

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School

Cheshunt

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117492

Headteacher: Mrs. Sue Allen

Reporting inspector: Kath Beck
10090

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th October 2002

Inspection number: 247795

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Lane Cheshunt Herts.
Postcode:	EN7 6LR
Telephone number:	01992 635060
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Adrienne Hurrell
Date of previous inspection:	31 st October, 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10090	Kath Beck	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13481	Doug Binfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
6436	Alan Andrews	Team inspector	English Physical education Special educational needs	
1359	Lyne Lavender	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

17649	Diana Batt	Team inspector	Curriculum for the Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Paul's is a small school for children aged from four to eleven years. It is situated in an area of owner-occupied housing with some local authority housing. Children come from a wider area, as the school serves the parishes of St. Paul's, Cheshunt and St. Martin de Porres in Cuffley. Of the 163 children on roll, 12 are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is less than usually found. Three have a statement of special educational needs. Eight children are eligible for free school meals. This is low in comparison to other schools. A few children come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of children who speak English as an additional language is a little higher than in most schools. None are at an early stage of learning English. There is one traveller child although from time to time others attend. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year varies from year to year but is largely similar to that expected nationally. Children start school in the September or January of the academic year in which they become five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Paul's is an effective school. It recognises its strengths and areas for development and is working successfully to raise standards. The governors, headteacher and senior staff work together closely and the interests of the children are put first. The Roman Catholic ethos underpins the life of the school. There is a strong, caring atmosphere and a calm positive environment for learning. In Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above average. They are below average at Year 2. The quality of teaching in Years 1, 5 and 6 is consistently good or very good. The parents hold the school in high regard. The children's attitudes to work are good and their behaviour is very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good standards in English and mathematics in Year 6.
- Consistently good or better teaching in Years 1, 5 and 6.
- The Roman Catholic ethos promotes a warm, welcoming and friendly atmosphere.
- Children are cared for really well.
- Provision for children's spiritual, moral and social development.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the children who show concern for one another and act accordingly.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Staff act as good role models and set the tone for the very good relationships within the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in Year 2, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- The number of children reaching level 5 in mathematics and science at the end of the juniors.
- The role of the subject coordinators, especially in the foundation subjects¹;
- Provision for children to develop their investigative and problem solving skills consistently through the school.
- Opportunities for children to use their initiative, develop their thinking skills and make decisions about their work.²

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 satisfactory progress since the last inspection in 2000. A substantive headteacher has been appointed and fewer teachers are joining or leaving. All subjects are now planned and taught in line with national guidance about the programmes of work. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage 2000 has been implemented appropriately. In addition, there is a new senior management team that has the potential to move the school forward. Parental confidence in the school has been secured. The number of children on roll is increasing so that some year groups are now full.

¹ Foundation subjects are art and design, music, geography, history, physical education, design and technology.

² All these issues are identified in the school development plan

There have been substantial improvements to the building. The school has approval to build a nursery that is due to open in September 2003.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Lesson observations and scrutiny of work indicate that children's attainments in English and mathematics are good in Year 6. In science, information and communication technology, art and design, music, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, children's attainments are similar to those found in most schools. In Year 2, children's attainments are below those expected in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and information and communication technology. They are similar to those found in most schools at age seven in physical education, art and design, music and design and technology. These standards are due in part to the very small number of children in Year 2. Many of these children were born during the summer months and have had less time at the school. Some have special educational needs. In addition, staff illness disrupted their learning in the previous year. The school is fully aware of this and has set challenging targets for the children to achieve by May 2003. Children's attainments in the current Year 1 are higher than expected for their age. Provision for children with special educational needs and traveller children, enables them to make satisfactory progress. Children in the reception year are on course to meet the early learning goals in all the areas of experience.³

Unverified results in national tests for children in Years 2 and 6 in 2002 are not as good as in previous years. The school expected these lower results. However, there have been significant fluctuations between years. It is important to bear in mind that one child represents almost 3%. The overall trend in the last four years shows an increase in the number of children reaching the nationally expected level 2 at age seven or level 4 at age eleven. Few are reaching the higher levels of attainment at the same ages⁴. This affects the average points score for the school and, in consequence, the school's performance is not as good as other schools with children from similar backgrounds, especially in mathematics and science. Very challenging targets have been set for the present Year 6 and the school is on course to meet them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children are eager to get to school and respond very well to the caring ethos.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good behaviour in and out of the classrooms means there is a calm purposeful atmosphere in which all children can learn.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Older children carry out their responsibilities sensibly. All children show concern for each other and act accordingly, contributing

³ There are six areas of experience, personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development.

⁴ The nationally expected level at age 7 is level 2. This is split into level 2C (lowest), 2B (average) and 2A (highest). Level 3 is a higher than expected level of attainment. At age 11, the higher level of attainment is level 5.

	much to the very good relationships in the school.
Attendance	Good. Many have good attendance records and arrive punctually.

Children present their work neatly. There is a strong family atmosphere in which older children are proud of their responsibilities to care for the younger ones. Children are friendly, polite and often show mature attitudes. These positive attributes impact positively on the school's efforts to raise standards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is particularly strong in Years 1, 5 and 6. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2 held back progress in numeracy. The daily literacy lessons are often taught well. Numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily. Strengths in teaching stem from challenging tasks that require children to think hard and make good progress in their learning, very good knowledge and understanding of the needs and ages of the children and the deployment of classroom assistants to enable all children to play a full part in lessons. Children are managed very well so that behaviour is very good and there is a calm learning environment. Examples of very good teaching were seen in mathematics, science and art. Teachers make the best use of information and communication technology and available computers to raise standards across the curriculum. In a small number of lessons, teachers' expectations of what children can do are too high and tasks are not sufficiently well matched to their abilities. In the Foundation Stage, staff have benefited from training and support from an advisory teacher so that knowledge is satisfactory. Planning for a wider range of play activities and the rigid structure of the timetable require review. Teaching of traveller children and those with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although it is better in Years 1, 5 and 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for all ages is satisfactory. It is enriched by a good programme of extra curricular activities and visits to places of interest.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual education plans are written well. Responsibility for their implementation depends on the class teacher.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All children are fluent English speakers and there is no specific provision for these children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for children's moral and social development is very good. Children are often asked to work in small groups in lessons and they respond very well. They know right from wrong. Provision for spiritual development is good and that for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care for the children is really good. Their progress is assessed frequently. This information is used appropriately to plan their work

Parents are really pleased with the way the school values their children and this contributes significantly to children's confidence in lessons. Parents assist with their children's learning effectively at home. They raise substantial sums of money for additional resources. Annual reports to parents about their

child's progress are detailed, but do not contain sufficient information about how to improve. The curriculum for the children's personal, social and health education is a good one and is taught effectively. Some teachers rely too heavily on poor quality worksheets that limit children's progress and opportunities to use their initiative and develop their thinking skills across the curriculum. All children have equal access to the many activities the school provides.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are newly appointed to their posts, but have a clear idea of the developments to be made to bring about higher standards. Most of the subject coordinators are new to their responsibilities and are just beginning to establish their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Their close working relationship with the staff is bringing about improved standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Results of national tests are analysed and the information used effectively to bring about improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Resources are directed correctly to the priorities set out in the school development plan.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school has extensive grounds, but some classrooms are small. The unsatisfactory accommodation for the Foundation stage is to be improved when the nursery is built in the coming year. Classroom assistants work well with the teachers to support children in their learning. The school's aims are reflected well in its day-to-day work and promote a strong caring ethos. It now has the stability in leadership and management that it needed. The governors and senior managers have established a firm foundation on which they can build to bring about further improvements and raise standards. There is a need to raise the management skills of the subject coordinators. The school applies the principles of best value well, consulting parents about future improvements and obtaining tenders for expensive purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children work hard and make good progress. • Behaviour standards are good. • The friendly and supportive atmosphere. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Parents are well informed about their child's progress. • The significant improvements that have been made in recent years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework set.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. However, there is a need for further development in some aspects of teaching and management skills. The homework arrangements work well and make a helpful contribution to children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainments on entry to school are mostly typical for children aged four. Some children do not have any experience of pre-school education; others have attended a playgroup or a nursery school. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and are on course to reach the early learning goals in all the areas of experience by the end of the reception year. Children adopt a very positive attitude to reading at an early stage and this stays with them throughout their time in the school. The rigid timetable for each day inhibits opportunities for children to use their initiative and learn through a wide range of play activities.
2. Results in national tests for children aged eleven, have shown improvement over time. At the time of the last inspection in 2000, the school recorded its highest ever results. Unverified data suggests that results in 2002 are not as good as in previous years. This is because few children reached the higher level of attainment, level 5. The year group taking the tests consisted of a number of children with special educational needs. This said, results in reading remain very good and all children reached the expected level of attainment in science.
3. In Year 6, lesson observations, scrutiny of previous work and discussions show that children's attainments are good in English and mathematics. They are similar to those found in most schools in science, art and design, music, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education, history, and geography. Many of the children in Year 6 started at the school and experienced unsatisfactory teaching earlier in their school career. They have also been subject to many changes brought about by a series of different headteachers. These factors have impacted attainment, as there are gaps in their knowledge, especially in investigative work.
4. The school has analysed the national test results for children at the end of Year 2 in 2002. This unverified data indicates that results are not as good as in previous years, including the time of the previous inspection. The number of children taking the tests was small and so the information needs to be treated with caution. Each child represents over three percentage points. In 2001, in mathematics and science, the number of children reaching the national average was high and placed the school in the top 5% of schools. The school has yet to analyse the information in relation to the traveller children and those with English as an additional language.

