

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST JOSEPH RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

South Oxhey

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117465

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Staunton

Reporting inspector: Mrs Ann Coughlan  
21124

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 247788

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ainsdale Road South Oxhey Watford
Postcode:	WD19 7DW
Telephone number:	020 8428 5371
Fax number:	020 8421 0568
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Trish Lincoln
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21124	Ann Coughlan	Registered inspector	Science	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
19727	Eric Langford	Lay inspector		Educational inclusion, Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety, Partnership with parents and carers
27568	Midge Davidson	Team inspector	Foundation stage curriculum, mathematics, physical education	Curricular opportunities
32745	Ian Durant	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology, special educational needs	
30457	David Evans	Team inspector	Art and design, geography, history, music	

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA  
Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>32</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school is below average in size with 160 girls and boys on roll and with 23 part-time children in the nursery. Their ages range from three to eleven years. The school is one of seven primary schools in the area that form a close association. The number of pupils on roll has declined considerably since the last inspection, in common with the other local schools, owing to demographic reasons. Although the number of pupils claiming eligibility for free school meals is below the national average at seven per cent and pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds there is some socio-economic disadvantage in the locality. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (20 per cent) and with Statements of Special Educational Needs (1.6 per cent) is close to the national average. Many have needs related to speech and communication but there is a wide range including emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disability. Children's attainment on entry is below average, particularly in their language and communication skills. There are 12 pupils from ethnic minorities but these pupils are fluent in English and need no additional support. There has been a large turnover of staff in the last two years and difficulty with recruiting teachers. Three weeks before the inspection the school suffered an arson attack that resulted in severe damage to two classrooms and smoke damage to a third classroom.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective and improving school owing to the very strong leadership of the headteacher coupled with good support from governors and staff. There is a strong commitment by all concerned to continue to raise standards and the school meets its aims well. Teaching is always satisfactory and frequently good; teachers and other staff work hard to provide a secure environment and activities that promote the pupils' interest in learning. The school is managed well and gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The very clear educational direction given by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is resulting in rising standards.
- The consistently good quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 and in Year 6 during this school year has resulted in the pupils in these year groups making good progress and the teaching of mathematics and science is good across the school
- Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour result in excellent relationships, very good attitudes to school and very good behaviour.
- Very good links with the church, the community and excellent relationships with other schools and educational institutions provide pupils with many benefits and experiences.
- The very good attention to pupils' care and welfare and the fully inclusive nature of the school provides a secure environment that promotes pupils' self-confidence very effectively.
- The school has a very constructive partnership with parents who support the work of the school very well.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in geography: these are currently below average by the end of Year 6.
- The use of assessment information to inform lesson planning more effectively.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1998 despite an almost complete change of teaching staff and senior management. The key issues from the last inspection have been

addressed well, particularly in the last two years. For example, there are now good procedures for supporting pupils with special educational needs and there has been a significant improvement in the procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The school has maintained standards in most subjects while implementing new national initiatives satisfactorily. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships have also improved. Pupils now have a clear understanding of the purpose of their lessons. The teaching of mathematics and investigative skills in science has improved. The way in which the curriculum in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is constantly reviewed and developed is also an improvement and the overall care and welfare of pupils is also better than at the time of the last inspection.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	E	E*
mathematics	C	C	D	E
science	B	C	E	E*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children enter the school with below average levels of attainment and although they achieve satisfactorily and are likely to meet the early learning goals in several areas of learning, their standards in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics remain below average at the end of the reception year. The school's performance in the national tests for seven year olds in 2002 dipped from the previous year being well below average. Preliminary results from this year's tests for seven year olds show a marked improvement and inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 are attaining above average standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Owing to a sharp drop in performance in last year's tests, the school's trend in results for eleven year olds over the last three years has been below the national average. When compared with similar schools the results were in the lowest five per cent of schools for English and science. However, when compared with their same performance in the national tests when they were aged seven their results were average in English and mathematics though still well below average in science. These results were related to the higher proportion than usual of pupils with special educational needs in this particular year group and the school failed to meet its targets in English and mathematics. The school has set challenging but realistic targets for this year's performance in the tests for 11 year olds. The inspection shows that pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall and they make good progress in Years 5 and 6 resulting in a rise in standards to average levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils attain average standards overall in other subjects but standards in geography by the end of Year 6 are below average and their achievement in this subject is unsatisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are very enthusiastic about their school, enjoy practical tasks and class discussions. Most concentrate well in lessons and show commitment to their work.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are considerate and friendly. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection.
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Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships and good personal development: pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility.
Attendance	Good: above the national average.

The pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes and the excellent relationships within the school make a strong contribution to the quality of school life, pupils' achievement and the positive and inclusive atmosphere for learning.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching of English and literacy skills is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers develop pupils speaking and listening skills well across the school. The teaching of mathematics, numeracy skills and science is good overall. A significant strength in the teaching is the very good management of pupils that helps to build pupils' confidence and sustain their concentration. Most lessons proceed at a good pace because teachers plan and prepare them well. The effective teaching assistants worked very closely with the teachers and are well prepared by them to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The teaching promotes the learning of average and higher attaining pupils well. In some lessons, however, where teachers plan the same work for all pupils the steps for learning are too difficult for lower attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work has developed during this year in most classes and helps pupils to improve their work. Homework supports the learning in class well. As yet, teachers do not make enough use of computers to help pupils learn across the curriculum. Sometimes teachers do not leave enough time towards the end of the lesson to effectively review the learning that has taken place. The use of personal targets for learning is underdeveloped so that pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the school has developed useful procedures for planning and monitoring the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils' needs are assessed at an early stage and individual education plans have clear targets for their development
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, good provision for their spiritual development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good child protection and welfare procedures. Very good promotion of good behaviour and discipline.

- The school works very well in partnership with parents.
- The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. The balance of the timetable does not always allow for pupils to learn skills

in a regular manner. Opportunities for extra-curricular sport are limited. There is no scheme of work for pupils' personal, social and health education.

- Although assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science are good and pupils' performance is tracked well in these subjects, assessment in other subjects is underdeveloped.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: very good leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher ensures clear direction. Satisfactory co-ordination of most subjects with good management in mathematics, science, special educational needs and assessment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory: governors are well informed and understand the needs of the school but do not rigorously measure cost effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' performance are contributing well to rising standards in this reflective school.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of resources and specific grants to support the school's priorities. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.

- Staffing levels are adequate with effective support for newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school. Accommodation is satisfactory. Learning resources satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in history, geography, in the quality of books in the library and the number of computers.
- Although the school has developed effective systems for the co-ordination of subjects, there is sometimes lack of continuity owing to staff changes.

#### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and are expected to work hard and do their best</li> <li>• The teaching is good, and children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-curricular activities and outside visits</li> <li>• The school to work more closely with parents</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments though they found teaching and progress were satisfactory overall rather than good. They consider that the school makes every effort to work closely with parents but agree that there could be more regular extra-curricular sports clubs and outside visits.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children enter the nursery with below the expected standards for their age especially in their language and communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. The children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and personal, social and emotional development so that most will attain the early learning goals in these areas by the time they leave the reception class. They make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. A significant number of children will not attain the early learning goals in these two key areas at the end of the reception year.
2. When compared with the national averages, the school's results in the national tests for seven and eleven year olds showed a sharp dip in 2002 and the school failed to meet its targets. As a result, the school's average points in the tests were below the national trend over the last few years. The performance of pupils at the end of Year 2 was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and in mathematics was in the lowest five per cent of schools. There was also well below average results for pupils at the end of Year 6 in English and science and below average results in mathematics. There are a number of reasons for this: both year groups had a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and to some extent were affected by disruption in staffing. An analysis of recent data and lesson observations indicate that, although the attainment of the majority of pupils is close to what is expected for their age, there are very few pupils whose attainment is above what is expected. This affects the school's average points score in the tests. The school has not identified any gifted or talented pupils. When compared with similar schools, as measured by free school meals eligibility, the performance at the end of both key stages was in the lowest five per cent of schools except in mathematics for Year 6 where it was below average. However, the school's reported free school meals percentage does not accurately reflect its situation; other indicators suggest the school should be in a lower benchmark group. When compared with their prior attainment as seven year olds, last year's Year 6 performance was average when compared with similar schools in English and mathematics, though still well below average in science.
3. At the time of the last inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 was in line with national expectations in all subjects except art and design across the school and music in Year 6 where attainment was above average. The quality of teaching and learning is similar now to that found in the last inspection. Standards overall have been maintained with pupils attaining average standards in most subjects. However, pupils in Year 2 now attain above average standards in English and in Year 6 standards in geography are now below average. Standards have fallen slightly in art and design across the school and in music in Year 6 but pupils are achieving satisfactorily in both subjects.
4. Parents consider that their children make good progress, though a few are concerned that standards and test results are affected significantly by staff changes. The school's actions to increase the rate of pupils' progress over the last two years are having a positive impact; inspection findings and preliminary indications from this year's tests show that pupils achieve well overall so that there is an improving profile in standards. However, inspectors agree that the progress of some pupils has been affected by frequent staff changes. The good tracking of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and the good monitoring of teaching and target setting by the headteacher, to some extent, mitigate this. Until recently, the school has enjoyed a period of more stable staffing during the current school year and this is reflected in the good progress pupils have made in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 and, from the limited evidence available, in Year 4.
5. The school carefully assesses the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and targets support appropriately giving priority to early intervention. Appropriate learning opportunities

enable pupils with special educational needs to make sound progress against the targets set in their individual education plans and to make similar progress to other pupils in lessons. The challenge for higher attaining pupils is usually sufficient for them to achieve well in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 and satisfactorily in other classes. However, the school's good quality assessment data, although used to group pupils broadly in lessons is not yet translated into targets for individual pupils to enable them to be clear about their next steps for learning. This has an impact mainly on lower attaining pupils where the work is not always suitably modified into smaller steps to help them learn easily.

6. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills; the school's strategies to develop these are not yet consistently implemented across the school but are successful in Years 1, 2 and 6. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards books and reading as a result of the increasing emphasis on literacy by the school and effective parental support. The school's focus on writing has also had a positive effect on pupils' progress though difficulties in staffing have limited this in some classes. Achievement in reading and writing is good by the end of Year 2 and satisfactory by the end of Year 6. The increased use of literacy across the curriculum has also been a significant contributory factor to rising standards as it has increased pupils' interest in producing good quality writing.
7. The daily numeracy lesson is well established in the school and as a result, nearly all pupils develop a sound knowledge of numbers and other aspects of mathematics. Teaching is good throughout the school as teachers plan lessons well, provide interesting activities and most give pupils' good opportunity to make choices, discuss ideas and assess their learning. Teachers provide sound opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in science but there is limited use in other subjects. Achievement is good at the end of Year 2 and satisfactory at the end of Year 6. The school's action this year on improving the teaching and learning of investigative skills in science has had a very positive impact so that pupils learn to plan investigations as well as carry them out. The emphasis on first hand experience means that pupils develop good practical skills. They develop a good scientific vocabulary and a clear understanding of what constitutes a fair test. Older pupils are learning to frame questions and to think how the answers may be obtained through the way they design tests. Achievement science across the school is good.
8. Pupils are enthusiastic about using computers and achieve satisfactorily in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Although basic skills are satisfactorily developed and pupils have a sound knowledge of the use of new technology in the wider world their use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is under-developed. This is largely related to a lack of computers in classrooms so that pupils only have access during timetabled lessons in the computer suite and overall, resources are unsatisfactory.
9. Achievement in geography, though satisfactory by the end of Year 2 is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6. This is because of timetabling arrangements, the lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject by some teachers and unsatisfactory learning resources. In other subjects achievement is satisfactory but is sometimes limited, as the practice of using both pupils' and teachers' assessments of learning in lessons to inform the next lesson is not well established. In particular, this affects pupils' progress in developing subject specific skills.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Relationships within the school are excellent and the very good attitudes and behaviour displayed by the pupils have a positive impact on the quality of the pupils' learning. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. A warm and welcoming family atmosphere of care, consideration and tolerance of others permeates throughout the whole school and pupils feel safe. Children in the nursery and reception class quickly develop good routines and positive attitudes because staff provide effective management and good opportunities for development.
11. Pupils are keen to come into school and the great majority quickly settle down to their work. Many pupils demonstrate good listening and speaking skills that enable them to take an active part in

class lessons and to make a valuable contribution to learning. Of note are the mature and positive attitudes demonstrated by most pupils and their practice to ignore the occasional silly behaviour of a few pupils and not to allow this to disrupt their learning.

12. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and show themselves to be motivated and enthusiastic learners. Most pupils display high levels of confidence and a willingness to share and discuss their learning with others. Many are able to sustain very good levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with each other in both group and paired activities. Pupils like their teachers and enjoy their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs display a very positive attitude to their learning. The teachers work very closely with the teaching assistants to manage pupils skilfully and as a result all pupils learn effectively.
13. The standard of pupil behaviour to be seen in and around the school is very good and serves to enhance the very positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Staff managed the very occasional lapses in behaviour seen in some lessons in a very skilful manner and the flow of good learning was maintained. Parents are very pleased with the high standards of behaviour that have been achieved over recent years, including the very good behaviour to be seen outside of school.
14. This very good behaviour seen in the school is very much the product of the teachers' very effective management of pupils. The school's behaviour policy and well-structured system of behaviour rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils and applied in a consistent manner by staff. They are proving to be very effective in supporting the ongoing development of pupils' very good behaviour and discipline.
15. The school is right to celebrate a record of no pupil exclusions over the past two years, with only one pupil exclusion since the last inspection. An anti-bullying culture is actively promoted within the school and there was no evidence of any inappropriate behaviour to be seen during the inspection. Discussions with parents and pupils during the inspection confirmed that staff, to the benefit of all, swiftly and effectively deal with incidents such as mild name-calling. The overall very good behaviour to be seen amongst pupils serves as a measure of the success being achieved through the school's values and code of conduct in promoting an ethos of learning in the school.
16. Pupils fully understand the impact of their actions on others and the relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school are excellent. This is a thinking and reflective school where pupils are friendly, and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors and demonstrate by their actions, and through conversations, that they know right from wrong. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness to the needs of others and many examples were seen in the school, and in the playground, of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils and adults alike. These include showing care and concern when a pupil falls in the playground, holding doors open for each other in school and saying "please", "sorry" and "thank you" to each other. Inspectors were impressed with the courteous and polite manner in which pupils responded to them during the inspection week.
17. Pupils collaborate well with each other in their learning and play activities, happily take turns without question, and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care. Pupils display a pride in their work and readily appreciate and acknowledge the good work of other pupils. Older pupils display an acceptance for each to have different opinions and views from themselves and readily listen and contribute their own views into structured debates. This was well illustrated by Year 5 pupils engaged in a lesson discussing the South African "reconciliation and justice" process. This is a very inclusive school in which all pupils interrelate well with each other in a calming and open atmosphere of racial and social harmony. Pupils display a pride and sense of ownership of their school and there was no evidence of any graffiti, litter or property damage to be seen in or around the school during the inspection.
18. The school provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for personal development, ranging from class based monitor duties to whole-school responsibility roles for Year 6 pupils. Their duties, however, do not include any responsibilities associated with supporting the younger pupils in

school. Each teacher organises a class rota to ensure all pupils can experience a class responsibility as part of their personal development and to extend their independent learning skills. All pupils willingly accept and undertake their assigned responsibilities with vigour and pride. However, the use of personal targets for learning is underdeveloped so that pupils do not always have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. The school council provides the junior pupils with opportunities to participate in, and influence, the running of the school. For example, the council decided to stop break-time football in the upper playground and during wet weather and to resolve that football can only be played on the grass field. The school plans to extend membership of the council to include infant pupils that will enhance the personal development of all pupils

19. Pupils' attendance at school is good and the level of unauthorised absence is below the national average for similar schools. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school, punctuality within the school is very good and lessons were seen to start on time. A minority of pupils habitually arrive late for school; however, as a result of positive action taken to address this, there is evidence that punctuality in arriving at school is improving. The recorded unauthorised absence is due mainly to a small minority of parents who do not conform to the school procedures to provide a reason for their child's absence from school. Some 0.5 per cent of the total absences result from holidays taken during term time. This level of absence restricts the learning opportunities of the absent pupil and has a negative effect on teachers' planning and overall class progress.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with many good features and presents a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. However, this does not reflect the instability and variation in quality that has taken place over the last two years owing to the school's difficulties with the recruitment and retention of teachers. Some classes have been taught by more than one teacher during the year and last year one class had several teachers. During the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and teaching was good or better in six out of ten lessons. A temporary teacher taught less than one in ten of the lessons seen.
21. The positive features in teaching identified by the last inspection have been retained and the way teachers much more consistently share the objectives and purpose of lessons is an improvement. In addition, the structure of lessons is better balanced with pupils now having sufficient time for practical or written tasks. In some lessons, however, teachers do not leave enough time to review the learning that has taken place, so that ideas and questions raised by pupils are not fully explored, and valuable opportunities for learning are lost.
22. The quality of teaching and learning varies through the school with the result that pupils achieve better in some classes than in others and their progress as they move through the school is uneven. Teaching in the nursery and reception class is satisfactory overall but there are many strengths. Children's personal, social and emotional development has a high priority and they make good progress that has a positive impact on their learning in other areas. There is very good classroom management so no time is wasted and there are clear routines understood by the children who develop positive attitudes. Good daily lesson plans ensure that adults and children know exactly what they are doing. Nursery nurses and teachers keep detailed records of what children can do. However, in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, this information is not used consistently to identify the next steps in learning so that teaching is satisfactory in these two key areas. Teaching is good overall in the other areas of learning.
23. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good and sometimes very good. Scrutiny of work, school records and pupils' approach to lessons indicate that teaching and learning has been good overall in Year 5, though the teacher went on maternity leave just before the inspection. The teaching in Year 6 is also consistently strong and has a very significant impact on pupils' attainment. Although some good and very good lessons were observed in Year 3, scrutiny of pupils' work shows there is not high enough expectation in some aspects of their recorded work

but teaching is satisfactory overall. A good feature is the way the teacher makes effective cross-curricular links in lessons. Owing to the recent fire, nearly all evidence of work in Year 4 was destroyed and their teacher left immediately before the inspection so it is not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching in this class. A supply teacher taught the class for the week of the inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall despite the difficult conditions of their accommodation, limited resources and loss of previous work.

24. A particular strength in the teaching across the school is that in nearly all lessons teachers manage their pupils in a very positive and effective way. This helps to build pupils' confidence, sustain their concentration and it contributes well to their positive attitudes and good behaviour. This has a good impact on their learning by encouraging them to work together well and tackle any difficulties that arise. It also means that time is used effectively and a good pace of work is maintained in nearly all lessons thus maintaining a purposeful atmosphere. Teachers plan clearly, using national guidelines; though they adapt these to provide suitable work for groups in their classes in English and mathematics this is not routinely done in other subjects. Teachers motivate pupils well in the lively way they present challenges and support this further by their good preparation of interesting resources.
25. Good questioning in many lessons means that all pupils are challenged at suitable levels. Teachers encourage speaking and listening skills well, often using discussion partners to share ideas. This makes pupils think more deeply and relate ideas to their own experiences so this extends their understanding. Overall, teaching and learning is good in mathematics and science across the school and in Years 1 and 2 in English and in art and design. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on teaching in information and communication technology or design and technology but teaching and learning were satisfactory in other subjects.
26. The teaching of English and literacy skills is good and sometimes very good in Years 1, 2 and 6 and is satisfactory in other classes. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well and in the better lessons use questioning effectively and through discussion at the end of lessons reinforce and assess learning. All pupils have targets for writing but many pupils in Years 3 - 6 did not know their targets and as a result are not developing the skill of assessing their own learning and progress. The teaching of numeracy is good across the school and a very good lesson was seen in Year 3. Both the introductory mental mathematics sessions and review at the end of lessons contribute to sharpening skills and consolidating learning. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss ideas and solutions and support each other. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively in, for example, their planning and in the use of equipment such as overhead projectors to support teaching and learning in several subjects but do not make sufficient use of computers to help pupils learn.
27. Although teachers appropriately assess pupils' progress in many lessons and provide relevant support, a weakness in the teaching is that good information from regular assessment is not yet used sufficiently to identify individual areas for improvement and formulate short-term achievable targets. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities to assess their own learning by understanding what it is they were supposed to have learnt and by being able to make choices within the lesson. Good examples were seen in mathematics and science lessons. While teachers usually mark work, there is a lack of consistency across the school and the expectations for presentation and handwriting are variable. The marking of work has improved throughout the year and is now more informative in most classes although there is still scope to develop it further to include the identification of the next learning steps. In the best examples of marking, such as in Year 5, comments refer to the objectives, showing that teachers are assessing pupils' progress and also informing them of what they need to do to improve. Teachers' day-to-day evaluations are not yet having sufficient impact on curricular planning.
28. The effective teaching assistants are well prepared by them to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs as they are given clear lesson plans by the teachers and are well supported by the statements in the pupils' individual education plans. Several very good examples of successful inclusion in class activities were seen owing to good teamwork between teachers and assistants, particularly in Year 1 and Year 4. Teachers and assistants also work in

partnership to ensure that all pupils can access the learning. This was well illustrated in Year 1 where the teaching assistants were quietly answering questions and explaining teaching points to small groups of pupils or individuals during the whole class introduction to a literacy lesson. The teaching promotes the learning of average and higher attaining pupils well. Although teachers appropriately tailor their demands for recording to pupils' capabilities, in some lessons teachers plan the same work for all pupils and do not sufficiently take into consideration the differing levels of prior attainment. In these lessons the steps for learning are too difficult for lower attaining pupils.

