full inspection of the school took place in April 1998 when, although the school was judged to be giving its pupils an acceptable standard of education, it nevertheless had serious weaknesses in the teaching and progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 and in its curriculum provision and assessment procedures. Since then, the senior managers have responded well and the school has made significant improvements in many areas of the curriculum and assessment, and addressed successfully the key issues identified in the inspection report. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies is starting to make an impact on overall standards of attainment in both English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment has improved in information and communication technology and design and technology at both key stages and in art and design, geography, physical education and religious education at Key Stage 2. This is a result of a much improved curriculum which is planned to meet the variety of needs within each class, and better teaching. All subjects now have appropriate schemes of work which ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on systematically. Work is now better matched to the pupils' prior attainment, and the good support provided for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language ensures that they make similar progress to that of their peers. Assessment of the pupils' work and attainment has improved in English, mathematics and science and the information gained from this is used well when planning lessons. All statutory requirements are now met.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	B	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	B	B	
science	C	D	B	B	

These results show that in 2000 the performance of pupils in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests was average in English and above average in mathematics and science when compared with all schools nationally and also when compared to schools with pupils of a similar background. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement overall in English, mathematics and science has been below the national trend but this masks a significant improvement since 1998 in all three subjects.

Evidence from this inspection confirms that children make good progress in the reception classes and by the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority reach the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 2 is below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics and science. Although standards are generally improving, these pupils' learning is being affected by the lack of permanent teaching staff. Pupils in Year 6 are making good and often very good progress due to the high quality of teaching. Currently, most are at least attaining levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science and a significant minority above this. Pupils are generally on course to reach the targets set in English and mathematics and any differences in attainment from previous years is related to the specific group of pupils rather than any deficiencies in teaching or provision. Throughout both key stages there is an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and although they make good progress, sometimes this is insufficient to bring them up to the levels of attainment expected for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested in what they do. Most are keen to talk about their work and enthusiastically take part in all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In lessons, very good for children under five and generally good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils behave well when moving around the school. The small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour are well supported by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children quickly settle into school routines and develop in confidence as they progress through the school. By the time they leave school they are responsible learners. Pupils play harmoniously and work well together.
Attendance	Very high in comparison with other schools and significantly improved since the last inspection. Lessons start promptly and no time is wasted.

The pupils' good attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships and very high levels of attendance provide a good basis for their learning and make a positive contribution to the standards that they achieve. Staff have high expectations of their pupils who, in turn, respond well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Across the school, the quality of teaching is excellent in 3 per cent of lessons, very good in 18 per cent, good in 44 per cent, satisfactory in 32 per cent and unsatisfactory in 3 per cent. This quality of teaching represents a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the very good management and leadership, which have focussed on this area for development. The teaching of children under five is good, and particularly effective in developing their personal and social skills and their attitudes to learning. These strengths are generally built upon successfully in Key Stage 1 but over the last two years there has been some fragmentation of the pupils' learning due to the lack of permanent teaching staff. This has made it more difficult for senior managers to ensure consistency of good teaching across Years 1 and 2. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall and very good in Year 6, where the teachers have particularly high expectations and develop the pupils' learning at a good pace. Across the school, teachers' planning and the quality and use of their assessment in English, mathematics and science are good. Teachers are generally encouraging and this results in most pupils becoming confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their own points of view. Teachers have adopted the literacy and numeracy strategies well and many use the format of these sessions when teaching other subjects. In the best lessons, they help pupils to understand the relevance of what they are doing by sharing with them the learning objectives for the lesson and encouraging them to review their achievements at the end of the session. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is generally good, although pupils in Key Stage 1 do not receive sufficient opportunity to practise their writing in subjects other than English. Teachers generally meet the needs of all pupils well. The adoption of strategies to improve the learning of higher attaining pupils has resulted in more pupils attaining a level higher than that expected for their age at age seven and eleven. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good and often very good. This results in them making good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language is generally good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Generally good but insufficient time is allocated for science at Key Stage 1 and the outdoor play curriculum for the under fives is unsatisfactory. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers and support staff ensure that activities match the need of all children, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils make similar progress to others in the class due to effective teaching and support. This ensures that they have good access to the full curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal education through the development of social and moral responsibilities is good and results in pupils' good behaviour. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education is also good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff have good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and make good provision for their welfare, health and safety.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard since the last inspection to ensure that pupils experience a broad curriculum. As well as successfully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, and other initiatives they provide a range of activities which develop pupils' personal skills well. The school's partnership with parents is good and staff work hard to maintain this.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good and a major factor in the way the school has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher play a key role in the promotion of high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their roles well and are now fully involved in the school development planning process. They support and work with staff effectively and have a clear understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good in analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the school and in deciding what needs to be done next.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages and uses its resources well and priorities for development are appropriately financed. Correct tendering procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers to ensure that class sizes are not too large but the school has had to rely on a series of supply teachers recently. This has affected the consistency of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1. Support staff are well trained and the good support they provide is a contributory factor in the pupils' learning. Although the accommodation is adequate overall, in some instances it has an adverse effect on the quality of education provided. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but the sufficiency and quality of resources for the under-fives are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • Children like going to school and make good progress. • The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching staff if they have any questions or problems. • Teachers are good at supporting pupils and helping them to become more responsible and mature. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency and quality of homework. • A wider range of activities outside formal lessons.

Inspectors support the positive views held by parents. However, they do not concur with the views of a minority of parents who think that the consistency and quality of homework are unsatisfactory. Inspectors believe that the provision of homework is satisfactory overall and effectively supports the work done in school. The inspectors understand and appreciate the parents' views on the provision of extra-curricular activities, but when judged over the whole school year and when visits and activities outside of formal school hours are taken into account, provision is judged to be very good. During the inspection, children aged under five were observed thoroughly enjoying a dance club after school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the reception classes with a range of abilities and experiences and most have broadly average levels of attainment in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social skills when compared with children nationally. When compared with children of the same age in Hertfordshire their attainment is below average. A few children enter with little or no spoken English but make good progress in communicating with adults and other children. Overall, children make good progress due to their good attitudes to school and the good quality of teaching. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development.
2. Results of the 2000 standard assessment tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds indicate that in comparison with all schools and with schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils' attainment was well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in the 2000 standard assessment tests, when compared with all schools and with schools with pupils of a similar background, was average in English and above average in mathematics and science.
3. The school has an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a few pupils join the school with little or no spoken English, which makes communication difficult initially. Although these pupils make good gains in their learning, sometimes they are insufficient to bring them up to the standards expected for their age. Forty-seven per cent of the pupils in the current Year 3 who undertook the National Curriculum tests last May are identified as having special educational needs and this, together with the frequent changes of teachers over the last two years, have significantly impacted on the standards which they attained.
4. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement overall in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 has been below the national trend but this masks a significant improvement since 1998 in all three subjects. The school's tracking system, which indicates the gains that pupils make in their learning, highlights that the vast majority of pupils meet the challenging targets set by the school although in some cases this does not equate with the national levels of attainment. The school exceeded its targets at the end of Key Stage 2 for English by 12 per cent and in mathematics by 9 per cent. Pupils' standards are significantly raised by the quality of very good teaching during their last year in school.
5. Evidence from this inspection confirms that, overall, the standards achieved in English by pupils in the current Year 2 are below average and in Year 6 they are average. The introduction of the literacy strategy has had an impact in the school by helping to focus teaching in English, particularly reading and writing. This is enhancing the standards achieved overall, but progress in Year 2 has been restricted by staffing issues and the inconsistent development of spelling and handwriting across the key stage. There is evidence that standards are generally improving in speaking, listening, reading and writing, but some pupils receive insufficient opportunities to write at length in other subjects of the curriculum than English in Key stage 1 and this affects their

progress. Standards of literacy are below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2.

6. Standards of attainment for pupils in mathematics are average for seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds. The introduction of the numeracy strategy is beginning to impact on the progress which pupils make and the standards that they achieve. Pupils get regular practice in developing and consolidating their number skills and the daily mental mathematics sessions aids their thinking. The analysis of pupils' work revealed that the demands and expectations made on some of the pupils in Year 2 are low and the quality of work and rate of progress could be higher. The heightened pace of work and additional challenge which teachers are able to provide in sessions when pupils are placed in groups of similar ability, are significant factors in improving standards at Key Stage 2. Standards of numeracy are average at both key stages.
7. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils reach average standards in science. The weaknesses in experimental and investigative science identified in the previous inspection are being addressed, but some issues remain at Key Stage 1. Staff are aware of this and are currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure that an appropriate balance of activities is provided to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. There is a low volume of written work which reflects the restricted time allocated to the subject. Much of the work in Key Stage 2 is focussed on experimental and investigative science and this is improving overall attainment.
8. Pupils make good gains in learning in information and communication technology throughout the school and at the end of both key stages reach standards that are above those expected for pupils of the same age nationally. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the school's commitment to raising attainment in this subject. The school's provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably and the development of the computer suite provides improved facilities for pupils, since teachers are now able to teach specific skills to a large group more easily and get pupils to consolidate their learning by working in pairs. The adoption of a new scheme of work and the development of teachers' knowledge and skills has also enhanced provision and consequently raised pupils' attainment.
9. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education. They achieve satisfactory standards in physical education by the end of Key Stage 1 and above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. This shows an improvement in design and technology at both key stages and in art and design, geography, physical education and religious education at Key Stage 2. This is a result of a much improved curriculum which is planned to meet the variety of needs within each class and better teaching. All subjects now have appropriate schemes of work which ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on systematically. Work is now better matched to the pupils' prior attainment.
10. No significant difference was noted in the progress of boys and girls during the inspection but data from previous years indicates that, for example, boys were achieving less well than girls in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. The school has already taken action to try to improve standards, particularly for the boys, and early indications are that it is beginning to be successful. The school has identified the need to continue to monitor this and use the information gained from tests to see if any clear differences continue.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets

identified in their individual education plans at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. They receive good in-class support and by the time they leave the school most reach standards in line with their abilities.

12. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress towards their individual targets when additional support is provided. This is particularly noticeable when pupils are in the earliest stages of learning English where language acquisition is most rapid. Sometimes progress is very good as in the reception classes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. Virtually all like school, are eager to attend and take part enthusiastically in all aspects of school life. Their attitudes to learning are good overall. Most pupils are attentive, respond well to questions, undertake tasks enthusiastically and enjoy lessons. For example, in a reception English lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the story "Santa's Busy Day" particularly when opening the flaps in a book to find Santa's clothes.
14. Pupils are enthusiastic about the very good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school and are particularly enthusiastic about the choir who sang at a Millennium Celebration at the Royal Albert Hall. Many take part in these activities, which make a positive contribution to both their academic and personal development.
15. Behaviour is good overall and very good in the lessons of children under five. Pupils are aware of the high standards expected and nearly all respond well to discipline which creates an orderly environment conducive to learning. However, in Year 3/Year 4 classes there is occasionally some disruptive behaviour which has an adverse effect on learning. Pupils behave well in assembly, the dining room and when moving around the school. They play harmoniously together in the playgrounds with older pupils playing ball catching games and younger ones playing chasing games.
16. There were no signs of aggressive behaviour or any forms of oppressive behaviour anywhere in the school and there has been only one exclusion in the past year. Pupils are very friendly, courteous and polite to adults, show respect for other people's property and are very aware of their environment. For example, they worked very hard creating an environmental area and flowerbeds, which they tend.
17. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work. They usually show an interest and they behave well. Most persevere with tasks and show appropriate levels of concentration. If they encounter difficulties, a few tend to lose their concentration and their attention wanders but they are aided well by adults and soon return to their task. The growing number of pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants and usually take a full and productive part in lessons.

18. Pupils' personal development is good, they mature as they progress through the school and willingly take on increasing responsibility. For example, reception pupils carry out simple monitor duties and tidy up after themselves; Year 3/Year 4 pupils carry out a range of classroom jobs and Year 6 pupils carry out whole school duties. These include looking after Key Stage 1 classes during wet playtimes, house captain duties and answering the phone at lunchtime. All classes have representatives on the School Council who take their responsibilities very seriously and this has a significant impact on the school. For example, they banned football in the playground and suggested the creation of the environmental area.
19. Relationships between pupils are good. They play together harmoniously and work well in the classroom when in pairs or groups. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils worked very well together planning tests to establish conditions to prevent bread going mouldy. Relationships between pupils and staff are also good and pupils are secure and confident in their relationships with other adults. Staff give a positive lead in engendering good relationships, for example, by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity.
20. Pupils listen to the views of others and respect their feelings and values. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson about the Muslim faith pupils listened attentively whilst a Muslim boy read from the Quran. They were clearly moved by this and applauded spontaneously. Pupils also have a good awareness of the needs of others, use their initiative to come up with fund-raising ideas and raise considerable funds for charity.
21. Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools and authorised absence is below the national average. Nearly all pupils arrive at school on time. These factors have a positive effect on the standards attained. Registration is carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.
22. Since the last inspection, attendance has improved considerably and is now very high. Behaviour and personal development have improved and are now good. Good attitudes to learning and good relationships have been maintained.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and this has helped to enhance the progress which pupils make and the standards that they achieve. Across the school, teaching is excellent in 3 per cent of lessons, very good in 18 per cent, good in 44 per cent, satisfactory in 32 per cent and unsatisfactory in 3 per cent.
24. The quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and an important factor in the way children develop good personal and social skills, attitudes to learning and behaviour. Teachers in the reception classes have worked hard to change their practice in line with the new national recommendations and planning is good. Appropriate attention has been placed on settling children into the school environment and a good range of activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. A good balance is made between direct adult teaching and activities which encourage the children's ability to make choices and work independently or with each other. The classroom assistants give valuable support to children and work well with the teacher to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
25. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.

Differences in the key stages can be accounted for by the higher expectations of teachers at Key Stage 2, particularly with the older pupils, the better subject knowledge, better management of pupils and use of time, support staff and resources. Most of these factors are a result of the more stable staffing at Key Stage 2 and the inability of the school to secure teachers long-term at Key Stage 1.

26. Staff have undergone recent training and they focus well on developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Valuable support is targeted well towards those pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. This use of resources is proving successful in enhancing the progress that these pupils make, and the standards that they achieve. Teaching is usually good in literacy and numeracy lessons apart from in literacy at Key Stage 1, where it remains only satisfactory. Teaching is very good in Year 6. The placing of pupils into classes of pupils with similar levels of attainment for literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 is proving to be successful, as teachers find it easier to plan work that meets the range of abilities in the class.
27. Staff have focused on developing the pupils' skills in a coherent way and have successfully used the literacy and numeracy strategies to meet the needs of pupils. The literacy strategy helps to engender the positive responses that most pupils have to reading and this results in Year 6 pupils reading a range of texts with confidence. The numeracy strategy ensures that pupils get regular practice in using their mental mathematics skills. Additional booster classes have also been provided, which have supported the pupils' learning. Support teachers and assistants work effectively alongside class teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in these areas. Teachers are now at the stage to extend the opportunities for pupils to practise their writing more consistently across other subjects, particularly at Key Stage 1.
28. Across the school, teachers plan their lessons well. They share their expertise by planning in year groups and this ensures that pupils receive a similar experience regardless of which class they are in. In most lessons, appropriate learning objectives are identified and shared with pupils. This means that the pupils are clear about what they should learn and at the end of lessons have the opportunity to reflect on the progress that they have made. Increasingly so, teachers are using the structure of the literacy and numeracy sessions in other subject lessons and this is contributing positively to the overall quality of teaching. Many teachers start the lessons with a clear outline of what the class will be doing, recapitulate on previous learning and introduce new information and skills either through direct exposition or demonstration. The pupils then work either in groups or independently to consolidate this learning and come together as a class at the end of the lesson to share learning points and evaluate what they have done. Within this structure, a satisfactory range of teaching methods is used in Key Stage 1 and a good range at Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils gain a heightened appreciation of the language of Shakespearean English by reading texts as a whole class and quoting extracts from Shakespeare when presenting their ideas. This latter activity was particularly effective in developing the pupils' confidence, speaking and listening skills.

29. Across the school, teachers have improved their assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and use the information gained from this to plan work which matches the needs of the variety of pupils in each class. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is now very good. Targets are set regularly and pupils are helped to understand how they can improve their work by informative marking. Even the youngest children are clear about what they should be learning and make reference to their 'Rainbow Targets' which are coloured in as they make progress with their work in literacy and numeracy.
30. In the best lessons expectations are high, the pace of learning is good and pupils are challenged. In a reception class lesson, the teacher used the enthusiasm which the children had for Christmas to enhance their skills in recognising letters and the sound that they make. All were fully involved and most made very good progress, including those pupils who speak English as an additional language. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher's very good subject knowledge was used well to plan a lesson with activities which challenged pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils were keen to learn and they made very good progress with their understanding of square numbers and number patterns. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in two lessons. In these, the pace of learning was slow and consequently the pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. Too much time was spent managing behaviour.
31. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is good and this has a significant influence on how, in most cases, staff successfully manage the pupils in their care. Those pupils with challenging behaviour are well supported and consequently generally behave appropriately. Teachers are encouraging and supportive and this results in most pupils becoming confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their views. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well to encourage them at a day-to-day level to improve and work harder in lessons. The school's arrangements for the setting and marking of homework are satisfactory overall and the work extends and complements that done in school time.
32. Senior management has a clear view of the quality of teaching expected from staff and work hard to achieve it. Regular monitoring and evaluation takes place and teachers are helped to improve their practice through the setting of targets and the provision of staff development training. Improvements at Key Stage 1 have been affected by the changes in staffing brought about by the difficulties in finding permanent high quality teaching staff. The senior management team realises that many of the pupils have specific needs, which will only be fully addressed with the provision of consistent good teaching. Staff work hard to improve the environment by displaying pupils' work, for example, in art and design. This supports the children's sense of self-esteem and encourages them to work harder.
33. Pupils learning English as an additional language are generally well provided for by class teachers and support staff. Since support is usually provided in the mainstream classes, there is good liaison between class teachers and other staff at the level of planning, teaching and assessment. The good or better quality of teaching evident in most lessons results in those pupils who are learning English as an additional language making good progress and having equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. These pupils are also supported by the additional provision of sessions to encourage their literacy skills where parents are invited to work alongside the pupils.
34. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are correctly identified and teaching is well focused towards reaching the targets identified

in their individual education plans. Teachers and support staff work well together and provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning. They have good relationships with the pupils. This, in turn, helps pupils to feel secure in their learning and willing to try hard, in most cases.

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

35. Overall, the school provides a good range of learning opportunities for the pupils both during the school day and through a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school meets all the statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship, which is an improvement since the last inspection. All the policies and schemes of work are now in place and provide good working documents for the staff and help improve the quality of pupils' learning by ensuring continuity and appropriate curricular provision. This is a further improvement since the last inspection, which highlighted a lack of balance, consistency and coherence. The curricular provision ensures equality of opportunity for all its pupils, with those children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receiving good support and making a positive contribution to the lessons observed during the inspection. Girls attend soccer club, a number of boys attend the flourishing dance clubs and boys and girls are well represented in the thriving art club.
36. Staff plan the Foundation Stage effectively and set clear learning objectives to ensure that the foundation curriculum is covered appropriately and that a balance between practical and knowledge based activities is achieved in all lessons. They build upon what the pupils have learned during a wide variety of pre-school provision and use their professional judgement to determine the best ways to incorporate the more formal programme into the pupils' learning experiences. Outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory with too few opportunities for structured and unstructured play in a suitable environment. Overall, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
37. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the school provides a suitable range of learning opportunities that are allocated appropriate amounts of time within the framework of the timetable, apart from science at Key Stage 1, which receives only 6 per cent of the allocated teaching time. Information and communication technology provision is a particular strength of the school, with high quality equipment and good time allocation. English and mathematics are given a high priority and there are appropriate strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy throughout the school, although insufficient attention is given to improving writing, particularly at Key Stage 1. A variety of grouping strategies is used to teach English and mathematics to the older pupils and currently these are effective. Continual monitoring of these arrangements is essential to ensure they are effective. The curriculum includes appropriate provision for personal, social and health education as well as for sex education and for learning about the dangers of substance misuse.
38. Good procedures are in place for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs from baseline assessment in reception and referrals from pre-school establishments. The curriculum meets the requirements for all the pupils on the Code of Practice Special Educational Needs Register. Special needs classroom assistants provide very good quality support within the classrooms and in small withdrawal groups. Literacy and numeracy targets are identified within the individual educational plans and this support makes a positive impact on pupils' learning and contributes to the good progress and sometimes very good progress which they make. This is a further improvement since the last inspection.

39. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including science, French, parents' reading groups, booster classes, residential visits, art, music, sport, dance and information and communication technology. Activities are well attended and provide for a wide age range, with pupils from Reception to Year 6 participating. Pupils have the opportunity to visit local places of interest in addition to visiting cultural venues such as the National Gallery, singing at the Royal Albert Hall and preparing to perform at the Festival Hall.
40. A satisfactory range of links with the wider community contributes to the pupils' learning involving them in work for local charities, singing to groups in the community and visits to local places of worship reflecting a range of religions. The school has good relationships with local secondary schools and those organisations that provide pre-school provision.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good; it is fostered through assemblies and daily collective worship which gives the pupils time for reflection and an increased sense of wonderment at the distinctive features of major world religions. The school's ethos contributes to valuing and celebrating each other's achievements. In lessons, teachers value pupils' ideas across the curriculum, and give them appropriate praise and encouragement. Pupils are given opportunities to relate to the work of great authors and to come together as a community when performing in school productions.
42. Provision for moral development is good. The adults in the school present positive role models to the pupils and there are clear codes of behaviour. Pupils are taught to know right from wrong through their day-to-day interaction with staff and through lessons and assemblies, which indicate examples of good moral practice. Good use is made of lessons where pupils sit in a circle and debate important moral issues. The school's code of behaviour is prominently displayed in the hall and throughout the school. High standards of behaviour are expected and the pupils are aware of the rewards and sanctions supporting the policy.
43. Provision for pupils' social behaviour is good. The new personal, social, health education policy has provided structure and continuity with all classes having a time set aside weekly for discussion, debate and activities designed to improve awareness, stimulate debate and encourage responsible attitudes. The School Council has added a further dimension to the school's response to social education and the members of the council take their responsibilities very seriously. They are delighted to have made several decisions, which have improved the playground environment and have resolved some behavioural issues. Pupils are given roles of responsibility including those of House Captains, assisting with younger pupils and helping in community events. Increased opportunities for pupils to be more responsible for their learning and to further develop independent learning skills would be of benefit. There is a wide range of visits during the year that provide good opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their social relationships with each other and with their teachers and other adults. This is particularly strong in the school's residential visits.
44. Pupils' cultural development is good and enhanced by good displays throughout the school. There is good provision for multi-cultural studies within the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education, supported by visits to local museums, art galleries and places of worship. The pupils have undertaken work on the Ancient Greeks and detailed work by classical artists such as Titian and Picasso together with the construction of Diva lamps and the painting of Rangoli patterns to support

work done for Diwali celebrations. Pupils are also encouraged to celebrate the richness of both their own and other cultures, and a cultural contribution is made by the study of a number of faiths in religious education lessons. The different languages which pupils bring with them to school are held in high regard within the school and this is in evidence in displays. The school's positive ethos supports the personal development of pupils who are new to the school and are speakers of other languages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. This is a caring school which makes good provision overall to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. This provision includes very good child protection procedures, very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying and satisfactory procedures for ensuring a safe working environment. The very good child protection procedures include keeping the designated staff up-to-date through regular training and ensuring that all staff, including non-teaching staff, are fully conversant with the procedures. Also, there is good liaison with other agencies.
46. Procedures for promoting positive behaviour and eliminating bullying include discussion of the school rules at the beginning of the year, a very effective rewards system and appropriate sanction for unacceptable behaviour. Many classes use additional systems and posters to promote good behaviour. For example "Flunky Fred" in a Year 1 class and the "4 Cs" in a Year 3 / 4 class. Rewards include weekly nominations by class teacher for inclusion in the "Gold Book" for good or improved behaviour and celebration of this in assembly. Sanctions include warnings followed by loss of "Golden Time" where pupils have the opportunity to participate in activities which they particularly like. Staff act as good role models and leave pupils in no doubt concerning the high standards of behaviour expected. This results, for the main part, in a calm atmosphere in lessons which is conducive to good learning.
47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance are good. Attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored and unauthorised absence is followed up appropriately. Ensuring regular attendance and punctuality are part of the Home/School Agreement and parents are reminded about these aspects regularly through newsletters.
48. Procedures for ensuring a safe working environment are satisfactory overall, with day-to-day issues being reported to the site manager either verbally or via his noticeboard. He rectifies these issues with appropriate urgency and also checks the premises daily to ensure they are safe before pupils arrive. The governing body is appropriately involved in health and safety and its buildings committee carries out regular checks of the premises. However there are a number of potential hazards including uneven paving slabs, muddy areas and flooding after heavy rain. Also parents, despite regular warnings from the school, are causing a potential hazard by parking in the restricted area outside the school and, in some cases, driving to the front door to drop off their children.
49. Pupils' personal safety, personal hygiene and general well being are covered well in personal, social and health education lessons. In addition these messages are reinforced by outside speakers such as the police and the fire service. Also appropriate visits are arranged such as Year 5 visiting "Hazard Alley" where pupils are encouraged to react to potential hazards.
50. Pupils receive good personal support and guidance which makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Pastoral care is the responsibility of class

teachers who, together with support staff, know their pupils well, are sensitive to their needs and thus able to provide good personal support and guidance. The good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have and there are opportunities in personal, social and health education sessions to discuss problems. Records of pupils' personal development are kept in each pupil's National Curriculum record pack and the most diligent members of staff up-date these details termly.

51. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the caring environment of the school. The school has efficient procedures in place for identifying pupils who may have a special need, either physical or learning. When a concern is first expressed, either by the class teacher or parent, the pupil is carefully monitored. If necessary, the pupil is placed on the appropriate stage of the school's special needs register. Pupils requiring specialist help such as speech therapy, physiotherapy or with a specific learning difficulty have the necessary support and guidance provided.
52. Assessment procedures were identified as a key issue at the time of the last inspection. They have improved significantly since then and are now very good in English, mathematics and science. The use of the information gained from these procedures is having a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. National Curriculum Record Books are used to monitor pupils' progress in these subjects and a school portfolio is in place with samples of work at different levels and co-ordinators' comments on why the sample is at that level. This ensures consistency of assessment throughout the school.
53. Good use is made of assessment to inform long-term planning. Teachers' assessments for English, mathematics and science, together with any test results, are recorded on class record sheets and targets are set against these for the coming year. Progress is reviewed at the end of the year and appropriate action taken; for example, if targets are not met extra support lessons may be given.
54. Daily and weekly assessment is used well to monitor pupils' progress and review planning. For example, literacy and numeracy weekly lesson plans include an assessment column which enables teachers to record progress daily and revise future lessons accordingly.
55. Pupils are well supported and guided in their academic progress through good day-to-day assessment, informative marking and the setting of targets. Pupils are clear about the learning objectives of each lesson and their work is annotated to indicate whether or not this objective has been achieved. Individual targets are set in literacy and weekly class targets set in mathematics which ensure that pupils know what they have got to do to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Since the last inspection the partnership with parents has improved and is now good. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school, except the provision of homework and the range of extra curricular activities. They are particularly satisfied with the fact that their children like school, the quality of teaching, the school's approachability, the expectation that their children should work hard to achieve their best, management and leadership of the school and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The inspection team fully endorses these positive views. However the team does not support the views of a minority of parents who are not happy with homework or extra curricular activities provision. The team believes the provision of homework to be satisfactory and the provision of extra curricular activities to be very good.
57. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus, the governors' annual report, fortnightly newsletters from the headteacher and termly governors' newsletters. Information about the curriculum is satisfactory. A mathematics workshop held in the autumn term was very well supported by parents. General curriculum information is given in the prospectus, and early in the autumn term parents are informed of the topics to be covered in the year. Also parents receive guidance on how to help their children to improve their reading at paired reading groups.
58. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings and good annual reports. Pupils' progress against their targets is reviewed at consultation evenings and details of what pupils need to do to improve are included in annual reports. This enables parents to give their children support where it is needed. Parents are also welcome to discuss any concerns about their children's progress at any time.
59. The school has developed effective relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents know who the special needs co-ordinator is and teachers make regular contact with parents of pupils who have individual educational plans to review the targets that have been set. The inspection supports the view, expressed in the parents' meeting, that pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the school.
60. Parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and at home and this supports the progress which pupils make and the standards they achieve. There is some parental help in the classroom, good support on visits and the Parent Teacher Association raises considerable funds for the school. These funds have been used to enhance the delivery of the curriculum by providing a wide range of resources including additional books, cookery equipment, television/video sets and improvements to the computer suite. Parents have good communication with the school through homework diaries which clearly indicate what their children are meant to be doing.
61. Parents are having a positive impact on the development of the school. Parents' comments were taken into account when preparing the Home/School Agreement which nearly all parents have signed, indicating strong endorsement of their support for the school's aims and values. Parents were also involved in developing a new behaviour and discipline policy and all parents have been sent a copy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good and a significant factor in the school's improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the provision of high quality teaching to ensure good standards. She is also keen to ensure that pupils receive a variety of experiences which develops their interests and encourages them to relate positively to each other. On entering the school an ethos of care and concern, together with high expectations of work and behaviour is evident. By the time pupils leave school they show a mature attitude and are sensitive to the needs of others. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect, and racial harmony is self-evident.
63. The headteacher is particularly effective at team building and motivating staff. A good feature of staffing is the strength of united teamwork that is noticeable soon after entering the school. Staff were keen to improve following the last inspection and are now purposeful and motivated. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and have complementary skills which are used well in the day-to-day organisation and management of the school. The deputy headteacher also acts as a good role model through his own very good teaching, which stimulates the interest of the pupils and results in most of them making very good progress. Since her appointment, the headteacher has developed a senior management team which has a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development, and ably assists the headteacher. The headteacher helps colleagues to become fully involved in school improvements, stays up-to-date with developments and offers support when necessary. At the same time, she encourages staff to lead developments and take responsibility for key areas for improvement, as in the case of information and communication technology and provision for the Foundation Stage. The role of subject co-ordinator has developed over recent years and co-ordinators now share a clear understanding of what should be achieved.
64. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. Effective systems are used to monitor pupils' progress and to evaluate the quality of teaching. The school's tracking system, which indicates the gains that pupils have made in their learning, highlights that the vast majority of pupils meet the targets set by the school. In some cases, however, the targets do not equate with nationally expected levels of attainment as, for example, in the case of some pupils with special educational needs.
65. The school has successfully addressed all the key issues arising from the last inspection. The governing body gives full support to the school and is fully conversant with the school's strengths and areas for development. New governors quickly become familiar with their roles and responsibilities through the guidance of others and attendance at courses. Overall, governors have good levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They have trust in the headteacher and staff. Governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement. There is an established culture of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school development plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and is the result of a thorough consultation process. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
66. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special needs co-ordinator has reorganised provision since her appointment and gives good support and guidance to staff. She co-ordinates the work of the classroom assistants well and the consequent development of their roles has

resulted in an improvement in provision. Good records for the pupils on the special needs register are maintained and staff ensure that pupils' individual education plans are relevant and monitored regularly. The school meets the recommendations of the national Code of Practice and the funding given for special needs provision is managed well. The quality of management and provision reflect the high priority that the school has given to supporting pupils with special educational needs over the last two years.