5. Inspection evidence shows that in Year 2, children's attainments are below those expected in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and information and communication technology. They are similar to those found in most schools at age seven in physical education, art and design, music and design and technology. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that the children in Year 1 are attaining at a higher level than those in Year 2. There are several reasons for this. The children in Year 2 are very young. Many were born in the summer months and have not been in school as long those born in the autumn or spring. There are a significant number of children with special educational needs in the class as well as a traveller child who has only been in school a short time. The learning of this year group was interrupted in the previous year by serious staff illness. There are gaps in the children's knowledge. The teacher in Year 2 is new to the phase and is still getting to know the precise needs and abilities of the children. Expectations are too high for these children and they struggle to make the progress they should in some lessons.
6. Speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are below those expected in Year 2 and good in Year 6. Children welcome visitors and are pleased to include them in their conversations. Children in Year 2, use a limited range of vocabulary and do not always listen as carefully as they should. The picture is different in Year 6, where children listen attentively, communicate meaning clearly and confidently, often drawing on their experiences and offering opinions. Year 6 children read with confidence, fluency and expression demonstrating their enthusiasm for the activity. Research skills are good. There are difficulties in Year 2 as children read haltingly and find it hard to talk about what they have read. The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing. Many in Year 2 find this difficult as their skills in sentence structure, punctuation, spelling and handwriting are developing slowly. However, by Year 6, children write well, expressing their ideas clearly and using imaginative vocabulary.
7. Year 6 children are competent in the use of the four rules of number. They know about the importance of the accurate collection and interpretation of data in day-to day life, such as traffic surveys. In Year 2, children find mathematics difficult. This is because the work they are asked to do is not appropriate. Children are asked to complete workbooks and worksheets of poor quality that limit opportunities to investigate numbers and apply previously learned mathematical skills. Throughout the school, the mental and oral sessions at the beginning of lessons are not taken at a fast enough pace to enable children to develop the rapid recall of facts and numbers.
8. In science, the curriculum is being covered thoroughly so that children acquire the knowledge they need. Progress is faster in the juniors than in the infants. Teachers are using the subject well to provide children with exciting opportunities to experience the awe and wonder of the natural world. Some teachers are using very effective strategies to improve children's investigative skills. However, this is not yet consistent in all classes. The rate of children's progress varies as they move through the school depending on the quality of teaching. Progress is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, Years 2, 3 and 4. Children make much faster progress in Years 1, 5 and 6 where the teaching is stronger.

9. In the infants, over the past three years, the boys out performed the girls in reading, writing and mathematics. The situation is reversed in the juniors. In the past, more girls than boys have taken the tests. Teaching strategies have also favoured girls. In the juniors, children are engaged frequently in writing tasks that girls enjoy. To provide a wider range of teaching strategies, the school is seeking ways to develop children's thinking skills and opportunities for them to use their initiative. Brighter children often complete the same work as their classmates before going on to other tasks. There is a need for teachers to provide work that meets their needs more precisely, especially in science and mathematics.
10. The percentage of children identified as having special educational needs is lower than in most other schools. It includes three children with statements of special educational needs. All the support is given within class lessons and relies heavily on the programme of work provided by class teachers. The achievement of the children is satisfactory. The work of the classroom assistants is valuable in helping them to make progress.
11. The school has done well to raise attainment in information and communication technology. Resources have been updated and each classroom has at least two up to date computers. The subject is taught explicitly. The main difficulty is that children cannot apply the newly taught skills immediately and must wait their turn on a computer. All children have to watch the teachers' demonstration on a single computer and it is not always easy for them to see. A computer suite is to be established shortly to overcome this difficulty.
12. The school does not have a specialist music teacher, but all staff promote children's interest in music and singing using pre-recorded tapes to support them effectively in lessons. Children's interest in history was inspired when the team producing the television programme 'Time Team' was carrying out an archaeological dig in the park behind the school. Children learned much about how discoveries of items from the past inform our knowledge of how life was lived in Roman Times. However, progress in subjects such as history and geography, is hindered by the excessive use of worksheets. In addition, there are some examples of good quality design and technology and art and design work on display. Usually much of the work completed to a similar format. This, together with poor quality worksheets, does little to challenge children to use their initiative or make decisions about their work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Children's attitudes to learning are good in all classes and are making an important contribution to the standards achieved. Children like coming to school, work hard and are keen to learn. During lessons they listen attentively, answer questions and contribute sensibly to class discussions. Children often help one another when working together in small groups and taking part in other joint activities. Written work and practical tasks are often undertaken with care and enthusiasm. Concentration levels lapse in lessons in Years 2 and 3 when tasks are too hard, too easy or the teacher spends too long on explanations. In addition, the children are not given enough opportunities to show initiative, develop thinking skills and to make more decisions about their work. An impressive feature is that many children take pride in the presentation of completed tasks. Particularly good examples of this were seen in the scrutiny of work in Years 5 and 6 and in the displays around the school.
14. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. In lessons, teachers have high expectations of good behaviour. There is a calm, positive learning environment so that children work without interruption. Children behave very well in the playgrounds and as they move around the school. In the dining hall, they are well mannered and behaviour is exemplary. Instances of bullying and serious misbehaviour are comparatively rare. Such incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. Exceptionally, last year there were three temporary exclusions involving two children. There were no permanent exclusions. The few children from minority ethnic and traveller backgrounds are integrated fully into the life and work of the school. Parents are rightly pleased with the high standards of behaviour that are a strong feature of the school.
15. Children's personal development is very good. Staff are very supportive of their individual needs and are instrumental in securing the very good relationships seen throughout the school. Children are polite, mix well together and show respect for others. They take on responsibilities in class and helping with the organisation of assemblies sensibly. Young children are very fond of their 'buddy' in Year 6 and often give them a present or card when they leave. All children show concern for each other and act accordingly. This does much to contribute to the very good relationships within the school. Children in the Foundation Stage cooperate well with each other.
16. Membership of the many school clubs enables children to develop special interests and to enhance their social skills as well as get to know children in other classes and age groups. Speakers from a range of backgrounds give helpful presentations at assemblies or in classes to extend children's understanding of the wider world. There is a well-planned programme of educational visits to support curriculum learning and to widen children's experience. The residential visit of Year 6 children to Norfolk is a particularly good example.
17. Attendance is good. Last year attendance levels improved to 95.1% and there was a low incidence of unauthorised absence. This outcome compares favourably with the national average of recent years. A minority of children, including those from the traveller community do not attend regularly. Punctuality is very good, enabling a prompt start to be made to the school day. Lessons and other activities start and finish in line with the approved timetables. The problem mentioned in the previous report about the youngest children taking excessive time to change after physical education lessons has been resolved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Overall, teaching is good. Almost half the lessons observed were good or very good. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and infants. It is good in the junior stage. This is similar to the time of the previous inspection. All teachers manage the children very well so that there is a productive working atmosphere. This enables children to work hard and concentrate on their learning.
19. All lessons observed in the Foundation Stage were satisfactory. The teacher and classroom assistants work together well and this plays an important part in enhancing children's progress. Children are managed with much kindness so that they behave well. Children's progress is checked regularly and the information gained is used effectively to group the children according to ability for some lessons in numeracy and literacy. Homework that children complete is valued and displayed for all to see.
20. The teacher's and classroom assistants' knowledge of this age group is satisfactory. Staff working in the Foundation Stage have benefited from attendance on courses and support from an advisory teacher. This needs to continue. The teacher's expectations are appropriate for this time of the school year. The importance of enabling children to learn routines and to settle into school quickly is given precedence. The main weakness in teaching relates to the limited planning for a wider range of play activities. The structure of the day is too rigid inhibiting opportunities for children to spend time on emergent writing or personal and social development. The school has plans for significant development in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage when the nursery is built and the school admits younger children.
21. The strongest teaching is in Years 1, 5 and 6 where all the lessons observed were at least good and often very good. The rate of children's progress is often good and sometimes very good in these year groups and has a significant impact on standards especially at the end of the junior stage. The characteristics of this high quality teaching include:
 - very good subject knowledge and understanding of the needs of the ages of the children;
 - basic skills in all subjects, but especially English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are taught very well. This means children can work confidently and do their best;
 - expectations of what children can do are high and children respond to this very well;
 - activities promote children's personal, spiritual, moral and social development as well as challenge their intellectual effort and capture their interest and concentration;
 - classroom assistants are used very effectively to enable all children, especially those from traveller backgrounds or with special educational needs to play a full part in lessons;
 - thorough planning that makes provision for differing needs;
 - very clear explanations and very good management of the children so that they work hard;
 - lessons build well on what children have done before;
 - teachers ask probing and thought provoking questions that involve many children in contributing to discussions.

