

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Two Waters Primary School**  
Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 117108

Inspection Number : 186277

Headteacher: Mrs Nanette Paine

Reporting inspector: Ms Alison Grainger  
20872

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707418

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
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Ridge Close Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 OAU
Telephone number:	(01442) 256046
Fax number:	(01442) 214150
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Heward
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms A Grainger, Registered Inspector	English Art Music Physical education	Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching Leadership and management
Mr J Bayliss, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school
Mr M James	Science History Geography Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs J Denton	Equal opportunities Under fives Mathematics Design and technology Information technology	Curriculum and assessment

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# REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

## MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well
- Where the school has weaknesses
- How the school has improved since the last inspection
- Standards in subjects
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the school
- The parents' views of the school

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

## INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1 - 3
- Key indicators 4

## PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 5 - 21
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 22 - 26
- Attendance 27

### Quality of education provided

- Teaching 28 - 32
- The curriculum and assessment 33 - 41
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 42 - 45
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 46 - 52
- Partnership with parents and the community 53 - 59

### The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 60 - 66
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 67 - 69
- The efficiency of the school 70 - 77

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

<b>Areas of learning for children under five</b>	<b>78 - 96</b>
<b>English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education</b>	<b>97 - 132</b>
<b>Other subjects or courses</b>	<b>133 - 165</b>

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

<b>Summary of inspection evidence</b>	<b>166 - 171</b>
<b>Data and indicators</b>	<b>172</b>

## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science and attainment in these subjects is above average when they leave the school.
- The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy are good and contribute to pupils' good progress as they move through the school.
- The curriculum and teaching are good in the nursery and result in children making good progress.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.
- The school has high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond well. Their attitudes to learning are good. They work and play well together and get on well with adults.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils' personal development to which they respond very well.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and for their social development it is very good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good and the information gained is used well in planning the curriculum and matching work to pupils' differing needs.
- Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are good and result in good levels of attendance.
- There is good provision for pupils' wellbeing, health and safety which creates a safe and secure environment in which pupils are able to learn.
- The overall quality of information to parents is good and supports them in contributing to their children's learning.
- Classroom assistants and the nursery nurse are well deployed and work effectively with teachers in supporting pupils' learning.
- Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good.
- The accommodation is good and there are good resources for learning.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and educational direction for the school.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- There is too little work in information technology at Key Stage 2 and pupils' attainment is below the national expectation at the end of the key stage.
- The curriculum for children under five in the reception class is not planned with sufficient regard to the areas of learning for children of this age.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to know how to improve their work.
- The governing body is supportive of the school, but is not sufficiently involved in the strategic and financial management.
- There are omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and in the school prospectus.

**The strengths of the school outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

## How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good, overall progress since its last inspection in November 1995. It has maintained and strengthened the strong social and moral ethos in the school and has improved its provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. It has established a long-term development plan, although priorities are not clearly enough defined. Standards have improved at Key Stage 2, most notably in the 1999 National Curriculum tests. Teachers have higher expectations of the standards of work pupils are capable of attaining and this is reflected in considerably improved standards of teaching. They provide many opportunities now for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 to become fully engaged in their learning, building on their investigative and decision making skills. Co-ordinators' roles are better established for English, mathematics and science and the school is continuing to develop them for other subjects.

The school has improved in areas that were not identified as key issues at the time of the last inspection. When the school was last inspected, one in five lessons was unsatisfactory. Presently, unsatisfactory teaching is very rare and half of the teaching is good. Assessment procedures were not a key issue at the time of the last inspection, but it is clear from the report that there were weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work. There are effective procedures in place in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and religious education, with procedures developing in many non-core subjects. There have been improvements in the accommodation and resources for learning. The capacity for further improvement is good.

## Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
English	C	D	<i>well above average</i>	A
Mathematics	A	B	<i>above average</i>	B
Science	A	C	<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E

The information above shows, for example, that standards in the 1998 tests were broadly average in English compared to all schools nationally, but were below average when compared to the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The comparison with similar schools is based on other schools where the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below eight per cent.

