

INSPECTION REPORT

BIRCHWOOD AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hatfield

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 132105

Headteacher: Mary Rimell

Reporting inspector: Gill Peet
18842

Dates of inspection: 29 April – 1 May 2002

Inspection number: 244616

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Birchwood Avenue
Hatfield
Hertfordshire

Postcode: AL10 0PS

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Raynsford

Date of previous inspection: 25 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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18842	Gill Peet	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and Design Design and Technology Equal Opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils achievements How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further?
19374	Wendy Sheehan	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30853	Susan Betts	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Physical Education Religious Education	
16408	Chris Rhodes	Team inspector	English Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?
4676	Mary Griffiths	Team inspector	Special educational needs The work of the special educational needs unit	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Birchwood Avenue Primary School was opened in September 1999 as a result of the amalgamation of Salisbury Infant School and Gascoyne Cecil Junior School. It has 180 full time pupils aged from four to 11. It is smaller than other primary schools. The school is situated to the north of Hatfield in the county of Hertfordshire. Most of the pupils live on the nearby estate. A high number of pupils come from families who are economically disadvantaged or who are experiencing a degree of trauma. The school admits children to the reception class in the September and January during the year in which they are five. There were 25 pupils in the reception class at the time of the inspection. Children transfer to the Year 1 class in the September after their fifth birthday. Almost all children have had some pre school experience, the majority in the neighbouring nursery school. A significant majority of children enter the reception classes with attainment below that expected of children of their age and well below in their speaking and listening skills. Twenty three pupils speak English as an additional language and three are at an early stage of English language acquisition. This is higher than the average. There are four children who come from families that are refugees and three from traveller families. Twenty seven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. There is an eight place unit attached to the school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. At present, there are only three pupils in this unit. The number of pupils on the register of special educational needs (46 per cent) is above average for a school of this size. There are four pupils with statements of special educational need, which is above average for the size of the school. Three of these pupils have behaviour difficulties and are in the special unit.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Although this school is not yet effective in achieving high standards in the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, it is providing a good standard of education. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. There is a rigorous programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Past problems relating to behaviour have been overcome and the relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a period of great change and consolidation following the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. She has been very successful in recruiting and building a high performing team; each member of the team is committed to the school's future success. The senior management team and governing body all have a strong commitment to improvement and the raising of standards. Although the school gives satisfactory value for money, the unit for pupils with special educational needs does not because it is under subscribed.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and good behaviour management strategies result in pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development all being good.
- The quality and range of the curriculum is good.
- The leadership and management of the school, including the support given by a strong governing body are good.
- There is a strong commitment from the current staff and the governing body to raising standards of behaviour and attainment.

What could be improved

- Standards are still not high enough across the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The levels of authorised and unauthorised absence are very high.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This school was opened in September 1999 and has not previously been inspected.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	N/a	E*	E*	E*
Mathematics	N/a	E	E*	E*
Science	N/a	E*	E*	E*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
lowest 5% of schools	E*

Tests taken at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 in 2001 show that pupils' performance in all the areas tested was in the lowest five per cent in the country. The trauma of amalgamation and the resulting lack of stability amongst teaching staff have taken its toll and the results have been poor. The inspection judgement is that the current situation is much more stable and positive and that standards are beginning to rise. The school is in a good position to improve standards. Pupils make good progress in the reception class. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have social, mathematical and creative skills that meet expectations. Their development in all other areas is below expectations for children at the end of the reception year. This is because they begin school at a low level and with poor language skills. Pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining standards below expectations in English, mathematics and science but this shows an improvement on the poor results of 2001. This can be seen to be an especially positive improvement when the very high number of pupils with special educational needs in this class is taken into account. An analysis of the progress of the Year 6 pupils, who have been together as a class since the end of Year 2, indicates that despite the difficulties, overall, these pupils have made satisfactory progress. Most have progressed the expected two levels in mathematics and a third of the pupils have made good progress over the past four years in English. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining levels below expectations in reading, writing and mathematics but this also is an improvement in the standards attained in 2001. Only in science are standards still judged to be well below expectations. The school set targets for the pupils' performance in 2001, which they failed to achieve. The targets set for 2002 are more realistic, although still challenging, and the school is on course to achieve them. At the end of Year 2, standards in design and technology, history, music and religious education are in line with expectations. At the end of Year 6, standards in music, physical education and religious education are in line with expectations. In all other subjects standards are still below expectations. In spite of the inspectors' positive judgements, there is still room for improvement. Most pupils in the school have below average abilities in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and mental and written mathematical calculations. This is affecting their progress in all areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good and they enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in and around school, is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are good and pupils make significant progress in developing their social skills.
Attendance	Overall, attendance at the school is poor. The level of attendance is

	very low in comparison with other schools and the rate of unauthorised absences is well above the national average. This high level of absence disrupts the continuity of learning for these pupils.
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The school's new behaviour policy has had a dramatic improvement on behaviour. The number of exclusions, which was extremely high last year, is now falling dramatically. Only one pupil has been temporarily excluded this term.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning throughout the school are good. Overall, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils learn well in lessons. However, the impact of this has yet to be felt on overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. In mathematics, there is insufficient focus on practising basic skills, such as number bonds, and this results in pupils not having committed these important facts to memory. Expectations are generally high, although teachers do not always insist on a high quality spoken vocabulary in pupils' answers. In the reception class, teaching and learning is good overall. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make especially when they work on their own with small groups of pupils. Teachers are very aware of the need to ensure all pupils are included and make every effort to ensure that all are fully involved. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported. Teaching is less successful when pupils struggle with the language or mathematical demands of a worksheet.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils in the school including those in the Foundation Stage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	An above average number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets that are set for them. They have full access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and are well supported. Activities are effectively planned to meet their individual needs, which are monitored on a regular basis. The unit, established for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, is a good facility. However, it is under subscribed and does not currently provide value for money.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition receive help in developing their speaking and listening skills. Pupils at later stages are well catered for as teachers ensure that they are fully included in all class activities and that they understand fully. The school is fully inclusive for all its pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good, and is satisfactory for cultural development. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils demonstrate respect and staff value pupils as individuals. Overall, procedures for child protection and

	health and safety are satisfactory.
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The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. However, parents' commitment to supporting their child with reading and homework is variable and this lack of commitment by some parents has an impact on pupils' learning. Apart from the need for a small amount of monitoring and control equipment for information and communication technology, the school meets statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has led the school successfully through a period of considerable change. She and the newly appointed deputy headteacher have a clear vision for its future development. The aims and values of the school are unmistakably reflected in its daily work. Staff are strongly committed to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body is committed, alert and informed. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a determination to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is a rigorous programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, but it is not yet developed enough in other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Prudent financial planning is linked to the detailed school development plan. Grants and resources are allocated correctly.

The accommodation is good. The school benefits from a separate dining area, library, and bright airy classrooms. There is no secure fenced area for the use of children in the Foundation Stage. Resources for information and communication technology, especially the new suite, are good. The governing body understands and successfully applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • Their children are becoming mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity of homework their children receive. • The information the parents' receive about their children's progress.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views about the school. Overall the inspection found that the quantity of homework was variable although some of this has been due to the staffing problems. The information parents receive about pupils' progress is good although some of the published information about the school is only satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Tests taken at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2001 show that pupils' performance in all the areas tested was in the lowest five per cent in the country. In the last two and half years, the school has experienced considerable trauma brought on by the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools. This was accompanied by disruption caused by building work and great staff unrest. A number of staff had extended long term absence due to sickness. This meant that classes frequently had many changes of teacher during the school year and very little stability in teaching style and approach. This situation has taken its toll and the results have been in the lowest five per cent in the country. They were very poor even when compared to similar schools. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2 was well below the national average in all subjects tested. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 was very low in comparison with the national average in all subjects tested. When these results are compared to those of similar schools they are also well below and very low.
- 2 The current situation is much more stable and positive and standards are beginning to rise. Of the current staff in the school, only two teachers and the headteacher remain from the amalgamated schools. All other teaching staff are new to the school since September or more recently. The school is in a good position to improve now that teaching is good and policies and schemes of work are in place.
- 3 Tests taken when children start school indicate that a significant majority of children enter the reception class with skills that are below the expectations for most four year old children in all of the nationally agreed areas of development¹. Many children have well below average skills in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children are currently achieving well in the reception class and by the time they leave most children have social, mathematical and creative skills that meet expectations. This is a promising start.
- 4 Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining levels below expectations in reading, writing and mathematics but this is an improvement in the standards attained in 2001. Standards in science are still well below expectations. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 about science indicate that these pupils have recently made much better progress with their newly appointed teacher who is also the science coordinator. There has not yet been time enough for this more effective learning to have a positive impact on standards. Pupils are making good progress in the current Year 1 class. These pupils are attaining the expected level in mathematics, information and communication technology and geography and above expectations in music and art. This indicates that improvements in teaching and the curriculum are having a positive effect on standards, which are rising.
- 5 Pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining standards below expectations in English, mathematics and science. This also shows an improvement on the poor results of 2001. This is an especially positive improvement considering the very high number of pupils with special educational needs in this class. Most have progressed the expected two levels in mathematics and a third of the pupils have made good progress over the past four years in English. The pupils presently in Year 5 are benefiting from the excellent teaching of the deputy headteacher. They are on track to attain the school's target of achieving standards that are close to average next year.

¹ The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views about the school. Overall the inspection found that the quantity of homework was variable although some of this has been due to the staffing problems. The information parents receive about pupils' progress is good although some of the published information about the school is only satisfactory.