22. In Years 2, 3 and 4, much of the teaching was satisfactory and some of it was good. It was unsatisfactory in mathematics in Year 2. Teachers in these year groups manage the children very well, teaching basic skills well and use time, support staff and resources effectively. However, teaching methods are not always appropriate within these year groups, especially in geography and history. Too many worksheets, that do little to take children's learning forward, inhibit the development of children's thinking skills and prevent them making decisions about their work. In Years 2 and 3, expectations are sometime too high, as work is not closely matched to children's abilities. Children do their best but find it hard to complete the tasks without a lot of help. These factors contributed to the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed.
23. Overall, the teaching of children with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is undertaken by class teachers who are sometimes helped by classroom assistants. Activities are mainly chosen to reflect the needs of the children, including those with statements of special educational need, as identified in their individual targets for development. However, these targets are not always used to match work to children's requirements, especially in classes where relatively new teachers are still acquiring these skills. Relationships are good and children are usually keen to please and to do their best. Their self-esteem is maintained well and they take part fully in class activities.
24. Work is marked frequently and in English, mathematics and science, teachers give children guidance about how their work can be improved. The work of the classroom assistants is effective and remains good when they are actively involved with children in small groups. The role of the classroom assistants in whole class sessions has been reviewed and they now enable children, including those from the traveller community, to contribute effectively to all parts of the lesson.

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

25. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched by visitors, visits and the provision of extra curricular activities and links with the community. All the required subjects plus religious education are taught. Each subject receives an appropriate allocation of time over the year. There are some shortcomings, in the provision for brighter children and in the development of investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics and science. Teachers are trying to put this right. Cross-curricular links are improving. History and geography overlap in several of the topics such as, Ancient Greece and the Aztecs and this makes learning more meaningful. Daily assemblies are an integral part of the curriculum promoting the school's ethos, spiritual values and beliefs well.
26. The previous inspection report stated that insufficient progress had been made in planning for the foundation subjects, including art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. At that time, this adversely affected the quality of learning activities provided by the school. Since then, considerable efforts have been made to ensure that curriculum planning is more secure. Teachers' weekly plans are good but the medium term ones are not all written to the same format, which makes it difficult to check progress from one year to another and across subjects.

27. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented satisfactorily. This, together with the provision of work that can be undertaken by groups of children, has helped to raise standards in English and mathematics at the end of the junior stage. Subject policies are being updated on a regular cycle and national guidelines and published programmes of work are being used as a basis for lessons in history and physical education.
28. Recent national initiatives for the Foundation Stage curriculum have been implemented satisfactorily, although there is still work to be done to improve the range of provision. Activities generally engage the children's interest and attention and promote knowledge, skills and understanding in all the areas of learning. The planning for teaching literacy and numeracy is detailed and based on the national strategies. Children have opportunities to use computers to enhance their learning. Many activities are linked to the development of phonic skills, that is, to learn about the sounds letters make and this helps the children read unfamiliar words. There is a good 'reading culture' in the Foundation Stage. Children enjoy reading and know that reading helps them to learn in other subjects. However, there are occasions when activities are not sufficient to develop children's knowledge and skills, particularly early writing. For example, the range of activities that stemmed from the role-play in the 'Travel Agents' provided more potential for the development of early literacy and numeracy skills than was planned for by the teacher.
29. The timetable for the Foundation Stage is too rigid and this limits opportunities for children to spend time on a range of tasks and engage in activities and experiences that allow them to plan and initiate for themselves. In addition, it hinders opportunities for children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions. There is a need to review the manner in which the curriculum in the classroom is extended into the outside area. The school is aware of these issues and has prepared an action plan to improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage.
30. The care and well being of the children are given a high priority. This is reflected in the successful personal, social and health programme which includes sex education and the use and misuse of drugs. Teachers take their responsibilities seriously and plan lessons where sensitive issues can be discussed in an objective way. Children show empathy for each other. One group demonstrated this in a games lesson when they slowed down the pace of the game to enable a child with disabilities to take part in a team activity. Strong links with the local community help everyone to understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
31. There is a good programme of after-school clubs that support the curriculum effectively. Children learn additional skills in netball, football, rounders, cricket, keeping fit, athletics, computers and board games. An environmental club encourages children to investigate aspects of the environment and to care for the nature area. Educational visits to places such as St. Albans and Waltham Abbey are used to broaden their knowledge especially about the Romans. A residential visit to Norfolk for the older juniors provides opportunities for them to try challenging outdoor pursuits and a broad information and communication technology curriculum. In addition, it provides opportunities for them to live and work together as a community away from home over several days. Visitors to the school bring learning alive. Two former evacuees came and talked to the children and showed them items from the wartime. During the inspection, a nurse talked to Year 4 children about the importance of dental care as part of the good provision for health education. Special events, such as the Queen's Golden Jubilee, are actively celebrated.

32. Girls and boys equally are encouraged to take part in all aspects of the curriculum and school clubs. Children of different nationalities and backgrounds work and play together in an atmosphere of racial harmony. They are generous in fund raising for different charities including money collected on Red Nose Day.
33. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for children with special educational needs. The procedures for identifying such children are sound and comply with national requirements. They are overseen by the experienced special educational needs co-ordinator who works closely with class teachers. The school liaises appropriately with outside agencies and the children benefit from this. Children's individual education plans are up to date and generally written well. Targets for development show careful diagnosis of children's learning difficulties and how they might be addressed.
34. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with particular strengths in social and moral education. A powerful mission statement underpins the life and work of the school and sets the tone for all its activities. This is strongly apparent in what the school aims for and is successfully carried out in practice.
35. Provision for spiritual education is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Assemblies and acts of collective worship are significant features in the provision. Class prayers at the beginning and end of the school day and grace before mealtimes underpin the school's Roman Catholic ethos and sets an atmosphere of calm. Children light candles on the prayer tables to create a sense of spirituality and time is set aside for reflecting on the beauties of the world we live in as well as on any public events which have caused sorrow. In one history lesson about the construction of 'family trees', a class wrote about giving thanks for the gifts and talents they have.
36. Provision for moral education is very good. Assemblies that praise children's efforts are held each week. They acknowledge good work and behaviour and children are rewarded with special certificates. This encourages children to think about how their behaviour affects others and to see the difference between right and wrong. The school's aims are clear and consistently promoted by all staff, who are themselves good role models. Children take responsibility for seeing the rules they devise are carried out. In one class, children had written their class rules in the form of promises, for example, "At St Paul's we are polite and show respect for others", and everyone had signed to keep them.
37. The provision for social development is very good and is clearly seen in the way children welcome visitors warmly to the school. Lessons are organised well and allow children to work collaboratively and exchange ideas in small groups. Outside the classrooms, everyone plays harmoniously together. Older children are 'buddies' to the younger children and really enjoy their responsibilities for caring for other members of the school community. When asked what he would miss most about the school when he leaves, a Year 6 child said he would miss the child he cared for greatly. Many participate in extra-curricular activities and inter-school competitions and this too adds much to children's social development.

38. The last inspection report was critical of the provision for cultural education. There has been some improvement since then, and it is now satisfactory. Lessons on other nations and faiths help children to learn about other cultures. Children enjoy these lessons. In discussion, one boy said that the aspect of geography he particularly enjoyed was learning about the cultures of different countries, such as India. Work in art includes finger painting in the style of aboriginal designs and Roman mosaic patterns in the shape of fish. In literacy, Year 6 study the language and style of Shakespeare's play "Macbeth". Visits to museums and places of interest also broaden children's cultural understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Very good provision is made for the health, care and safety of the children. The Roman Catholic ethos of the school helps to promote an understanding and supportive environment. This is conducive to promoting children's self-confidence and an enthusiasm to learn. Parents are right to be very pleased about this.
40. The school places strong emphasis on the welfare and support of all children. This includes helping children with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those from travellers' families, who join the school from time to time. Staff trained in first aid deal with accidents and illness competently. At lunchtimes, the midday staff supervise meal arrangements and activities on the playgrounds and field effectively and thoughtfully. They encourage children to play games and share playground equipment happily. The children receive good advice on health education as part of the science and the personal, social and health education programmes. There are appropriate arrangements for child protection procedures, including staff training. Governors give a high priority to health and safety issues carrying out regular inspections and risk assessments to make sure that staff and children work safely.
41. The monitoring of children's personal development is very good. Teachers and staff know the children well and give them good advice. This helps deal with any worries and gives children confidence in their ability to deal with new situations. Appropriate records are maintained and helpful information about each child's personal development is given to parents at termly meetings and in the annual reports.
42. There are very good procedures for promoting regular attendance. Parents are familiar with the school's expectations and co-operate by giving notice about the reasons for absence. Registration and follow up procedures are effective. The school works closely with the education welfare officer. This enables appropriate action to be taken when there are individual concerns about attendance.
43. Arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour are very good. Parents are given clear information about the school's expectations of high standards of behaviour. The children understand the 'Behaviour Code' and this is prominently displayed around the school. All staff adopt a consistent approach. They place strong emphasis on praising and rewarding good behaviour. There is a clearly defined range of sanctions for dealing with any misbehaviour that occurs, including bullying. When serious issues do arise, the school works closely with the child and their parents to resolve the situation.
44. The school has reviewed and improved its assessment policy recently. It is clear about the processes and procedures to be used and is a helpful document for staff in

monitoring children's progress. A satisfactory range of assessments and record keeping systems has been introduced. These enable teachers to track how well individual children are doing and to target resources so as to raise standards. However, the information gained from the school's assessment procedures is not always used as effectively as it could be to match work closely to children's needs.