67. The management, levels and quality of support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language have a positive impact on the progress of these pupils. Good strategic planning makes effective use of the specialist teacher's time. Appropriate records are maintained and pupils' progress is charted appropriately.
68. Financial planning by the headteacher and governors is good. It is closely linked to the educational priorities set out in the school development plan and all concerned have a clear vision about how best to achieve these objectives. Staff and governors meet regularly to discuss and monitor the budget, plan for the future and ensure that their spending decisions are having the desired impact on the educational standards achieved by the school.
69. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used well. The support for such pupils is good and reflected in the good progress they make at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. Effective use has been made of funds to support the school's drive to improve standards in literacy. The school makes good use of human and other resources to raise standards and has spent wisely to improve the resources in areas such as information and communication technology. The school is making effective use of new technologies, and training is helping staff to become increasingly confident in their use.
70. The school's administration is good and staff are quietly effective in supporting the work of the school. They provide a welcoming first point of contact to visitors and enable teachers to concentrate on their work. There are clear financial procedures and regulations and the recommendations made in the last local education authority audit have all been acted upon. The school is aware of the principles of best value and acts accordingly. There are sound procedures in place for the ordering of goods and services, and school funds are kept properly.
71. Staffing levels are sufficient to ensure that class sizes are not too large and staff are suitably qualified and experienced for full delivery of the curriculum throughout the school. However, the school is currently having to rely on supply staff, which is unsettling for the pupils concerned. For example, one class has had nine different teachers since the beginning of the academic year. All teachers have additional responsibilities over and above their classroom duties and some of these are related to their initial specialism, for example, English, history and geography. There are sufficient classroom assistants, who carry out their duties very effectively and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school. Staff are hard working and dedicated; they work well as a team and are supportive of one another. Effective systems are in place for introducing new staff to the school, and the induction process for newly qualified staff is very good. Formal staff appraisal is suspended pending decisions regarding performance related pay. However, informal arrangements such as shared classroom observations, attendance at courses and regular review meetings with the headteacher meet staff development needs. Identified training needs reflect the priorities of the school development plan, national initiatives and the individual needs of teachers.

72. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall and in some instances has an adverse effect on the quality of education provided. There is no enclosed outdoor play area for the under fives, the location of the library makes it unsuitable for private study and four classes are housed in mobile classrooms. Also, the dining room is too small and the staggered sittings result in Key Stage 2 classes having to work a much longer morning than is normal in primary schools. This results in pupils in some classes being restless in the lessons before lunchtime. The grounds are adequate for delivery of the outdoor curriculum but poor drainage results in flooding in many areas particularly the Key Stage 1 playground. The school is aware of the shortcomings of the accommodation, and funds are now available to build five permanent classrooms, extend the dining room and provide a new library. The actual building work is scheduled for commencement in 2002. The school is well cared for and the accommodation is enhanced by displays of pupils' work.
73. The school is well resourced for mathematics, science, information and communication technology and special educational needs. Resources for other subjects are satisfactory apart from those for children in the reception classes where there are too few ride-on toys and insufficient large outdoor play equipment to develop their physical skills. The library is adequately stocked with an appropriate range of books.
74. Taking into account the good quality teaching, the good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, the above average standards achieved in mathematics and science and the average standards achieved in English by the end of Key Stage 2, and the unit cost per pupil, the school gives satisfactory value for money. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.
75. The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection and developed significantly since that time. This is due in the main to the very good leadership and direction given by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the support of governors and the hard work of the staff who all endeavour to improve the quality of education provided and the standards achieved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Raise levels of attainment in English, particularly in writing, at Key Stage 1 by:
 - * developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of spelling;
 - * reviewing and developing the school's approach to the teaching of handwriting;
 - * ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing across a range of subject areas.

(Paragraphs 92, 93, 105, 156)

- Ensure greater consistency of teaching at Key Stage 1 by:
 - * continuing to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and highlighting areas for improvement;
 - * sharing good practice;
 - * raising the expectation of what pupils can do;
 - * improving the pace and challenge in lessons.

(Paragraphs 25,26)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Review the time allocated to teaching science at Key Stage 1.
(Paragraphs 37,105)
- Improve the accommodation for outside play and resources for those children in the reception classes.
(Paragraphs 72, 84)
- Continue with plans to improve the library accommodation and the provision of books.
(Paragraphs 72, 91)

The school has already highlighted in its School Development Plan the need to raise levels of attainment and teaching at Key Stage 1 and improve the school's accommodation and resources.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	18	45	31	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		351
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		101

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	22	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	19
	Girls	15	15	17
	Total	31	31	36
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	62 (60)	62 (67)	72 (78)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	22
	Girls	15	17	17
	Total	31	36	39
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	62 (60)	72 (67)	78 (69)
	National	84 (82)	82 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	25	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	20	23
	Girls	23	20	20
	Total	45	40	43
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	88 (78)	78 (50)	84 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	22
	Girls	21	18	21
	Total	38	35	43
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	75 (46)	69 (58)	84 (70)
	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	5
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	5
Indian	2
Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	2
White	269
Any other minority ethnic group	19

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	239

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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	686,959
Total expenditure	671,225
Expenditure per pupil	1,885
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,145
Balance carried forward to next year	41,879

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	321
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	51	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	56	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	14	4	0
The teaching is good.	51	45	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	47	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	37	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	41	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	50	9	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	44	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	50	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	38	16	0	7

Other issues raised by parents

The vast majority of comments from parents were positive and highlighted how the school had improved since the last inspection. Parents were particularly pleased with the way their children had settled into the reception class and developed good attitudes to school. They also commented positively on the way teachers and support staff gave of their own time after school to encourage and support pupils.

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

76. Children are admitted to the reception classes after they have reached four years of age. They enter with a wide range of skills and experiences and have broadly average levels of attainment in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social skills when compared with children nationally, but below in comparison to the Hertfordshire average. A few children enter with little or no spoken English but make good progress in communicating with adults and other children. Most children have had experience in a playgroup or nursery before attending school.
77. Children make good gains in learning in the reception classes as a result of the good quality teaching. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers as their work is well planned and they receive good quality support. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. Teaching in this area is good. The school places great emphasis on developing positive relationships with parents before their children start school and has developed a good induction programme. This results in parents feeling confident about placing children in the school and they state that their children settle well. Staff are effective in creating a caring and stimulating learning environment in which children develop good attitudes to learning and quickly understand routines and the structure of the day. Children from both classes were observed playing well together and sharing resources, for example, when making preparations for Christmas. They were encouraged by staff to wrap presents and were seen to be supporting each other by holding the wrapping paper or using sticky tape. A good balance is created between teacher directed activities and those when children are able to choose their own activity and play without direct adult supervision. This develops confidence in the children and a growing independence and initiative when presented with choices. The children's skills are further developed as they follow instructions with increasing confidence. They are encouraged to be polite and sensible and usually move easily from work undertaken as a whole class to group and individual activities. They learn how to share resources and take turns, as a result of the high expectations of the teachers and support staff, who make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation, for example, when playing a mathematics game 'Dressing Santa'. Children are well behaved and form good relationships with each other and with adults. Staff act as good role models and the children's skills are continually developed throughout the positive interactions between staff and children. Children are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and apologise if they upset another member of the class. They quickly learn to do this as a result of the firm but caring way the teachers' expectations are relayed. The good gains made in pupils' personal, social and emotional development are a key feature in children feeling secure and learning well in other areas of the curriculum.

Communication, language and literacy

79. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is good and sometimes very good, particularly in developing the children's range and use of vocabulary. Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress through experiencing a range of activities that stimulate their learning and maintain their interests. Children listen attentively to stories and are able to relate issues in the books to their own experiences, due to the careful choice of text and good teacher questioning, for example, when reading 'Santa's Busy Day'. Those children who find it hard to sit and concentrate are well supported by the classroom assistants who gain their attention through giving appropriate praise and giving good direction and examples. The children's speaking skills are systematically developed through the provision of specific activities such as in the imaginative play areas and through day-to-day interactions between staff and children.
80. Children handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. Most follow and recall a story by looking at the pictures and enjoy sharing books with adults. Higher attaining children read simple common words and are beginning to develop basic strategies to read unfamiliar text. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home.
81. Children develop their writing skills by making their own books and writing Christmas cards, which they give to their friends. Regular sessions on phonics support children well in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make. In a very good lesson, the teacher maintained a very good pace of learning throughout by organising a range of activities, systematically assessing children's understanding, introducing new ideas and consolidating their learning. Consequently, the children made very good progress. A satisfactory range of resources to encourage writing and communication is available, and results in the lower attaining children making marks on paper and the higher attaining children writing about the pictures which they have drawn. The majority of children write their names clearly on their work and are proud to talk about what they have achieved.

Mathematical development

82. Teaching in this area of learning is good and sometimes very good. This makes a positive contribution to the good progress that children make. Some pupils are already achieving in line with the standards expected for children when they enter Year 1. Pupils are supported well in their learning by the provision of a variety of activities which develop their skills in number, shape and space. They are encouraged to develop their concept of number by a daily numeracy session which extends and consolidates their recognition and understanding of numbers to ten. This is achieved well in both classes where pupils were observed completing a sequence of numbers by identifying the missing numbers. Children have a good understanding of shape and this was developed well in a lesson which focused on identifying the shape of Santa's presents through feeling those in a sack. By the end of this session, pupils were able to identify a cube and say that it was a solid not a flat shape. One child described a shape as 'flat with no corners' and others in the class quickly guessed it to be a circle. The needs of all pupils were well met in this lesson, for example when higher attaining children were asked to solve the problem of fitting all the presents into Santa's sack. This resulted in them working together to identify the properties of shapes and seeing how they could fit together. The teacher's good subject knowledge was used well and her careful questioning encouraged children to describe the difference between shape using a good level of mathematical language. Staff have high expectations and the pace of learning is generally good. The good adult child ratio means that all the

children's needs are well met.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Teaching to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children are encouraged to develop the scientific skills of observation and investigation by using torches and coloured acetates to 'make' colours on the ceiling. They respond very positively to this activity and the good questioning by the teacher develops their understanding of light and shadows. Photographic evidence and discussion with the children indicate that they are developing a sound sense of chronology through asking questions of a visitor who brought her baby into class and also through talking to another visitor who spoke about toys from the past. Children have the opportunity to discover knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and, for example, get practical experience of dressing-up to celebrate Diwali. Visits to local places of interest such as a farm extend the pupils' knowledge of the area. Children are given the opportunity to develop their understanding of the world through the provision of imaginative play areas which also develops the children's speaking and listening skills well. Children use computers confidently by working independently through a simple program. They develop sound control of the mouse and have a satisfactory understanding of the uses of everyday technology. Their sense of direction is developed well when they are encouraged to estimate distance and program a 'floor robot'. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and disassemble simple models, using a variety of construction kits to try out ideas.