- 6 In the end of year tests last year, boys in Year 2 out performed girls in reading and writing. In the end of year tests in Year 6, girls out performed boys in English, mathematics and science. The reasons for this were not apparent during the inspection. Inspectors did not see any significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in the lessons observed. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included and plan lessons to meet the individual needs of all pupils regardless of gender.
- 7 The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are providing a good structure for teaching, are effective in developing these subjects, and are contributing to the improvement in standards. However, in mathematics, there is insufficient focus on practising basic skills, such as number bonds and this results in pupils not having committed these important facts to memory.
- 8 Standards achieved in information and communication technology are below expectations. Progress is unsatisfactory because a small number of programs and equipment necessary to meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum are not yet available. The school is aware of this issue and has plans to address the situation. In addition, pupils' use of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum needs further development.
- 9 At the end of Year 2, standards in design and technology, history, music and religious education are similar to national expectations. Pupils make good progress in these subjects. In art and design and geography although standards are below expectations, pupils make satisfactory progress. Because no lessons in physical education were seen in the infant classes, no judgement can be made for attainment in this subject. At the end of Year 6, standards in music, physical education and religious education are similar to national expectations. Pupils make good progress in these subjects. In art and design, design and technology, geography and history standards are below expectations. In art and design and geography progress is satisfactory. In design and technology and history progress is unsatisfactory.
- 10 Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often good in all subjects. Standards are rising across the curriculum because of the improvements to teaching and learning but there is room for further improvement. Most pupils in the school have below average abilities in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and mental and written mathematical calculations. This is affecting their progress in all areas of learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed a good understanding of how to interpret a chart but made elementary mistakes because they failed to read the questions correctly or made simple mistakes in their calculations.
- 11 The school set targets for the pupils' performance in 2001, which they failed to achieve. The targets set for 2002 are more realistic and the school is on course to achieve them.
- 12 The provision for the above average numbers of pupils with identified special educational needs is good. They make good progress towards targets set for them. These pupils receive good levels of support from teachers and specialist support staff, who work well together. Support staff are well deployed and are instrumental in structuring work that is accessible to all pupils. Staff effectively plan activities to meet the needs of individuals. Pupils almost always work in the classroom alongside their peers. Although pupils who are gifted and talented have not been specifically identified, able pupils are given work that is well matched to their needs and sometimes receive extra support from learning support assistants.
- 13 Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in learning English. Pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition receive a programme of support, which enables them to get off to a good start. Staff successfully support those pupils at a later stage of English acquisition, when necessary. All pupils in the school, included those from the unit, are fully included in all lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 14 Pupils' attitudes are good and they enjoy coming to school. Overall, there is a feeling of respect for the school and premises. They are generally interested in their lessons and are happy to be involved in class activities. In a Year 2 information and communication technology lesson, pupils were excited by the work they had produced on the computer and were eager to show others. Almost all pupils willingly take part in class discussions. They respond well to teachers and motivation is good overall. The majority of pupils are able to concentrate and work well in lessons. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils were keen to share their ideas with others.
- 15 Most pupils display a sense of responsibility and rise well to any challenges. They are generally sensitive when working with others in groups or with partners, and sensible working by themselves. In the Foundation Stage, children enjoy their work and have positive attitudes to school, adults and each other. Many have difficulty in listening attentively and this affects the progress they make.
- 16 Overall, pupils behave well and the overwhelming majority of parents agree this to be the case. Parents and pupils confirm that the school's new behaviour policy has had a dramatic improvement on behaviour. The number of exclusions, which was extremely high last year, is now falling dramatically. Only one pupil has been temporarily excluded this term. Behaviour, both in and around school, is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Most pupils take responsibility for their own actions, although a small minority of older pupils behave immaturely during wet playtimes.
- 17 Pupils' response to school and class rules is positive. In discussion with Year 5 pupils, they all knew how to behave, what the sanctions were for misbehaving, and all pupils felt they were appropriate. Most pupils are accustomed to showing respect for other people's property and are generally polite and trustworthy. The successful use of the 'red card system' has significantly reduced instances of bullying, aggressive, sexist and racist behaviour.
- 18 Relationships within the school are good and pupils make significant progress in developing their social skills. Most pupils are aware of the impact of their actions on others. They display considerable concern for feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils reflect these in assemblies, religious education lessons and many other lessons. Year 2 work on "my special person" showed pupils learning to express their feelings by writing about what made a person special to them. They are gaining confidence to talk about their feelings and experiences with their classmates. In a Year 5 personal, social and health education lesson on bullying, pupils empathised with the feelings of a person being bullied. They know what to do in such circumstances. Assemblies and the school council give pupils an opportunity to reflect on their roles as citizens and pupils show a feeling of pride in their school community. There were no incidents seen during the inspection of pupils displaying sexist or racist prejudices.
- 19 Pupils' ability to take initiative and show personal responsibility is satisfactory. Some older pupils accept the responsibility of doing routine tasks to help with the smooth running of the school. For example, they ring the lesson bell and carry out jobs in the classrooms. However, some older pupils do not yet show a sense of maturity or ability to take initiative for their own learning.
- 20 Pupils, teachers and other adults within the school relate well to one another. There are good levels of respect and consideration for others. Pupils feel comfortable asking questions in class, for example in a Year 3 religious education lesson pupils asked inquisitively about the Muslim Eid celebration. When others need help, pupils usually respond well. For example, in a discussion with Year 5 pupils they showed sensitivity, good understanding, and tolerance of the needs of a child with behaviour problems.
- 21 Overall, attendance at the school is poor. The level of attendance is very low in comparison with other schools and the rate of unauthorised absences is well above the national average. This high level of absence disrupts the continuity of learning for these pupils. Punctuality to school and for lessons is generally good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 22 Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Twenty eight per cent of the lessons seen were very good or better and six excellent lessons (12 per cent) were seen. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. All but two of the teachers are new to the school this school year. This good teaching and learning has yet to make an impact on the standards achieved at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- 23 The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. All members of staff have high expectations of children's achievements. They use praise well and this encourages children to succeed. The teacher gives children clear instructions and uses questions skilfully to involve all pupils. Good use is made of puppets, which the children enjoy. For example, they listened carefully when the puppet made mistakes in counting and were eager to correct it. This ensures that the children learn and achieve well. All adults provide good role models for the children and these high standards are consistent across all adults who work in the reception class.
- 24 Overall, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils make good progress in lessons. The teaching and learning of literacy is always at least good. One excellent lesson was seen. Teachers are confident teaching the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and have a secure understanding of what they are teaching. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and plan well to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- 25 During the inspection, when pupils did not fully meet learning objectives in lessons, teachers adjusted their plans. Teachers explain clearly and give clear instructions. This means that pupils know exactly what their teachers expect of them and understand how to do it. In some lessons, teachers use humour well to maintain pupils' interest. This was seen in Year 1 when pupils acting out the story had to steal sweets from the teacher. In another class, the pupils maintained their interest when the class debated whether football should be played on the school playground. These good choices of topic mean lessons are relevant to pupils and they are interested in learning. In the excellent lessons, the methods used by the teachers were very good. The tasks captured the imagination of the pupils and kept the pupils actively involved in the learning.
- 26 The teaching and learning of mathematics is always at least satisfactory and often good. In these lessons, carefully planned tasks meet the needs of the differing abilities within the class. Teachers have a secure understanding of numeracy and teach new concepts well. However, there is insufficient focus on practising basic skills, such as number bonds and this results in pupils not having committed these important facts to memory. Expectations are high. The strength of the teaching in mathematics is in the clear explanations teachers give to pupils. In the very best lessons teachers give pupils time to consolidate each stage of learning before moving on to the next. This was seen in an excellent lesson when the teacher also used an imaginative range of different strategies to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. For example, jumping to the rhythm when counting, using whiteboards, working in pairs and asking more able pupils to consolidate their own learning by becoming teacher for one aspect of the lesson. In all lessons observed teachers adapted work well to meet the differing needs of the pupils.
- 27 Teaching of science in the junior classes was good overall and ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Although standards are improving in the junior classes they are still below expectations at the end of Year 6 because teaching and learning has been interrupted by the considerable number of staff changes since the pupils were in Year 3. No science teaching was seen in the infant classes. Teachers plan lessons that enable pupils to learn through practical activity. A weakness in some of the lessons seen was the lack of opportunity for pupils to think about the science. For example, when pupils accidentally discovered that a parallel circuit would also work, they were discouraged from comparing it to a series circuit. The teacher missed the opportunity to extend pupils' thinking and understanding.
- 28 Teachers generally have good subject knowledge of the subjects they teach, and plan and prepare well. In a geography lesson comparing Hatfield to St. Andrews, the pupils benefited from the trouble the teacher had taken to take photographs of her home town.

- 29 Teachers use resources well. This was seen in practical lessons such as science and design and technology where a focus on pupils having first hand experience helped them learn.
- 30 Teaching and learning are less successful when teachers fail to recognise that pupils do not have the necessary literacy or numeracy skills to cope and pupils struggle with the language or mathematical demands of a worksheet. This was seen in a geography lesson where many pupils' uncertain understanding of text and graphs meant that the teaching and learning had to focus on literacy and numeracy skills. This was at the expense of giving the pupils a deeper understanding about the geography.
- 31 Teachers generally manage pupils very well and this results in good attitudes to learning and concentrated effort. The exception to this is in the oldest class where restless behaviour and lack of concentration sometimes limits the progress the pupils are able to make in lessons and it becomes satisfactory rather than good.
- 32 Some of the best teaching seen was in music, taught by a specialist music teacher. Her lively and brisk approach and infectious enthusiasm resulted in pupils being fully engrossed in what they were doing. Her superb relationship with the pupils and her high expectations of their achievement meant that pupils were very keen to succeed.
- 33 The teachers know the pupils well and have high expectations of them. Marking is good and teachers add useful comments to help pupils improve, day to day assessment is good. In most lessons, this good assessment enables teachers to match work well to the needs of all pupils and this is having a positive effect on learning. Targets are set for individual pupils and these are pasted inside the back cover of exercise books. Although this is useful for some pupils, the wording of the targets set for most pupils in the class is so similar that sometimes pupils do not have a meaningful insight into what they need to do in order to improve their learning. Similarly, teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons but in some, the language used was not clear to all the pupils in the class. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the progress pupils' make in lessons especially when they work on their own with small groups of pupils.
- 34 Teachers are well aware of the needs of all pupils with special educational needs. They take an active role in drawing up and monitoring individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and setting targets. Tasks are frequently adapted to suit the needs of individuals. A good variety of learning resources are provided, some of which have been produced by teachers and classroom assistants themselves. Careful planning of the specialised support for statemented pupils focuses well on their specific needs. Liaison between class teachers and support teachers, including those from the unit, is good. The consistent management of any bad behaviour ensures that there is minimal disruption to lessons and the progress of other pupils is rarely affected. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching and learning in the unit because none was seen during the week of the inspection. This was because there was only one child from the unit in school that week and he was in class all week.
- 35 Teachers are very aware of the need to ensure all pupils are included and make every effort to ensure that all are fully involved. Staff support pupils with English as an additional language well.

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

- 36 The school provides a good, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils in the school including those in the Foundation Stage. It lays good foundations for pupils moving to the next stage of their education. Apart from aspects of information and communication technology, the school meets statutory requirements. Religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus. The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship.

- 37 The curriculum in the Foundation Stage covers all areas of the Early Learning Goals and places a suitably strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development. However, the provision for outdoor learning opportunities is under developed and this restricts the opportunities for children to learn independently through outside play.
- 38 The balance of the curriculum is suitably tailored to pupils' needs. Pupils spend slightly more time than average on physical education, though this has no detrimental effect on standards generally. The school feels that younger pupils, in particular, benefit from extra time to develop their coordination skills. It is not possible to make an inspection judgement on this provision in the infant classes because no physical education lessons were seen in these classes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 currently have swimming instruction, whereas pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not. This situation is to be addressed shortly. Time allowed for the teaching of other foundation subjects is about average. History and geography are sometimes taught together as a topic. Although there are currently two half terms when only geography or history is taught, overall the school gives a suitable amount of time to these subjects.
- 39 There are policies in place, including a curriculum policy, which outline the aims and objectives for all subjects and aspects of the curriculum, and which reflect the aims of the school. The curriculum is planned systematically in three stages using nationally available guidelines as a foundation for the content. The school has identified the need to adapt further schemes of work to meet the needs of pupils in the school. A particularly helpful exercise has been some joint planning with another primary school in similar circumstances. This has enabled staff to develop plans along with useful discussions with other teachers.
- 40 There are effective strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy skills, though the school is aware that writing and spelling need some improvement. There is good provision for music from a specialist music teacher who is employed one day a week.
- 41 The personal, social and health education programme is good. The subject coordinator has introduced, and is monitoring, a subject policy and a scheme of work, based on a published scheme. This includes provision for the teaching of citizenship. Recently the school held an election for members of the school council during which pupils 'canvassed' for their candidate and then visited the school 'polling booths'. A display of photographs of this event shows how much pupils enjoyed it. Pupils benefit from time each week when pupils discuss freely. Sometimes part of this might include the discussion of topics raised by members of the school council. The school plans to have further training for staff in the use of circle time. There is suitable provision for sex, drug and health education. The sex education policy states clearly what is to be taught in each year of the school, and the context in which it is to be taught.
- 42 The provision for the personal development of the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. All children receive a high level of support in developing their personal and social skills. This is particularly effective for children with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. It ensures that they take a full part in all classroom activities.
- 43 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They have good access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and to the full range of extra curricular activities. The majority of support is delivered within the classroom. This has a positive effect on their learning and enables them to develop confidence and self esteem as they work alongside their peers. Curriculum planning takes into account the needs of individual pupils but this is not always sufficiently focused and does not actually identify what particular pupils will be doing. All staff understand and effectively apply the school's arrangements for the early identification and assessment of pupils' needs.
- 44 The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition receive help in developing their speaking and listening skills. Teachers cater well for pupils at the later stages of language acquisition. They fully include pupils in all class activities and ensure that they understand fully what they have to do in lessons. The school is fully inclusive for all its pupils. All pupils have good access to learning both in the

classroom and beyond. The pupils in the unit are well integrated into the life of the school and into the mainstream classes.