29. The school has a clear policy for providing work to be done at home and this is implemented well and makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers provide parents with class-based homework guidelines setting out the type and frequency of homework expected. The homework that teachers provide is well organised and develops good habits as it encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning, being linked well to work in class. It builds appropriately as pupils become older. Though a few parents report 'it depends on the teacher' scrutiny of homework books indicate regular work and pupils are enthusiastic about their reading at home.

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

30. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactorily planned in the six areas of learning. The nursery in particular uses a helpful format that indicates a good balance between adult focused and child-selected activities. Children are prepared well for the next stage of education particularly in the area of their personal, social and emotional development.
31. The curriculum of the remainder of the school offers pupils a satisfactory breadth of study, in which all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, covering the designated programmes of study. All subjects have clear policy statements and schemes of work. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects and this area of the subject does not meet statutory requirements. A significant proportion of time is allocated to English, including the National Literacy Strategy. This links to an initiative to improve standards in writing; this has been successful, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The senior management team has produced clear and effective formats for planning and have established systems that enable subject coordinators to monitor their areas of the curriculum. These focus on particular criteria in order to feed back information to teachers and ensure that, specifically, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the quality of the curriculum is under constant review. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection.
32. Sufficient consideration has not been given however to the structure and balance of the timetable for some of the other subjects. In particular, the allocation of history and geography topics does not always allow for pupils to learn skills in a regular manner. Similarly in physical education, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have only limited time for lessons. Those in Year 4 do not, at present, have the opportunity to develop their skills across all aspects of the physical education curriculum as only swimming is taught in this year group.
33. Literacy skills are used well in other subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills in science and mathematics, where they contribute to class discussions and explain methods of working. The use of discussion partners to develop strategies in problem solving, for example, also makes a significant contribution here. There is evidence of regular written records of investigations in science and descriptions of problem solving in mathematics. Pupils assess their own progress effectively in physical education in Year 3, in written accounts of their lessons. Numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics lessons, but although the use of measuring and graphical skills is satisfactorily incorporated into work in science their use in geography is limited.
34. The school's strong commitment to educational inclusion results in good opportunities for all groups of pupils, including those with particular needs. There has been good improvement in provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. All these pupils have

individual education plans with targets that are now specific, measurable and achievable. Pupils receive good support in small group teaching by experienced teaching assistants.

35. A few teachers allow time in their daily schedule to carry out specific activities related to personal, social and health education, and younger children have frequent sessions to discuss important issues. The very good caring ethos of the school provides for pupils to share and resolve any problems in a very sensitive way, but there is no formal personal, social and health education policy or scheme of work and no formal records of personal development are kept after the end of the Foundation Stage. The governors have agreed a sex education policy, and this is taught with due regard for the foundation principles of this Roman Catholic school. The school has yet to develop a programme for teaching about drugs awareness.
36. All pupils in Year 6 have an opportunity for enrichment to the taught curriculum by attending a residential educational centre, where they can participate in outdoor and adventurous activities. There are occasional excursions out of school and a few visitors are able to share experiences, which link to history. Throughout the year there have been opportunities for older pupils to join in with sports coaching and clubs, which run for short periods of time, like dance. Recently a French club has been established. However, there is a limited range of long-running extra-curricular activities, and the team broadly supports parents' concerns in this area.
37. The very good contribution of the community to pupils' learning provides pupils with a wide range of benefits and educational experiences. These include having close links with elderly people in local nursing homes and the collecting and donating to a variety of charitable organisations. The pupils gain great benefit from the many visitors into school who talk and work with the pupils and enrich their learning. These include dance and drama groups, secondary students on community experience placements and student teachers undertaking part of their training in school, all of whom add value to pupils social and educational development. Pupil's personal safety awareness is enhanced by the visit of fire professionals, road safety and cycling proficiency officers, school nurse and other health professionals who talk, and interact with, pupils on the many dangers in life and how to ensure their personal safety
38. The school has established excellent educational links that provide significant benefits to pupils and staff alike. These have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Teachers and subject co-ordinators gain significantly from their links with the South Oxhey consortium of schools and the exchange of good practice involved with the consortium's "raising achievement" project. The strong partnership links with St Joseph's pre-school provides for a smooth induction process of new pupils and parents into mainstream education. The close working arrangements that have been developed with the two secondary receiver schools, and the Year 6 and Year 7 cross-year project arrangements, enable a seamless transition for well-informed pupils and parents to move up into secondary education. Pupils gain value from the many students who work alongside them in school, such as trainee teachers from the University of Hertfordshire teacher training college.
39. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development. This is particularly significant in assemblies, when carefully chosen music is played at the beginning and end to provide an atmosphere that encourages reflection and contemplation. During the assemblies candles are lit and older pupils are chosen to read passages from the Bible. There is currently a focus on the prayer life of the school and each classroom has been provided with a corner for quiet reflection. Discussions in some lessons engendered a good sense of spirituality. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson pupils were encouraged to understand and respect the feelings of others, while in a Year 6 history lesson pupils' enthusiasm was fired as they pondered the meaning of John Lennon's song, 'Imagine'. However, opportunities for pupils' personal reflection were often missed in lessons across the curriculum. In subjects such as history, geography, art and music there is no systematic planning to include opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development in lessons and, consequently, pupils are not often reminded of the beauty and diversity of the world around them.

40. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. It is very effective in teaching the pupils the difference between right and wrong. All classrooms have a code of conduct prominently displayed and all pupils are aware of how they should behave in and out of school. The adults who work in the school give the pupils positive images of socially acceptable behaviour. They deal with issues firmly, fairly and patiently, and respect the opinions of the pupils and their carers. This is very effective in developing consideration for each other and mutual respect throughout the school community. Carefully designed systems of praise and reward encourage and motivate pupils in their moral behaviour. 'Well Done' certificates are awarded to pupils in weekly assemblies for exemplary attitudes and behaviour. Teachers have high expectations of standards of pupils' behaviour and work consistently to achieve them. As a result the quality of relationships is excellent in lessons and around the school, and pupils are very considerate, helpful and supportive of each other.
41. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school gives all the pupils suitable opportunities to take responsibility. Classroom monitors, for instance, diligently and unobtrusively carry out a number of worthwhile duties, routines and activities to help their classrooms run smoothly, such as handing out resources and operating equipment. There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council, which consists of representatives from all the junior classes, makes an important contribution to this. Pupils encounter a full election process and they are actively encouraged to find solutions to problems that are raised by staff and pupils. There is a school house system for the junior classes with Year 6 pupils acting as house captains and staff representatives as presidents. House points, which are awarded daily in school, are eagerly collected at the end of each week by house captains. Pupils raise money for a range of charities, including the Catholic Children's Society. At present, pupils can proudly claim to hold the Society's record for having collected more money than any other school in the Westminster diocese. Throughout the school, there is a caring, harmonious and friendly atmosphere and pupils are expected to help each other as well as visitors.
42. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. This represents a decline when compared with the very good standards reported at the last inspection. However, the school is now beginning to address the weaknesses in planned opportunities for multicultural awareness. During the year the school has participated in a number of activities to promote this aspect of pupils' development, for instance, artists and dance groups have visited the school to talk about Indian and Spanish cultures. Street jazz workshops, afternoon culture clubs and study support projects have also been organized as part of the school's concerted effort to improve this provision. Art and design, history, geography and music offer some limited opportunities for pupils to extend their multicultural awareness, but as yet, the school has not adopted a systematic approach to planning in this area.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

43. The school's provision for the care and welfare of the pupils in its charge is very good and a strength of the school. This represents an area of significant improvement over the findings of the last inspection. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. The head teacher is the named person for child protection, is fully trained and leads this sensitive area very well. Very good working relationships have been established with external support agencies. All staff are trained in, and familiar with, the child protection procedures and are aware of, and alert to, the need for vigilance in monitoring the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care.
44. The school has established very effective strategies to care for, and support, "looked after children" and those pupils identified with having special educational needs. Effective procedures are in place to ensure the regular review of their progress in consultation with parents and carers. Very good support facilities and accommodation access have been organised to ensure that pupils with mobility difficulties can be fully included in the learning opportunities provided by the school.
45. Very good filter procedures are in place to safeguard pupils from inappropriate material when accessing information on the Internet. There are good arrangements in place for reporting any use

of physical restraint in school and for ensuring that the best interests of pupils and staff are maintained at all times. Teachers and support staff are asked to respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal matters raised with them by pupils and to respect pupils' confidentiality. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and have the confidence and independence to raise queries and concerns with staff.

46. The school has established very good health and safety procedures that involve governors and embrace the whole spectrum of the pupils' time in the school. Risk assessment is in place for the school site and out of school visits and is in the process of being extended into whole school planning routines. Standing orders are in place to ensure that the annual inspection requirements for school equipment and electrical systems take place. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken and logged each term to ensure that all pupils and staff are familiar with school procedures.
47. Formal health and safety inspections, involving staff and governors, are undertaken each term with outcomes and recommendations reported for discussion at full governor meetings. The head teacher and the school caretaker have a good practice for regular informal health and safety checks of the school accommodation. During the inspection period, staff and pupils demonstrated good health and safety awareness in and around the school. The school premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness and provide the pupils with a safe and secure learning environment.
48. The school has an adequate provision of staff with first aid training and very good procedures are in place for the management and reporting of pupil injuries occurred during their time at school. Examples were seen during the inspection week of the quality of care and attention given by qualified first-aid staff in school and of the trust and reliance in them shown by pupils with minor injuries. Secure management arrangements are in place for the correct recording and administration of prescribed medicines to pupils, as and when requested by parents.
49. Good procedures are in place for the recording and reporting of pupil attendance at school and the school works in close liaison with the education welfare service to monitor and follow up all incidents of pupil absence and late arrival to school. The daily registration practice in school fully complies with statutory requirements. However, there is no absence management system in place to provide ongoing attendance and absence review data and no formal practice for the monitoring of pupil absence by the governors on a termly basis.
50. The school has established very good behaviour management routines to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and these contribute greatly to the very good attitudes to learning displayed by the pupils. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the very good behaviour to be seen in the school clearly demonstrates the successes being achieved. The comprehensive behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom to provide pupils with a meaningful focus of their teacher's expectations and rewards for good behaviour. The clear, simple and well-documented behaviour procedures are liked and understood by pupils and parents, all of whom judge these to be applied by teachers in a fair and consistent manner.
51. The school has a philosophy of zero tolerance towards bullying and has worked hard to promote a culture of anti-bullying amongst the pupils. During the inspection there was no evidence of any oppressive bullying or harassment of pupils. Past incidents of inappropriate behaviour by pupils are judged by pupils and parents to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.
52. The school identifies the special educational needs of pupils well and tracks their progress carefully. Pupils' individual education plans give a clear indication of the support the school is providing and indicate what parents/carers and the child can do to help achieve the targets. This represents a good improvement from the situation at the last inspection. The teaching assistants are allocated to classes based on the identified needs of pupils with priority given to early intervention. They provide very effective support to individuals and groups of pupils in class and work closely with the class teachers to ensure that every pupil can access the learning.