Physical development

84. Due to the poor weather conditions, few opportunities were available to observe children playing outside. A formal physical development lesson was seen and other evidence was gained through observing the children's control and manipulation of objects and materials. Their use of small objects, such as pencils, construction apparatus and paintbrushes is satisfactory, and they handle them safely and appropriately. They have opportunities to cut, stick and join objects together, for example, when making a calendar. Pupils made good progress in their physical development lesson and responded well to the teacher's instructions. They developed their ability to move around the hall in response to music well. Children in the Foundation Stage have limited opportunities to develop their physical skills through regular sustained play outdoors. There is no specified enclosed area, few ride-on toys and little large play equipment. The school is aware of this issue and has begun to develop an area close to the adjoining classrooms. Teaching is good in formal lessons but restricted by the lack of facilities and resources. Children recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues.

Creative development

85. Teaching is effective in getting good responses from children in relation to what they see, hear, feel and imagine and their creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. Children are encouraged to experience mixing paint and developing a good understanding of how to create certain colours, for example, by mixing blue and yellow to make green. They are also able to make a range of shades, when encouraged. Most enjoy this activity and are proud of their work. Attainment is enhanced by the good support of classroom assistants who encourage the children to experiment. Children use a range of tools to manipulate modelling material and talk about the shapes they have made. Their responses are developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. A classroom assistant was observed encouraging pupils to sing a range of songs following a computer program

and the children responded well. The role-play areas provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.

86. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good or better in over 8 out of 10 lessons and very good in a third. This quality of teaching is characterised by good subject expertise, high expectations, and the systematic development of children's good attitudes to learning and good behaviour. This results in children being confident in what they do and willing to 'have a go'. Staff work well together to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning and plan well to ensure that the children receive a similar experience regardless of what class they are in. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and their planning is clear and detailed. The curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt this to meet the needs of the children. Staff use good assessments of the children to inform their planning and set targets in literacy and numeracy. Records are kept to monitor the progress that children make. Staff provide a calm, secure and purposeful learning environment in which the children make good progress.

ENGLISH

87. Standards of attainment in English reached by the age of eleven in national tests have improved over the last four years and the majority of pupils reach nationally expected levels, with higher attaining pupils achieving at a level above this. The school exceeded its targets for the end of Key Stage 2 by 12 per cent in the 2000 national tests with girls outperforming boys, as in the national picture. Standards of attainment in English reached by pupils by the age of seven in national tests are however, well below average in both reading and writing, although there is an increase in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in both reading and writing. Although the school has sustained the same number of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 in reading over the last two years, there has been a fall in standards of writing achieved by the age of seven. Pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching standards which are below average and in Year 6, they are average.
88. Children enter the school with appropriate knowledge and understanding of early reading and writing processes and appropriate levels of speaking and listening skills for their age. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage and this is sustained during Year 1, where the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is starting to make an impact on overall standards of attainment. This progress is not consistently well sustained in Year 2 at the present time, since staffing difficulties have led to a succession of part-time supply teacher appointments in one of the classes and this has impacted on the progression of pupils' learning.

89. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted in the school, especially in the Year 6 classes, where pupils are encouraged to address large audiences and to extend their use of English. This was evident when, for example, pupils quoted extracts from Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' such as " you tawny tartar" whilst exploring Elizabethan insults and how language has changed over time. Sensitive discussion on contemporary language and the unacceptability of name calling followed this.
90. Reading is satisfactorily promoted in the school and all pupils take books home on a regular basis. Many additional adults provide valuable voluntary support for reading at school. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy reading large class-made books to one another and show a keen interest in the printed word. Most are starting to develop their understanding of initial sounds and thoroughly enjoy whole class games where they match pictures and sounds, and sequence events in a story together. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 show confidence when reading aloud. They predict what will happen next and they use both their knowledge of the relationship between letters and the sounds that they make, and overall grammatical knowledge, to work out unknown words. However, lower attaining pupils in Year 2 are often over reliant on sounding out each individual letter sound in a word, when they encounter unknown words. They have a poor sight vocabulary of basic words and do not attempt to use the full range of strategies in their reading. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading a range of texts, both fiction and non fiction, and are able to discuss different authors and types of text with confidence. Lower attaining pupils in the upper school gain from the frequent opportunities they have to read with adults at school. Whole class readings of a Shakespearean text in Year 6 are lively, well paced and undertaken with a real sense of drama and suspense.
91. Due to the present location of the school library in the corridor, there are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to fully develop independent research and referencing skills. There are also few opportunities to display and promote books by selected authors or particular types of writing, for the benefit of all pupils in the school. Although the book stock provides a satisfactory range of texts for pupils' use, there is a need to further extend both reference and fiction materials. The school has recognised the need to develop provision in this area and a new library is planned for the building extension.
92. Pupils make significant progress in the upper school and the majority achieve standards of writing which are in line with, or above expectations by the age of eleven. However, writing development is below national expectations by the age of seven. Pupils in Year 6 write for a very broad range of purposes and make good progress. For example, they write autobiographies and poetry; they write letters expressing different viewpoints on the plot by Shakespearean characters and pleading pamphlets from Victorian factory workers. Much writing links purposefully into other curriculum contexts, for example, history and information and communication technology. Very constructive marking approaches in Year 6 ensure that pupils are constantly challenged to improve the style, structure and content of written work. They are given feedback on what they do well and on what they need to do next in order to improve a piece of writing. Standards of presentation are generally good by the age of eleven. Although above average and average pupils in Year 2 know about the use of capital letters and full stops, they frequently forget to apply this knowledge in their writing and the overall presentation of work for many pupils is untidy. The content of writing for some of these pupils is quite lively however, and they are starting to develop stories with a clear beginning, middle and end, and to write short factual accounts. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 know that print carries meaning and their written work shows some recognisable letters and words, although they sometimes confuse upper and

lower case letters in their written work. Marking in the lower school is always encouraging, but does not sufficiently challenge pupils to improve aspects of their writing. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their writing across subjects other than English at Key Stage 1.

93. Standards of handwriting vary throughout the school. Pupils have regular handwriting sessions to develop their use of a joined script. However, a significant number of younger pupils appear to find the transition from printed to the joined script in use throughout the school very challenging, and their unaided writing sometimes indicates confusion over letter formation. Teachers are frequently inconsistent in their own use of scripts when writing in pupils' books or on displays throughout the school. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have developed a legible personal writing style, although for a minority of pupils the mechanics of handwriting remain laborious. There are weaknesses in spelling throughout the school, although older pupils are encouraged to make good use of dictionaries and to proof-read their own written work. From their earliest days at school, pupils are encouraged to recognise individual letters by sound and by name, but work on spelling patterns and strategies for improving spelling are less well developed throughout the school at the present time. The additional literacy support programme undertaken by trained classroom assistants provides good phonic skills development for targeted pupils in Years 3 - 6.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 with often very good teaching in Year 6. In only one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory, due to lack of pace and the overall organisation of pupils' learning. In very good lessons, such as those in Year 6, pupils were enthralled by the teachers' lively exploration of the complex plot of 'Midsummer Night's Dream' and started to quote passages from the text to illustrate their views on the motivations of key characters in the plot. Very good strategies such as asking pupils to write accounts of events in the voice of different characters and challenging questioning techniques, undertaken at a lively pace, ensured that motivation and interest levels remained high. The teachers' high expectations that all pupils participated in a dramatic rendering of the text during the lessons resulted in pupils' heightened appreciation of the language and wit of Shakespearean English. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils participated eagerly when writing a short text with their teacher on decorating the Christmas tree, who modelled the writing process using a large flip chart, and challenged pupils to use their growing knowledge of how sounds blend together, when spelling new words. In a minority of lessons, the planning for independent group activities for younger pupils includes tasks which need a high level of teacher support if they are to lead to successful learning outcomes, and this detracts from the quality of teaching and learning for the teacher's focus group.
95. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress during small group sessions with specialist staff or when working in the classroom with the well trained classroom assistants.
96. The management of English is good and well organised. Although the co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection, documentary evidence shows that new initiatives in the teaching of English are taken into account through regular staff training and that a programme of monitoring of teaching has been started. The co-ordinator has made good links with the Schools Library Service in order to further develop resources and provision in the school library. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been secure and good joint planning across year groups is in place. Standards of literacy are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Assessment procedures are very good, and include individual target setting shared with the pupils throughout the school. This is

already starting to raise standards in literacy, as can be seen in the improvements in the performance of pupils by the age of eleven, but has not yet had an impact on standards reached by the age of seven.