- 45 The school has a good range of extra curricular activities, which promote pupils' social and cultural development. This is a strength of the curriculum. These include clubs for dance, drama, football, netball, and computers and a story club. All activities are open to all boys and girls who are equally well supported. The school has mixed teams for football and netball. They have been successful in the league table for netball. There is a 'Friday Club' funded from the New Opportunities Fund where pupils can join a further programme of activities, a recent one being a radio club.
- 46 There are two educational residential visits each year, which support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 visit a local education authority residential camp and pupils in Year 6 visit the Isle of Wight. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed a visit to HMS Belfast in London during the week of the inspection. The school welcomes a large number of visitors to broaden pupils' cultural understanding and their knowledge of the community in which they live. For example, there have been visits to the school by the local magistrate, the vicar to assemblies, the rabbi, the circus and a jazz band.
- 47 The school has good links to the community. The University of Hertfordshire provides a helpful mentoring system for a term for pupils in Year 6, and takes them to visit their secondary school. There are links with the adjacent music and arts centre, and with the nursery nearby which many pupils attend before they enter the reception class at the school. The school has links with another similar primary school and also with a Beacon school. The headteacher is a member of a consortium of local headteachers who have a project to raise the profile of education. This group made the bid to the New Opportunities Fund for the provision of the Friday Club at the school. A display of photographs of the Summer Fayre shows that pupils thoroughly enjoy the community of which they are part.
- 48 The school successfully cultivates pupils' personal development. The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good, and is satisfactory for cultural development.
- 49 The school promotes pupils' spiritual development well. There are opportunities in the curriculum, both in assemblies and lessons, for all pupils to gain insights into values and beliefs and to allow quiet moments of reflection. In one assembly for pupils aged five to seven years, pupils thought about the beauty of the world, and how pollution in the environment might adversely affect creatures' lives. In a class assembly in Year 6 with a similar theme, pupils thought about the pleasure their pleasant immediate environment provides for them, comparing this with the surroundings, which they saw on a recent school trip to London. Teachers gently support pupils' self esteem through praise and the sensitive support of achievement. They encourage reflective thoughts, as they did in a story in English when pupils' were thinking about memories of Badger after his death. There is spirituality in joyful music lessons and, while performing for a production, pupils were seen to be thoroughly involved, and their enjoyment in this was clear. The many lively and well presented displays around the school reflect the value the teachers have for pupils' ideas and achievements.
- 50 The school successfully promotes pupils' moral development. The recognition of right and wrong underpins the code of conduct displayed around the school. Pupils have some ownership of their classroom and playground rules by setting and displaying their own individual targets for behaviour, or care and respect for others. The school council debates the views and opinions of pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop and express moral values and to extend their personal and social understanding. Sporting activities in lessons and clubs give pupils a sense of fair play. Displays about recycling waste and care of the environment raise pupils' awareness of conservation, and pupils take good care of their surroundings. The high degree of pupils' honesty was demonstrated when pupils were asked, during one assembly, whether they had ever dropped litter anywhere.

- 51 The provision for pupils' social development is also good. There are many opportunities in school for pupils to develop their social skills. Throughout the curriculum, pupils of all ages are given the opportunity to relate to each other when they work in small or large groups. Pupils working in the computer suite work in pairs, taking their turn, learning to be patient and tolerant. In a lesson in geography, pupils were given positive role models of people who wear glasses. Pupils develop social skills at lunchtime, when younger pupils are encouraged to use a knife and fork more carefully, and play team games. All staff and voluntary helpers treat pupils, each other and visitors with respect. This provides a good model for pupils to follow. The rich and varied programme of extra curricular activities and educational visits provides many further opportunities for pupils to develop social skills. Staff encourage independence and responsibility by giving pupils duties in the classroom and around school.
- 52 There is satisfactory provision for the appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures through aspects of many subjects in the curriculum, though there remains room for further development here. In geography, pupils are aware of how Africa is a place of contrasts, with many modern cities. In music, pupils can enjoy a variety of styles of music from around the world. Displays around the school give pupils an appreciation of festivals and aspects of other religions. Pupils' own culture is appreciated through the many visits and visitors to school, through celebrations held in assemblies for festivals of pupils in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 53 The school is a caring community where pupils demonstrate respect and staff value pupils as individuals.
- 54 Overall, procedures for child protection and health and safety are satisfactory. The school has a clear appropriate policy for child protection and the named person has received training, although not recently. Neither has there been any recent training for staff. The named person, the headteacher, is regularly involved in case conferences and has good links with the external agencies.
- 55 The health and safety policy is satisfactory and the governing body together with the headteacher and caretaker ensure the premises are safe. The school is clean, tidy and in good repair. Regular health and safety audits take place, however the school has yet to introduce a formalised risk assessment procedure. Sufficient teachers are trained in first aid and day to day procedures for dealing with injuries is well established. Pupils are well cared for when injured or sick. The school promotes satisfactory awareness of pupils' own health and safety through personal, social and health education lessons, science and assemblies.
- 56 Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Good and detailed records are kept of pupils' attainments, especially in English and mathematics. Assessments are made of children when they begin in the reception class. The same assessment is repeated at the end of the reception year and forms the basis of a record that tracks pupils' progress through the school. In the rest of the school, assessment weeks take place twice a year. In Years 3 to 6, the same standardised test is repeated for literacy and numeracy and this gives a clear indication of pupils' progress over time. The local authority scheme is used to identify levels at which pupils are working in the Year 1 and 2 classes and in science and the foundation subjects. This all gives useful information about pupils' progress and identifies areas of underachievement. Teachers use this well to identify pupils who need extra support in class. Teachers' day to day assessment is good. Class work is marked regularly and good use is made of questioning within lessons to assess individuals' progress.
- 57 The Foundation Stage staff keep careful and detailed records of children's personal and academic achievements. They share and discuss the records with parents, each other and outside agencies where necessary. This ensures all concerned adults know how well the children are doing.
- 58 Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is very effective. The school has established a good inclusion philosophy and other pupils are often very supportive of those who

experience learning difficulties. Early Learning Support, Additional Literacy Support and Springboard mathematics classes in Years 3, 4 and 5 enables pupils' progress to be monitored against previous targets. Individual education plans are in place for those pupils requiring them and where relevant, closely reflect the recommendations of statements. Provision to carry out the requirements of the statements is good. Regular monitoring ensures that targets set for pupils are both realistic and achievable. The school intends to involve more pupils in this process. There is full compliance with legal requirements in respect of four statemented pupils. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is good and they receive extra help with the acquisition of English when they first enter the school. Support for pupils in the unit is good.

- 59 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. The school secretaries and headteacher monitor attendance. However, some registers are confusing and show a lack of clarity in the school's procedures. Unauthorised absences are exceptionally high at this school and the current policy of waiting three days before following up an unexplained absence is unsatisfactory. The school does not contact parents or carers on the first day of absence to reduce the amount of unexplained absences. As a result, the school does not effectively reinforce to parents the importance of regular attendance, staff conduct daily classroom registration efficiently.
- 60 The school regularly rewards pupils' good attendance by presenting stickers in the younger classes and by class and individual certificates in the older classes. These strategies are good at promoting and reinforcing the importance of regular attendance amongst pupils. There are prominent displays showing class monitoring of attendance and this promotes an understanding amongst pupils of the need to develop good attitudes to school. The education welfare officer visits termly and any concerns are carefully followed up.
- 61 The policy for promoting behaviour is good. Staff implement it uniformly across the school. This new policy is effective, with parents and pupils both confirming that behaviour has improved significantly. The policy is based on a red card system, which is easy for all pupils and parents to understand and all staff to administer. The initial launch of the scheme resulted in dramatic increases in exclusions. However, these are decreasing over time and display the positive impact that the system has achieved. Arrangements for monitoring and reducing instances of inappropriate behaviour are well established. The school handles misbehaviour sensitively. Records of instances of bullying and harassment are carefully kept. These incidences are very infrequent. Pupils report that staff deal promptly with such incidents and this is confirmed by parents. The employing of an art therapist has been an effective strategy to support pupils with specific emotional and behavioural needs. The schools system of rewards through certificates and badges is highly regarded by pupils and further promotes good behaviour.
- 62 Pupils' personal development is monitored well in an informal way, using the good knowledge that the headteacher, teaching staff and non teaching assistants have of the pupils. The school consistently acknowledges pupils' achievements and encourages further progress through a star system, badges and celebrations in assemblies.
- 63 The twice yearly questionnaire of pupils' views of their school gives staff an opportunity to monitor pupils' attitudes and consider if any improvements in promoting pupils personal development are required.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 64 The overwhelming majority of parents feel that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. They also confirm that their children like school and are becoming mature, responsible people. Parents' feel teaching is good and that behaviour has improved. Two issues where parents are less in agreement are to do with being kept well informed about their child's progress and the quantity of homework. Overall, inspectors judge that the information parents receive about pupils' progress is good although some of the published information about the school is only satisfactory. The quantity of homework is variable, although some of this has been due to the staffing problems.

- 65 The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The school has successfully launched initiatives including the Family Literacy group and the Share project, which encourage parental understanding of how to support their child's learning in the home. In addition, the school has held curriculum evenings, for example, on National Curriculum tests to help parents understanding of the process. Parents have three opportunities a year to consult with teachers, with an open evening in the autumn term, a consultation meeting in the spring and an annual report in the summer. They are able to discuss the annual report with the teachers if they wish. Informal opportunities to meet with teachers are also available at the end of the school day or through telephone appointments. All members of staff in the Foundation Stage forge strong and effective links with parents and carers. The annual reports to parents are particularly helpful in giving areas for pupils to improve as well as celebrating their achievement.
- 66 The school makes every effort to establish good links with parents of pupils who have special educational needs and to keep them regularly informed and involved. They are encouraged to become fully involved in review procedures. The school consults these parents regularly, and gives them access to all relevant information. Most of these parents are happy with what the school is trying to achieve and the information they receive about their children's progress. The school takes into account parents' wishes and feelings so that, where possible, they can make an active contribution to a pupil's education. The use of a translator enables all parents (including those of pupils who do not have special educational needs) who have difficulty understanding English to be well informed about pupils' education and welfare.
- 67 Some parental concerns regarding the Year 6 unit pupils not being successfully integrated no longer apply. All unit pupils are fully integrated into the classes.
- 68 The quality of documentation provided for parents is variable. Parents are regularly informed about what is to be taught through detailed termly topic letters. Regular newsletters are sent out. Pupils' annual reports to parents are good overall, and are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and include appropriate targets for improvement. Annual reports to parents of children in the foundation stage are also good. The prospectus meets statutory requirements but is lacking sufficient detailed information to help prospective parents. The annual report of the governing body fails to meet statutory requirements and provides parents with little information about the duties and decisions taken by governors.
- 69 The contribution and involvement of parents in their child's learning is satisfactory. The "Friends of the School," run by a very small core of committed parents, raise funds through summer fairs and discos. Recent purchases include the new physical education apparatus, which provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their physical skills. Parents' commitment to supporting their child with reading and homework is variable and this has an impact on pupils learning. Parents have been involved in the adoption of the new behaviour policy and have been very supportive of the schools stance on exclusions. This support has helped lead to the improved behaviour in school. Parents are contacted immediately if their child's behaviour doesn't meet the expected standards and this ensures a shared commitment to promoting each child's personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 70 The headteacher is a good leader who has determinedly led the school through a period of great change and consolidation following the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. She has done this against a background of staff changes and physical upheaval while the building was altered and adapted for its new purpose. She has been very successful in recruiting and building a high performing team, each of whom is committed to the school's future success. The newly appointed deputy headteacher and all the senior staff share the headteacher's clear vision for improvement and higher standards, and lead by personal example by successfully fulfilling their specific roles.