45. The baseline assessment of children when they start school at the Foundation Stage is carefully administered. It includes the local authority's system for assessment together with the class teacher's own assessments. The findings are used effectively to put children into different ability groups for lessons and to set individual targets for achievement to enhance the rate of progress.
46. Emphasis is rightly placed on the early identification of children with learning difficulties. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works closely with class teachers to ensure this happens.
47. Throughout the school, teachers' planning includes key objectives that are used to assess children's progress. Class teachers also complete daily assessments of what children can do and this is recorded on planning forms. Individual targets in literacy and numeracy are set for infant and junior children. These are written in the appropriate exercise books and are usually clear, precise and realistic. Regular reviews of children's progress are carried out during each year. This helps track how well they are doing and enables adjustments to be made to individual targets. The school's results in National Curriculum tests are analysed by the senior management team and discussed with governors and staff. Additional tests in literacy and numeracy are administered to junior children each February. However, the information gained from the school's assessment procedures is not always used as effectively as it could be to match work closely to children's needs, especially those of the brighter children.
48. The marking of work is kept up to date and includes some helpful comments to tell children where they have done well and what could be improved. Home school reading records contain details of books read by individual children. They sometimes include comments from parents and children about how well they are doing. Portfolios are kept of each child's work as they move up through the school. These are helpful in determining the progress made and what needs to be done next.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents now have full confidence in the school. They are very pleased with the improvements made since the last inspection two years ago. Parents are right to say that behaviour is good; that the children work hard and that they make good progress. There is a friendly and supportive atmosphere and their children are happy at the school. Parents feel that the teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence generally supports this view, although there is still work to do in raising overall management and teaching skills. Parents are well informed about their child's progress. Whilst most are pleased with the school's homework scheme, about one sixth of the respondents to the questionnaire are not satisfied with the amount of homework set. For some it is not enough and for others it is too much. Inspectors judged that, the homework arrangements work well and make a helpful contribution to children's learning.
50. The school has very good links with parents. At the start of each term parents are notified about the main areas to be studied. Regular newsletters keep them well informed about school events and activities. Parents are given clear information

about their child's progress at consultation meetings with the class teacher in the autumn and spring terms. Parents are pleased with the annual written reports issued towards the end of the school year. Inspectors find that in some instances the information about work covered is rather lengthy. There is a need for more consistency in the subject sections of the reports so that areas for development or improvement are identified. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns early and informally with the class teacher or the headteacher. These arrangements work extremely well and contribute to the effective partnership between parents and the school. The school prospectus gives comprehensive information about the school. The governors' annual report to parents provided a good account of the school's activities in the previous year.

51. Parents make a very good contribution to children's learning. A small number of parents help in lessons, with reading, computer studies, cooking and sewing. Others assist with swimming and school trips. An impressive feature is the encouragement that parents give to their child to complete their homework. Parents are very supportive of the activities organised by the school association. Last year the association raised nearly £7,000 that was used to provide resources for the reception class, mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. A substantive headteacher was appointed in January 2002 and this has given the school the stability it needed. Until then there had been a series of temporary headteachers. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is still work to do in raising the overall management skills. The deputy headteacher took up her duties in September 2002 and many of the subject coordinators are new to their roles. There is a need to consolidate the senior management team responsibilities and develop the skills of the subject coordinators to influence developments and standards in their subjects. Some longer serving subject coordinators, such as in mathematics and science, have a clear understanding of their role and have completed action plans to drive developments forward. Leadership ensures that there is a clear educational direction for the work of the school. The school's aims and values are reflected well in all aspects of school life. Day to day management is good so that everyone can get on with their work.
53. As at the time of the last inspection, the governors continue to make a significant contribution to the management of the school. Their work remains energetic, well organised thorough and effective. The Performance Review Committee and chair of governors in particular, act as conscientious critical friends. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They review its performance and its progress towards targets and priorities in the school development plan half termly and agree action and new ways forward. Governors have played an important part in improving the school's provision.
54. There is a strong commitment to improve, on the part of all staff and governors. The school is taking determined action to achieve its challenging targets for the number of children to reach level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science. The

strongest teachers have been deployed in Years 1, 5 and 6. This is impacting standards and the rate of children's progress. The school is open and honest about its strengths and weaknesses and has a good, clear programme for raising standards. The school development plan has been improved since the last inspection and provides clear success criteria to measure the impact of improvements on children's attainments.

55. There is a clear programme to check the school's performance. The chair of governors and headteacher analyse statistical data in detail and share this information with colleagues to identify areas for development. Each term, lessons are observed and checked for the rate of children's progress and improvements required in teaching. This term, the programme includes observations of children's behaviour in the playground and the ethos of the school as well as lessons in literacy, mathematics, science, information and communication technology. In the past, the headteacher, local authority and members of the senior management team have made these checks. It is intended that subject coordinators will take on some of these responsibilities when they have been trained to do so.
56. The school's arrangements for the management and organisation of the special educational needs provision, is satisfactory overall. There are appropriate links with parents and the special needs co-ordinator ensures that targets set for individual children are realistic and up to date. This is particularly important because a number of teachers are relatively new to teaching in this country and are learning the skills of setting such targets.
57. The school has an appropriate complement of teachers, but there has been a high turnover of staff recently for a variety of reasons and many of them have not been in post long. This includes three teachers who trained abroad and a deputy headteacher who took up post at the beginning of the current term. There are sufficient administrative staff and they make visitors feel welcome. The school finds teacher recruitment difficult and there are few applicants for advertised teacher positions. This is due in part to its closeness to London, the lack of London weighting in salaries and the cost of housing in the area.
58. Classroom assistants feel valued and work effectively and co-operatively with the teaching staff. They make a significant contribution to children's progress. The school has devised a support form completed by class teachers that sets out the tasks to be undertaken by the classroom assistants in each lesson. The form includes space for comments by the assistants about the progress made by children. The system works well and helps to ensure good communication between teachers and support staff.
59. A policy for performance management is in place and a programme for the headteacher to meet with individual members of staff to set targets for this year has been agreed. Appropriate emphasis is given to staff training and priorities, rightly, include the induction of new teachers. At the beginning of last year, the new teachers were given an opportunity to observe others and to attend courses organised by the local authority. The headteacher is aware of the need to enable the new deputy headteacher to settle in to the school, but also to quickly get on with her responsibilities. This is happening successfully.
60. Accommodation is satisfactory and maintained well. It includes a hall, dining area, seven classrooms, a television room, but no computer suite. There are library areas

for each of the infant and junior stages that include tables and chairs for the children. The outside area has hard playing surfaces and a good-sized field. It provides ample space for physical and other learning activities. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage limits activities but a building programme has been agreed to improve this and provide a purpose built nursery. The plans are at a relatively advanced stage.

61. The school has satisfactory amounts of equipment and books of mainly good quality. Resources are stored and organised well. They are easily accessible for use. Fixed climbing apparatus adds to the quality of the outside environment for the children.
62. There are good arrangements to ensure that the school's forward financial planning takes into account educational priorities. The Performance Review Committee ensures the school development plan includes costings for each proposal. Governors consider carefully each priority when reaching final decisions on the annual budget. Procedures to deal with day-to-day financial administration are effective. The bursar provides helpful advice and submits monthly reports about progress against the approved budget for governors and headteacher to review. The finance committee monitors the school's financial position twice each term. Specific grants are used appropriately for the designated purposes.
63. The school places good emphasis on securing best value in utilising available resources. The governors and headteacher give priority to ensuring that financial, staffing and other resources are directed at improving standards of achievement. The school's national test results are compared closely with the outcomes for other schools. Very careful consideration is given to cost effectiveness when placing orders for work and services. Governors consult staff and sometimes parents about major curriculum and spending decisions.
64. Income per child is higher than in most primary schools. Taking into account the standards of achievement, the overall good teaching and the responsible management, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The governors, headteacher and staff should build on the strengths of the school to:
- (1) raise standards at the end of the infant stage, especially in English, mathematics and science;
Paragraphs: 5, 6, 7, 22, 28, 29, 89, 92, 93, 98, 102, 109, 134, 139, 140, 144
 - (2) increase the number of children reaching level 5 in mathematics and science at the end of the juniors;
Paragraphs: 2, 54, 98, 108, 109
 - (3) develop the role of the subject coordinators to bring about higher standards, especially in the foundation subjects.
Paragraphs: 52, 107, 118, 133,
 - (4) improve the provision for children to develop their investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics and science consistently across the school;
Paragraphs: 13, 76, 109, 116
 - (5) make more opportunities for children to use their initiative, develop their thinking skills and make decisions about their work;
Paragraphs: 29, 71, 77, 87, 123, 124.

All these issues are in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	14	23	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	19%	30%	49%	2%	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 points.