The work of the present Year 6 pupils shows standards to be above average in English, mathematics and science, but below the standards expected nationally in information technology. Standards in religious education are in line with those set in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, based on the present Year 2 pupils, are above average in reading and writing and science. In mathematics, information technology and religious education, they are in line with the expected standards. By the age of five, children's attainment is above the expected standards in language, literacy and mathematics.

The school is setting clear targets for standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, they were exceeded in all three areas, with 100 per cent of pupils reaching the national standard of level 4 or above in mathematics and science.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons. There is good teaching in 51 per cent of lessons and very good and even excellent teaching in eight per cent of lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in two per cent of lessons.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
Attendance	Good. Overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good.
Ethos*	Good. There is a commitment to high standards. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. Their response to the opportunities for their personal development is very good. Relationships are good among pupils and between pupils and adults.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and educational direction for the school. The roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and key stage co-ordinators are substantial and are fulfilled well. Those of curriculum co-ordinators are established in English, mathematics and science and are developing in other subjects. The governing body is supportive, but insufficiently involved in the strategic and financial management.
Curriculum	The curriculum in the nursery is good and is well linked to the recommended areas of learning for children under five. In the reception class, in which there are also children under five, the curriculum is insufficiently related to the areas of learning for children of this age. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is, however, too little work in information technology at Key Stage 2.
Special education needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well identified and supported, and make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and very good provision for their social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sufficient teachers and support staff. Arrangements for the professional development of all staff are good. Good accommodation and resources.
Value for money	Good

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

**The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children achieve a good standard of work.</li><li>• Pupils are encouraged to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.</li><li>• The positive values and attitudes that the school promotes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are not encouraged to play an active part in</li><li>• The school is not very approachable and does not</li><li>• The amount of homework that their children are</li></ul>

Inspectors' judgements, based on the evidence of the inspection, support parents' positive views. There is a high level of disagreement by the parents on the approachability of the school, the way in which complaints are handled and whether they are welcome in school. It is the inspectors' judgement that the school is welcoming and provides a good quality of education, support and guidance. Complaints in respect of matters directly related to the school's provision for the pupils in its charge are dealt with properly.

Views of parents are based on the 40 per cent of parental questionnaires that were returned, the views of the thirty-six parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, twenty-eight parents who provided additional written responses, and the nine parents who met with inspectors during the inspection.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on the existing good practice, rectify the weaknesses and improve the quality of education in the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

raise standards of attainment and improve pupils' progress in information technology at Key Stage 2 by:

ensuring that there is a fully planned and implemented curriculum for information technology;

providing opportunities for the development of pupils' skills and for research through the use of information technology in other subjects of the curriculum;

ensuring that all computers and other resources, such as the Internet connection are fully in use;

providing staff with the training necessary to support pupils' learning;

*Paragraphs: 12, 19, 29, 34, 75, 122, 123, 125, 126*

review the curriculum for children under five in the reception class to take account of the recommended areas of learning for children of this age and to allow smooth transition from the Desirable Learning Outcomes to National Curriculum requirements;

*Paragraphs: 15, 29, 33, 81, 84, 90, 96*

ensure that marking throughout the school is to consistently high standards and that it provides pupils with information about how to improve their work;

*Paragraphs: 32, 60, 104, 112, 119, 131, 148, 154*

improve the part that governors play in the strategic management of the school and review of its practice;

*Paragraphs: 66, 72*

ensure that the school prospectus and governing body's annual report to parents include all information required by statute to ensure that parents are fully informed.

*Paragraph: 55*

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in the paragraphs given below.

There are some teachers in Key Stage 2 who are insufficiently aware of the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language in their classes (*Paragraphs: 21, 32, 48, 60*).

There is too little three-dimensional work in art, and the scheme of work for art does not support teachers in planning for the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills over time (*Paragraphs: 14, 135, 137, 138*).