- 71 The school has a strong ethos, and its aims and values are met effectively in its daily work. Good standards of behaviour, mutual respect and strong relationships come from the pupils themselves and the good role models provided by all the school staff. The effective inclusion of all pupils in all class activities and extra curricular activities has resulted in increased self esteem. It is a mark of the headteacher's success that the staff and governors' commitment to improvement is very strong, and that she has been able to complete the appointment and consolidation of a strong team before she retires at the end of the current term.
- 72 The appointment of new staff is enabling the headteacher to increase the amount of work delegated to senior staff. The new deputy headteacher has already made an important contribution to the work of the school by concentrating on raising standards of teaching and learning. She has formed a strong management partnership with the headteacher. Although the original intention was for her to work in all classes, circumstances beyond the school's control mean that she has taken responsibility for Year 5 during the current term. These pupils are benefiting greatly from her high quality teaching and she has earned the respect of the rest of the staff as a model of good practice.
- 73 New and established teachers are developing their roles as subject coordinators. The literacy and numeracy coordinators are particularly effective in assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses through data analysis, and a regular programme of monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching. This enables them to spread good practice, praise success and work with colleagues who have areas of insecurity. The school is now extending this successful development of monitoring and evaluation of literacy and numeracy to include other subjects. This is a specific target for improvement in the school development plan. Systems for the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and the curriculum are well established.
- 74 A relatively new coordinator of special educational needs has made a satisfactory start. She is well supported by class teachers, support assistants and a governor who takes an active interest in school procedures. Records of pupils are well kept and documentation is informative. There are good links with the nursery and reception classes and with receiving secondary schools. Good contact is maintained with a range of outside agencies. The school is successfully operating the revised Code of Practice although the policy has not been updated to reflect this. Although funding for special educational needs has been appropriately deployed, the unit, in its present form, does not provide value for money.
- 75 The governing body is committed, alert and informed, and provides strong support to the headteacher and staff. It has a realistic understanding of its own role and is proud of what the school has achieved. It is very aware and concerned that standards are not high enough and is working closely with the school in order to understand its strengths and weaknesses more clearly, and to establish a well defined way forward now that the amalgamation period has been successfully completed. The chair and headteacher work together closely to achieve the school's aims. Governors visit the school regularly and have formed close contacts with senior staff. Coordinators report to governors on standards, strengths and weaknesses within their subjects. The school's link with the nominated governor for special educational needs is a good example of liaison. This keeps governors informed and allows them to monitor the effectiveness of the ways in which grants are allocated and spent. The governing body does not meet its full statutory responsibility in some aspects of its annual report to parents.
- 76 The development plan is satisfactory and brings together the school's aims and targets for the next five years. It identifies specific short term targets for completion within the financial year. These are appropriate and are based on the staff and headteacher's evaluation of the school's most urgent priorities. Plans include the detailed actions that will be taken to raise standards in English and mathematics, the development of support for pupils with special educational needs, assessment, Information and communication technology and the basic skills of teaching and learning. There is no plan for science. The specific targets within the action plans are realistic and relevant, and are focused on raising levels of achievement. The criteria that are identified as measures for success are too general and very hard to evaluate. In mathematics, for example, the target is raising standards of teaching in numeracy lessons. The plan does not indicate whether this is to be a judgement about an increase in the number of good lessons or whether it refers to a particular

aspect, for example, the mental warm up. This makes it harder for staff to achieve, for the coordinator to measure progress and for governors to assess overall success. Governors take this aspect of their role very seriously, and see it as part of their strategy for making sure the school gets best value for the money it spends.

- 77 The governing body has made sure that the school's finances are run properly and that available funding is allocated effectively. Despite the school's current high level of income, which is partly due to the amalgamation, and the past disappointing academic results, governors are spending wisely and the school gives satisfactory value for money. Specific grants, for special educational needs are managed efficiently by the headteacher and delegated to senior staff when appropriate. There has been no external audit since amalgamation. The administrative staff make good use of office computer software to order goods, maintain pupil records, link to the local education authority, and to desktop publish school materials in an attractive format. They do not use a computerised system for recording and monitoring attendance. The closed circuit television system monitors arrivals at the school. Staff and pupils use a digital camera for every day recording of visits and activities.
- 78 The rate of staff turnover has been high, and all but two teachers are comparatively recent appointments. This turnover was an inevitable consequence of amalgamation and adjustment, but has had a detrimental affect on standards because pupils have had too many changes of teacher. Current staffing levels are appropriate, although the headteacher reports that filling vacancies with suitable permanent staff is becoming increasingly difficult. The school has done very well with the appointments it has made because the governing body has set high standards and has managed to attract a strong team. A relative weakness in the current staffing is that no teacher has a science background or qualification. The induction of new staff is a particular strength. The professional welcome and support they have received have equally impressed newly qualified teachers and other new staff. The school has implemented the required arrangements for teacher performance management, but it is too soon to measure an impact on standards as very few of the staff have been long enough in the school for them to work towards and achieve their targets. The support staff are a strength of the school and work very closely with teachers to provide the best possible academic and pastoral support to the pupils.
- 79 The standard of accommodation is good. The former junior school has been imaginatively converted into an attractive, airy and pleasant learning environment, which is kept clean and safe by its committed caretaker and the cleaning staff. The separate dining area is a great asset as it enables the hall to be used at lunchtime and saves staff the daily chore of setting up and clearing away tables and chairs. The new Information and communication technology suite gives pupils a good facility in which to learn and develop their skills. The playground is attractive and well maintained with areas of quiet seating. There is no immediate access to a secure fenced area for children in the Foundation Stage and this limits their opportunities to develop their physical and social skills. Resources for the different subjects are generally satisfactory and well stored. The library is a well organised and pleasant area in which to read and research.
- 80 Staffing levels to support pupils with special educational needs are good. Support staff, including those in the unit, offer good quality provision to pupils with special educational needs. The school values their contribution and relies on their expertise and ability to work closely with class teachers. They plan pupils' work well and meticulously record the progress they make. Working efficiently as a team, they are an asset to the school. Good accommodation enables pupils to be taught in a variety of additional areas if they have to be occasionally withdrawn from the classroom. The unit provides an excellent "time out" area for pupils who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, because it is under subscribed, it does not provide value for money. Learning resources, which are well deployed throughout the school, are adequate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 81 In order to maintain and increase the current commitment to improvement in the school, the headteacher, staff and governing body should;

- 1) Raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by:
- raising the quality of teaching throughout the school to that of the best;
 - extending the use of information and communication technology across all subjects;
 - placing a greater emphasis on the quality of pupils' spoken language, spelling and writing in English;
 - placing a greater emphasis on the learning of basic mathematical skills in mathematics;
 - ensuring progression in skills, knowledge, and understanding through the scheme of work in science, and by ensuring that all staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of science themselves.

(reference paragraph numbers: 1,4,5,7,8,9,10,26,27, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 108, 111, 114, 120, 123, 124, 133)

- 2) Increase attendance rates by:
- accurately recording and rigorously following up unauthorised absence;
 - contacting parents promptly on the first day of pupils' unexplained absence.

(reference paragraph numbers: 21, 59)

- 3) Other issues which should be considered by the school:
- Ensure that the governing body report to parents meets statutory requirements.

(reference paragraph numbers: 68, 75)

THE WORK OF THE UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- 82 The school has an eight place unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently, there are only three pupils in the unit and during the course of the inspection only one pupil was at school.
- 83 The aim of the unit is to integrate pupils into the mainstream school, with support, and this they do very effectively. There is a large amount of external support from agencies that support not only the pupils but also the staff. Close liaison between outside agencies and the unit staff, enables pupils to make the best possible progress. This is evident from the monitoring records kept by staff. The unit provides an excellent facility for pupils who need "time out" for any reason. It is a quiet, yet bright and stimulating learning area and pupils know that an adult will always be present should they need to go there.
- 84 During the inspection, the unit staff provided extra cover in mainstream lessons. Such support is usually very effective and often serves to diffuse tensions. Unit staff are flexible and able to adapt to a variety of situations. The sharing of expertise and discussion of strategies enables pupils to be fully included in the life of the school. There is good involvement of parents through a "home contact" book. This keeps them informed of anything of significance that has happened during the day and likewise, enables them to inform the school of incidents that have occurred at home.
- 85 Despite the high calibre of support staff in the unit, they are not operating to their full potential. The lack of pupils in the unit means that the facility is grossly under subscribed and is currently not providing value for money.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	8	22	12	0	0	0
Percentage	12	16	41	31	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)	0	180
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	81

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.11

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	3	10
	Girls	7	6	10
	Total	14	9	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	50 (45)	32 (66)	71 (83)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	9	9
	Girls	8	13	11
	Total	13	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	46 (66)	79 (72)	71 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	98 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	12	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	8
	Girls	8	7	10
	Total	13	12	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (45)	39 (45)	58 (62)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	8
	Girls	5	8	7
	Total	13	17	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (21)	55 (45)	48 (17)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	137
Any other minority ethnic group	8

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)	10.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	237

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	68	2
Other minority ethnic groups	6	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	592,437
Total expenditure	585,615
Expenditure per pupil	2,871
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,342
Balance carried forward to next year	71,164

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	49	8	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	56	6	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	46	19	8	2
The teaching is good.	46	40	6	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	57	19	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	37	13	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	54	5	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	19	54	19	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	27	52	10	5	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	56	8	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	44	13	3	5

*Due to rounding these figures do not always add up to 100

Other issues raised by parents

The number of teachers that have taught Year 5 this year.

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

- 86 Children enter the reception class in September and January, during the school year in which they will become five. The school's entry procedure is carefully planned to make the transition from home, playgroup or nursery as easy as possible. It organises preparatory visits for both parents and children before the children start full time school. This helps both the parents and the children to become familiar with the staff, the reception class and the school. The school has strong links with the local nursery and organises visits to share information and build up a pre school profile of the children. This helps the staff to develop understanding of the children's likely needs and ease the start of their school life. If any outside agencies are involved, the school holds meetings and exchanges information about the child. This enables staff to take into account any particular needs of the children and ensure a smooth entry into school. Parents find these arrangements helpful and supportive.
- 87 The school has a clear policy for the education of children in the Foundation Stage of learning. It links planning to Early Learning Goals, covers all the required aspects and stresses the need for teamwork. This involves parents and adults working with the children. The planned tasks prepare children effectively for moving on to National Curriculum work in Year 1. The school assesses children carefully on entry to the school. It uses the Hertfordshire baseline procedures, parental and staff observations, and information from prior settings. These enable the reception staff to provide activities that meet the needs of individual children. Current information shows that the majority of children are not achieving the levels expected by the baseline procedures when they enter the school and that they are well below expectations in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. The children's rate of achievement is good in all aspects of their learning. Many, however, are not on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they are reaching the end of the reception year. This is particularly noticeable in the children's listening and speaking skills. The reception class teacher has already identified this need and is taking steps to improve development in this area. The provision within the classroom is high quality, but there are limited opportunities for outdoor learning activities. This restricts the children's ability to work independently outside.
- 88 Strengths of the Foundation Stage are the quality of planning and the teamwork. Teaching is consistently good in all the areas of learning. The support given by other adults is good and they make a significant contribution to all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage leader is very new to the school but is already giving clear leadership to improve the children's listening skills. The high quality policy and scheme of work reflect the commitment of all members of staff to giving the children a positive start to their education. The provision for children with special educational needs is good in all the areas of learning. All members of staff work hard to make sure these children are included in every aspect of the work. This ensures that the children achieve and learn well. There is effective support for children who have English as an additional language. They have specialist teaching on a weekly basis and the reception staff continues to use suitable strategies to develop understanding. This enables the children to increase their knowledge, understanding and use of English.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 89 There is a strong emphasis placed on the personal, social and emotional development of the children in the reception class. Teaching and learning are good and most children, including those with special educational needs, are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class.
- 90 All adults establish and maintain a calm and supportive atmosphere in the classroom. This makes the children feel cared for and secure. It leads to the children showing respect for the adults and each other as well as appreciating each other's efforts. All members of staff encourage the

children to become independent. For example, they insist on the children changing before and dressing themselves after physical education lessons. Their appreciation of the needs of others is clear when they applaud the efforts of a child from the special unit as he explains how to mix colours to make green. Careful and sensitive questioning enables all the children to take part in discussions. The children find listening to each other difficult at times and it takes great patience from the teacher to establish quiet.

- 91 All the children clearly enjoy being with each other and they are enthusiastic learners. They work hard at their tasks and try to finish them accurately. The children move sensibly around the school for example, when they go to the hall for assemblies and physical education lessons. They remember that other children are working and try very hard to be quiet. The teacher has clear directions on the wall to tell the different groups of children about their tasks. This helps them become familiar with classroom routines. All the children take responsibility for putting things away and handle equipment and resources with care.