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)	N/A	162
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	12

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	N/A

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	7	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	17	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	94 (95)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	100 (100)	100 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	20	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	10
	Girls	17	14	20
	Total	25	21	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (84)	70 (68)	100 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	17	17	19
	Total	25	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (84)	83 (92)	90 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	106	3	0
White – Irish	25	0	0
White – any other White background	18	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	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	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	113

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	443,920
Total expenditure	418,446
Expenditure per pupil	2,312
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,236
Balance carried forward to next year	36,710

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

42.5%

Number of questionnaires sent out

174

Number of questionnaires returned

74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	36	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	16	0	0
The teaching is good.	57	42	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	46	9	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	36	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	28	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	7	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	61	32	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	46	7	3	4

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

Foundation Stage

66. Children are admitted to the reception class twice a year. Children, aged five between September and February the following year, begin school in September. Those aged five in March to August start school in January. One teacher supported by a part-time classroom assistant teaches them. Another teaching assistant works with a child who has special educational needs. Each morning staff meet the parents and children. This time is used well to exchange information and build relationships. At the end of the school day parents wait for their children outside the classroom and the class teacher uses this time effectively to exchange information about children and their day at school.
67. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Judgements are based on lesson observations, scrutiny of previous work, teachers' planning and photographic records kept by the school.
68. On entry, children's attainments are similar to those found nationally among four year olds. The majority of children make satisfactory progress and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Teaching and children's progress is satisfactory. Staff use everyday experiences to enable children to explore the awe and wonder of the natural world. When a 'sleepy' hoverfly was discovered in the outside area the children's interest was captured. The teacher made good use of this opportunity and helped children to look at it through a special magnifying glass, to talk about it and then release it. The teacher ensured the creature was cared for well.
70. Children respect the adults as well as their classmates. During literacy lessons, children sit still and listen to adults and other children politely, taking it in turns to share their point of view. They change their clothes quickly for physical education lessons and this overcomes a criticism from the previous inspection. In addition, the children return resources tidily to their rightful place, and interact confidently with adults. In the role-play area and whilst throwing bean bags into a basket, they demonstrate skills in sharing, taking turns, relationships with their peers, listening to each other and playing collaboratively.
71. There are, however, few planned opportunities to develop children's independence and decision-making. Planning does not indicate well enough what is to be learned in a wider range of activities. It does not take into account how children can make important decisions about their work, use their initiative, make the most of 'snack-time' nor does the planning show learning in creative work or imaginative learning opportunities. One of the reasons for this is that the classroom is too small to sustain a range of different activities going on at the same time.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Teaching and children's progress in communication, language and literacy are satisfactory. Children speak confidently and initiate conversations with their classmates and adults. In the role-play area children negotiate and exchange ideas. There are many opportunities for children to be involved in discussions with adults during literacy, numeracy and worship sessions. Although they are in larger groups, children speak up confidently. Children with special educational needs are supported effectively by staff who ensure they work well towards attaining the targets in their individual education plans.
73. There is a good reading culture developing in the reception class. This gives a foundation on which children can develop early literacy skills. Staff place emphasis on enabling children to learn the sounds letters make. This helps them to make a good start with reading and provides a secure foundation for spelling simple words correctly. Children know about the characteristics of a book and how we read from left to right. They enjoy learning to read in sessions where they are guided effectively by the class teacher or support staff to read simple stories or guess what is going to happen next. At other times, they like to share books or retell stories to their friends. They read at home with their parents and this does much to enhance their reading skills. This too encourages a positive attitude to reading that children carry with them through the school.
74. Most children hold their pencil correctly and are beginning to form their letters appropriately. During the inspection, there were opportunities for children to develop early writing skills in a role-play situation, for example, in the 'Travel Agent' children wrote out tickets and made passports. The classroom assistants model writing well as when they showed children how to complete forms for hotel accommodation. The play in this area was good as it allowed children to enjoy writing, organise themselves, interact with each other, negotiate and plan their writing and take turns when talking to each other. Other situations in the role-play area gave children good opportunities to develop their vocabulary, for example when answering the telephone and booking holidays. However, there are few other opportunities for children to develop their writing skills independently in play activities.

Mathematical development

75. Scrutiny of photographs of previous work and planning indicate teaching and children's progress in this area of learning is satisfactory overall. Children are on course to meet the expected level of attainment at the end of the reception year.
76. Children can thread beads in a repeating pattern, relate numbers to the telephone and count using songs and rhymes. In a numeracy session, children counted reliably up to six objects and knew add 'one more than' to single digit numbers. A group of brighter children counted to fifteen, added 1, 2, and 3 together correctly and in a fishing game, caught three numbered fish and totalled the numbers accurately. While some of the work is practical, there are fewer opportunities for children to investigate numbers and their patterns.
77. The teacher's planning indicated strong emphasis on the implementation of the numeracy strategy. Opportunities, to build mathematical development into play activities, such as the role-play area, were missed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. From scrutiny of work, photographic evidence and lesson observations children's knowledge and understanding of the world is being taught and developed appropriately. Progress is satisfactory and children are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the year.
79. Children learn about how plants grow and about the wonderful world around them. Children construct bridges, seesaws and towers from large apparatus and balance on these. They are unaware that they are talking and finding out about forces as the work is presented to them as play. During the inspection, using small equipment, children constructed vehicles with wheels successfully. These were kept and displayed for all to see. In the small outside area boys made a road track and investigated how fast cars travelled down a slope.
80. As it is early in the school year, there was little to show how children learn about time passing and geography of the area. However, they have learned how to find their way around the school independently.
81. Working with a classroom assistant a small group of children made vehicles with wheels from recycled materials. They used scissors confidently, joined materials using masking tape, sticky tape and glue effectively. In this activity children's attitudes were very good, concentration was sustained, they played well together, shared resources and took care of equipment. Tasks were generally open ended so that children could make some decisions about their work based on prior learning. Social skills were promoted effectively and outside play was linked to earlier work on transport.
82. Children are developing appropriate skills in using the computer. They know that by moving the mouse, the cursor moves around the screen. They can draw simple pictures using a 'paint' programme, but often they use the computer to improve literacy skills.

Physical development

83. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children are on course to meet the early learning goals. Children take part in physical education lessons in the hall. In the lesson observed, children were in control of their bodies as they hopped and jumped in the warm up activity. Subsequently they worked confidently, choosing partners and following a range of actions demonstrated by other children in the class. They changed direction without bumping into each other, responded to changes in movement quickly and followed instructions carefully. Children throw and catch balls of different sizes appropriately and some did this well, gathering the ball to their body and throwing gently. They find it harder to kick a ball in a controlled way, often kicking it too fiercely.
84. There are few opportunities to use an appropriate range of large toys such as, tricycles, scooters and 'push and pull toys' as there is little room for storage. The area immediately outside the classroom is also too small to use this equipment. There is no sheltered area for children to work outside the classroom in wet weather. This has been included in the plans for the new nursery.

Creative development

85. From scrutiny of work, photographic evidence and limited lesson observations in this area reception children's creative development is being taught and developed appropriately. Progress is satisfactory and children are in line to meet the early learning goals by the end of the year.
86. In the early morning prayer and assembly sessions children sang enthusiastically. They sang and performed the actions for 'Stand up Clap Hands say Thank you God'. There are opportunities to sing number rhymes and other songs, but less opportunity to play musical instruments.
87. Photographic evidence and last year's art portfolio indicated that children have a variety of successful experiences in creating pictures using a variety of media, including collage. Some children have painted high quality self-portraits that are on display for other children to see. Previously, some children had made 'ladybirds' from cardboard that required an elastic band motor to help them to move along. These were made to the same format, but involved children in using creative skills. However, too often, children do not have the opportunity to express their own creative ideas in art and design. Role play is used more effectively to promote children's creative development.

ENGLISH

88. The previous inspection in 2000 found that standards of attainment had risen significantly and were above average at the end of both the infant and junior stages. The school monitors its performance carefully and this is paying dividends, particularly at the end of the junior stage. Its results in the 2001 national tests for reading and writing at the end of the infant stage were above average. At the end of the junior stage, its results in English were well above average, although when compared to schools in a similar context they were average. However, the school's results in national tests need to be viewed with caution because of the relatively small size of some year groups. The school's 2002 unverified results appear to have fallen. The school predicted lower results and this is reflected in the targets that were set.
89. Scrutiny of work available shows most children make satisfactory progress over time at the infant stage. Older children at the junior stage make better progress. Scrutiny of work and lesson observations together show that at the end of the infant stage, children's overall attainment is below average. This is because a number of children in the current Year 2 find learning difficult and their progress is sometimes slow. In addition, there were difficulties with staffing when they were in Year 1. A different picture emerges at the end of the junior stage where attainment is above average. This reflects the consistently good or better teaching in Years 5 and 6. Children with special educational needs mostly make satisfactory progress at both the infant and junior stages.
90. The national initiative on literacy has been introduced satisfactorily and teachers feel it is helping to raise standards. Texts are chosen well and generally appeal to children's interests. However, more could be done to reinforce literacy skills across all subjects. Appropriate efforts are made to use homework, including spelling, reading and surfing the Internet, to enhance the work in lessons.