There are no whole school assessment procedures in art, music and physical education (*Paragraphs: 41, 138, 160, 165*).

Not all pupils take sufficient care with the presentation of their work (*Paragraphs: 23, 103, 111, 118, 130, 147, 153*).

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

The school is situated on the outskirts of Hemel Hempstead on the Manor estate. The area which the school serves comprises mainly owner-occupied housing and a small amount of rented accommodation. Pupils come from a broad, but mainly advantaged, socio-economic background.

With 219 pupils on roll, in the reception year to Year 6, 116 boys and 103 girls and a further 25 children attending the nursery part-time for mornings only, the school is about the same size as most other primary schools. At the time of the inspection, there were ten children in the reception class, 8 boys and 2 girls, all under five years of age. Children enter the nursery at the age of three and transfer to the reception class in the main school after three terms. There are two admissions each year. Children born between the start of September and the end of February begin in the autumn term. Those born between the start of March and the end of August, start in the spring term. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although pupils have better speaking skills than are normally expected for their age. No pupils have a statement of special educational need and the percentage of pupils identified as having a special educational need, 11.87 per cent, is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language, 3.19 per cent, is higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, 2.73 per cent, is below the national average.

The school aims to create a stimulating and caring environment, to develop each child's self-esteem and to encourage the development of their individual capabilities. It expects high standards of behaviour, seeks to celebrate success and learn from failure and to provide pupils with equal opportunities. The encouragement of parental involvement and partnership between home and school are key aims. Main development priorities include provision for information technology and physical education. The school has set clear targets for the raising of standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science and has already exceeded them in the 1999 National Curriculum tests in all three areas, with 100 per cent of pupils reaching the national standard, level 4 or above, in mathematics and science.

**Key indicators**

**Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	14	19	33

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	9	12
	Girls	16	16	15
	Total	27	25	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87(100)	81(94)	87(97)
	National	80(80)	81(80)	84(83)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	27	29	29
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87(72)	94(94)	94(91)
	National	81(80)	85(83)	86(85)

**Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	12	10	22

for latest reporting year:

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	14	16
	Girls	8	11	11
	Total	22	25	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71(82)	81(76)	87(72)
	National	65(63)	59(62)	69(68)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	12	11	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	22	21	21
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71(69)	68(48)	68(52)
	National	65(63)	65(64)	72(69)

.....

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year  
Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.1
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	3
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	8
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

Children's attainment on entry to the nursery, at the age of three, is broadly in line with the expectations for their age. Many have better than expected skills in speaking. On moving to the reception class, three terms later, children are close to achieving the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and physical development. They are on course to achieve them in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development. By the age of five, children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and physical development. They meet them in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development.

By the age of five, children listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They discuss stories and events and confidently participate in role play. They know the sounds and shapes of letters, blend sounds to make simple words, such as 'm' and 'en' to make 'men'. They recognise familiar words in books, know that print is read from left to right and understand that words and pictures carry meaning. The highest attaining children read simple books. Most children write their names, although not all form the letters correctly. Children recognise numbers up to ten and higher attaining children recognise them to twenty. Most do simple addition and subtraction, recognise and make repeating patterns with two objects or shapes and are aware that time passes throughout the day. They know differences in size of objects and use mathematical language such as 'bigger' and 'smaller'. They recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as circles and squares.

Pupils' performance in the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 1998 was above the national average in reading, well above the national average in writing and broadly average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching the national standard, level 2 or above, was above the national average in reading, and close to the national average in writing and mathematics. The percentage reaching the higher level 3 was above the national average in reading, very high in writing and close to the national average in mathematics. This represented high performance by about a third of pupils in reading and writing. Teacher assessments show a more favourable picture for mathematics, overall, and for the percentage at level 3 in reading. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in the 1998 tests was average in reading, well above in writing and below in mathematics. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance was above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Over the three year period, girls' performance was better than that of boys in writing, but boys performed better than girls in mathematics. There was little discernible difference in reading. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, there was an improvement in the percentages reaching level 2 or above in writing, but a considerable fall in the percentage at level 3. In mathematics, 100 per cent of pupils reached level 2 or above and the percentage at level 3 more than doubled. In reading, the test results were similar to those of 1998.