Communication, language and literacy

- 92 The teaching and learning of language and literacy are good. The teacher uses suitable elements of the literacy hour, such as the 'big book'. This stimulates the children to enjoy reading together and provides them with valuable opportunities for speaking and listening. The teacher makes very good use of these sessions to get the children to use full sentences rather than one word answers when they reply. All the children enjoy identifying rhymes and chanting to a rap rhythm. They are very proud when they discover that 'me' rhymes with 'three'. The teacher and other adults use praise effectively to congratulate children on their achievements. This increases their self esteem and encourages them to move on to new learning. Staff carefully plan work to meet the different needs and abilities in the class. This gives effective support to all the children, including those with special educational needs, and increases their growing confidence. The support given to children who have English as an additional language is good and this helps them learn to enjoy looking at books. Children work well together in the café area and the teacher makes good use of this to develop conversational skills. An example of this is when one child was preparing a meal, "This is your dinner for when you come back." The majority of the children are already developing good pencil control and many can now form letter shapes and trace patterns with their pencils. The children achieve well, but most are not likely to meet the requirements of the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class.

Mathematical development

- 93 The provision for children's mathematical development is good. Teaching and learning are good and the children have a carefully structured programme of games, activities and class lessons. This helps them become confident in all the different aspects of early mathematics. Their knowledge of shape is particularly strong. For example, they repeat patterns accurately and approximately half of the class identify symmetrical shapes correctly. The vast majority of the children recognise mistakes when a puppet 'counts' to 20 but many have difficulty in describing the mistakes. This is a result of their under developed vocabulary. The teacher and other adults take great care to explain the meaning of specific mathematical vocabulary. This gives all the children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, increased understanding. An example of this was seen when a child added or discarded objects to achieve the required number, "Too many of these and less of these." The teacher ensures that there are ample opportunities for the children to consolidate their new learning.
- 94 There is a strong emphasis in the classroom on different aspects of mathematical learning; for example, numerals and different shapes are clearly labelled. These, along with examples of the children's work, give effective support to help the children remember what they have learnt. All children have carefully planned tasks to carry out at home. These reflect and support the work done in school and involve parents effectively in their child's learning. Most children are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of mathematics by the end of reception. This represents good progress in learning from entry to the reception class.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 95 The provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the children are interested in finding out about the world around them. The class teacher links work in this area very effectively with language and creative development. For example, she read a story about the weather and involved all children, including those who have English as an additional language, in discussing the types of weather pictured in the book. This gave the children a deeper understanding of the sequence of seasons and how weather affects their dress. Their achievement is limited by the lack of vocabulary to describe changes. All adults work hard to increase the children's understanding and use of suitable language. This provokes much lively discussion about how to mix colours and create different shades of the same colour. The well planned activities enable the children to learn about themselves, their families and how they change as they grow. This leads naturally into discussions about the needs of living things and how to care for seeds and plants. The children observe and record the weather and talk about the changes each day. The teacher uses questions skilfully to increase their knowledge and understanding of change. All the children have opportunities to investigate the properties of materials such as play dough, sand and water and compare differences; for example, using wet and dry sand. They learn how to use the computer and develop their skills satisfactorily. For example, most children use the mouse confidently to draw and colour shapes. In spite of their good progress in learning, most children are not likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class.

Physical development

- 96 Many children have difficulty in using tools accurately. They are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Teaching and learning is good and all adults work very hard to increase the children's skills and hand and eye control. There is a strong emphasis on activities to help develop and increase these skills. For example, children learn to trace letters and numerals and use scissors to cut round shapes. The teacher makes very good use of the limited outdoor play area to enable children to control wheeled toys, steer safely round obstacles and learn the beginnings of road safety. The children move with confidence in the hall and use space carefully. This increases their awareness of each other's movements. They practise to refine their movements; for example, one child develops a complex routine of head movements before jumping off a bench. The teacher plans these activities carefully to enable the children to make good progress in their physical development and to enhance their own confidence and self esteem. All children, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, enjoy their work and receive good support.

Creative development

- 97 The school makes good provision for the children's creative development. The quality of teaching and learning are good and most children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Following the story about Kipper and the weather, all the children painted pictures of different types of weather. The high quality resources enabled the children to mix the colours they needed. They discussed how to mix colours enthusiastically, "You mix yellow and blue...you can put more in (blue) to darken it," and were eager to explain what they were painting. The class teacher uses puppets and the children's imagination very effectively to encourage the more timid children to speak to others and to develop the use of new words. This makes a significant contribution to the children's language development and emphasises the good quality teaching. The specialist music teacher promotes the musical aspect of children's creative development very well. All the children thoroughly enjoy this session and use and explore a range of new instruments. They listen with rapt attention to the teacher as she talks about the instruments. They make good progress in keeping accurate time and in following rhythmic patterns and movements. The class teacher effectively reinforces this work by encouraging the children to clap rhythms and sing songs in the classroom.

ENGLISH

- 98 Standards are below average at seven and eleven years of age. This is a considerable improvement from the well below average results achieved in National Curriculum tests in 2000 and 2001. Results were also well below average when compared to similar schools. Standards in Year 2 have been affected by past changes in teachers, but progress since the beginning of this term has been good. Standards in Year 6 have also been affected by frequent past changes in teacher. The standards in this class also reflect the fact that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is twice the national average. A third of the pupils have made good progress over the past four years. The other pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, have all made satisfactory progress. Pupils at an early stage of language acquisition receive extra help from a visiting teacher.
- 99 Standards of speaking and listening are below average. Many pupils begin their formal education with very limited vocabularies. Although they listen attentively in lessons, they do not have the expected range of words to use in their own speech. This is seen in all classes, and the lack of a wide and imaginative vocabulary reduces the quality of pupils' discussion and writing in every subject. Year 6 pupils have considerable difficulty in describing objects in detail although they clearly have a firm picture in their own minds. This was seen, for example, when they were explaining the difference between life in Victorian times and today. They knew how clothes were hand washed and dried, but only the higher attaining pupils could put it into words. Progress in all classes is generally satisfactory but pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their oral vocabularies through drama, role play and discussion. Teachers do not always insist on a high quality spoken vocabulary in pupils' answers. Good progress can be seen when teachers, in Year 2 and Year 6 for example, encourage pupils to challenge any word they do not understand or is weak like 'nice.'
- 100 Standards in reading are also below average at the age of seven and eleven although overall they make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 2 read familiar texts fluently but have difficulty when they meet new words. Average and higher attaining pupils know how to put sounds together to read a word, but lower attaining pupils are only just beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds with any confidence. Higher attaining pupils read at expected levels for their age but have to concentrate hard to decode new text. They do not always 'read ahead' or use the punctuation in unfamiliar text effectively enough to give good expression.
- 101 Many pupils in Year 6 find reading challenging, despite regular practice. Higher attaining pupils read at a satisfactory level for their age but are not stretching their 'reading muscles' with challenging texts. Pupils make satisfactory progress year on year, especially when they read regularly to an adult. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4. This is especially pleasing as their past performance in national tests was very unsatisfactory. The enthusiastic and dramatic reading by one average ability pupil from Year 3 electrified the whole group, especially the 'Woof' that announced the arrival of a dog. Several pupils' report that they do not have an opportunity to practise their reading at home and this makes their progress more difficult. Reading diaries are maintained carefully, but do not contain enough comments that show pupils how they can improve or guide parents and carers to particular areas of difficulty.
- 102 Standards in writing are below average in Year 2. Progress this term has been good, but pupils' written work in their books and lessons indicates that only half are likely to achieve the national standard in this term's National Curriculum tests. Pupils of average ability within the class use full stops and capital letters correctly, and are starting to develop their ideas in a series of sentences. They write stories in very simple language, just as they would tell them aloud, and without the reflection and improvement that is expected in written work. Sentences are short and do not extend ideas in any depth or contain enough careful choices of word or phrase to give colour and interest to the text. Higher attaining pupils write more confidently and their work is more imaginative. Lower attaining pupils have great difficulty in expressing themselves in writing and are only just beginning to communicate in written form. All pupils have considerable difficulties with spelling and standards are below expected levels. In order to remedy this the school has trained learning support assistants to support pupils' learning of phonics and spelling. Handwriting is

becoming more confident but letters are not always of the same size. Progress is good and all pupils are attempting a joined script.

- 103 Standards in writing are also below average in Year 6 even though the class has made satisfactory progress over the last four years and a third have made good progress. This is because over half the class has special educational needs. Many pupils have a sound understanding of the basic skills of writing that they have learned in literacy lessons. They are beginning to develop their ideas in an interesting way, and to use paragraphs and punctuation within sentences. The weakness lies in the depth and range of their writing, which is linked to the limitations in their vocabulary. Pupils' writing tends to contain nouns which are unqualified by an adjective to give it texture or interest. The small group of more able pupils are working successfully at higher levels. Their work often contains a good range of interesting vocabulary and catches the reader's attention. Many spelling errors are careless, and pupils' books in all classes indicate that they are not setting themselves high enough standards of accuracy. A Year 4 pupil of average ability wrote 'finerly' for 'finally' and a higher attaining pupil used 'thack' for 'thank.' The handwriting in Year 6 is joined and fluent, and shows the benefits of regular practice.
- 104 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better. It reflects the careful attention current teachers have paid to the National Literacy Strategy, and to planning their lessons so that the material is interesting and challenging. Clear learning steps are shared with the pupils so that they understand why and what they have to do. In the very best lessons, the work is marked carefully, often with a detailed comment that shows pupils how to improve. Classes are very well managed. Pupils know the routines, and get on with their work quickly, allowing the teacher to concentrate with a particular group. Pupils' attitudes to learning in English are overall good but are better when teaching is better.
- 105 Very high quality teaching was seen in Year 5 when pupils read and composed letters to a local newspaper. The lesson content was exactly right because it had been carefully replanned in light of pupils' progress the previous day. Very strong features included the use of paired discussions to encourage pupils' to reflect on what they were learning and form opinions. There was also a good variety of approach in the various parts of the lesson that gave it pace. The quality of the different tasks challenged each group of pupils according to their ability. There was a noticeable 'buzz' throughout the lesson. The quality of handwriting throughout the school is improved through the attention that teachers give to their own handwriting on class white boards. They do not always achieve the same standard when they write in pupils' books, and this provides an unsatisfactory model for pupils to copy. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good on the few occasions when pupils have to sit too long listening to the teacher, rather than being actively involved in the learning.
- 106 Very good learning occurs when pupils are challenged intellectually by the work, and teachers make it clear that they have high expectations of what can be achieved. They are specific about what pupils have to do and how much time they have to do it. Learning is also good when the lessons proceed at a brisk pace with a variety of activities following on one from the next so that pupils' concentration and interest levels remain high. Very good learning was seen in a Year 2 lesson when the plenary session at the end of the lesson went beyond consolidating the key messages from the lesson and took their knowledge forward a further step. Pupils demonstrated their understanding of glossaries in non fiction books. They were keen to learn more as their teacher introduced the idea of a dictionary being more than a checklist of spellings but a way to find out what words mean. Pupils with special educational needs learn effectively, as was seen with the specialist teacher working in Year 3, when staff do not give them the answers, but encourage them to think for themselves. Their learning is also effective when teachers make sure the work is challenging by giving pupils worksheets set at the correct level of difficulty.
- 107 Support staff make an important contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. In the best lessons, they are as fully involved in the 'whole class' sessions as when working with groups. They identify closely with particular groups, including on occasion the higher attaining pupils, and help them to concentrate, encourage them to give answers, and enjoy their success. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress working alongside support staff in group work. This was seen in Year 2, for example, when pupils kept working hard, writing a list of 'healthy foods' despite

difficulties with spelling and the physical business of handwriting. An excellent example of inclusion was seen when a pupil had to be withdrawn from the main group for a few minutes because of unsatisfactory behaviour. The support assistant kept him concentrating on the teaching, checked his answers, and quietly reintegrated him into the class group when he was calmer and ready to learn.