MATHEMATICS

97. Inspection evidence from classroom observations, work in pupils' books and from talking to staff and pupils indicates that the standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are what is expected for their age. This evidence covers all areas of numeracy and mathematics, which includes number, algebra, space and measures and data handling. The 2000 national test results at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the pupils achieved well below the national average. However, there was an increase in the percentage achieving the higher Level 3 and this particular year group contained a significant percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The present Year 2 has experienced much unavoidable disruption this year. The school is addressing this issue and currently the standards are in line with expectations. The 2000 national test results for Year 6 were above national averages, the school achieved levels 9 per cent higher than its target. This indicates an improvement over time. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress towards the targets set.
98. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, with a few able to solve problems up to 1000. They know some of the properties of two and three dimensional shapes and can measure length, time and weight. The pupils have knowledge of how to collect data and record it on graphs. They are currently learning the processes of how to divide by repeated subtraction. Most of the pupils have grasped this concept and can solve simple division problems. By the age of 11, pupils can work out calculations in their heads quickly, they understand fractions and their links with decimals and percentages, are developing their measuring skills and use and interpret a range of diagrams and charts. They are aware of place value to one million and can use the correct standard notation in working out problems using the four rules of number. In Year 6 they have good experience of how to apply their mathematical knowledge to real life problems. Currently Year 6 are investigating patterns in number sequences, this includes negative numbers and many strategies to solve the problems. They are making very good progress in this area of mathematics.
99. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good, particularly in Year 6 where it is often very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when there was a significant number of unsatisfactory and poor lessons seen in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Sixty nine per cent of the teaching was good or better and one excellent lesson was seen. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 was 40 per cent satisfactory and 60 per cent good. In Years 3 to 6 it was satisfactory in 25 per cent, with 37 per cent good and a further 37 per cent very good or above. The analysis of pupils' work revealed that the demands and expectations made on some of the pupils in Year 2 are low and that the quantity of work achieved could be greater.
100. Where teaching is good or better, the mental sessions are lively, have good pace and all pupils participate fully. In the best lessons, the teachers have a clear idea of their objectives and set realistic achievable and challenging targets. The teachers successfully use and encourage the use of the correct mathematical language.

101. The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented, all staff have received effective training and the positive impact of the strategy is starting to become evident. Standards of numeracy at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are average. Numeracy lessons are well structured and give the opportunity for mental mathematics, concept development and the opportunity to reflect on what has been learned. Homework is set and this supports the learning satisfactorily. Information and communication technology is used well to support the pupils' learning; this is an improvement on the previous inspection.
102. There is a satisfactory range of good modern resources that are used well and this has a good impact on teaching and learning. Planning is good and the teachers have adopted an extensive and efficient system of tracking and targeting pupils' progress. The teachers have a good knowledge of the levels of the National Curriculum and assess the pupils accurately, this is an improvement on the last inspection where this was found to be weak.
103. The pupils enjoy their mathematics; work well together in groups and no bad behaviour was seen. Their positive attitude to the subject was particularly evident in Years 3 to 6.
104. There has been extensive monitoring of the teaching by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject co-ordinator and governors. This has had a positive impact on standards. The pupils experience the full range of the mathematics curriculum with good emphasis now being placed on their understanding and ability to explain and apply their calculations. The subject is well led by an efficient and knowledgeable co-ordinator. The school has made good progress and improvement since the last inspection. Standards are rising.

SCIENCE

105. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is just in line with national expectations and securely in line by the end of Key Stage 2. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained below the national average. The unusually high level of pupils with special educational needs, over 40 percent in this particular year group, depressed these results. Even so, this represents an improvement compared with the results of teacher assessments for 1999. The weakness in experimental and investigative science identified at the previous inspection still remains but is being addressed within the science curriculum. This is evident from teachers' planning for the current year where opportunities are being created in order to improve pupil attainment in investigative and experimental science. A scrutiny of pupils' books identified a low volume of work in science. This is largely due to the restricted time allocated to science in Key Stage 1.

106. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attained standards above the national average. Currently, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is securely in line with national expectations. The range of work seen was well balanced across the four attainment targets for science. Much of the work, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, was focused on experimental and investigative science. This is a strength. Trends over time are broadly in line with the national trend over the past five years to 2000. Individual performance targets are set within Key Stage 2 for science. These are linked to National Curriculum levels and reviewed on a termly basis. Levels of pupil attainment have been maintained at Key Stage 1 and improved at Key Stage 2 since the time of the last inspection.
107. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils possess a sound scientific vocabulary and knowledge. They are beginning to understand the need for fair testing and can differentiate between a fair and an unfair test. Presentation and layout is generally satisfactory. There is evidence of good progress amongst lower attaining pupils when they are supported well.
108. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to distinguish between natural and manufactured materials; understand the dangers of smoking and how this relates to personal health; sustain investigations over a period of time as in an investigation of the development of mould in Year 6; discriminate between solids, liquids and gases; determine which changes are reversible and which are not; which substances are soluble and which are insoluble; understand the difference between pulse and heart rate, and the beneficial affects of exercise; possess a sound understanding of the parts, structure and functions of the human body. There is evidence of sound progress across all the attainment targets and particularly in the development of experimental and investigative work within the other three attainment targets. This is particularly good in Year 6 lessons. Provision for health education, particularly drugs awareness and sex education, is good in upper Key Stage 2.
109. Pupils with special education needs are afforded full access to the science curriculum. Although there is little evidence of differentiated tasks in pupils' previous work, pupils with special educational needs are often well supported by classroom assistants and, consequently, make good progress towards the targets set. Pupils develop a good scientific vocabulary. In a Year 6 class, pupils talked of "germs", "bacteria", "condensation" and "control" with assurance. In a class of Year 3 and 4 pupils, they talked of "bar magnets" and "horse-shoe magnets". Presentation and layout of work is usually clear, neat and makes effective use of annotated diagrams, tables, graphs and drawings. Homework is regularly set. Marking is usually good and work is frequently commented upon in terms of presentation and content. This serves to promote improved attainment by pupils.
110. Computer skills are having an increased impact upon the work in science. Pupils make use of computers in data handling and work is often interpreted in the form of graphs and tables, which also links well with mathematics. Computer usage is sometimes impaired by the lack of keyboard skills. Focused report writing and using writing frames establishes good links with literacy but evidence of more creative writing in science is infrequent. In a Year 6 lesson, however, three pupils worked together on a song related to science work on microbes. There are good links with design and technology, as in the work in Year 6 on cams and the demonstration of the inter-relation between circular and linear motion.

111. Pupils' attitude to science is good across the whole school. Pupils respond positively to the challenges set by their teachers. Pupils confidently put forward ideas, make predictions and draw conclusions. They listen well to each other and value each other's opinion. Pupils co-operate and collaborate well, particularly in investigative work. They demonstrate a mature and responsible attitude towards caring and supporting each other and towards the creatures and plants that are in their charge. The improving level of investigative opportunities at Key Stage 2 makes the subject exciting and challenging. Behaviour is always satisfactory and often it is good. Pupils use equipment and materials sensibly and safely. However, there are instances where tasks in experimental and investigative tasks are carefully controlled because of behavioural concerns in lower Key Stage 2. Overall, however, the ethos for learning science is good.
112. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning is sound and resources are used well. Teachers know their pupils well. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher made good use of inclusive questioning which prompted quick recall of facts, articulation of opinion and prediction. Questions were directed carefully so that appropriate responses resulted. In a Year 2 class the teacher conducted an experiment to demonstrate that the size of shadow changed depending upon the distance from the light source. However, higher attaining pupils were unchallenged by the work. Pupils used scientific vocabulary well and with understanding. Pupils in Year 2 knew that "recording" was a means of "keeping it" or "saving it" and knew that a table was for collecting information. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and learning is satisfactory.
113. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good and very good in Year 6 classes. This represents an improvement in teaching within the key stage compared to the last inspection. Teachers look for the opportunity to link attainment targets to an investigative element and to other subjects. This is a very positive feature in lessons within the key stage. Pupils in Year 6 were investigating the growth of mould and designing a test to allow or restrict its growth. The teacher posed questions such as, "What do you wish to investigate?", "How are you going to test it?" and "How are you going to measure it?" Pupils' thinking was appropriately challenged and they responded thoughtfully and enthusiastically. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and this is reflected in the very good focus on vocabulary. Expectations are high. This is reflected in the quality and range of questioning. Open-ended questions promote pupils' thinking and this is reflected in the sensitive and thoughtful responses and predictions that pupils give. Questioning techniques are appropriately used to assess pupils' learning and promote progress. Homework is regularly set. Marking at both key stages is generally good and frequently teachers make encouraging comments and pose questions.
114. Teachers' planning is good overall. Learning objectives are usually clear and sufficiently well defined to ensure that outcomes are successful. Assessment in the subject is very good. The school makes very effective use of national and commercial test data, end of unit assessments and, in Key Stage 2, sets individual performance targets that are reviewed termly. This is well supported by on-going assessment and recording of pupil achievement at the end of units of work. A school portfolio of levelled work is almost completed. This provides a good record of pupil achievement in the subject and is accessible, through the co-ordinator, for use as a resource bank for teachers. The inconsistencies in planning and assessment, reported at the last inspection have been effectively addressed.
115. The subject is very well supported by a hard-working and knowledgeable co-ordinator who is effectively encouraging links across the attainment targets in science as well

as links with other subjects. The co-ordinator has a good strategic over-view of the subject, observes lessons and provides feedback to teachers about the lessons observed. The policy document and scheme of work for science were reviewed in 1997, incorporating many aspects of the nationally recommended scheme, and updated earlier this year in relation to Curriculum 2000. There have been many school-based training opportunities during the last year, with a particular focus on experimental and investigative science. The co-ordinator runs a science club for Year 5 pupils during the summer terms, which includes visits. The previous report stated that resources for science were good. This situation has been maintained. However, central storage of equipment is an issue the school needs to address. The school has good outdoor provision and the nature area, including a pond, are used well, particularly in Key Stage 1.

ART AND DESIGN

116. By the ages of seven and eleven pupils reach standards which are in line with expectations for their age. This is an improvement from the last inspection, where standards for older pupils were below expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress due to the good support they receive. The school has adopted a new scheme of work and this has been gradually introduced into the school. Good use has been made of art gallery and museum visits to develop pupils' appreciation of different types of art forms. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 explore and interpret the symbolism of Titian's painting of Bacchus and Ariadne in lively paintings with additional three dimensional paper figurines, following a visit to the National Gallery.
117. Year 1 pupils investigate relative size when making lively observational figure drawings in different scales, and Year 2 pupils explore bright and pale colours when making paintings inspired by the work of Kandinsky, Miro, Monet and Turner. They also experiment with different textures when using sand, paint, and seashells to create sea side scenes. Good links between art and design and history are made when Year 3 and 4 pupils investigate and make large papier mache pots and metallic coins in the style of the Ancient Greeks, and Year 6 pupils experiment with quilling and repeat fabric patterns linked to their study of the Victorians. Year 5 pupils enjoy making three dimensional collage animals for a wall hanging and concentrate well when undertaking silk paintings. Sketchbooks are used appropriately in the upper school to gather visual information and to try out and evaluate designs before making borders to frame completed work. Textile work is represented, for example, by a stitched fabric collage depicting the Viking longships, undertaken by Year 3 and 4 pupils and clay is used to create masks and lamps. Fuller use of three dimensional work needs to be made, however, in order to extend the curriculum further.
118. Art work is attractively displayed throughout the school, and selected individual work is framed and placed along the corridors for pupils to admire. Useful links are made with information and communication technology to develop the use of graphics and to develop work in the style of different artists, such as Matisse. The school has a thriving art club attended by boys and girls from Year 3 to 6 and the work which these children undertake is also displayed prominently around the school, and given recognition.
119. No overall judgement is made on teaching, as only one lesson was observed during the inspection due to timetable arrangements. However, the pupils' interest in art and design and the sound range of work in additional photographic evidence reflect teachers' satisfactory subject knowledge and understanding. This results in

encouragement for pupils to develop both individual creativity and the necessary technical skills and knowledge.