53. The school's monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory. Although staff know pupils' well and give them good support and guidance the school has no procedures to monitor pupils personal development beyond the Foundation Stage. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved significantly from the previous inspection when these were a key issue. The procedures are now satisfactory overall and good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school uses the results of end of key stage and optional tests in English, mathematics and science well to monitor progress and predict attainment levels for pupils. The headteacher regularly interviews class teachers to monitor progress towards these targets. In English the results of the tests are used to set curricular targets in writing. This needs to be more rigorously implemented and monitored, as there is evidence that some pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not clear about their targets. There is no formal system yet in place to set individual curricular targets in mathematics and science but the school is aware that this is an area for development. The progress of pupils is not systematically recorded in any of the other subjects and this needs to be improved.
54. The marking of pupils work has been developed this year and the qualities of teachers' comments have improved though this is not yet consistently applied across the school. When the marking is good it assesses pupils' work against the learning objectives and identifies what the pupils have to do next. In the best lessons pupils' evaluation of their learning when linked to teachers' own assessments, is then used to inform the next lesson. However, this practice is not well established and overall the use of assessment to inform planning, particularly in the development of skills, is unsatisfactory.
55. The assessment co-ordinator provides strong and effective leadership and manages the range of assessment procedures well. She has developed a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning from her analyses of performance information and has shared this with staff. She monitors the implementation of assessment procedures effectively and provides appropriate support when required. However, with a number of new staff and new initiatives in assessment, pupil tracking and target-setting arrangements, ensuring consistency in the implementation of these developments is still a priority.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

56. The majority of parents are supportive of the school, hold positive views about the staff, and believe their children receive a good quality of education and care. Most parents are actively involved in their children's learning and consider teachers to be willing to listen and talk with them about their child's progress. Their very good view of the school and very good involvement and contribution of parents in support of pupils learning represents an area of improvement since the last inspection.
57. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good and makes a positive contribution to their children's education and personal development. Parents are welcomed in school and encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. Parents' contribution and involvement in supporting the learning of the younger pupils is good and has a positive impact on their children's introduction to mainstream education. A number of examples exist of partnership working between parents and teachers that have proved successful in the improved behaviour and learning of pupils. The school actively encourages parents to be fully involved in setting targets for the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs and in the review of these.
58. Parental attendance at formal consultation meetings is very good and many parents commented favourably on these as valuable ways of keeping them informed of, and involved in, their child's progress. In particular, parents like the termly after-school "display evenings" organised for parents to come into school with their child to look through their class work and see displays of pupils' work in the school. Parents also praised the termly "parent surgeries" organised to provide parents with opportunities to meet with, and share any concerns with the head teacher about their child's time in school.
59. The great majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement and parents talked with during the inspection commented favourably on the regular opportunities provided for them to be

kept informed about their child's time in school. The school provides parents with class-based homework guidelines setting out the type and frequency of homework expected from their children. In addition, the school provides a good range of leaflets, for example, on high frequency sight recognition words, to help parents support their children's reading and writing skills in the home and to ultimately help raise standards.

60. The school appreciates the valuable contribution of some fifteen regular volunteer parents, who are able to provide a pre-planned input and support to the pupils' learning in the school, all of which helps to enhance the pupils learning opportunities. Of particular note are the three parents that are undertaking training in "parenting skills" and the school plans for these parents to be involved with the head teacher in delivering parenting skill workshops in the new school year.
61. The school benefits greatly from a very active parent-teacher association that organises regular fund raising social events, all of which are well attended and provide valuable informal opportunities for meetings and communications between teachers and parents. The association contributes significant funds in support of pupils' learning and provides an effective conduit for making parents' views known to the school. The school makes very good use of regular parent surveys to canvass their views on the strengths of the school and areas for improvement.
62. The quality, range and timeliness of information provided to parents are very good. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. Parents are kept well informed on a regular basis about all aspects of school life, organised events and pupils' activities. The weekly newsletter and the regular "dear parent" correspondence ensure parents are kept well informed about their children's time in school with detailed information related to ongoing changes and forthcoming events. Many parents make good use of the home-school link diaries to exchange comments with teachers and often talk with teachers at the beginning or end of the school day to clarify ways they can help with their children's homework.
63. The comprehensive school prospectus is a helpful reference document for parents. The governors' report to parents is informative and makes for easy reading. Of note are the many educational leaflets and booklets provided to parents to raise their awareness and understanding to learning styles, curricular topics and statutory assessment tests and level grades. The school has the good practice of organising awareness raising workshops for parents on such subjects as, "Helping your child with reading, homework and standards assessment tests" designed to help parents support their child's' learning in the home and in the school..
64. Overall the quality of the annual end-of-year pupils' progress reports to parents is satisfactory. Reports are typeface, written in plain English and provide parents with an insight to the effort and attainments achieved by their child. While some reports are good in describing pupils' achievement, there are inconsistencies between teachers in the level of textual detail provided to parents about what their children know and can do and the identification of specific targets for their child's improvement.
65. A few parents did not feel the school works closely with parents. The inspection team considers the school is proactive in encouraging parental involvement in support of pupils learning and provides a very good range of opportunities for partnership working between parents and teachers and therefore does not support these views. Nearly 40 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire do not consider sufficient extra-curricular activities and out-of-school visits are provided for the pupils. The inspection team agrees that more regular extra-curricular activities should be provided and that the out-of-school visits programme could be extended to enhance pupils' learning experiences.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

66. The leadership and management of the school are good. This is a similar finding to the last inspection though both the current headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken up their posts since that inspection. The headteacher provides very energetic and enthusiastic leadership and has a very clear focus on raising standards while maintaining the school's inclusive and positive

ethos. She is supported very well by the very capable deputy headteacher who fulfils a significant complementary role. Together with the key stage co-ordinators they provide an effective senior management team that steers the school well and has developed good quality systems that underpin the work of the school. This is particularly important in the school's situation of an unstable staffing complement but also results in all four members of the senior management team carrying significant responsibilities. The school now faces several months without the deputy headteacher during her maternity leave.

67. Developing the role of the subject co-ordinators was a key issue at the last inspection. There has been good improvement as the senior management have introduced a consistent pattern of subject management with opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor lessons and curricular planning in their subjects, provide action plans for improvement and discuss how effectively these have been implemented with the headteacher. Although there is effective delegation to several members of staff, including support staff, that allows their individual skills to have a positive impact on their areas of responsibility, subject co-ordination has been hampered by staff changes. There is good management of mathematics and science, but unsatisfactory management of geography and history and sound management of most other subjects. No judgement could be made on the management of design and technology.
68. Improving the systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs were another key issue for improvement in the last inspection. Since then the school has made significant progress in this area. The co-ordinator, provides good leadership with a clear vision of effective practice and has implemented good monitoring systems. Pupil's needs are assessed at an early stage and individual education plans have clear targets for their development. The governor with responsibility for overseeing special educational needs provides valuable support. The governors and senior management have a strong commitment to educational inclusion and this is made clear in its racial equality and equal opportunities policy. The school's commitment to racial harmony and the excellent prevention of any type of oppressive behaviour is put very effectively into practice.
69. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is good; through her own monitoring of lessons and discussions with staff the headteacher is well aware of what is happening in classrooms and the school as a whole. She has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve based on a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together to improve and make more effective use of assessment procedures. They analyse data so as to track pupils' progress in the core subjects in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress and discuss their findings with class teachers, setting them challenging targets. They are aware that the provision of clearer individual targets for pupils is now a priority.
70. The governing body is supportive, understands the needs of the school well and has a clear view of the challenges the school faces, such as the falling role and the resulting financial implications. Governors have discussed the consequences of this for classroom organisation at a meeting for parents to explain the reasons for their decisions. Several individual governors, including the chair, are regular visitors to the school to discuss their areas of special interest with co-ordinators. Many have visited lessons on an agreed basis and reported their findings back to the full governing body. They have also recorded their observations in written form. The governing body is also kept well informed by the headteacher and by other members of the school staff. The overall efficiency of the governing body is enhanced by a number of active committees that meet regularly to review specific areas of the school's provision such as curriculum, premises and finance, and report their findings back to full governing body meetings. The governing body meets most statutory requirements well but does not ensure that the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is involved in strategic decisions, such as a recent one to move to mixed age classes linked to prior attainment. However, as at the time of the last inspection governors have no formal procedures to rigorously monitor the impact of decisions on standards and quality and therefore their cost effectiveness.
71. School improvement planning involves staff and governors at appropriate stages and includes projection of numbers and financial information. The targets in the school improvement plan reflect

many aspects of the school's work over the next few years but these are not wholly realistic in the school's current climate of change. The plan does not sufficiently prioritise those items that would raise standards in the shorter term. Procedures for the performance management of teachers are well established with targets linked well into the improvement of the school through data analysis of pupils' progress, into subject leadership and also for professional development. The procedures have been maintained well despite changes in teaching staff and the school plans to extend them to other staff.

72. Strategies for financial planning and monitoring are good. The finance committee of the governing body is suitably involved, for example, examining several draft budgets before coming to a decision. Relevant expert support and advice is purchased from the local authority. Routine administration is very good owing to the way the effective school secretary provides invaluable support to the headteacher, staff, governors and parents. There is sound and increasing use of new technology. The school does not suffer from any inappropriate bureaucratic demands. There has been no recent local authority audit, but the issues raised in the last one have been fully addressed. The school makes appropriate use of specific grants.
73. The school has sound regard for the principles of best value. It consults pupils and parents on relevant issues. It compares its performance with similar schools both locally and nationally and takes action where appropriate. The costs of services are regularly reviewed and major purchases are only made after obtaining several quotations and judging these in terms of quality as well as cost. However, the school does not always challenge its decisions, such as some of those on timetabling.
74. During the last few years there has been a very high turnover of staff and the governors, in common with other schools in the area, have experienced some difficulties in recruiting new staff of a sufficient calibre despite considerable effort. While these problems have not proved insurmountable, some staff have needed an investment in time and training in order to raise their competence to an acceptable level. Teacher recruitment has made it difficult to ensure a full match of qualified staff to fully meet the needs of the curriculum. At present, staffing levels are adequate and slightly more stable. Staff share the commitment for improvement and good teamwork is evident throughout the school. Newly qualified teachers are well supported with appropriate mentoring arrangements and provision of non-contact time. A satisfactory system for inducting new staff operates which helps them to become familiar with the school's organisation. During a time of considerable changes in the teaching staff, the support assistants have been a significant influence and have provided pupils with much needed stability. The school administrative staff provide helpful and efficient support. The school is well supported at lunchtimes by the kitchen staff and the meal supervisors.
75. The accommodation is satisfactory and allows the curriculum to be taught appropriately. The recent fire has affected the use of some classrooms with the result that certain classes have been relocated. One class has moved to the computer suite, while another is situated in the school hall that is in constant use as a thoroughfare between classrooms, the administrative offices and staff quarters. However, the school has moved swiftly and efficiently to solve these problems and demountable classrooms have been established on site as temporary measures. The accommodation in the nursery and reception class areas and in Years 1 and 2 is good with attractive displays of pupils' work. The school is already planning to improve the quality of the outside play areas as a learning resource. The site manager and cleaning staff maintain the building soundly and ensure that it is clean and welcoming.
76. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. There has been a substantial investment in the range of fiction and non-fiction books to support pupils' individual and whole-class learning. However, many of the non-fiction books in the library, though in good condition are outdated. In history, geography and music resources are unsatisfactory. To promote its use across the curriculum there are plans to improve the unsatisfactory quality and range of information and communication technology resources.

77. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues raised by the last inspection. The management of the school has demonstrated that it can continue to improve standards and quality even under difficult circumstances. This is an effective school that promotes educational inclusion and a positive ethos for learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. In order to continue to improve standards and quality, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in geography at the end of Year 6 by:
- Improving teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject
  - Providing sufficient resources to support teaching and learning
  - Placing appropriate emphasis on pupils' mapping and enquiry skills and make more use of numeracy and information and communication technology
  - Reviewing time allocation and timetabling
  - Developing assessment procedures
  - Monitoring provision rigorously

(paras: 3, 9, 32, 33, 125, 127, 128, 129)

- (2) Use assessment information to more effectively inform lesson planning by: \*\*\*
- Developing the use of individual targets for pupils in the core subjects
  - Improving consistency in marking so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve
  - Planning the work for lower attaining pupils in suitably small steps
  - Encouraging pupils to assess their own learning more consistently at the end of lessons and building this into future work
  - Improving the procedures for assessment in the foundation subjects, in particular the development of pupils' skills

(paras: 5, 9, 24, 27, 28, 33, 54, 5, 59, 69, 83, 98, 105, 108, 119, 129, 135, 140, 145, 150)

- (3) Increase the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum by: \*\*\*
- Providing more resources to allow pupils greater access to computers and peripheral equipment
  - Incorporating the use of information and communication technology into curricular and lesson planning
  - Developing assessment procedures for the subject
  - Monitoring the use of computers in lessons

(paras: 8, 27, 33, 97, 99, 106, 114, 121, 129, 140, 144, 148)

79. In addition to the above, the school should consider the following item for inclusion in its action plan:

- a) provision of a scheme of work and monitoring procedures for personal, social and health education, including drug awareness education

(paras: 35, 53)

- b) the balance of provision in physical education including extra-curricular sports clubs

(paras: 32, 36, 146, 149, 150)

- c) improving the provision for pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of society \*\*\*

(paras: 42, 120, 143)

\*\*\* Indicates areas already under consideration by the school.

## 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	46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	26	18	0	0	0
Percentage	0	10	53	37	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage point..

### 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)	12	160
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	33

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	18	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	5	7
	Girls	14	12	15
	Total	20	17	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (75)	63 (71)	81 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	6
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	20	21	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (79)	78 (92)	70 (79)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

*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
	2002	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	10
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	16	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (67)	63 (77)	67 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	11
	Girls	10	8	8
	Total	18	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (60)	70 (60)	70 (63)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	137	0	0
White – Irish	17	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

**Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	24

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	142

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	479016
Total expenditure	475232
Expenditure per pupil	2263
Balance brought forward from previous year	11216
Balance carried forward to next year	15000

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	183
Number of questionnaires returned	85

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	36	7	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	51	8	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	59	4	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	49	8	6	0
The teaching is good.	47	44	4	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	8	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	24	6	7	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	43	3	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	46	11	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	34	6	7	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	45	3	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	31	31	7	10

**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**

80. The school's provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage of the school comprises two classes, one nursery with 21 part-time children, and a reception class of 28. Most children transfer from the nursery to the reception class. This, like the transfer to Year 1 is smooth and untroubled as children become used to playing with older friends, and only need to move 'next door'. The two classes are successfully developing the ethos of a Foundation Stage unit, and plan and work closely together.
81. Children arrive at school with attainment that is below average. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development, so that most will attain the early learning goals in these areas by the end of reception. They make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. A significant number of children will not attain the early learning goals in these areas by the end of the reception class; their achievement is satisfactory overall.
82. There were many strengths in the teaching observed in the Foundation Stage. The reception teacher and the nursery nurse in charge of the nursery demonstrate very good classroom management. No time is wasted, children move successfully from whole class activities to structured play in a sensible way. The insistence on good routines and positive attitudes to work ensures that children understand that they need to work hard. Older children are happy to complete tasks and always try to do their best. Good daily lesson plans also contribute to the smooth running of the day, and children, as well as their teachers know exactly what they are doing. Good links are made between areas of learning. For example, the Gingerbread Man runs everywhere! There are biscuits to make, books to write, stories to re-enact in the role-play area and even the floor turtle traces the path of his escape. Children enjoy this and these effective links add relevance to their learning.
83. The curricular planning is effective and identifies the six areas of learning. It additionally describes in detail adult focused and child selected activities for both indoor and outdoor learning. This is particularly helpful and successful in the nursery, where a good balance of these activities is maintained. Nursery nurses and teachers keep detailed records of what children can do when they are working with them. However in a few areas, like communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, this information is not used consistently to target small groups so that work is planned accurately enough for the children to make the best progress they can and to identify the next steps in learning. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants who support children in the Foundation Stage make a significant contribution to their care and learning and play an appropriate role in the management of classes.
84. Children with special educational needs are identified early in their school career and suitable individual education plans are written and maintained well. Where children have special needs linked to emotional and behavioural development, early intervention ensures that these children are well supported by additional teaching or by classroom assistants, to enable them to take a full part in classroom activities.
85. There is very good contact with parents and carers. The teacher or nursery nurse greets children and their carer each day and there are plenty of opportunities for worries, celebrations or issues to be shared. Regular formal meetings take place during the year, and these are well attended. Children and their carers have a chance to visit school before they start and can meet their teachers and learn about practical arrangements. Regular informative letters are sent home and each half-term the teachers let parents know what will be happening in class and how they can help. Messages are also transmitted in the home/school record book, which reinforces contact.

This aspect of care for the children is particularly good and reflects the closely knit religious community that the school serves.

86. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They participate in the activities of the 'big' school, by attending assemblies, sharing the playground with older children, and eating lunch with the rest of the school.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

87. Children make good progress in this area, and most will attain the early learning goals at the end of the reception class, because of good teaching. This area of the curriculum is given a high priority. Right from the start, children are encouraged to follow regular routines. They respond well to non-verbal signals like claps, and sing songs to remind them how to sit and listen attentively, or to stand to join hands in a circle. Good emphasis is placed on hygiene and independence. All children are careful to wash their hands at the correct times, and most can dress and undress themselves properly for physical education by the time they are five years old. They are encouraged to answer questions politely. Children settle happily in the nursery. They know that adults will listen to them and engage with their play. Through well-structured activities, they learn to play together, making a story in Aladdin's Cave and sharing the see-saw. In the reception class there is a particularly high expectation of good behaviour and active responses in lessons. Children become more skilled at working in small groups and being able to take turns in games. The caring ethos of the school permeates this area of the curriculum. Children become aware of the needs of others and are helpful, polite and well behaved, both in and out of the classroom.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

88. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of the curriculum, and while many will attain the early learning goals, a significant number will not. Teaching is satisfactory in this area. The older children are participating in a literacy hour, which is appropriate for this stage of the school year. They have phonic activities, taught in two main groups, they read from a big book and share in guided writing. They learn how to write speech bubbles for characters in their story and begin to understand letter sounds and blends. A few of the higher attaining children can hear vowel sounds in the middle of words and make rhyming words. Teachers and nursery nurses like to challenge their children. However, the size of the groups means that occasionally there are some children who find the work too difficult, as it does not build directly upon what they already know and can do. At these times learning is effective for a few, but not for everyone. In the nursery, children are learning how to write and they recognise some letters and their names. They can trace letters in the sand and sing alphabet songs. Children in the reception class are beginning to write. A few can record some well-known words and make good attempts at sounding out new ones. They make little books linked to their topic, and describe pictures of the Gingerbread Man. They also use these skills with their reading and make sound progress in this area. Those with most confidence in reading, know about authors, fact and fiction books. All can retell a story by looking at a sequence of pictures, and this is reinforced by listening to the story of the Gingerbread Man on a tape, and acting out the story in the role-play area. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's vocabulary. From the start of the nursery all adults talk with the children, asking questions and extending their thinking. This challenge is continued in the reception class, where specific language for different subjects is reinforced appropriately in mathematics, music and science.

### **Mathematical development**

89. Sound teaching ensures that children achieve satisfactorily in this area of the curriculum. A significant number, however, will not attain the early learning goals for mathematical development. Older children are beginning to experience the elements of the numeracy lesson and take part in a mental mathematics session before working in small groups on related activities. They are beginning to recognise large numbers and higher attaining children can identify most numbers and recognise patterns on a hundred square. With help, most children can count beyond ten, combining spots on ladybirds. Others are able to make piles of brick to match numbers up to ten,

and later beyond ten to twenty. Confident children make necklaces and pay one penny for each bead, working successfully with the class teacher. Younger children use the register time to count and are beginning to count two sets of numbers to make six and seven altogether. Children have opportunities to compare weights, deciding which objects are heavier or lighter than each other.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

90. Children achieve well in this area of learning because of good teaching and most will attain the early learning goals by the end of reception. Children have many opportunities to make things. They use tissue and cut out lanterns to decorate Aladdin's Cave. They learn about how toys move and the materials they are made from. They make special containers to keep their precious objects in, using glue to join and paper and paint to decorate. They make simple puppets to go with their big book and the speech bubbles they have written. They are pleased with their products and describe what they have done. The youngest children learn how to use a mouse to select pictures on the screen of the computer. A few know how to print their pictures. However, programmes used and tasks suggested do not always link directly to a particular skill or learning outcome. Nevertheless, when working with the nursery nurse, children make good progress in learning how to programme the floor turtle. They use animals from the story of the Gingerbread Man, so that they can 'see' how the journey took place. These links help with learning. Children visit local shops and learn about their community. Later, they play at being the baker and butcher. They invent maps to show the way to Watford. They use their senses to feel for buried treasure and look for patterns around them. They become aware of the changes in the weather and the passage of time, by keeping routine records at the beginning of each day.