- 108 Pupils do not make enough use of their information and communication technology skills to develop their learning in English and programs are not well used for supporting learning within the literacy hour. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills and they set out and correct their work on screen. They use their reading skills to skim for information from the Internet or information CD-ROMs in history and geography lessons. Pupils use their literacy skills in other subjects with a varying degree of success. Good use is made of literary texts in history lessons, such as Pepys' diary in Year 3 and the saga of Beowulf in Year 4. However, weaknesses in spelling and a general lack of a rich vocabulary limit what pupils write, for example, in history and geography. This is very clear in the Year 5 history books. Although all pupils have all covered similar work about Ancient Greece, only the higher attaining pupils' books contain written work of any historical merit. This is because the rest of the class has clearly struggled with the reading and writing aspects of the tasks.
- 109 Good and detailed records are kept of pupils' attainments in English. Assessment weeks take place twice a year. In Years 3 to 6, the same standardised test is repeated for literacy and this gives a clear indication of pupils' progress over time and gives useful information about pupils' progress and identifies areas of under achievement. Teachers use this well to identify pupils who need extra support in class. Teachers' day to day assessment is good.
- 110 The subject is well led and managed by an experienced and enthusiastic member of staff. She is making good use of the data held by the school about past attainment, and is refining the way in which targets are set and assessed. She has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses within the subject through regular scrutiny of pupils' books in all classes and a monthly observation of a literacy lesson in a class other than her own. Good practice is praised and a professional discussion takes place about areas for development.

MATHEMATICS

- 111 Standards are below average at seven and eleven years of age. This shows an improvement from the well below average results achieved in the National Curriculum tests at the end of 2000 and 2001. In these tests, results were also well below average when compared to similar schools. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 have had disruptions to their education caused by the instability of staff within the school and changes of teacher. In the case of Year 6, this was exceptionally frequent when they were in Year 5. This has affected the standards the pupils have been able to attain. The very high number of pupils in Year 6 who have special educational needs also adversely affects standards in this class.
- 112 Pupils have made satisfactory progress overall between Year 2 and Year 6. An analysis of the progress of the pupils in Year 2 shows that although they made satisfactory progress and attained the expected level in Year 1 they have until recently failed to maintain progress in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs have made similar progress to that of other pupils and between Years 2 and 6 have progressed the expected levels. They are now making satisfactory progress in the Years 1 and 2 classes. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported when they need it and also make similar progress to other pupils.
- 113 Pupils in Year 1 have the expected level of understanding across the different aspects of mathematics. Pupils count easily to 10, and read and write the numbers involved. They are able to order numbers up to 20 from highest to the lowest. More able pupils can find the missing numbers in sums using numbers up to 20. Pupils in Year 2 have had experience of all the aspects of mathematics expected of pupils of their age. More able pupils understand well and confidently talk about negative and positive numbers, odd and even numbers and the properties and names of three dimensional shapes. They know the two; five and 10 times tables. They are less secure

about mentally recalling the addition and subtraction facts to 10. Other pupils cover the same work but are sometimes less confident. Most pupils count confidently and can order numbers to 100 and sometimes beyond. They make sensible estimates of how much money their partner is holding in their hand. Pupils in this class generally have poor levels of concentration and do not work well when asked to work independently or in pairs. This is affecting their progress. The new teacher is working hard to address this problem and it is already apparent that the progress pupils have made since her arrival has been good.

- 114 In lessons seen, standards of work were satisfactory in Years 4 and 5 but were below expectations in Years 3 and 6. The Year 3 lesson observed was the first of two lessons on measuring capacity. Pupils had an unsatisfactory level of prior knowledge and although they made satisfactory progress during the lesson attainment was still well below that expected for pupils of their age at the end of the lesson. An observation later in the week of the pupils in this class with special educational needs showed that these pupils had made good progress during the week and in the second lesson observed were achieving at a higher level. They were able to say that 1 litre is made up of 1000 millilitres and could predict accurately that a container would hold five litres. Pupils in Year 4 work at the expected level when they add tens, hundreds and thousands to a two or three digit number. In this class a good range of mathematical challenges and good teaching effectively challenges pupils and raises attainment.
- 115 The Year 5 class have experienced a number of changes of teacher during the current year and this has affected their progress and overall level of attainment. Nevertheless, since the class has been taken over by the deputy headteacher, the excellent level of teaching has been very effective in producing excellent progress and these pupils are now working at the expected level. In the lesson observed, the pupils moved from a level of understanding that was below expectations to a level that was securely in line with expectations for almost all pupils. During the lesson the pupils learnt how to multiply three digit numbers by a two digit number. More able pupils learnt how to multiply three digit numbers by another three digit number.
- 116 Year 6 pupils have good recall of multiplication and division facts and know how to add and subtract decimals to three decimal places. They have a good understanding that an angle is a measurement of turn and know that the angles in a triangle add up to 180° . Pupils collect and record data in a frequency table and can construct and interpret simple graphs. Nevertheless, in the Year 6 lesson observed, a significant number of pupils failed to demonstrate a satisfactory level of attainment because they did not read the question properly or they made mistakes doing simple calculations. The mathematics coordinator has worked with both the higher and lower attaining pupils in this class and this has had a positive effect on the attainment of each group. For example, higher attaining pupils demonstrate an ability to convert some metric measures to imperial.
- 117 The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and all teachers are confident teaching it. The mental and oral starters to lessons are usually lively and are effective in involving all pupils. Teachers use this opportunity to encourage pupils to use a range of different strategies for solving problems. This is helping to develop pupils' mental skills, which are still below that expected for their age.
- 118 Pupils have good attitudes to learning mathematics when involved in the whole class parts of lessons. They enjoy answering questions or talking about what they have learnt. However, in many lessons pupils' concentration lapses when they have to work independently. This is adversely affecting the progress some pupils are making.
- 119 The quality of teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory and much good teaching was seen across the school. One excellent lesson was observed. Teachers have secure knowledge of mathematics, good basic teaching skills and are confident in using the numeracy strategy. Teachers match their plans well to the strategy and draw clear objectives for what pupils will learn in lessons from it. Expectations are high. In the excellent lesson in Year 5, the teacher used a wide range of strategies to maintain pupils' attention and give opportunities for pupils to consolidate each stage of learning. Learning in this lesson was fun but at no time was the attention of any

pupil allowed to lapse. Imaginative strategies such as asking the pupils to jump to the beat when counting, or asking pupils to come out and consolidate their own learning by teaching the class ensured all were fully involved.

- 120 In the lessons that were satisfactory rather than good, weaknesses generally related to the management of pupils or the class. For example, in one class the pace of the lesson slowed considerably when giving out resources. In another class the teacher talked too much and did not give the pupils sufficient opportunities to become fully involved. All teachers give clear explanations and this is helping pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress. Teachers provide some good feedback to pupils in their marking and this helps them to improve further. Pupils work hard in lessons, sustain effort and concentration and a marked feature in most classes is very careful and well presented work which aids accuracy. Information and communication technology is not yet used sufficiently well or often to enable it to support learning of mathematics. Classroom assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs. They follow the examples of the teachers and also give clear explanations and have high expectations. Overall, insufficient attention is paid to practising basic numeracy skills such as number bonds in the younger classes. This results in pupils not always being able to recall these important facts as quickly as they should.
- 121 Assessment of pupils' progress is good. Pupils are tested regularly and good records are kept that enable pupils' progress over time to be measured. Teachers use this information well to plan work that meets the individual needs of pupils. Pupils identified as having special educational needs or requiring extra help have work specially planned for them and are very well supported by capable and effective classroom assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported when they need it.
- 122 The coordinator, who is a leading mathematics teacher, is very knowledgeable, efficient and very effective. She is the deputy headteacher who has had some time this year without a full class commitment. This time has been used well to support other teachers and to raise successfully the standard of teaching and learning in mathematics. She monitors the planning and the teaching of mathematics and is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses throughout the school and the need to raise standards. She has provided training for teachers and classroom assistants, and developed teachers' awareness of standards and progression through arranging meetings to compare samples of work.

SCIENCE

- 123 In 2001, results of national tests in science showed that standards of attainment of pupils aged 11 years were well below those expected nationally, both in comparison with all schools and with schools in similar circumstances. Evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment is better than this for the pupils in Year 6, but that standards still remain below those expected nationally. The coherent development of skills, knowledge and understanding of science for these pupils has been interrupted by the considerable number of staff changes since Year 3, and particularly when they were in Year 5. There are also a higher number of pupils in Year 6 who need extra support with their learning than usual. However, pupils are improving rapidly in the current more settled situation. Pupils in Year 5 are making particularly good progress, which is a good sign for the future.
- 124 For pupils in Year 2, standards of attainment are well below average and progress is unsatisfactory. This reflects the results of the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001. This is because there has also been an unsettled period for these pupils in the short time they have been at school, which has adversely affected their learning in science. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 indicate that these pupils are making much better progress with their newly appointed teacher. However, there has not yet been time enough for this more effective learning to have a positive impact on standards.
- 125 Pupils' progress throughout the school has been unsatisfactory and this is reflected in the present standards. Because of the changes that have taken place, overall it is now satisfactory. Pupils

with special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants and they and those with English as an additional language make similar satisfactory progress to other pupils.

- 126 Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Year 1. Work in pupil's books in Year 1 shows that they have seen a seed growing and that they have thought about health, when they designed a pudding made from fruit. Pupils make observations, and are in the early stages of making records of results. For example in a topic about materials, pupils have completed a table concerning testing materials to see how strong they are. Some science learning is associated with literacy. For example, pupils learn about physical processes when they describe dark and light, and what shadows are like.
- 127 In the current Year 2, pupils have made less progress than might be expected, until recently. Pupils' recorded work indicates that pupils have addressed a variety of topics. Discussions with pupils, revealed that they are aware of experimenting, but that pupils have a sporadic knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, some pupils found difficulty in talking about comparisons between plants and animals, and in describing what plants or animals might need to survive. With prompting, pupils could say that a window might be made of glass but did not know why this material might be suitable, or of its dangers. Given a practical example, one pupil could name a shadow, and higher ability pupils could say this might be 'behind you'. However, there is no evidence of pupils learning about electricity or sound, and pupils seemed unaware of these topics. In contrast, their learning with their new teacher about caring for a baby indicates that this learning is of good quality, not because it is recent, but because during discussion pupils voluntarily gave explanations. One pupil made a good attempt to explain why it is important not to carry a baby upside down
- 128 Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 makes it clear that there is a satisfactory range of science topics taught. A portfolio of pupils' work shows that pupils regularly engage in scientific enquiry. They make predictions, collect results, and make charts and a few graphs, though pupils interpret these infrequently. The recent recorded work of pupils currently in Year 5 is of a good standard. For example, they make fair tests, and can attempt to explain why a piece of cotton material dries quickly on a radiator. They compare their results with estimates. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with making a prediction, but during discussion were less sure about drawing conclusions from results.
- 129 Discussion with pupils in Year 6 confirms that much learning has taken place this year. Pupils have some remembered knowledge rather than real understanding. This was evident when one higher attaining pupil said that in order for us to see, light must enter our eyes, but she could not use this knowledge in a problem. Similar difficulties occurred in pupils' understanding of night and day. In addition, one higher ability pupil could say that gravity 'held things down', whereas pupils of average and lower ability were unsure about this. Pupils know the names of the major organs of the body and can place most of them. They are less certain about the parts of a plant, or habitat of animals. Pupils' knowledge of the properties of materials was less secure, but they were aware of filtering as a means of separating.
- 130 Pupils are developing a positive attitude towards science and enjoy experimenting, working both cooperatively and collaboratively. They share equipment readily and keenly discuss aspects of experiments. Pupils develop good social skills in this way. Good behaviour is a feature of all the lessons seen. Pupils generally handle resources carefully. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 were enthusiastic, polite and friendly during interviews.
- 131 Although it was not possible to see lessons in Year 1 and Year 2 during the inspection. It is apparent from the lack of progress pupils have made that teaching has previously been unsatisfactory. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that it is now better and is at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. A particularly good feature of the excellent lesson seen was the way the teacher's focus on explanations and reasons when she was teaching about condensation. She made scientific ideas, such as a simple notion of particles of water vapour in the air, clear to pupils. In all lessons, teachers plan, organise activities and manage pupils well. They use a good range of scientific vocabulary. In one lesson, the teacher referred to sunlight, nutrition, and oxygen when pupils were thinking about plant growth.