120. Co-ordination of art and design is good. Although not a specialist, the co-ordinator has much enthusiasm and interest in the subject and has promoted the subject well. Regular monitoring of teaching is undertaken and linked to this, in-service training has been provided for staff to develop teachers' own subject knowledge. External specialists have also been consulted for advice and a local artist has made useful contributions in lessons during the year. Good links with the local secondary school have been made in order to assess progress over time, but the school has not yet established formative assessment procedures in art and design. For example, sketchbooks have not yet been introduced to younger pupils. Resources for the teaching of art and design are satisfactory and the curriculum has been carefully planned in blocked units of work to ensure appropriate coverage over time.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. At the previous inspection standards of attainment were reported to be below national expectations at both key stages. Attainment in design and technology is now in line with national expectations at the end of both stages. This represents a significant improvement in standards of attainment between the inspections. Each term there is a particular focus on an aspect of design and technology. Long-term and medium-term planning is linked to topics within a two-year cycle and this ensures the systematic development of pupils' skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress due to the quality of support provided.
122. Pupils enjoy the subject and work with care to produce finished products of which they are justly proud. They know of jointing, hinging and joining techniques, the need for hygiene when working with food, and testing structures for weight bearing properties. Pupils in a Year 2 class took considerable pride in showing sock puppets that they had made. They were able to talk confidently about making them and about how they could be improved. Pupils work co-operatively and safely. In a Year 6 class, space was restricted but pupils worked with tolerance and a mature awareness of the needs of others. They worked with sustained interest on fashioning moving toys using cams. Pupils enjoy the challenge that design and technology lessons afford. They are well motivated to think carefully about their designs, make sensible choices of materials and tools and evaluate their finished products. Pupils behave well during lessons and tools are used safely and with respect.
123. Overall, teaching is good in design and technology. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers ask focused and challenging questions in order to promote pupils' thinking about design faults they encounter. In a Year 1 class, pupils were making Christmas cards using sliders. The card was being made to a previously drawn and annotated design. Pupils found that "the slider falls out" and "it pulls better than it pushes". Careful questioning ensured that pupils arrived at a suitable solution.
124. Lessons are well planned, structured and delivered at a brisk pace. In a class of Year 3 and 4 pupils the teacher revised aspects of the work previously done on making sandwiches to order and designing appropriate packaging. The teacher had high expectations of pupils' recall, promoted careful thinking in pupils' evaluation of the task and ensured sufficient time for the majority of them to complete the evaluation work. There is a good focus on vocabulary in lessons. In a Year 6 class where pupils were

constructing toys using a cam, they talked confidently about “circular and linear motion” and understood the relationship between them. They were able to describe the design faults that they encountered and how they overcame them. They also understood the significance of finishing techniques. The work of a lower attaining pupil in Year 6 was used to demonstrate imaginative, well-executed techniques. This also served to promote the pupil’s self-esteem. Teachers know their pupils well and develop good relationships.

125. Teachers link work well to other subjects such as history and geography in the construction of Roman columns and African masks. In Year 6, pupils were designing computer stars for inclusion in their toys. Each unit of work is kept in a spiral bound folder. This is well presented and includes opportunities for pupils to design, comment upon construction and evaluate the finished product. The quality of the workbooks enhances pupils’ pride in their work.
126. Assessment procedures are good and teachers keep informal notes of pupils’ progress. This would be enhanced by an on-going record of pupil attainment in skill development linked to National Curriculum requirements. Although the school has no subject portfolio, it is building up a useful collection of photographs and developing pupil workbooks, which would make a good basis for portfolio development.
127. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post since September. The previous holder had revised the policy document and the scheme of work, using nationally recommended guidance, in May 2000. The new co-ordinator has recognised that in some areas there is some mis-match between design and technology units and topics. This will be addressed when the current two-year cycle is completed. The co-ordinator monitors the subject through teachers’ planning, pupils’ work and via lesson observations made by senior members of staff. There have been no training opportunities during the year in order to develop teachers’ subject knowledge and understanding. Resources are adequate for subject delivery and centrally located. The co-ordinator is developing resource provision systematically within a limited budget, with a current focus on tool kits.

GEOGRAPHY

128. The standards achieved by the pupils at age seven and eleven are what might be expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 1 and very good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress at both key stages. Only three lessons were taught and observed during the week of the inspection and these were all in Key Stage 2. Inspection findings are therefore also based on work seen in pupils’ books, displays, samples of past work and interviews with teachers and pupils. The last time the school was inspected standards at eleven were below national expectations, as they have now risen, this represents an improvement.

129. By the age of seven, the pupils have a good knowledge of local places. This is due to the good planning which emphasises fieldwork. Pupils achieved well when investigating the local village, looking at buildings, traffic, and pedestrians, human features of the landscape and making and recording a survey. Holidays, location of resorts and the use of water, are all part of the Year 2 study and, with a visit to the local museum, make for an interesting and appropriate curriculum.
130. Throughout Years 3 to 6 map-work is taught and the progression of the skills of being able to use and read maps is evident. This has been achieved through good planning and teaching. Year 6 pupils are able to confidently use four figure map references and many can see the need for and can use six figure references, they also have a good knowledge of the Ordnance Survey map symbols.
131. Of the lessons observed, one was unsatisfactory, one good and one very good. In the better lessons the management of pupils and time was good, the work challenging and the pace of the session was brisk; consequently the pupils achieved a good level of learning, they were attentive and the lesson objectives were met. The pupils enjoy geography, work well together and, apart from the unsatisfactory lesson where the pupils' behaviour was not managed well, no bad behaviour was seen.
132. Teachers' planning indicates that good use is made of local resources and visits. There are also good, planned opportunities for links between geography and numeracy through map-work co-ordinates. Also, literacy is supported through the written presentation of ideas, and information communication technology with the display of finished work. Planned opportunities for assessment are taken and this helps raise attainment.
133. The subject makes a contribution to the pupils' cultural development by extending their knowledge of the world and its peoples. The level of resources has recently been improved with the purchase of globes, aerial photographs and maps. The subject is well led by a keen, enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who has worked hard to update the curriculum, planning, teaching and the resources.

HISTORY

134. Because of the nature of the timetable only one lesson of history was seen in each of the key stages. Inspection evidence is therefore based on the analysis of pupils' work in books, displays, interviews with teachers and pupils and the two lessons.
135. Standards achieved by the pupils aged seven and eleven are what might be expected nationally. Both boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their learning. By the age of seven, the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past; for example by looking at clothes worn in the past, from visits to local museums, looking at houses, transport and holidays long ago, using old photographs and comparing with today. This comparative work is successful because the teachers have good subject knowledge and can effectively bring the period to life. It is taken forward well in Key Stage 2. At age eleven the pupils have good knowledge of key dates, periods and events in British history. They develop this well; as seen in the very good lesson observed in Year 6 where the pupils were examining unusual household objects from the Victorian age. They were challenged to look, describe and to work out use and purpose of the object. By drawing on previous knowledge of the period and techniques of investigation, pupils learned they were able to be quite successful.
136. With only two lessons observed it is impossible to grade the teaching overall.

However, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen and one was very good. The teaching motivates the pupils who, in turn, apply themselves very well, complete a good quantity of work and show much interest in their history. This was well illustrated in both lessons seen, where the teachers focussed the pupils well on carefully analysing and comparing the source photographs and objects they were given.

137. The subject is well planned and covers all aspects of the history curriculum. A professional scheme is followed and the teaching of the skills of historical interpretation and use of source material is very good. Assessment is planned into each of the pieces of work and influences the short term planning; this has a positive impact on standards.
138. Good links have been established with literacy through speaking and listening, numeracy in graph work and information and communication technology with the display of finished work. Visits and visitors provide good opportunities to further enrich the curriculum. The headteacher and deputy-headteacher have monitored the teaching and planning and this is helping to raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

139. Attainment in information and communication technology is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress at both key stages. At the previous inspection attainment was judged to be below national expectation in both key stages. The impetus for this improvement has been the acquisition of the computer suite, which has provided specific focus on the development of pupils' computer skills. At the time of the previous inspection the range and quality of hardware and the lack of a comprehensive scheme of work restricted pupil attainment. Both issues have since been addressed. The school has established an eleven-computer suite, which is networked and has Internet access. Each classroom has a computer. Most of the classroom computers in the main block are linked into the network and the remaining classrooms are to be linked in the near future. The demountable classrooms present more of a problem and currently house freestanding computers.
140. By the age of seven pupils are competent in using the mouse and are developing their typing skills. They capitalise, use the space bar, delete and insert. Pupils save their work, use a variety of fonts, use the computer to generate pictures for use in cards and calendars, produce and print out pictograms for mathematical data and log-on and log-off. By the age of eleven pupils are using the Internet for information retrieval, using Powerpoint to generate a web page of themselves, using e-mail to seek subject-related information, using a digital camera and scanner to include material in their work. They use terms such as "icon", "clipart", "animation" and "edit" with confidence and understanding. However, pupils are often frustrated by the lack of keyboard skills and many type with index figure only. An increasing number of pupils improve their keyboard skills as a result of having a computer at home. This is evidenced by the increasing number of pupils who return homework in the form of computer print-outs.