### **Creative development**

91. Children achieve well in this area of learning and most will attain the early learning goals by the age of five. Particularly good teaching ensures that all children have well planned opportunities to learn about how sounds are made by instruments. They use them while they sing songs. Older children make simple compositions by watching for symbols and accompany the words of the Gingerbread Man song. They also make particularly good progress with their learning linked to creative role-play. Adults help them to dress and act out the characters from a story, developing their spoken language well. Magicians with magic lanterns and a beautiful princess engage in conversation with the genie. Whilst in the Reception class, the Old Woman sends the Gingerbread Man down the road to be met by a dog and a fox. Good use of tent props outside also encourages children to develop imaginative situations and engage well with adults and their friends. Children have a satisfactory number of opportunities to paint, cut and stick. But there is limited evidence of the development of printing skills. This area is not celebrated as well as others, although children make sound progress.

### **Physical development**

92. Good teaching and good opportunities for physical development ensure that almost all pupils will attain the early learning goals in this area. Children benefit from the use of a pleasant, outside play area. This is used as often as the weather allows, giving plenty of opportunities to engage in climbing, balancing and the use of wheeled toys. The outside space is used well as an extension of the classroom. Children have water and sand play, as well as chances to paint and carry out mathematical activities. Children also learn during specified physical development sessions. They sometimes use the hall and older children get changed appropriately. They learn how to use space well by using individual mats for warming up. They are learning through aerobic exercise that their bodies become warm, and they can stretch, run and jump. They begin to investigate patterns of movement, working with a partner. This is hard! But all children try. The youngest children learn to move with music and know how to remain still. These lessons contribute effectively to the children's personal and social development, as they need to listen attentively and follow regular routines.

## **ENGLISH**

93. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and speaking and listening as pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. Standards are average in Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory but some pupils have been affected by staff changes. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and support staff who work well together and they achieve as well as other pupils. As a result of initiatives put in place by the school standards have improved since the last inspection by the end of Year 2. Standards are similar by the end of Year 6 but inspection evidence shows good progress in Years 5 and 6.
94. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well, especially in Years 1 and 2. This area has been a focus for development and strategies to improve standards have been successfully implemented. This was well illustrated in the Year 1 class where the teacher used every opportunity to extend skills in this area by asking pupils to choose the most appropriate key words when describing an object to their partners. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills were not as well developed in some of the classes for older pupils but by the time they reach Year 6, pupils are reaching expected levels of attainment. In the Year 6 class the pupils started with a role-play situation where they assumed roles in an argument that later developed into a writing exercise. The pupils were able to convey their opinions clearly in discussions and listen carefully, and respond well, to others' views.
95. Year 2 pupils read accurately for a range of purposes. They understand the purpose of punctuation and use a variety of strategies to help with the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Boys and girls have a growing knowledge of books, which they enjoy talking about. By Year 6 pupils are attaining the standards expected of them. Pupils are able to show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters. They read books for information as well as for enjoyment. Every pupil to whom inspectors spoke about their reading showed a love and regard for books. Some pupils in Year 6 talked about reading at home for pleasure for extended periods. They attributed much of their enjoyment of books to the way that their teachers had promoted and valued reading.
96. The school has made the improvement of writing a priority and this has helped to raise standards. This has been especially effective in Years 1 and 2. The Year 2 teacher structured learning very well when she modelled the writing of a poem about a worm using pupils' ideas in the form of a diagram. Using the model all pupils were then able to produce their own poems. Pupils with special educational needs were able to achieve well because of the good support from the teaching assistant who, using carefully prepared plans produced by the class teacher, simplified the task to make it appropriate to their needs.
97. One of the strategies employed to help to raise standards is the development and reinforcement of literacy skills in other curricular areas. There were many examples of this strategy being effectively used in Years 1 and 2 and in some classes in Years 3 to 6. In the Year 2 class the pupils had made books with contents pages, page numbers and chapters about the life cycle of frogs and butterflies. They had also produced first-person accounts of the Great Fire of London and successfully linked literacy and design and technology with their interactive display based on a famous spider poem. In the Year 6 class pupils had written letters home from the homes to which they had been evacuated in World War Two. These letters were well organised and presented and contained many examples of vocabulary chosen for its effect on the reader. However, information and communication technology is not yet used effectively to support literacy.
98. Teaching in English lessons seen during the inspection was good and sometimes very good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 all lessons seen were at least satisfactory with good teaching in Year 6. Evidence indicates there has been good teaching in Year 5 for most of the current school year. In good lessons the teachers used questioning effectively to consolidate and reinforce learning and they demonstrated their good knowledge of the subject. Good preparation and planning by teachers ensured that the learning was appropriate and that the lessons had brisk pace. In a more effective lesson a discussion at the end was used to reinforce the learning and assess how well the pupils were learning. However there were few lessons observed where pupils were given the opportunity to assess how well they had learned themselves and share the strategies that they had used with others. The teaching assistants worked very closely with the

teachers and were well prepared by them to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. All pupils have targets for writing but many pupils in Years 3 to 6 did not know what these targets were, although they knew where to find them. The marking of work has improved throughout the year and is now more informative in most classes although there is still scope to develop it further to include the identification of the next learning steps. Day to day evaluations are not yet having an impact on curricular planning.

99. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequately supported through literacy. The teachers look for opportunities to encourage pupils to explore feelings, emotions and relationships and the books on other cultures are popular with pupils. The school library is used well to promote the development of library skills. For example, Year 6 pupils effectively use the index system to track down reference books and explain how they would widen or narrow their search if necessary. All pupils using the library showed a great respect for books and handled them with care but the range and quality of books does need to be improved. No computers and few audio visual aids, with the exception of listening centres, were used to support literacy during the inspection.
100. The English subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She has identified appropriate priorities to improve standards in English and provided the support necessary to introduce them throughout the school. These strategies have not been consistently implemented in every classroom and she has not been able to monitor their impact fully. She monitors mainly by sampling pupils' work and checking teachers' planning. She has not yet visited the classrooms while lessons are underway to assess the effectiveness of initiatives such as the separation of guided reading from the literacy hour. She has identified the future needs of her subject appropriately and detailed them in an action plan. The plan includes development of the analysis of test data so that changes can be made to the curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils.
101. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in extended writing opportunities across the curriculum and in the appropriateness of teachers' planning. The literacy strategy is more effectively utilised and there has been satisfactory progress overall.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. Pupils attain average standards in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been an improvement in attainment since last year's recorded results of national testing. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching. They continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Although some good and very good teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6, resulting in an improving profile of attainment, a significant number of pupils have experienced disruption in their teaching, and this has affected the standards they attain. For the older pupils, the proportion of higher attaining pupils is smaller than is usually found.
103. The daily numeracy lesson is well established in the school and provides a framework for curricular content and a pattern of teaching. As a result, all pupils have suitable experience of the full range of the programmes of study in mathematics. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently identify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They learn effectively because they enjoy taking part in well-planned games. They understand their group activities and work well together. They recognise odd and even numbers, and can count quickly forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens. They are able to make estimates before measuring accurately in centimetres. They are beginning to understand fractions and the higher attaining pupils can calculate half of a given number.
104. In Year 6, pupils investigated the relationship between multiplication and division facts very effectively. The open nature of this investigation allowed pupils to operate at their own level of understanding, enabling some to work with decimals and some to make straightforward rearrangements of numbers. Pupils are used to solving problems that require a variety of strategies. For example, they can extract information from tables and work out methods to define how points are awarded. Year 5 pupils experiment with reflective symmetry being given good opportunities to explain how they have drawn required shapes that effectively consolidated their

understanding. Year 3 had good opportunities to investigate fractions in a practical way and order them on a number line. They responded well to the high expectations of the teacher.

105. Teaching is good throughout the school, underpinning the improving standards observed. Teachers manage their classes well and as a result, pupils are happy, settled and secure in their activities. In the best lessons, pupils are given ample opportunity to assess their own learning by understanding what it is they were supposed to have learnt and by being able to make choices within the lesson. This self-assessment worked particularly well in Year 6, where pupils were able to acknowledge work to be difficult and choose to continue the lesson with another group. Teachers plan very clearly, using non-statutory lesson guidelines, but adapting them to provide suitable work for groups in their classes. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in their planning, and in the use of equipment like overhead projectors. However, currently, there are few opportunities for pupils to support their learning by using suitable computer programs in the classroom.
106. Introductory mental mathematics sessions usually maintain a good pace and pupils find them interesting as they can all participate in answering questions when writing their answers on individual white boards. The final sessions of lessons usually contribute effectively to the consolidation of learning. For example, a Year 5 lesson started with a well-designed game for the recognition of two-dimensional shapes and ended with a similar game to recognise three-dimensional shapes, consolidating the learning gained in the lesson. Good questioning in lessons ensures that all pupils are challenged at suitable levels. Speaking and listening is encouraged well during lessons, using discussion partners to share ideas before presenting solutions to a problem. Pupils are often encouraged to write down descriptions of what they have done. Particularly good use of supportive learning was observed in Year 5, where pupils who understood reflective symmetry were able to talk sensitively through the problem, enabling another who had difficulty, to learn what to do.
107. Pupils' attitudes to this subject are very good and the particularly good behaviour observed ensures that the best use is made of teaching time. Teachers deploy their classroom assistants well. Where they are employed particularly to support pupils with special educational needs, these pupils make good progress, following well-designed activities, relating appropriately to their individual education plans. Numeracy is taught well in mathematics lessons but there were fewer opportunities observed where these skills were transferred to other subjects, except in science.
108. The co-ordinator demonstrates a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has ensured that a large amount of assessment data has been effectively collated and shared with teachers. This has led to an adaptation of teaching and concentration on specific areas of the curriculum. All teachers are able to use this data to make accurate predictions for pupils' progress, which is rigorously reviewed during each year. However, at present this information is not translated into targets for individual pupils to enable them to understand their next steps for learning and ensure that they make the best progress possible. The co-ordinator has had opportunities to observe teaching and support teachers in their planning through the carefully designed monitoring system used in the school. Her good sense of humour and practical, 'no nonsense' approach to curricular development, is having a significant impact upon the subject. Standards are improving and notable improvement has been made in the development of the curriculum and assessment, and also in the quality of teaching and learning observed since the last inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

109. Standards in science are average in Year 2 and Year 6, as found at the last inspection. Following well below average results in last year's national tests for 11 year olds and teachers' assessments of seven year olds, the school made a thorough analysis of pupils' performance. This revealed no difference in the performance between girls and boys and across the curriculum pupils' knowledge and descriptive abilities were satisfactory. However, the analysis showed there were weaknesses in pupils' skills in investigative and experimental science. The subject co-ordinator undertook paired lesson observations with a local authority consultant to determine the stage of development

in this area across the school and provided training for staff. This resulted in heightened awareness among teachers and support staff. Inspection evidence shows a good improvement in this area across the school, as a result of better practice, that has resulted in rising standards.