Teacher assessments in 1998 showed pupils' performance in science as above the national average for the percentage reaching level 2 or above and as well above the national average for the percentage at level 3. In comparison to the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds,

the percentage at level 2 or above was above average and the percentage at level 3 was well above average. In 1999, the percentage at level 3 increased.

The evidence of the work of pupils in the present Year 2 is that their attainment is above average in reading, writing and science. Their speaking standards are broadly average, although their listening skills are less well developed than is normally expected. Pupils answer questions clearly and higher attaining pupils give more extended answers. They listen carefully to a well told story, but do not show sufficient attention in listening during class question and answer sessions. They read fluently and with expression, taking account of punctuation and use phonic and sound-blending skills effectively when encountering a difficult word. They write at good length, producing stories, news reports and descriptions, choosing language for effect and with awareness of the purpose of their writing. Standards of spelling and punctuation are above average. Handwriting is neat and evenly formed, although lower attaining pupils do not join their writing. Pupils understand numbers up to 70 and add and subtract numbers to 20. Higher attaining pupils work with bigger numbers. Pupils calculate with money to 50 pence, know which simple two-dimensional shapes will tessellate and which will not, understand standard and non-standard units of measurement and tell the time to the hour and half hour, with higher attaining pupils doing so to the quarter hour. In science, pupils have a good body of knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties. They understand a simple electrical circuit, forces such as pushes and pulls and have some knowledge of light and sound. They successfully undertake scientific investigations, achieving above average standards in this aspect of science.

In the 1998 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, pupils' performance was broadly in line with the national average in English, and well above the national average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils reaching the national standard, level 4 or above, was above the national average in English and well above the national average in mathematics and science. The percentage reaching the higher level 5 was close to the national average in English, and well above the national average in mathematics and science. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was below average in English, above in mathematics and average in science. Teacher assessments in 1998 showed a less favourable picture than the tests in mathematics and science. Taking the test results for the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance in English and mathematics was well above the national average and in science it was above. Girls' performance was better than that of boys over the three year period in all three subjects. There was a marked improvement within the school in the 1999 test results. In mathematics and science, all pupils reached level 4 or above and, in English, nine-tenths of pupils did so. More than a third of pupils reached level 5 in English and mathematics and about three-fifths did so in science. Standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection.

The evidence of the work of pupils currently in Year 6 is that their performance is above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils enter into debate, expressing their views with maturity and confidence and providing well considered answers to questions. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They read a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. They write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, producing notes, short biographies, stories and reports. Overall standards of spelling, punctuation and choice of vocabulary are above those normally expected, but only higher attaining pupils organise their writing into paragraphs. Most pupils' handwriting continues to be neat and evenly formed, although lower attaining pupils still do not join their writing. In mathematics, pupils are confident in using the four rules of number to calculate to six digits. They competently convert fractions into decimals and identify decimals as percentages. They have good mental calculation strategies, pose mathematical questions and have a secure understanding of standard measures and probability. They successfully collect and

present data as pie, line and block graphs. In science, pupils have a more developed body of knowledge of electricity, forces, light and the solar system. They understand many of the systems of the human body, plant life, food chains, and changes that occur when materials are heated or cooled. They continue to achieve high standards in experimental and investigative science.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' performance is in line with national expectations in information technology, but it is below at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the keyboard and type their name independently. They use the mouse to select an icon on the screen, change the size and style of text and print their work, with many able to save it. They are competent in using tape players. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use computers effectively for data handling and use a language program to support their work in literacy. They do not have the expected competence in drafting on to the screen or in editing their work. nor do they have the expected skills in using CD ROMs for research. They do not use the Internet. Attainment is low, due to too little work in information technology which has resulted in significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in this area. Standards of information technology at Key Stage 2 have declined since the last inspection in relation to the national expectations.