141. Pupils' attitudes to lessons are very good. They listen attentively to teacher instructions and act upon them enthusiastically. They greatly value the time they have in the computer suite and work very hard either independently or in pairs. Pupils in both key stages are very well behaved, show great interest in their work and sustain concentration well. Pupils help each other very well and those with special educational needs benefit from the support of their peers as well as support from adults. They are well supported by classroom assistants and make good progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2 towards the targets set. Pupils with special educational needs use computers frequently during literacy and numeracy hours. Pupils treat equipment with respect. As a result of pupils' very positive attitude towards the subject, they make very good progress.
142. Statutory requirements are now met and this is an improvement when compared to the previous inspection. Teaching is very good. All lessons observed were conducted at a brisk pace, were well planned and teachers demonstrated a very good subject knowledge. In a Year 6 lesson in the computer suite there was an excellent focus on vocabulary. Discussion between teacher and pupils generated the use of relevant, two-way use of terminology. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and questioning is often challenging and always inclusive. Teachers know their pupils well and tasks are appropriately set in order to build on prior knowledge. Work, especially in Key Stage 2, is often of an on-going nature and helps to consolidate and develop pupils' skills effectively.
143. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work and the policy document was re-written in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The school has adopted the use of information and communication technology books across the whole school which contain computer print-outs of the pupils' work. Teachers, to mark particular achievements, often annotate the books and they serve as an on-going pupil record. In addition, there are assessment opportunities at the end of units of work. Each class has a folder where examples of pupil work throughout the year are collated. The school is developing an excellent base upon which to develop a school portfolio of pupils' levelled work. This would have the dual purpose of a total school record of achievement in the subject and a resource bank for teachers.
144. Planning is good and reflects teachers' confidence in their subject knowledge, understanding and expertise. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has worked extremely hard to raise teachers' expertise and confidence in the subject. The recent introduction of an after school computer club has proved popular and the club operates for an hour each week. The good level of training in the subject since the development of the computer suite has contributed very well to the improvement in levels of pupil attainment. The cross-curricular application of information and communication technology is good. Pupils work on graphs in data handling within mathematics; paint programs and information retrieval about artists in art and design, mapping programs within geography; graphics work to support design and technology constructions; plant labelling and body parts programs and databases within science; text comprehension and letters to an agony aunt in work on Shakespeare in Literature and design front covers and posters for work in other subjects. Computers are increasingly well used within classrooms.
145. Use of display is good and helps to raise subject awareness and promote higher standards. Resource provision is good but the school possesses a range of control and modelling technology which is very under-used. The school is aware of this and training is planned to acquaint teachers with its usage and develop expertise. Hardware is supported by a good range of software, access to the Internet and e-mail

in the networked suite. The school has worked very hard to improve provision within information and communication technology and this has impacted very well upon pupil attainment.

MUSIC

146. Pupils at the end of both key stages reach standards which are in line with expectations for their age and the school has sustained this since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. The school benefits from the visiting specialist instrumental teachers and overall music provision is enhanced by the good extra curricular opportunities for interested pupils to undertake lessons in guitar, flute, recorder, clarinet and saxophone. There is a thriving school choir and after school recorder group and the extra curricular folk dance club is very well attended, even by the youngest pupils in the school. At the time of the inspection, most of the music making seen was linked to preparations for the forthcoming Christmas performance and carol service. Singing was much in evidence. Due to timetable arrangements, however, only one music lesson was seen and therefore no overall judgement is made on teaching. No recorder or choir rehearsals took place during the week of the inspection and no judgement is made on standards attained by pupils involved in these activities.
147. Younger pupils sing with enthusiasm, although they need to be constantly reminded not to shout when trying to vary the pitch of their singing. They learn the words of new songs eagerly and when singing favourite tunes such as "Away In A Manger", their tone is good and the singing is melodic and tuneful. Older pupils also enjoy singing and produce a good volume of sound. Here again, pupils sometimes need to be reminded not to shout. During rehearsals for the "Old Time Music Hall" Christmas performance, Year 6 pupils displayed strong performance skills as they entered into the singing of old time favourites with great gusto and acted out the comic song, "I don't want to play in your yard." Pupils gave an impressive performance by singing all the words to a selection of old time music hall songs and clearly enjoyed doing so. The headteacher's good conducting skills and enthusiasm for music-making promotes the singing throughout the school, and there are a number of staff with musical skills who support assemblies and performances. The school choir participates in performances locally such as at the St Alban's Arena, and is taking part in a choral performance at the Royal Festival Hall this year.
148. The school has adopted a new scheme of work recently and this is gradually being introduced throughout the school, to ensure that all classes progress in musical skills, knowledge and understanding. The school has a satisfactory range of tuned and untuned musical instruments, including a selection of instruments from a range of cultural traditions, although there is a need to extend the range of tuned percussion instruments for the use of older pupils. Year 6 pupils make satisfactory development in their composing skills when they use a composition grid to build a new percussion piece on a Christmas theme. They show an understanding of musical notation, rhythm, beat and syncopation. Year 5 pupils enjoyed a visit to a Gamelan workshop in Stevenage last year, and pupils in the school have regular visits from visiting musical ensembles. A satisfactory range of recorded music is available within the school to extend pupils' appreciation of different types of music from around the world.
149. Co-ordination of the subject is sound. The present co-ordinator has only been in post for a year and although not a specialist, has already undertaken monitoring of teaching. Good advisory support has been provided externally and this has enhanced teachers' subject knowledge and understanding and confidence in teaching music. The school has not yet developed systematic assessment procedures to monitor

pupils' progress in music, although informal assessments take place.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. Standards of work seen at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with what should be expected from pupils of that age and from the younger pupils at Key Stage 2. Many of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieve standards above those expected. This is as a result of good quality teaching from specialist staff and a very good range of extra-curricular activities available for all pupils but more particularly with those at the end of Key Stage 2. There is no difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are supported both by the class teacher and by pupils within the class. The school has made a number of improvements since the last inspection including the appointment of a specialist teacher of physical education to act as subject co-ordinator, detailed planning with explicit schemes of work and focused monitoring of the teaching by both the subject co-ordinator and the headteacher.
151. Pupils in Year 2 were observed working enthusiastically on improving their jumping skills and the challenging layout of the apparatus allowed them to attempt a sequence of three different jumps at each turn on the apparatus. Older pupils were used to assist putting out apparatus during lunch break, which maximised the amount of time available for the activity. A class of Year 5 pupils had the opportunity to improve their attacking skills during a lesson taken by a supply teacher, who set them a number of activities to create attacking situations. Reception pupils enjoyed a dance activity interpreting a range of musical stimuli to improvise a scene in a toy workshop at Christmas time. Year 6 pupils participated enthusiastically during a gymnastics lesson, which aimed to improve the quality of their gymnastic sequences. The very good class management, high levels of activity, high expectations and good use of both pupil and teacher demonstration ensured the pupils made very good progress and that the quality of their gymnastic work was of a good standard. A common weakness is that pupils of all ages appear to lack imagination and creativity, and look to others for ideas. Further opportunities to plan and evaluate their own work would be beneficial.
152. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and very good in Year 6. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and ensured the teaching of basic skills in all the lessons observed. The lessons were well planned with clear learning objectives and pupils knew exactly what they were supposed to do. Some younger pupils in Key Stage 2 presented challenging behaviour and this had an adverse effect on pupils' learning. Where teachers challenged their pupils and expected high standards of work the enthusiastic response led to pupils reaching their potential and achieving work of good quality. The school has its own outdoor swimming pool and this, despite the relatively few weeks it is available for use, enables all pupils to swim each year and good standards of swimming are achieved. The pupils enjoyed their work, responded well to the teachers and showed high levels of co-operation with each other.
153. The subject co-ordinator is having a positive impact upon the subject's effectiveness and she has clear priorities for future development. Her enthusiasm, subject expertise, rigorous approach and commitment to improvement have resulted in good planning, improving teaching, regular monitoring and higher standards of performance. Formal assessment procedures and pupil evaluation are particular targets for further development. Extra-curricular activities are a strong feature of the school, with large numbers of pupils of all ages seen participating in two dance

sessions, soccer practices and netball club. The school has many opportunities to participate in local school sporting competitions and older pupils can attend residential, outdoor pursuits programmes. The school has benefited from visits by local and national sporting celebrities and has enjoyed a number of dance workshops.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. During the last inspection several issues related to the teaching of religious education were raised in that schemes of work were incomplete, pupils received variable opportunities for the study of the main religions of the world and that statutory requirements were not being met. These issues have all been addressed and there is now good documentation, incorporating the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus and an informative scheme of work. Planning is monitored by the subject co-ordinator and the headteacher to ensure appropriate coverage and continuity. All pupils receive an adequate amount of religious education teaching each week and there was a sense of 'awe and wonder' in most of the assemblies observed. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. There are gaps in the pupils' knowledge of basic Christianity, which the school is aware of and is attempting to eliminate. Attainment has risen at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection.
155. During a Year 6 lesson, a Muslim pupil was introducing his fellow pupils to readings from the Qu'ran, in Arabic, and the whole class was visibly moved by the experience and learnt much about Islamic culture from the demonstration. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were studying the variety of messages, and their meanings, expressed through religious symbols. The teacher used good questioning techniques which gave the pupils opportunity to think in greater depth about the reasons for sending religious, and secular, messages through cards. A small number of pupils in Year 3 required good class management skills to ensure that their behaviour did not affect the learning opportunities of others in the class. Pupils in all year groups display a lack of imagination and creativity and this area needs to be developed to allow them to gain most from their work. 'Light' was the focus of a lesson with Year 1 pupils and the teacher's calm, unruffled but informative approach gave the pupils a chance to reflect on its importance and its spiritual significance.
156. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. A scrutiny of work covered by the pupils revealed few opportunities for them to produce significant written work in a range and variety of styles reflecting the lessons taught. This restricts the standards of work that they achieve. Different work is not always provided for pupils of varying prior attainment and the school marking policy is not applied consistently. However, the teaching is well planned overall and each lesson has learning objectives, which are made clear to the pupils at the start of the lesson. The majority of teachers show good subject knowledge and many provide an excellent range of artefacts together with good displays to stimulate the pupils and support their learning. In most lessons pupil behaviour was good, with very good behaviour from the oldest pupils. Pupils are keen to participate in the lessons and respond well to direct questioning from the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. They are well supported by the class teachers and play a full part in all the lessons.
157. Subject co-ordination is much improved since the last inspection with the appointment of a teacher with specialist knowledge and a commitment to improve

both the standards of performance and the quality of teaching. Her priorities for future development include the provision of more resources, a more formal assessment procedure for all pupils and a review of the new Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. One of the governors is an Anglican vicar and she makes regular visits to the school in a pastoral and supportive role. All the pupils have visited her church for particular festivals and they are given the opportunity to visit religious buildings from other faiths within the immediate vicinity. Information and communication technology is used to support this subject and visits to web-sites provide both useful information and 'virtual' tours of religious sites.