91. Children are usually pleased to talk to visitors about their work and interests. They are polite and respectful. However, children in Year 2 often use only a limited range of vocabulary and their speaking and listening skills are not as well developed as in most other schools. They listen carefully at first during oral sessions and respond well to prompts and encouragement, but some quickly become restless and find it hard to concentrate. Many are reluctant to offer opinions or to express preferences. They sometimes find it difficult to communicate more than simple meanings clearly. Children in Year 6 are much more confident. They listen attentively, use a good range of vocabulary and communicate meaning clearly, often using their own experiences to develop what they have to say. They answer questions sensibly and many are prepared to ask some of their own. Their contributions to class discussions are good. An example of this was observed in a lesson about the need for scene setting and stage directions when writing plays. The children quickly understood this and made useful suggestions about what they might include.
92. Children enjoy listening to stories. Most take reading books home regularly and home school reading records are used to show the progress they make. This is a useful link between parents and teachers and helps to encourage children to spend time reading. Infant children make use of letter sounds, pictures and the context of the story to help them read new words. However, in Year 2 their reading is often halting and lacking in confidence. They have little to say about books they have read and their reading skills are generally below that expected for their age. At the junior stage, many children read with growing confidence, fluency and expression. In Year 6, reading skills are mostly above average and there is a real enthusiasm for the activity. Children show a good understanding of main story lines and of characters. Many can predict story outcomes and suggest reasonable alternatives. They have read the work of an impressive range of authors and playwrights, including William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and Laurie Lee. They use dictionaries well and their research skills are good.
93. The school has worked hard to raise standards in writing, but many children at the infant stage find it difficult. In Year 2, children's attainment is below that expected nationally. They show a growing understanding of how to sequence events in the right order, but often write little given the time available. Many children's knowledge of basic sentence structure, including the use of capital letters and full stops, is developing only slowly. Although children try hard with spelling, simple words are often spelt incorrectly. They try to write neatly, but letters are frequently not well formed.
94. At the junior stage, children write for a range of purposes and audiences, including stories, playlets, poems and letters. They are beginning to think more carefully about the use of language and its meaning. By Year 6, children's writing skills are above average. They communicate meaning clearly and use interesting vocabulary. For example, when writing an adventure story a child wrote, *"The air was thin and cold. He could smell a revolting stench. He could taste it in his mouth and his throat went dry."* Children are given opportunities to express views and opinions and they do so sensibly, for example on fox hunting, the use of dancing bears and the future of the rain forest. They show good understanding of sentence structure and stories are planned carefully. Most children know how to use speech marks, question marks, exclamation marks and apostrophes correctly. Spelling is usually good and handwriting is neat and presented well.

95. Some of the teachers have not been in post long, but all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and much of it was good. One lesson in Year 5 was very good. The structure provided by the literacy hour has given teachers clear guidelines about the organisation of lessons and this is proving beneficial. Lessons are prepared well and plans are usually clear about what children are to learn and how. This is often explained to them at the beginning of the lesson so that they know what they are going to do and why. Most children have really good attitudes towards the subject and behave very well. The good teaching stems from:
- good relationships and an expectation that children will work hard and do their best throughout the lesson;
 - secure subject knowledge that is used effectively to clarify teaching points;
 - good control and management, including the use of praise and encouragement to motivate children and build their confidence;
 - reminders about previous work and how it links with the tasks to be undertaken;
 - well chosen texts and activities that hold children's interest and is matched to their needs. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson about Shakespeare's Macbeth in which the children compared the language used with that of today;
 - skilful use of questions that assess what children understand and challenges them to think hard;
 - effective deployment of support staff to help children who need it most.
96. Features of the very good lesson included:
- the recognition and use of opportunities to reinforce basic skills, such as the use of exclamation marks in the class text;
 - high expectations of what the children could do in the time available;
 - ensuring that children knew what to do next and how to improve;
 - a sense of real purpose and pace that led to children developing their skill effectively.
97. The school broadens and enriches children's literacy experiences successfully. Activities have included visiting theatre groups, an annual Book Fayre, a Book Club and special events, such as days when children are encouraged to dress up as a character from a favourite story. These all help to enliven children's interest in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

98. Attainments in lessons are good in Year 6. They are below those normally expected nationally in Year 2. Results in national tests in 2001 for children aged eleven, were similar to those found in all schools but well below average when compared to schools with children from similar backgrounds. Few children reached the higher level 5. Unverified results for tests in 2002 indicate that children are doing as well as those in other schools nationally. The trend in improvement in results over the last three years is similar to other schools.
99. Lessons observed in Year 6 show that the majority of children are competent mathematicians and can handle large numbers with confidence. Children have a good understanding of place value and multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and sometimes 1000 accurately. They are gaining experience at interpreting data and representing their findings in different types of graphs using

- information and communication technology. Work on display in the school about a local traffic survey shows very good links between these skills and everyday life.
100. Past work shows that by the end of Year 6, children calculate fractions, percentages and use formulae to work out areas of triangles and rectangles in square centimetres and metres confidently. They estimate and measure different types of angles and draw them accurately in their exercise books. The pace of children's progress is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and increases at a rapid rate in Years 5 and 6.
 101. National tests for children aged seven in 2001, show that all children reached the required standard with some reaching a higher level of achievement. Unverified results for national tests in 2002 indicate that standards are not as good as in previous years. However, results over the last three years show a rising trend and variations are likely because of the small numbers of children involved and differences in ability.
 102. Lesson observation show that attainments for children in Year 2 are below those expected nationally in numeracy and other areas of the mathematics curriculum. This is not as good as the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be good. This is because there are a small number of children in the year group, some of whom have special educational needs. Children in Year 2, make slow progress because they lack the necessary skills and knowledge. Children in Year 1 now make good progress, as teaching is good.
 103. In Year 2, children have a satisfactory understanding of adding numbers up to 10 and 20. In subtraction sums, many are confused about the process. Children try to do their best but take shortcuts when they have misunderstood the task and so most of the answers are wrong. In a class mental arithmetic session, most recognised and named coins up to the value of 50p. In previous work, some show they can measure objects reasonably accurately using centimetres and label three-dimensional shapes such as cone, cylinder and pyramid. Children with special educational needs struggle and do less work because it is not matched well enough to their prior learning.
 104. At the time of the last inspection teaching throughout the infants was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Now it varies from unsatisfactory to good. Lesson plans are taken from a commercially published programme of work based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers decide for themselves how mathematics should be taught and what resources to provide. These include workbooks that children colour in or fill in the missing number. Some Year 2 children find this difficult despite their efforts to do so. This holds back their learning. Progress is faster in Year 1 as there is more emphasis on practical work. Lessons are planned carefully and children investigate problems in number, shape and measurement that build effectively on their previous learning. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is conveyed well to the children and they are motivated to do as well as they can. The objective for the lesson is made clear so that they understand fully what they are learning. The children organise themselves well within their groups and show a high level of collaboration and concentration on their work.

105. In lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is good or very good. In these classes, teachers plan thoroughly and give clear explanations. They emphasise the importance of using the correct mathematical vocabulary. Lessons are structured well, with a good balance of practical and written activities in which children take part with enthusiasm. The pace of lessons is very good and groups are encouraged to think for themselves, producing a large amount of well-presented work. Children say they enjoy mathematics and their positive responses contribute significantly to their learning.
106. In the satisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4, teachers' place emphasis on using classroom assistants well to support groups of children and focus on teaching the basic skills children need. However, sometimes the work is less challenging and explanations are confusing. Good classroom management means most children stay on task, but some find it hard to concentrate because they are less well motivated and as a result produce a smaller quantity of work. Sessions to promote children's skills in mental arithmetic are not taken at a sharp enough pace and children are not made to recall facts fast enough.
107. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered, and the Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented. In Years 2, 3 and 4, not enough attention is paid to the needs of the brighter children. These children carry out the same work as their classmates rather than complete tasks designed to meet their needs. Teacher assessment procedures are not sufficiently accurate and children do not always achieve the levels expected for them in the national tests. The co-ordinator is well aware of these issues and has an action plan to deal with them. The school is trying to raise the profile of mathematics and, as part of this, children receive rewards for their efforts in whole school assemblies.

SCIENCE

108. At the time of the last inspection, the national test results in science were the best ever achieved by the school at the end of the juniors. Almost half the children reached the higher level of attainment, level 5. In 2001, all the children taking the test at the end of Year 6, reached the expected level 4, with one fifth reaching level 5. Teachers' assessments show that all children at the end of Year 2 reached the expected level of attainment. Unverified information shows that results in 2002 are not as good as in previous years at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school was expecting this because of the number of children with special educational needs in the year group.
109. From lessons observed and scrutiny of previous work, attainment in science is below that found in most schools at the end of the infants and similar at the end of the juniors. The school has rightly identified the need to develop children's problem solving, thinking and investigative skills in order to raise attainment. During the inspection, teachers were demonstrating their efforts to work on this aspect of children's learning. This is because there are gaps in children's knowledge and understanding about ways to carry out investigations fairly that limit opportunities for them to reach higher levels of attainment

110. Attainment is higher in Year 1 than in Year 2. This is due in part to the range of abilities in Year 2, including children with significant special educational needs. There are also differences in the children's behaviour and some children do not always listen carefully to their teacher or their friends. This means time is lost capturing their attention. The teacher is new to the age group. As it is early in the term, there are adjustments to be made to the work for children of differing abilities, so that it is matched more closely to their needs.
111. As children move through the school, they now cover the science curriculum thoroughly. The scrutiny of work shows that there have been gaps in the past, especially in investigative science. In the year prior to the inspection, there was little difference in the work provided for the brighter children, especially in Year 5. All children carried out the same tasks, with the brighter children completing more. However, this is no longer the case in that year group. Older children are taught the correct scientific vocabulary and are expected to spell it correctly and use it appropriately in lessons. The scrutiny of work showed some lack of coverage of the curriculum. Teachers are now dealing with this, trying to fill the gaps in knowledge as a matter of urgency.
112. At the end of the junior stage, children know about magnets, forces, how to live healthily, the names for parts of flowers and the parts of the body. They know how to write up science experiments correctly, to make hypotheses and draw conclusions from their investigations. At the end of the infant stage, children know what plants need to grow and that jelly or ice can melt and change back to their original state. They are less certain of changes that cannot be reversed. Year 2 children can make simple hypotheses, for example, where in the classroom their ice might melt slowly or quickly, but they find it hard to say why.
113. Science is taught very well in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are planned thoroughly to promote high standards in science and children's social development. Practical activities challenge children to think hard and share their ideas with others. In a Year 6 lesson, children were learning that when an object is submerged, the water provides an upward force on it. The children had to plan a fair test to investigate whether there was a difference in the weight of objects in the air or in the water. To carry this out effectively, the children had to make accurate, careful measurements using a force meter and record their findings appropriately. In Year 5, children were challenged to design a fair test to investigate the most effective method of seed dispersal.