110. The quality of teaching is good overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The school is successfully developing a consistent pattern of teaching science that helps pupils to learn important features of the subject, develop their scientific vocabulary and build up their practical and investigative skills. Pupils achieve well overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection. This is because pupils now have long enough time in lessons to complete their experimental work and teachers involve pupils in developing ideas for their investigations. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting resources to help pupils develop their observational and practical skills. This approach also promotes pupils' interest and enjoyment and they tackle a variety of practical work confidently, co-operating well in pairs or small groups and discussing solutions to any difficulties that arise. They have good attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons.
111. The teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good with many strong features because the teachers plan and prepare lessons well and have high expectations of pupils. Firm, pleasant management results in very good relationships and a good use of time. The work meets the needs and interests of this age group well so that pupils take part enthusiastically. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils showed keen interest and were well behaved because they were clear about what was expected of them and the teacher had provided a good range of materials to compare and test with magnets. The pupils showed a good degree of independence for their age and persisted well, treating the resources sensibly. Higher attaining pupils practised their skills of prediction and lower attaining pupils were well supported so improved their knowledge of the names of different materials. Through effective questioning in a Year 2 lesson the teacher developed pupils' understanding of aspects of growth of a plant from building on pupils' previous work on fruits and seeds and the life cycles of butterflies and frogs. The teacher involved pupils well in drawing up a set of instructions for germinating sunflower seeds enabling the pupils to consider different variables and make their own choice of medium in which to grow the seeds. Pupils make good progress in these classes.
112. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. In a Year 3 lesson about light and shadows, the teacher managed pupils and motivated them very well to select everyday objects and test them to decide whether they were opaque, translucent or transparent. From their activities, the pupils were able to confirm a statement given at the beginning of the lesson that opaque objects block light and a shadow is formed. Several pupils showed in their comments and questions that they were thinking carefully about this. However, scrutiny of work over the year shows expectations for recording of work are not high enough. Work is not always completed and there is little improvement in its organisation or in diagrams over time. Misconceptions are not always corrected. There was little evidence for Year 4 but a lesson taken by a supply teacher contained several good features that enabled pupils to consolidate their understanding of friction and where it is useful.
113. Pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 5 shows high expectations for good organisation of practical and recorded work with emphasis on key knowledge and vocabulary in each area. Pupils draw conclusions from their test results and begin to give reasons, for example, in the rate of evaporation in different temperatures. Good quality marking encourages pupils to improve their work. The benefit of this systematic approach showed in the way Year 5 pupils tackled a challenging investigation on pitch provided by the part-time teacher. Despite good preparation and resources, practical difficulties arose but the pupils reacted positively with higher attaining pupils learning from their mistakes. The lower attaining pupils made good progress owing to support from the teacher. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher was helping pupils with the difficult task of turning their ideas and suggestions into questions that can be investigated. She encouraged pupils to work together in small groups and provided good support by helping them to think ahead about what might cause practical difficulties. As a result, when they undertook their fieldwork on shrubs in the school grounds there was a high level of interest

and good application so they collected a useful quantity of data in a short time and came to realise they would need a mathematical way of sorting this out for interpretation.

114. Teachers share the learning objectives in lessons well with pupils and a busy purposeful workshop atmosphere is evident. Pupils are keen to 'find out' and try to answer questions even when unsure. However, activities and tasks are not always sufficiently varied for groups of differing prior attainment. This has an impact mainly on lower attaining pupils, who together with pupils with special educational needs are well supported and usually the demands for recording are appropriate. Nevertheless, the work is not always suitably modified into smaller steps that will help them to understand. Pupils' work in science makes a good contribution to their literacy skills as they write accounts in their own words and these are largely well organised and complete. They show that pupils develop a good understanding of the role of prediction and how to make a test fair. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily in their use of measure, tables, bar charts and line graphs. The school recognises that the use of information and communication technology is an area for development and is beginning to make use of a digital camera.
115. The co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject last September in addition to her role as co-ordinator for mathematics. Her enthusiasm and energy has already had an impact on improving standards. Although pupils have targets related to National Curriculum levels with records being kept in individual folders the co-ordinator hopes to develop formative assessment related to the schemes of work from national guidelines to improve lesson planning for the different groups in each class. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development as pupils learn to work together on practical tasks and by Year 6 have developed team working. Work in science encourages their moral development and fulfilment of the school's aims by consideration of environmental issues and respect for plants and animals.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

116. Standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and all pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs. During the last few years the school has concentrated on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and art and design has not been a priority and there has been a decline since the last inspection when standards were above average. Judgements are based on the observations of two lessons, examination of the pupils' work and planning documents, and discussions with teachers and pupils. Provision for art and design is generally satisfactory. The scheme of work used ensures that pupils experience a satisfactory range of most elements of art and design, such as painting, textile work and sculpture.
117. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can use a range of materials and processes such as painting and collages. In Year 1, for instance, pupils have made farm collages using materials such as pipe cleaners, straws and ribbons. They know how to mix various colours and use this knowledge in their paintings. They make careful observations, recognising the similarities and differences of surface textures used in buildings, materials, windows and doorways. They make appropriate rubbings of wall surfaces and pathways as they explore the outside environment. In Year 2, pupils have established good links with their work in history on the Great Fire of London and they have produced a sound range of self-portraits that are proudly displayed in the classroom corner. Many pupils, however, find it difficult to comment on their work or to articulate what could be improved because this aspect is not regularly emphasised and modelled as a matter of routine by teachers.
118. In Year 3, pupils have produced a range of appropriate patterns using paint, pens and clay. Their work on the Egyptians and harvests display good links with history and other subjects. Pupils in Year 4 have completed Tudor drawings using oil pastels, while Year 5 pupils have complemented these studies with drawings of Tudor dress. There are also good links with other subjects such as science and literacy in these classes. The range of work seen in Year 6 was rather limited because of the effects of the recent fire in the school. There were, however, some notable exceptions, for instance, some sound drawings of scenes from the wartime blitz and colourful examples of performance masks. Although pupils are able to draw appropriately, their painting skills and brush techniques are less well developed. There was little evidence to show that three-dimensional work was well developed throughout the school. Sketchbooks contain some

interesting studies, which are of a suitable standard for the pupils' ages. At present, their use across the school is inconsistent and this means that much of their value is lost. By the end of Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of various artists and of other cultures is limited.

119. Inspection evidence shows that teaching is satisfactory, with some good examples observed. The positive elements that emerged in two good lessons in Years 1 and 2 were good questioning techniques that encouraged observation, promoted consideration of detail and developed awareness of composition. As a result, pupils' concentrated well on their tasks and showed high levels of interest in their own and others' work. The enthusiastic teachers displayed good knowledge of the subject that motivated the pupils well. From discussions, however, it is clear that some teachers lack confidence when teaching the subject. Inspection evidence shows that, where teaching is less effective, this was due in the main to learning objectives not being made clear to pupils and the lack of appropriate planning to challenge higher attainers. In the lessons observed, opportunities for pupils to develop their evaluation skills and comment on their own and others' work were missed.
120. There are very few good quality displays to show that teachers make good use of interesting contexts to extend pupils' experience of using a wide range of art materials. Artists' work is rarely displayed or used to inspire pupils and to teach them how to create different effects through using different techniques. At present, there are few visits to places of interest and art galleries to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design in different cultures so the subject's contribution to pupils' cultural development is limited. Teachers' use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' artistic understanding is limited, though a satisfactory example was seen in Year 1.
121. The newly-appointed coordinator is very enthusiastic and has shown sound leadership and management in the short time that she has had responsibility for the subject. Although the coordinator informally checks coverage of work, there is no focussed monitoring of teaching and learning or evaluation of provision and standards. The coordinator has identified some areas for improvement and has a developing grasp of shortcomings in the subject such as improving resources and developing procedures for assessing pupils' work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Most of the records of pupils work were destroyed in the recent fire. Owing to the way the timetable is organised for the teaching of design and technology and art no lessons were observed during the inspection and there was insufficient evidence available to make judgements on quality and standards.
123. Year 1 had investigated materials in their project on structures and made sea dwellings. Year 2 had used levers, pivots and sliding mechanisms to produce a display based on a poem about a spider. Year 6 has produced storybooks using previous learning. They used hinges, sliders and joining and cutting to produce their books. Year 6 had designed and made slippers using textiles. Pupils attained average standards of designing and making in these projects but there was little evidence of their evaluating their work or considering how it could be improved.
124. The co-ordinator had only just taken over leadership so no judgement is yet possible on her impact of the subject. She has familiarised herself with the units of work and audited resources. She is aware of the need to monitor standards in design and technology and track pupils' progress but this has not happened yet. The resources for design and technology, when augmented by the results of the audit, will be satisfactory and should enable teachers to meet the statutory requirements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125. Although standards by the end of Year 2 are average and pupils achieve soundly, standards by the end of Year 6 are below average and pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory. There has been unsatisfactory improvement in geography since the

previous inspection when standards were also average in Year 6. This is because resources are unsatisfactory and the subject has been a low priority for the school. Judgements are based on evidence from the two lessons observed, scrutiny of samples of pupils' work in their books and displayed around the school, and discussions with teachers and pupils about their work.

126. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make a study of the locality and draw picture trails of their routes to school. They examine different features in the area and show a developing understanding of the importance and functions of various buildings, such as churches and shops. In Year 2, pupils have undertaken interesting studies of the Isle of Struay and have been following the travels of Barnaby Bear. During the course of their studies they learn about departure procedures and the use of passports. Teachers use the photographic evidence, souvenirs or postcards from Barnaby's travels to promote learning soundly. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also spoke confidently about their studies of the seaside. Good links with history emerged when they made useful comparisons between the seaside now and in past times. For example, pupils explained ways of travelling to the seaside that have changed over time. Through these links, pupils are developing a sound understanding of the changing uses of land and some factors that influence it.
127. Pupils in Year 4 are studying village settlers and investigating various places so as to identify the essential characteristics of settlement patterns. They draw intelligent comparisons with their historical studies on Viking settlements. In Year 5, there are appropriate displays on the developments of rivers and the water cycle with some good examples of pupils' projects on various rivers throughout the world. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, have produced stimulating projects. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to talk sensibly about their studies on mountains, rivers and the various problems associated with water cycles. They have also identified areas of water movement around the school and they are able to explain the various uses of water. However, pupils do not make sufficient progress in their work and their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills are underdeveloped: pupils are often unable to identify capital cities on the map of the United Kingdom; they are unsure of the location of continents; their mapping and enquiry skills are underdeveloped; and they do not have a secure enough understanding of the importance of individual human features in the environment and of human processes.
128. Teaching and learning were satisfactory or good in the two lessons observed. In the good lesson, the teacher had a clear understanding of what the pupils were required to learn, the pupils were managed well throughout the lesson, the pace of learning was brisk, pupils had to respond to quick-fire questions, and there were simple, though appropriate, resources to stimulate geographical investigations among the pupils. The lack of specific challenge for higher-attaining pupils sometimes limits their progress in the development of geographical skills. Pupils in Year 5 have very long lessons that continue all afternoon and, as a result, they often become restless and their concentration levels recede. The lack of computers in classrooms means that teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology in their lessons to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Nor do they assess pupils' work regularly or rigorously enough.
129. The subject coordinator, who coordinates the humanities, has been in post for only nine months. Leadership and management are at an early stage of development and are currently unsatisfactory. There is an appropriate scheme of work and a subject policy but monitoring of teaching and learning is at a very early stage of development.