At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the standards set in the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the major world faiths of Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. They know some of the stories and famous figures of each religion and identify features common to them such as holy books, symbolism and ceremonies. By the end of Key Stage 2, they know about different places of worship and understand some of the rituals associated with them. They also have some understanding of the importance of faiths to those who follow them.

In the non-core subjects of design and technology, geography and history standards of pupils' work are in line with those normally expected for their age. In art, standards of much two-dimensional work are of a higher standard than is normally found, although this is restricted mainly to drawing and painting and there is no three-dimensional work. Overall drawing standards have improved since the last inspection. In music, standards of singing developed through lessons and whole school singing practices are high. Other work in music is of the standard expected for the age of the pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils swim the required distance of 25 metres unaided. Other work in physical education is of the expected standard, although dance in Year 6 is of a very high standard.

Overall, children under five make good progress while in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class, although there are variations in rates of progress in the different areas of learning. The better progress in the nursery is due to the curriculum being more effectively matched to the needs of children under five and firmly related to the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. In the reception class, provision is linked to the National Curriculum and few pupils are ready to progress to this on entry to this class. In language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and physical development, children make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class. Progress is satisfactory at both stages of children's under fives education in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development.

During their under fives education, children make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class, in widening their vocabulary, improving their ability to listen with care and developing early reading and writing skills. In mathematics, while in the nursery, they develop well their counting skills and awareness of pattern, become familiar with some simple two-

dimensional shapes and start to gain a mathematical vocabulary. This is satisfactorily extended in the reception class as children develop a more complex awareness of pattern and encounter bigger numbers. In personal and social development, children learn to share and take turns while in the nursery. In the reception class, they develop independence, perseverance and an awareness of personal hygiene, as well as of the difference between right and wrong. Children develop their understanding of the world in which we live. In the nursery, they become more aware of the local environment and issues such as road safety. In reception, they become aware of their five senses, functions of parts of the body, develop cutting and sticking skills and begin to use the computer. While in the nursery, children become more aware of the space around them and develop skills in climbing and balancing. They gain greater physical co-ordination while in reception and become more competent in using pencils, paint brushes and scissors. Children gain confidence in playing untuned percussion instruments, in using tools and paint and in participating in imaginative play.

The attainment of the present Year 2 and 6 groups was broadly average when they started their respective key stages. In view of their current attainment, they have made good, overall progress over time in English and science at both key stages. In mathematics, progress has been satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The evidence of lesson observations and the work in pupils' books, shows that all Key Stage 1 pupils are currently making good progress in English and mathematics as a consequence of the good literacy and numeracy strategies and good teaching. Progress in English and mathematics is currently uneven for pupils in Key Stage 2 and this is a consequence of variations in the quality of teaching. In English, progress is good in Year 3, satisfactory in Years 4 and 5 and very good in Year 6. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 5 and 6, with very good progress in number in Year 6.

As pupils move through the key stages, they widen their vocabulary and express views with increasing clarity and confidence. Key Stage 2 pupils listen more critically and with greater attention, as do those in Key Stage 1, although the present Year 2 have made fewer gains so far. Pupils widen the range of fiction and non-fiction books they read, becoming increasingly independent as readers. They develop well their understanding of the need to adapt the style of writing according to its purpose. In mathematics, pupils gain confidence in handling numbers and develop proficiency in mental mathematics strategies. They tackle increasingly difficult mathematical problems and develop their understanding of space, shape and measure. Competence in data handling is better developed at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1.

In science, pupils make good progress at both key stages in developing and consolidating their knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of the science curriculum, with greatest progress in the area of experimental and investigative science. In information technology, progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 as pupils gain confidence in using the mouse and keyboard independently and in saving and printing their work. At Key Stage 2, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in information technology due to their limited experience in using the computers and too little direct teaching. Pupils make satisfactory progress across both key stages in religious education. They increase their understanding of world faiths and the importance of rules in communal and family living.