114. In the lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, teachers:
- made provision for children to experience the awe and wonder of the natural world;
 - had high expectations of what children could do;
 - demonstrated very good knowledge of the science curriculum, especially investigative work;
 - gave very clear explanations so that children gained new knowledge and skills;
 - communicated very clearly with the classroom assistants so that they knew well how to help the children they were working with;
 - planned work to meet the needs of children of differing abilities so that they played a full part in lessons and achieved as well as they could;
 - picked up errors made by the children and used these to extend learning;
 - caught the children's interest so that they remained on task for long periods of time and behaved very well;
 - reminded children what they had learned at the end of the lesson and how this would be built on in the next one;
 - provided a good range of resources for children to choose and make important decisions about their work;
 - included mathematical skills of measurement in the tasks so children could understand that the skills they learn in mathematics are important to other subjects.
115. This very good teaching enables children to make made rapid progress in scientific knowledge, skills and understanding. Brighter children are challenged well. The lessons demonstrate the potential to improve children's problem solving and investigative skills. Behaviour and relationships were very good so that there was a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere. This too contributed to children's rapid progress as they were helping each other to think about new ideas.
116. Science is taught well in Year 4 and satisfactorily in Year 3. Both teachers used practical activities to identify different kinds of teeth or to investigate the length of shadows over the school day. Lessons had a clear sense of purpose and involved practical work. However, the extent to which children were free to explore and investigate was limited by the way in which the teacher directed each step of the lesson, rather than allowing children to use their initiative. Long explanations meant some children lost concentration and were unable to take in the information. Some were less willing to listen to the ideas presented to the whole class as there were fewer opportunities for them to contribute. This said, the work was intellectually challenging and science skills of observation, measurement and the need for a fair test were taught effectively. The children work in groups, but the size of the groups is too big for everyone to play a full part.
117. In the infant stage, science is taught very well in Year 1 and satisfactorily in Year 2. Teaching in Year 1 has many of the high quality characteristics found in Years 5 and 6. The lesson observed was about recognising that people have different tastes and what animals need to stay alive. Particular strengths in teaching in Year 1, include the challenge for children to apply literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in science. In addition, the work was carefully structured to allow children to consolidate what they had learned before moving on to the next task. Year 2 children were fascinated by the way ice melted at a faster rate in different parts of the classroom. However, the children were expected to do a lot of writing, before placing the ice in areas of their choice. This impacted the quality of the investigation

- as the ice was already melting. The groups the children were working in were too big, reducing real opportunities for discussion.
118. The science coordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and her influence in developing staff's skills in investigative science is proving fruitful.

ART AND DESIGN

119. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in the juniors. Judgements are made on the scrutiny of teachers' planning, children's portfolios of work, sketchbooks, work displayed around the school and talking to the children. Attainments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those found in schools nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In most classes, children have the opportunity to develop their skills systematically. They use sketches to build up their designs and chart their progression. There remains room for development in allowing children to express their own ideas more and increase their knowledge of famous artists.
120. A display of children's art from the Foundation Stage to Year 6 in the school hall demonstrates clearly that their skills are developed and built on over time. The display shows a range of techniques, involving colour mixing, finger painting, collage and observational work. The youngest children painted self-portraits with large paintbrushes, but by Year 6, children use fine watercolour brushes to paint high quality landscapes with perspective.
121. In the juniors, children's fine line drawings are detailed and precise. Observational drawings of human figures by children in Year 6 show they know how to draw people with the body parts in the correct proportions. In the lesson observed, children built on previous learning and acquired new skills to draw figures representing different movements. In a Year 5 class, children made observational drawings of 'still life'. In a series of lessons, children started by making a quick sketch, moving on to using two objects to make a composition. In the penultimate lesson that was observed, children decided on the type of media to use for best effect. Children in Year 5 and 6 are able to look critically at their own work and that of others. They make sensitive and perceptive comments on how work might be improved.
122. Work from across the school in portfolios, sketchbooks and on display boards indicate that children have the opportunity to mix colours, work with a variety of media, such as pastels, materials, watercolours and clay. Infant children made some imaginative snails coiling the clay to the shape of the snail shells. Other children made clay pots linked to their history project on the Aztecs. Children's drawings and finger paintings, such as flowers and aboriginal art designs, make good links with other subjects.
123. In the lessons observed, teaching was good and very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and this is reflected in the confidence, enjoyment and satisfaction children gain from their art sessions. Teachers use praise effectively and provide constructive feedback to enhance children's learning. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of specific skills. Children in Year 6 studied body proportion in detail and their teacher demonstrated techniques clearly to enable them to sketch a partner in a particular pose with a high level of success. There was a brisk pace to both lessons and children worked industriously. Their interest was caught so that they concentrated hard and behaved well, contributing much to the positive learning environment. These lessons also demonstrate the school is right to set the need for children to use their initiative and express their ideas in art. Opportunities are

provided for children to use their initiative and to express their own ideas, but this practice is not consistent in all classes.

124. An art coordinator has recently been appointed within the school. Planning is checked to make sure art and design is being taught, but as yet there is no monitoring of class lessons. Teachers use national guidance and receive help from the coordinator when appropriate. Although children experience a range of art activities, and a craftsperson skilled in fabric sculpture visited the school, there is limited evidence that children have explored and used the work of other artists to develop their own skills and creativity. Teachers link art and design to history, English, science and other subjects effectively. Resources are satisfactory and support teaching and learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of work around the school, examination of teachers' planning and discussions with children show that attainment is similar to that found in most schools in Year 2 and Year 6. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and have a range of opportunities to design and make models.
126. Skills in the subject are taught satisfactorily as children move up through the school. There was little work to see in the infants as their learning was disrupted in the previous year. However, it is clear that children sew, cut and join materials using glue and sticky tape successfully. There are clear examples of vehicles made from wood and card that show individual designs. Junior children build effectively on skills developed earlier in their school career. Children solve a range of design problems including how to make pop-up puppets, chairs from recycled materials, moving toys and pop-up storybooks. Year 6 children have made a variety of hats of using a range of materials as well as vehicles powered by batteries.
127. An observation of a learning support assistant working with a group showed that the children worked competently from their design of a shelter. They were clear about the purpose of the shelter, made careful measurements and evaluated their design making changes as they went along. Children used tools such as, a hack saw safely and confidently and answered questions such as:
- what will it be used for?
 - what will it be made with? confidently, expressing their own point of view.
- In the lesson observed children used complex sewing techniques to make purses or wallets to a detailed specification. They have made items from their designs and have evaluated and changed their work as necessary.
128. Throughout the lesson that was satisfactory, children were on task, the pace was brisk, interaction was positive and helped children move forward in their learning. The teachers' planning was detailed and tasks provided a suitable challenge for all the children. They enjoyed their work and took pride in doing their best. Sometimes, homework is set, for example, in one class children had to practise 'backstitch'.

GEOGRAPHY

129. It was not possible to observe teaching in geography during the inspection. This is because geography is taught in the second half of the term. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of evidence of previous work and teachers' planning, discussions with children as well as the co-ordinator for the subject. Children's attainments are below those normally found in schools nationally in Year 2. They are average in Year 6. Progress in the juniors is faster as the curriculum is covered more thoroughly.
130. A group of children in Year 6 talked positively about work they had covered. They recalled that in Year 5 they investigated the location of water pipes on the outside of the school and marked these on a plan. They remembered conducting a traffic survey in which over a thousand cars went round a roundabout in a specific time. Their objective was to suggest ways to minimise the impact on the environment caused by such a heavy traffic flow. In the environmental club they investigated the physical features of the school grounds including the pond and other wildlife habitats. When much younger they visited Cheshunt Park to look at different plants and trees. They liked Year 5 particularly because they learnt a lot about Canada from their teacher who had recently arrived from there. In a Year 4 topic on a village in India, they learnt about the difference between physical and human features of a different country. When the group was asked their views about geography they said they really enjoyed:
- looking at maps of the world and learning about different countries and cultures;
 - going out on 'field work' as it made learning real and the subject easier to understand;
 - comparing countries and cities with each other;
 - talking to special visitors in the hall about a road safety project.
131. A display of work in the hall shows the outcome of the 'Safer Routes to School' project mentioned by the children in the discussion. Fact finding questionnaires have been filled in and the results of these analysed using computer generated graphs and charts. A forum of Year 6 children, parents, teachers and governors and an outside local firm are discussing possible initiatives for improving road safety in the area. A residential visit to Norfolk is arranged for Year 6. This will include a study of the beach and children will follow up their visit with additional work in school.
132. The pace of progress has been slower in the infants as the children in Year 2 find it harder to learn. In discussion with a small group, the children had difficulty recalling previous geography work.. They remembered a visit to Paradise Park and the Mother Nature topic where they sketched houses in the road. In the small amount of previous Year 2 work scrutinised, children have compared the Isle of Struay with their own. On an outline map, they labelled the pier, shops and houses found on the island. One group completed a list of facts about the Hebrides by filling in missing words. The use of worksheets that do little to take children's learning forward, holds back progress. The disruption to children's learning by staffing problems has meant aspects of the subject, such as local studies, have not been covered adequately. The school is trying to address this matter now.
133. The coordinator is new to the role and has a clear view of how the subject is to be developed, but requires training to carry out the role fully.