- 132 Throughout the school, there is an emphasis on learning through direct experience of science and teachers ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn science. Teachers often provide simple recording sheets for pupils who need them. In one lesson, two more able pupils had separate research work about plants and photosynthesis, which enabled one pupil to say that he thought that sunlight 'generated food and energy in leaves'. A weakness in some of the lessons seen was the lack of opportunity for pupils to think about the science. For example, when pupils accidentally discovered that a parallel circuit would also work, they were discouraged from comparing it to a series circuit. The teacher missed the opportunity to extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Pupils improve their numeracy skills through measuring, and discussions enable pupils to use their literacy skills. Learning support assistants often make a useful contribution to many pupils' learning, particularly during group work.
- 133 Although there are still some omissions in the learning of pupils in Years 1 and 2, the curriculum in science is now satisfactory and the omissions will be covered later in the term. It is based on nationally available guidelines. Though this provides a framework for teachers to work from, there is still no comprehensive document showing the progressive development of skills knowledge and understanding directed towards the needs of the pupils. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in science. Teachers' individual lesson planning is good. They plan individually, through discussion with coordinators, and through informal discussion with colleagues. There is a good range of assessment procedures outlined in the policy, including marking, a summary judgement of a pupil's level towards the end of a topic and science tasks used twice yearly. Marking in science is satisfactory ranging from formative ticks to comments. There is a useful portfolio of pupils' work, consisting mainly of examples of investigative work carried out by pupils, to which teachers can refer when levelling work.
- 134 Resources for science are adequate, accessible and clearly labelled. Accommodation is good. Water is available in classrooms, and there is a small pond, which is safely fenced and enclosed in a quadrangle, which is itself useful for environmental work. Pupils enjoyed planting seeds in this area during the week of the inspection.
- 135 The new coordinator had only been in her post for three weeks at the time of the inspection. She has already read all the science documentation, and produced a map of science being taught throughout school. Some of her proposals include discussing the curriculum with staff, setting targets in science, arranging for inservice training for staff, and increasing the use of information and communication technology in science. Currently there is no mention in the school development plan of the ways in which the school is going to raise standards in science.

ART AND DESIGN

- 136 Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils make erratic progress as they move through the school.
- 137 Pupils in Year 1 attain standards that are above average and they achieve very well. This is because their teacher, who is the coordinator for the subject, is enthusiastic and skilled at teaching art and design. In the Year 1 lesson observed, pupils were working at a level above expectations as they created collages of their favourite places. Their work was inspired by that of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils in this class have also produced some good quality patterns with swinging shapes inspired by the picture 'Swinging' by Kandinsky. The pupils in Year 2 have had some disruptions to teaching and there was no evidence available during the inspection to indicate the work that they have covered. This has adversely affected their learning in art and design.
- 138 There was no evidence of artwork in the Year 6 classroom or of work they had completed. Pupils in Year 6 could recall sketching the field and remembered talking about the artist David Hockney, but they could give no other examples of work they had done recently. Work seen in the other classes was of a satisfactory standard. In other classes pupils' experience a good range of different activities. At the time of the inspection, Year 5 pupils were working at the expected level on a giant group picture, inspired by the Bayeux tapestry. Pupils first investigated materials and in

the week of the inspection were investigating how to paint fabrics. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have produced work of a good standard. Pupils in Year 3 are presently working on sculptures inspired by the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils in Year 4 have worked with reclaimed materials to produce abstract pictures representing journeys.

- 139 Overall art and design does not have a high profile in the school. In some classes, it is being covered well and in these classes pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. In other classes, there has been insufficient work retained to make a judgement. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in art and design is underdeveloped.
- 140 There were too few art lessons seen during this inspection to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning or on pupils' attitudes to the subject. This reflects the low profile of the subject. In the lesson seen, which the coordinator took, resources were used well to stimulate pupils' imaginations. Good ongoing assessment clearly informed the pupils on how well they were doing and the teacher suggested ways in which pupils could improve their work further. She had high expectations and she insisted on pupils meeting her learning objectives. In this lesson pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language were well supported and given help if necessary. Pupils enjoyed the lesson. They listened and concentrated well when the teacher was talking to them.
- 141 The coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic but has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She is having a positive impact on the provision and standards in some classes but the full impact of her influence has yet to be felt. Her main focus has been implementing the scheme of work and ensuring the resources are available for this. Overall the use of assessment to plan the next stage of learning is under developed.
- 142 There is insufficient focus on ensuring that the agreed curriculum is effectively covered and that standards are high enough. The coordinator is aware of the need for further development and is hoping to have an art week put into the yearly timetable to ensure a higher profile for the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 143 Standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to national expectations. In these classes pupils make good progress. At the end of Year 6, standards are below those expected of pupils at this age and progress is overall unsatisfactory.
- 144 Throughout the school, teachers follow closely the nationally approved scheme of work. This is helping to improve progress and raise standards. Teachers teach focused practical tasks to pupils, which helps them to acquire the skills needed to design and make their own artefacts. For example, when investigating textiles in art, pupils in Year 1 learnt different ways to stitch before making some mini clothes to display on the wall. They have also investigated food and different ways to prepare fruit. In the Year 2 class, pupils made glove puppets to a satisfactory standard and decorated them in their own designs. Pupils in Year 2 have looked at a range of different vehicles before designing and making their own. In these classes, pupils have experienced using an appropriate range of materials and techniques and are attaining the standards expected.
- 145 Improvements have been made in Years 3 to 6 and the curriculum is now being effectively covered in these classes. For example, pupils in Year 3 know how to control movement using a simple pneumatic system created by a syringe. Pupils in Year 4 are familiar with a range of techniques to enable them to make pop up cards. Pupils in Year 5 are currently looking at different ways in which to make bread. This indicates that, although standards at the end of Year 6 are below national expectations, the provision in other classes is now better and standards in these classes are in line with expectations.
- 146 There is very little evidence that pupils now at the end of Year 6 have experienced the expected range of materials or learnt the expected techniques to enable them to attain the expected standards. This is because of disruptions to teaching and inconsistencies in the curriculum. Recently produced slippers, with a range of decorating designs, are of a satisfactory standard.

However, in discussion, pupils could not recall having made any mechanisms or structures. There is little evidence that pupils use either numeracy skills or information and communication technology skills to support their learning in design and technology. There was little evidence that literacy skills were developed through the written evaluating of their work. The use of information and communication technology in designing is underdeveloped.

- 147 Teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and is overall good in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are well planned and demonstrations are good. Pupils learn new skills well. High expectations are resulting in pupils producing final products of which they are proud. Classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language well and have high expectations of them. Pupils enjoy design and technology lessons and get satisfaction from the success they are achieving.
- 148 The coordinator has good subject knowledge but has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She is having a positive impact on the provision and standards. Her main focus has been implementing the scheme of work and ensuring the resources are available for this.

GEOGRAPHY

- 149 Standards are below national expectations at the age of seven and eleven. Pupils have a very limited recall of past work or understanding of geographical skills. Progress over time has been unsatisfactory, as pupils in all classes have had an interrupted curriculum over the years due to teacher changes. Current progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Progress in some individual lessons, as in Year 5 when they contrasted Hatfield with the teacher's hometown of St. Andrews, is good.
- 150 Pupils in Year 2 have some understanding of different localities, through their reading about 'Katie Morag' on her Scottish island, and by following 'Barnaby Bear' on his journeys round the world. Pupils' knowledge of their own locality is limited and their understanding of the rudimentary features of human and physical geography are less than those expected nationally. They do not have a basic understanding of a geographic vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils know that the world is round like a sphere and the names of some foreign countries but have difficulty in locating the United Kingdom on a world map.
- 151 Standards in Year 6 are also below national expectations. Some pupils have missed geography lessons to attend groups to improve their literacy skills. Other than those capable of higher attainment, most pupils have very little geographical understanding. They have completed work on mountains and have an elementary understanding of the water cycle. Their appreciation of the difference between contrasting locations is often limited to holiday experiences. The curriculum does not refer to the range of countries from which several pupils' families originally came.
- 152 The standard of teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection was good overall, and is a positive indication of the school's potential to raise standards. Effective teaching occurs when the teacher is secure with their subject material and prepares resources and materials that catch the pupils' attention, inspiring them to wanting to know more. Pupils' attitudes to lessons are good. Year 1 enjoyed 'packing their bags' in preparation for a visit to Dublin, knew how long the journey would take and why they needed a passport. Year 5 responded very positively to the teacher's invitation to 'walk through a street' in St. Andrews using photographs she had taken of the town and to compare what they saw with a street in their own locality.
- 153 Teaching is less successful when pupils struggle with the language or mathematical demands of a worksheet and lose sight of the central geographical teaching in the lesson. This was seen in Year 6. Many pupils' uncertain understanding of text and graphs meant that the teaching and learning had to focus on literacy and numeracy skills rather than on giving the pupils a deeper understanding about the rainfall in different seasons and locations. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in geography is underdeveloped.

154 The coordination of the subject is in the temporary care of the headteacher. Although this is satisfactory it does mean that until a permanent appointment is made to this post the subject is not being further developed.

HISTORY

155 Standards are similar to national expectations at the age of seven. Standards are below those expected in Year 6 where many pupils have special educational needs and do not have the writing and reading skills needed to produce work at nationally expected levels. They have very limited recall of past work or understanding of historical skills. Pupils in all classes have had an interrupted curriculum over the years due to teacher changes. This has limited their progress, which is satisfactory to the age of seven, but is unsatisfactory over time between eight and eleven.

156 Pupils in Year 2 have a sound recall of the life and importance of major historical figures including Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys, whose life and experiences at the time of the Fire of London they recall in considerable detail. They know that Pepys' diary was written in code and had been buried with a prize cheese in the garden so that both escaped the flames. They have a sound understanding of historical chronology. They recognise how things change from year to year and make comparisons between their own childhood and those of their grandparents. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand how people can affect the course of history, and wondered aloud and unprompted about why wars were started.

157 Year 6 pupils have limited factual knowledge or understanding of the history of Britain and almost no information about the history of the countries from which several of the families within the class originate. They know something of the life of children in Britain during the Victorian period but not that Victoria was Empress of India. They have made some comparisons between modern and Victorian artefacts. They have very limited recollections of what they learned previously about the Tudors. Work in progress on HMS Belfast has caught their imagination, and their historical understanding is good because of the quality of the actual visit. Current lessons have also given them an important insight into how to use posters and other materials to gain information and reveal attitudes. There was a lively debate on the changes in public perception of the place and role of women in society when they realised why women started doing 'men's work' in World War 2.

158 Pupils in all classes enjoy their history lessons, whether they are making deductions about which Viking lord might have been buried at Sutton Hoo (Year 3) or 'meeting' John Lennon to learn about his life (Year 5). Very good use is made of visits. 'Every day' conditions came alive for Year 4 pupils when they went to the museum at RAF Hendon. They used the skills they had learned in literacy lessons to write home as evacuees and to recall the experience of an air raid.