## **HISTORY**

130. Standards of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Judgements are based on the observation of two lessons, an examination of teachers' planning, analysis of pupils' work and interviews with teachers and pupils.
131. In Year 1, pupils develop a sense of old and new by studying homes through the ages, old telephones and timelines of seaside holidays. By Year 2, pupils' historical knowledge and

understanding are developing satisfactorily and they showed a sound grasp of chronology as they compared toys old and new. They have also studied the Great Fire of London and they are eager to explain to visitors that the fire began in a bakery and took hold rapidly because the houses were then built from wood. They have researched the life of some famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and they are able to describe the salient events in her life. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 find out about the past by hearing about events before they were born and using simple sources of information, such as pictures and photographs that depict various aspects of the past. However, inspection evidence shows that the range of books and resources used to support learning is very limited.

132. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop their sense of chronology and understand that the past is often divided into eras with distinctive features of costume, architecture and art, such as in Ancient Greece and Tudor England. In Year 3 there are appropriate time lines on the Ancient Egyptians with good links to other subjects on the curriculum. In Year 4, pupils have studied settlers and invaders from the Viking and Saxon periods. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well in their detailed studies on the Ancient Greeks, on Tudor voyages of discovery and on the Second World War. Year 6 pupils, in particular, have produced interesting pieces of work on evacuees, the effects of the blitz, rationing and Anne Frank's diary. In the one Year 6 lesson observed, pupils made good progress as they discussed the merits of John Lennon's song, 'Imagine', against the background of the protest movements of the 1960s and 70s.
133. Although the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development by introducing them to a range of cultures, their investigative skills are not well developed. They do not have a firm enough understanding of the nature of historical enquiry and interpretation. This is related to the unsatisfactory range of resources that pupils use. As a result, opportunities for them to develop skills of historical enquiry, combining what can be learned from artefacts, books, documentary evidence from past times and similar sources of evidence, are limited. In addition, the use of information and communication technology in history is only at an early stage of development. At present, there are few visits to places of historical interest, although some visitors come to the school to talk about their historical experiences.
134. Although only two lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence suggests that the standard of teaching is satisfactory overall. A number of factors contributed to the good teaching which was observed in two lessons: there was a brisk pace of learning; the teacher's knowledge of the subject was strong; classroom management was an important contributory factor; the resources used were particularly stimulating and these had a pronounced effect on the pupils' learning; pupils were also effectively challenged in groups which met their specific needs; there were good strategies for promoting pupils' literacy skills throughout the lesson; and, finally, the discussion towards the end of the lesson was used well to consolidate pupils' learning and to provide a good forum for the sharing of historical knowledge and vocabulary.
135. The coordinator is also the coordinator for geography. Her leadership and management of the subject are at an early stage of development and are currently unsatisfactory. The subject has a scheme of work and a policy but resources are unsatisfactory. They are mostly outdated and they are not stored methodically in a convenient, attractive location. Assessment is underdeveloped in the subject and teachers do not show the pupils how to improve their work. While there is some limited monitoring of planning, there is as yet no monitoring of teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

136. Owing to the recent fire, the computer suite was in use as the Year 4 classroom at the time of the inspection and was not available for its intended purpose. Only two lessons were observed and neither utilised computer equipment. There was little record of pupils' work available so judgements about standards are based on interviews with pupils and scrutiny of displays around the school. Attainment in information and communication technology is average in Years 2 and 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. However, pupils' use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is underdeveloped and does not meet statutory requirements.

137. Year 2 pupils described a range of information and communication technology they had experienced at school. This included work with graphics, word processing, control and a simple database. They are enthusiastic about using computers and would like to use them more. They are able to explain how to enter, save and retrieve their work. They have some experience of using a website to access information but this is very limited. The pupils talk with confidence and understanding about programming the floor robot. They can discuss the use of computers outside school. One pupil described how a parent worked from home and used his computer to link with his workplace.
138. Year 6 pupils described experiences that include word processing and graphics. They had used a database but for input only. They use the Internet for information retrieval and are very well informed about the potential for misuse in this area. Control technology is the weakest aspect in Years 3 - 6 and the children could only remember its use via a trip to Legoland where one of the exhibits was the control of a robot. They talked about the digital microscope but could not remember when they had last used it. They talked in detail about entering, saving and retrieving information and about classification processes. They are knowledgeable about the application of information and communication technology in the outside world as illustrated by one pupil's description of its application in an operating theatre. They are very enthusiastic about using computers and are concerned that they have limited access at school.
139. The two lessons observed were both skilfully managed to tackle areas of the subject without the benefit of any computer equipment. In Year 3 the pupils controlled the order of musical sequences using a simple control process using visual prompts to arrange musical phrases. This was a well-planned lesson with a good pace of learning as the learning objectives were clearly identified and each step in the learning shared well with the pupils. In a very good lesson in Year 1 the pupils described objects using key words as they worked on their classification skills with good opportunities also for developing speaking and listening skills. The pupils responded very well and all were beginning to organise and classify appropriately.
140. The co-ordinator left the school just before the inspection but from evidence in her file the leadership of information and communication technology has been satisfactory overall. She had undertaken a recent skills audit of the teachers and monitored medium term planning. The development plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement such as the provision of portfolios of pupils; work and the development of assessment procedures. There is lack of a self-evaluation system for pupils where they can identify and record what they achieve. The other area that needs development is in the provision of more equipment. The suite contains the only provision of computers for teaching and learning in the school apart from those in the reception class. Even when the suite is back in operation there are not enough computers to allow anything but basic skills to be taught. Teachers use new technology effectively to plan and prepare lessons, in assessment and reporting. However, if information and communication technology is to be used effectively across the curriculum pupils will need greater access to computers and related resources.

## **MUSIC**

141. Standards overall are average in Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve soundly and there are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average by the end of Year 6 and singing is still above average. Evidence is based on the observation of two lessons during the inspection, on singing in assemblies and hymn practices, from the scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.
142. An obvious strength of the school is singing and this was clearly exhibited during hymn singing practices that are held each week in the school hall. Children in the Foundation Stage joined those in Years 1 and 2 to practise a range of carefully selected hymns, which they sang tunefully and cheerfully as a result of the enthusiastic support they received from teachers and the visiting pianist. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural

development. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to explore rhythmic patterns using a range of instruments. Pupils are encouraged to consider how sounds can be used descriptively to reflect changing moods and emotions, and how they can help to understand different aspects of the environment.

143. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 show good levels of concentration and interest when practising their hymns in the school hall. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average in singing. Pupils sing with good control over pitch and dynamic. They know how to change the way they sing to suit the mood of the hymn and they are able to maintain parts in a well-rehearsed hymn. Pupils' enjoyment of music is evident in their enthusiasm in these practice lessons. Their singing and performance skills are further enhanced when they participate in the school choir during the Christmas and Easter festivals. There are a few pupils who benefit from instrumental tuition and others who attend an after-school guitar club. Overall, pupils' compositional and evaluative skills are not as well developed. They do not have secure knowledge of different types of music and composers as opportunities to enhance their cultural development are missed.
144. All pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well, largely because teachers manage classes very well and teaching assistants work well alongside teachers to give appropriate support to lower -attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to enable them to perform as well as others. There were examples of good lessons in Years 2 and 3 where pupils built up and polished their skills well but not all teachers have confidence in teaching the subject and resources are not sufficient to promote higher standards. The use of information and communication technology in music is at an early stage of development so has little impact at present though a good example was seen in Year 3. As yet, teachers do not systematically record pupils' achievements.
145. The coordinator is experienced, enthusiastic and committed to improving the subject that she manages satisfactorily although she acknowledges that music has not been a priority of the school in recent years. There is no formal and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning to identify and share strengths or to address areas for improvement in order to raise standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

146. Pupils attain average standards in Years 2 and 6 in physical education. They achieve satisfactorily throughout the school and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. However, some of the arrangements for teaching the subject limit pupils' attainments and progress. The structure of the timetable means that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have very little time for physical education lessons, so have limited opportunity to develop skills and raise standards. As swimming is the only element in physical education for Year 4 pupils, a whole year elapses between the development of skills in gymnastics, dance and games. This also means that older pupils are not making as much progress as they might do.
147. In Year 2, pupils are able to roll, pursue and retrieve a ball successfully. They use space well outside on the playground. They recognise the changes that take place in their body during exercise. In Year 6, pupils are able to take part in a self-developed warm up routine with a partner. They learn to field a ball and participate in a small-scale rounders type game. Pupils in Year 4 have swimming lessons each week, and at the time of the inspection, about three-quarters of them could swim 25 metres.
148. Teaching in this subject ranges from very good to satisfactory and is satisfactory overall. Most teachers are good at developing warm up skills. In this element of the subject pupils show good progress in learning throughout the school. Very good attention is paid to health and safety and pupils' understanding of how their bodies work and respond to exercise. Lessons are planned clearly and the first part of each lesson maintains a quick pace that engages pupils' interest. The limited time available in some lessons mean that reviews at the end of lessons of what has been achieved are not always completed nor is there time to discuss what needs to be the focus for the next lesson. In the best lessons, teachers use demonstration to illustrate good movements, skills and interpretation. Although pupils are able to comment on what they have seen, they do not

always have a chance to practise and improve their performance. In Year 3, however, the teacher has established good links with literacy, by enabling her pupils to write evaluations of how well they have progressed with games skills, contributing well to the quality of learning. Teachers and assistants support pupils with special educational needs sensitively and make similar progress to the other pupils in their classes. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively for planning but at present there is no evidence of its use by pupils.

149. The school ensures that all Year 6 pupils participate in outdoor and adventurous pursuits, like walking and canoeing, during their residential, educational visit. Simple orienteering has also taken place in the school grounds. Although there have been opportunities for older pupils to join in with sports coaching and clubs, which run for short periods of time there is a limited range of long-running sports activities or opportunities for playing matches against other schools.
150. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator has an appropriate action plan though development of this subject is not a high priority for the school at the moment. At present there is no formal assessment in this subject, although the coordinator has identified this as an area for development. The school has good indoor and outside facilities for promoting pupils' physical development but does not make sufficient use of these to develop pupils' skills and interests and thereby build as well as might be expected on the good progress made by children in the Foundation Stage.