HISTORY

134. Children's attainments are below those normally expected in Year 2 and similar to those found in most schools in Year 6. Lesson observations in Years 1, 3 and 4, scrutiny of teachers' planning and last year's work show that progress is faster in the juniors than in the infants. However, the school is aware of the lower level of attainment in Year 2 and is taking action to improve the situation. Teaching is good in Year 1 and so children learn at a good rate.
135. In discussion with a group of older infants, they recalled facts about Florence Nightingale with confidence and could name the Crimea and the hospital in Scutari. One told how Florence's mother did not want her to nurse wounded soldiers because "she might get injured herself". In a Year 2 lesson that was observed, the class teacher introduced a new topic on the 'Great Fire of London' by reading a story. Children sequenced the events correctly using cut-out pictures in the follow-up work. Good foundations for learning history are set down in Year 1 as children learn more about chronology. In one lesson, they compared old objects with new using picture cards, placing the information on a time line hanging across the room. The group with special educational needs learned well and took an active part as the learning support assistant gave them the confidence to join in.
136. A small number of Year 6 children were interviewed and they talked with enthusiasm about some of their favourite topics, including the Aztecs, Ancient Greeks, Romans and Tudors. They particularly enjoyed dressing in Tudor costume on a trip to Kentwell Hall and the visit of the Channel 4 Time Team who included the school in a local archaeological dig. Older juniors showed a good understanding of what it was like to be an evacuee during the Second World War. Comments in their writing included "when me and Sean went on the bus, we had to go in order of our last names", and "I heard that any child who had spots and glasses were not picked." During a Year 4 lesson, the class researched information about Greek gods and goddesses and wrote simple descriptions about them. Information books were used but not computers. A video on Roman armies was shown to Year 3 as part of their class topic. They were quiet and reflective when watching and keen to take in as much as possible. However they found it hard to take notes while watching the video. Their actual recall in discussion was better.
137. Teaching and learning are good in the junior stage where children learn at a faster rate. In one good lesson in Year 1, the work was well structured and the class teacher made effective use of the children's contributions and the experience they brought to the task. Resources were well prepared and the teacher expected the class to do well. Learning was made real by practical tasks. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers demonstrated a sound knowledge of the subject and gave appropriate support in group work. Additional explanations were given to clarify children's thinking and questions were used effectively to check what had been understood. Most children showed a natural curiosity about the past and remembered information from previous work. They offered interesting opinions when teachers asked probing questions about what happened and why. Behaviour was very good and children remained positive even when instructions were unclear and had to be repeated.
138. Lesson plans are adapted from national guidance and teachers provide varied activities according to children's abilities. The history curriculum is extended by visitors to the school and visits to places such as museums.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

139. Attainment in information and communication technology is below that normally expected in Year 2. It is similar to that found in most schools in Year 6. Progress in information and communication technology skills has been hindered in the past by a lack of resources. This has been overcome to some extent as every class now has two up to date computers that are linked together as part of a networked system. However, this does mean that teachers demonstrate explicit skills to the children who then have to wait their turn on a computer to practise them. The school has advanced plans to provide a computer suite so that the subject can be taught to the whole class at once and children can apply new skills immediately.
140. Progress is faster in Years 1, 5 and 6 where the quality of teaching is higher. In Year 1, children know how to use the tools on a painting program to draw a picture of the seaside. Children know how to select the paintbrush, change colours, import pictures from clip art and stamp prepared pictures. Year 2 children, know how to use the mouse and can type simple words on the screen. There are gaps in the knowledge of children in Year 2 as skills have not been developed systematically.
141. No lessons in information and communication technology were observed during the inspection in Years 3 and 4. In Year 5, children learned how to use spreadsheets to enter information in order to calculate the total of a set of numbers in a range of cells. This was linked to the costs of a family holiday. In Year 6, children built on this knowledge to enter information into a spreadsheet and use the computer to turn the data into a graph. The children are confident in the use of spreadsheets and unafraid to experiment with the program.
142. The scrutiny of work showed little had been completed previously. The installation of a new server during the summer vacation had wiped out saved files. This was a big disappointment to the children. However, in Year 6 children have designed and constructed a website, used e-mail and searched the Internet for information about Shakespeare and also Chinese Food.
143. Children's very good attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their attainment. In the junior stage, children responded very well to the teachers' requests to listen and observe carefully as new skills were taught. This was very demanding as, for some children sitting some distance from the screen, it was hard to see. Children carried out the follow up work in pairs and helped each other to complete the task successfully. In Year 6, children are very confident using the computer without the constant supervision of an adult. They are familiar with several programs and use the tools to find out what they need to do if they are not sure.
144. Teaching observed was always satisfactory and often good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge, demonstrate skills confidently and provide tasks that link to everyday life and other subjects of the National Curriculum. They devise tasks that can be completed away from the computer, but link with analysis of information that is completed on the computer. In Year 2, tasks are very challenging for the children and so they struggle to complete them. In Year 1, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and the children respond eagerly.
145. Assessment is not used consistently to check children's progress. Much depends on the quality of teaching. There is a need to ensure that tasks are matched closely to

their level of achievement. Resources are satisfactory and include a digital camera that some children use well.

MUSIC

146. Only two lessons in music were observed across the school. However, after scrutinising teachers' planning, discussions with children, taking into account singing during acts of collective worship, it is judged that attainment in music is in line with that found normally in Years 2 and Year 6. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress.
147. Children of all ages have an appropriate repertoire of songs and hymns that they sing enthusiastically and tunefully. They have opportunities in assemblies to listen to music from other cultures as well as music by famous composers. Infant and junior children use percussion instruments well. In a Year 1 lesson, they composed music patterns whilst working in small groups and then the whole class performed their compositions as an orchestra. The children's response to the lesson was enthusiastic and one particular child was captivated by the whole experience from the beginning of the lesson to the end. Children's behaviour was very good and they contributed well to the lesson. In a taped radio broadcast children were able to copy rhythm patterns effectively using untuned percussion instruments and their hands.
148. All teachers take responsibility for teaching music to their class. Generally they use taped radio broadcasts, stopping the tape at strategic intervals to consolidate a teaching point or refine and improve children's performance. One lesson observed was taught very well and the other satisfactorily. In the very good lesson in Year 1, children learned to recognise patterns in music. This was linked to written notation. Lesson planning was very detailed and clearly indicated what children of different abilities were to do and achieve. Children worked together in small groups to compose short pieces of music. The teacher helped the children to practise different patterns, play instruments and tunes to others and refine their performance. The co-ordinator, who has been appointed to the role very recently, plays the guitar and has a general interest in the subject.
149. Some children from Years 4, 5 and 6 have the advantage of being taught flute or guitar by a visiting specialist. Currently there are 20 children involved. There are opportunities for children to play and sing in assemblies and concerts. This gives them the opportunity to perform in front of an audience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. During the period of the inspection gymnastics and games lessons were observed at both the infant and junior stages. Examination of teachers' records and planning shows that all other aspects of National Curriculum requirements for the subject are included in the programmes of work. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs. In Years 2 and 6, attainments are in line with those expected nationally. Year 3 children have weekly swimming lessons in a local secondary school pool and most learn to swim 25 metres by the end of the year. Year 6 children undertake outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential visit to Norfolk.
151. Infant children follow instructions well during lessons. Most show a satisfactory level of control and co-ordination in their movements. They use space sensibly, with an awareness of the needs of others. In a Year 1 lesson, many children showed good balancing techniques when practising floor movements, including the use of hands and knees to move backwards like a crab. They maintained balance effectively and held position well in motion and in stillness. Children learn to throw and catch satisfactorily and to play simple games in pairs or small groups. They become very involved in all these activities and improve their techniques and use of equipment.
152. Junior children build satisfactorily on skills already acquired. They work hard, sometimes out of breath through effort. In gymnastics, they use apparatus with growing confidence and imagination. Most throw and catch accurately using two hands. In a Year 6 hockey lesson, children received and passed a ball well. They held the hockey sticks correctly and demonstrated an increasing awareness of how to position the body and feet. Children show a sense of sporting behaviour and a willingness to persevere so as to improve. This has a positive impact on their progress.
153. Children dress appropriately for lessons. They change quickly, without fuss, and move sensibly to the hall or field. Their attitude towards the subject is good and they behave well, although noisy at times. They do their best, but also look after each other. For example, in one lesson children deliberately slackened the pace of a game for a while to enable slower classmates to participate fully.
154. In the lessons observed, the teaching was mostly good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers plan the activities well, show secure subject knowledge and pay appropriate attention to safety factors. Their instructions are clear and they praise and encourage good performance. Particular skills are demonstrated effectively and this helps children to improve. Good use is made of time and opportunities are provided for children to evaluate their own efforts as well as that of others.
155. Older children are able to participate in a satisfactory number of extra-curricular activities that contribute to their progress in physical education. These currently include football and netball, but there is also athletics in the summer term. In addition, the school plays football and netball matches against other schools and participates in the District Sports.