159 The overall quality of teaching in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory. No teaching was observed in other classes. Where teaching is good, the work is well planned and concentrates on historical skills rather than a series of tasks that require pupils to have good literacy skills if they are to be successful. A good example was seen in Year 4 when pupils learned how to make deductions from old photographs of Hatfield and compared them with what they actually saw on their visit. Pupils made good progress because much of the work was oral; they were very interested and wanted to learn more. Higher attaining pupils made good use of literacy skills looking up terms like 'draper' and 'tailor' in their dictionaries to establish meaning. The quality of learning seen in lessons was always satisfactory and often good because the pupils were actively involved and their curiosity was aroused. Learning has not been so effective in the past. Pupils' books contain too many worksheets where they have not been required to do much more than fill in gaps in a text or have just copied out sentences from a book or the whiteboard. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in history is under developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 160 Standards of attainment for pupils aged both seven and eleven years are below national expectations. The school's suite of 15 computers, and those in classrooms, provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop most information and communication technology skills. However, a small number of programs and devices necessary to meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum are not yet available. The elements missing are programs for modelling, where pupils can explore what happens in imaginary situations, and equipment for control and monitoring, where pupils can make things happen, or, measure light levels, for example. In addition, pupils' use of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum needs further development. As a result, although progress is satisfactory in lessons, progress overall is unsatisfactory for all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language.
- 161 Pupils are rapidly becoming more skilful in presenting, organising and communicating information in all years. Pupils in Year 1 know that there are various kinds of information by identifying the messages associated with sounds from a tape recorder. By Year 2, pupils can change a font or change the size or colour of text. They can save and retrieve their work done in the computer suite onto their personal file. In these aspects, pupils' learning is often very good. Pupils in Year 2 do not remember being able to give instructions to the computer to draw a shape, however. In Year 3 pupils share their ideas with others as they learn how to send electronic mail. Many pupils know how to draw and paint simple pictures. Pupils in Year 4 make charts of their favourite snacks, and use cutting, pasting and editing text when they write a recipe. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show that they have are developing a wider range of skills like using a CD-ROM, or a spreadsheet to list costs of produce. Pupils' research skills are improving, and they know the sort of questions to ask of an encyclopaedia to find information in a particular area. There was no evidence during the week of the inspection of pupils in this year group using a branching database, although pupils are aware of the meaning and use of this kind of program.
- 162 There is some use of information and communication technology made in subject teaching though this is not consistent across the school. For example, in one lesson in Year 4, a pupil used a mathematics program designed to improve her addition and subtraction skills, which she did effectively with the help of a number line. Much use is made of word processing, as evidenced in attractive displays of pupils' work around the school. The opportunity to draft, edit and publish their work enables pupils to practice their literacy skills. Pupils make satisfactory use of the Internet to search for information, for example on skeletons in science, and paintings in art.
- 163 Pupils show much interest in learning information and communication technology skills. They are confident and generally well behaved in the computer suite. Pupils work well in pairs and share out responsibilities. Turn taking and being patient contribute to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils in Year 2 were amazed and excited by the effects on the computer screen of changing the font of their names.
- 164 The quality of teaching is good overall. In a very good lesson, the Year 2 teacher demonstrated a very high level of competence, had very good lesson planning with simple achievable objectives and used much vocabulary associated with information and communication technology. Teachers are competent and becoming more confident in using the suite, including the interactive white board. This helps pupils to recall what they already know and understand the new task clearly. Teachers put the digital camera to good effect, and there are many examples of photographs of pupils engaged in activities displayed around the school. A strength of teaching in information and communication technology is the way that teachers organise and manage pupils well in the computer suite. In a fairly large Year 3 class, not all pupils could be at the computer at once, so the teacher provided an associated written task so that all pupils were engaged in similar learning. One teacher paired more competent with less competent pupils in order to share expertise, and this was helpful to pupils in the lesson seen in this case.
- 165 There is a scheme of work in place developed from national guidelines, which provides for pupils to develop systematically their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, this cannot be fully implemented until modelling, control and monitoring programs and equipment are bought. As it stands, the bulk of the scheme is being taught and has been adapted to the school's current

needs. Teachers are developing those areas in pupils' knowledge and skills, which were previously lacking while pupils did not have the opportunities provided by the use of the suite. Teachers assess pupils informally in lessons, through marking and by making a summary judgement at the end of a topic.

- 166 The school has computers in each classroom, with those in Years 3 to 6 linked to the suite. Most programs used are already on the computers and there are efficient arrangements in place for each pupil to have his or her own folder of work. There is a satisfactory development plan for 2002 with clear success criteria, which highlights staff development, further updating of equipment and further aligning resources to the scheme of work.
- 167 The leadership and management of information and communication technology are good. The coordinator works hard to keep abreast of developments in information and communication technology, and has made the suite very accessible and interesting to both staff and pupils. There is a strong commitment from the coordinator and staff to improve standards. The coordinator is aware of the lack of staff and pupil confidence and competence. Staff training is held in the school, which is helpful since staff are familiar with their own computers. There is a technician available for one half day per week.

MUSIC

- 168 Standards in music match national expectations for most seven and eleven year olds. Pupils in Year 6 achieve above average standards in performing skills. This is because a specialist music teacher who transmits enthusiasm and skills to the pupils leads music lessons. This is a recent initiative and is just beginning to have a positive effect on standards, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6, in listening, appraising and composing. Pupils are confident in exploring the sounds instruments make and perform their compositions confidently. They have opportunities to listen to music and sing enthusiastically in assemblies and lessons.
- 169 The subject leader is determined to raise interest, enthusiasm and standards in music throughout the school. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and a high proportion is excellent. This increases all pupils' interest, enjoyment and enthusiasm and, as a result, most behave very well in music lessons.
- 170 The teacher ensures that, by the age of seven, all pupils have opportunities to copy and create rhythms and use instruments correctly. This increases the pupils' skills in playing and they work hard to maintain beat and rhythm when clapping and playing instruments. Effective support from the class teacher and support assistant ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language join in and learn well. This increases the pupils' confidence and self esteem. All pupils enjoy their work, behave well, sing enthusiastically and play instruments skilfully.
- 171 This good rate of learning and achievement continues as the pupils' progress through the school. They learn how to play tuned instruments and compose rhythms to accompany songs. The teacher ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational need, have the opportunity to use the drum kit. Carefully targeted questioning ensures that all the pupils discuss and evaluate their own and other's achievements. This develops the self esteem of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school provides effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and make sure that they understand the meaning of words such as 'beat'. This enables the pupils to achieve at a similar rate to their classmates. By Year 6 pupils sing confidently in three parts but their ability to maintain the correct pitch in singing is still variable. Their performing skills are above those expected for most pupils of this age. Pupils' attitudes to learning music are very positive. The enthusiasm engendered by the very good teaching is having a positive effect and is raising standards.
- 172 The school's scheme of work gives clear guidelines and support to teachers. All teachers work alongside the specialist teacher. This improves the teachers' knowledge and confidence and ensures that pupils achieve well. The specialist teacher has clear assessment procedures within

the scheme of work. She uses these effectively to indicate pupils' progress and to set individual plans for improvement. The school has a wide range of instruments from western and non western cultures, but relies on loan schemes to supplement recorded music. This increases pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

- 173 There is limited use of information and communication technology to support work in music. This restricts the pupils' ability to use their skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about the good range of extra curricular activities that support and enhance their work.
- 174 The specialist music teacher is the subject coordinator. Her enthusiasm and commitment to raising standards together with a clear vision for the future direction of music within the school is having a positive effect on the profile and the standards of music in the school. Her practice of working alongside other teachers is helping to develop their confidence and expertise.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 175 By the age of 11, pupils attain standards that meet those expected nationally. It was not possible to see any lessons for pupils in Years 1 and 2 but discussion with pupils in Year 2, and evidence from teachers' planning, indicates that pupils meet the expectations for most seven year olds. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress.
- 176 The school places great value on pupils' work in physical education. Clear evidence of this appears in the quality teaching and learning in lessons. The school teaches all aspects of the subject, including swimming, athletics and games. At the moment, swimming is available only to pupils in Year 3 and Year 4. This limits the development of swimming skills and techniques for older pupils. The subject leader is aware of this and has plans to address this need.
- 177 Teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about all elements of physical education. There is a wide range of extra curricular sports provision and the school has many successes with its sports teams. Pupils derive much benefit from the mixed teams they field in football and netball. The school is continuing with its outdoor and adventurous provision to maintain a good balance in its curriculum. These factors make a significant contribution to the standards pupils achieve.
- 178 There is good teaching in physical education and pupils learn well. By Year 4 pupils have well developed skills in throwing and catching balls. They apply these skills effectively as they play a range of rounders games. They evaluate their performance but do not have enough time to practise and improve their skills. Teachers continue to build on pupils' increasing skills and techniques as they progress into Year 5. This enables the pupils to grow in confidence and work very well together in teams with no arguments or fuss. The class teacher does not give pupils enough opportunities to evaluate their own or another's work. This restricts their learning and understanding of how to increase skills and techniques. By Year 6, all pupils make effective links with science in their understanding of the need for exercise. They make good progress in practising to improve their performance and make critical self evaluations of their techniques. For example, the second rounders' team is more effective in batting and following rules. All pupils learn and apply new skills successfully because of the careful and skilful teaching.
- 179 Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in developing an awareness of the use of space. They develop their ability to throw, bat and catch balls well as they practise these skills. All pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 make good progress in learning how to swim. They meet the expectations for most pupils of their age in this aspect of physical education.
- 180 The quality of learning in physical education lessons is good. All pupils work with a sense of purpose and want to achieve. They are eager to learn new skills and apply their learning well in games. The quality of teaching makes a positive impact on pupils' learning.

181 Pupils throughout the school at both key stages have positive attitudes to their work in physical education. They work with much enjoyment and enthusiasm and have high levels of concentration. Pupils behave well in lessons, both in the hall and when moving to and from the hall and outside. They work quietly, collaboratively and cooperate very well with each other and their teachers. Relationships are good and pupils help and support each other well, particularly when practising agility skills. This is a result of the consistently good teaching. All teachers give clear explanations to pupils and take care to ensure they understand the purpose of their work. The organisation of lessons is good and teachers prepare lessons carefully to provide a suitably balanced programme of progression in skills and techniques. They have a good level of subject knowledge and understanding and are confident in the teaching of physical education.

182 Most teachers have suitably high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, although there is some lack of challenge for more able pupils in Year 5. Lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils enjoy them. The school's physical education programme receives effective support from the range of extra curricular activities, including sport, which the school provides.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

183 By the ages of seven and eleven, most pupils achieve standards that meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the religious education curriculum. This gives pupils opportunities to learn about a range of world religions and increases their awareness of different faiths and beliefs. Most pupils have above average knowledge of important symbols and events in the religions they study. However, their understanding of how religion affects people's everyday life is limited. This is why standards are not higher.

184 The school has enough books, posters and artefacts to support pupils' learning and supplements these from the county loan arrangements. Lessons are lively and interesting and involve pupils in discussions that raise interest in the practices of a range of religions. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, during the inspection a member of the Jewish faith answered questions prepared by pupils from Year 5.

185 The pupils in the Year 1 and 2 classes know that the Bible has stories that are important to Christians and Jews. Pupils in Year 2 behave well and listen attentively to their teacher. Careful and sensitive questioning increases their ability to understand the meaning of death. In one lesson observed, the teacher read the story 'Badger's Gifts' and encouraged pupils to reflect on how Badger and his friends might have felt. The pupils moved on to relate this to their own experiences of loss. One pupil said, "Deep inside Badger's heart he will have memory of everyone". Another pupil explained, "I had a brother but I never met him because he died before I was born... It makes me feel sad." This sort of discussion makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development. It represents very good learning because their current teacher has been in post for only three weeks. The teacher and learning support teacher encourage all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, to join in. Many have difficulty expressing their thoughts clearly. This restricts their ability to contribute to the discussion.

186 Teachers build on pupils' knowledge as they progress to the older classes. This continues the good quality learning and achievement in Years 4 and 5. Pupils do not achieve as well in Year 3 because they are just beginning to settle with a relatively new class teacher. They know about the rules of fasting during Ramadan but do not have a clear understanding of why Muslims fast. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils learn about religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Careful questioning enables pupils to increase their understanding about the codes of conduct in all religions. For example, pupils in Year 4 write confidently about the Sikh rules for following a good life and relate these to the Ten Commandments. Skilful questioning enables them to give thoughtful answers to questions about the meaning of God. An example of this is when a pupil says, "God wasn't born and He can't die... He is immortal. That means living for ever and not dying."

- 187 The work in Year 5 shows a significant improvement since the beginning of this term. They think carefully about the significance of symbolism in Judaism and the meaning of 'Shabbat'. There is clear understanding of why Jews celebrate Shabbat, "It's the day when God rested after the creation". Scrutiny of pupils' works shows that this effective teaching continues into Year 6. These pupils are developing an increasing understanding of how religion affects people's lives. For example, they know why Buddhists are vegetarian and know about the noble eightfold path of life rules.
- 188 The quality of teaching is consistently good. Half of all teaching in lessons seen is very good. This has a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes to learning. The teachers ensure that all the pupils have opportunities to discuss their concepts about a range of world religions. They give a good level of support to pupils who speak English as an additional language. This increases the pupils' understanding of English and enables them to discuss their ideas confidently. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support that ensures they work alongside their classmates. The lessons are interesting, tasks are demanding and teachers are enthusiastic. This leads to good behaviour in lessons, respect for different religions and pupils' enjoyment of their work.
- 189 Teachers make effective links with literacy by encouraging pupils to read and take part in discussions. However, they do not place enough emphasis on insisting that pupils use their handwriting and spelling skills correctly in their written work. The use of information and communication technology for research is under developed. This means that pupils do not use their skills in this subject to support work effectively in religious education.