Pupils make satisfactory progress across the key stages in design and technology, geography and history. In art, they make satisfactory, overall progress, with good progress in two-dimensional work. They do not make the expected gains in three-dimensional work due to insufficient attention being given to this aspect of the art curriculum. In music, progress is satisfactory, overall, with good progress in singing. In physical education, progress is satisfactory with excellent progress in dance in Year 6.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. This is due to the good levels of support they receive. Targets are regularly reviewed and new ones are set to aid their progress. The progress of a very few pupils with English as an additional language in Key Stage 2 is sometimes restricted in lessons because teachers are insufficiently aware of their specific needs. In other classes, for example in reception and Year 2, teachers are keenly aware of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and provide effective support to ensure that they make at least the same rate of progress as other pupils in the same classes.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

Children develop good attitudes to learning while they are under five. They work well independently and as part of a group. They handle books and other equipment carefully, for example treating the computer with respect. They share pencils, crayons, counting equipment and scissors amicably and take turns, for example, when using large play equipment in the nursery. Most concentrate hard, such as when 'writing', estimating the number of objects in a collection, or applying paint to paper. They enjoy activities such as role playing in the nursery and reception classes. They relate well to each other and to adults and their behaviour is good.

Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. They listen politely and attentively to the teacher and to each other and are keen to answer questions, putting up their hands to do so. Some in Year 2, who do not have the expected listening skills for their age, do not listen as well as those in other classes and call out rather than putting their hands up. Most pupils work well independently and concentrate well. Some sustain a very high level of absorption in their work such as when writing stories in Year 2 or when singing in five parts in Year 6. Pupils of all ages, including children under five, settle quickly to individual or group work once it has been introduced by the teacher. They enjoy problem solving activities such as sorting jumbled up parts of sentences into the correct order in Year 1. They share ideas very effectively, for example when considering what they like or dislike about the story 'Rainbow Fish to the Rescue' in Year 2 or when carrying out research into Shakespeare's life and plays in Year 6. Many pupils respond with enjoyment to activities such as role playing events in stories at Key Stage 1. In both key stages they eagerly take part in mental mathematics sessions. Pupils show a good level of curiosity and are keen to discover more in subjects such as science, geography and history. Year 6 pupils show great maturity in their response to all aspects of their work. In many classes, pupils do not show the independence and involvement in physical education lessons that is evident in their work in other subjects. While many pupils throughout the school take care and pride in the presentation of their work, not all do so.

Pupils respond well to the high standards of behaviour expected. Their behaviour is good in lessons, when moving to the hall for physical education or assembly and when eating their lunch. They behave well at play and take care of each other. They treat resources with care, showing respect for school property and the belongings of others. They handle each other's work carefully, such as the displayed models made in design and technology lessons. Lapses in behaviour in lessons are very rare and are a consequence of weaknesses in teaching. In a Year 4 music lesson, pupils deliberately misbehaved and sang badly because there was insufficient challenge in the task presented and they were not managed well. Pupils have a well developed sense of right and wrong and this is evident even while they are under five. There were three fixed period and one permanent exclusions in the 1998 to 1999 school year. This represents an increase since the last inspection when there were none. The rate of exclusions is rising.

Relationships are good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others and this is apparent in discussion in religious education lessons. They respond very well to opportunities to assume responsibility which steadily increase as they move through the school. Those under five in the reception class carry out responsibilities such as returning the register to the office and clear away after using paper and scissors. At Key Stage 1 and in the early part of Key Stage 2, pupils are diligent in fulfilling their classroom responsibilities. Year 6 pupils show pride in carrying out their work as monitors, for example helping to supervise younger pupils during wet break-times, delivering milk to classrooms, helping Key Stage 1 pupils find non-fiction books, or taking charge of the overhead projector during assembly. They are also enthusiastic about other opportunities for their social development, for example through visits.

Pupils greatly enjoy school. Their good attitudes to learning, good behaviour, good relationships, and very good response to the opportunities provided for their social development, all make a strong contribution to their progress and the standards they attain.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is good. Since the previous inspection, the school has consistently maintained levels of attendance at least in line with the national average for primary schools. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality in the mornings is good and, during the day, lessons begin and end on time. There are a few instances of minor lateness in the morning but when they occur they do not disrupt lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

The overall quality of teaching is good. It is unsatisfactory in only about one in fifty lessons. It is good in about two-fifths of lessons and occasionally very good and even excellent in about one in twelve lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when about one in five lessons was unsatisfactory. All the very good or excellent teaching is located in Year 6 and is in English, mathematics, music and physical education. The unsatisfactory teaching is in Year 4 in music.

In subjects, teaching is good, overall, in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 1 and 2, although there are variations in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects, except in information technology, where it is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. This is due to insufficient planned work for information technology. This results in too little teaching taking place and teachers not meeting pupils' needs in working towards the end of key stage national expectations. This restricts pupils' progress and is reflected in the low attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in information technology. The teaching of children under five is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. The variation results from differences in the planned curriculum. The nursery planning is appropriately framed in the recommended areas of learning for children under five in which the teacher has secure subject knowledge. The confines of the curriculum in the reception class restrict teaching and result in missed opportunities to promote children's progress through exploratory and investigative activities.

Where teaching in Year 6 is very good and even excellent, lessons are conducted at an intense pace in music and dance. In English and mathematics, there is also very effective use of every moment in the lesson. The teacher has very secure subject knowledge and very high expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining. This, together with very focused direct teaching, well targeted questioning, very good planning with assessment opportunities identified, contributes to pupils making very good progress. As in some of the other more effective teaching in the school, the teacher not only clearly identifies the learning objectives but also communicates them very clearly to the pupils who know what they are working towards.

In other good teaching, which is to be found in most classes in the school, lessons are carefully planned and prepared and good account is taken of the needs of pupils of differing levels of prior attainment. The teachers have high expectations of the standards all pupils can achieve. They manage pupils and resources well and prepare thoroughly for lessons. Effective support is provided for pupils working on activities, such as in design and technology in Year 1. Teachers assess pupils' understanding and level of performance through observation and questioning. Classroom assistants are very effectively deployed and their effective team work with teachers contributes much to pupils' attainment and progress. Praise is used well to reward good responses and raise pupils' self-esteem, such as in a Year 3 English lesson in which pupils practised reading aloud with expression. Teachers use language appropriate to an activity, such as the word 'lyrics' in a Year 1 music lesson and technical language in a Year 6 art lesson on the work of Dali. All teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 have secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum and of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers have positive relationships with their classes and this creates a climate conducive to learning. They take good account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and match work to them. All these aspects of teaching support pupils in making progress.

Although teaching is normally at least satisfactory, there are some weaknesses. In English in Year 4, work is not as well matched to pupils' differing needs as it is in other classes. There are also variations in teachers' expectations of the standards that pupils are capable of attaining in English in the Key Stage 2 classes. This leads to differences in the rate of progress in separate year groups. There are occasions when resources are not managed well. This makes it difficult for pupils to be fully involved and make best progress during an activity because they are unable, for example, to see the instructions intended for their group. In some Key Stage 2 classes, teachers are insufficiently aware of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. This restricts the progress of these pupils. Marking is inconsistent. While all teachers regularly mark work, in some classes there is little indication given to pupils as to how they might develop and improve their work. Marking is most effective in Year 1 where comments are very helpful to pupils. It is least effective in Year 2 where it is limited to ticks on a page and only very occasional comments. While many teachers give good oral feedback to pupils, marking is not fully supporting pupils in making progress throughout the school.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

The curriculum for children under five in the nursery is good. It is broad and balanced and covers all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. Activities are well planned to match children's needs. In the reception class, the curriculum is unsatisfactory for children under five because it is planned from the National Curriculum. While many children have attained a level at which they are capable of following programmes from the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, the structure of time and activities does not sufficiently match their needs or allow

enough opportunities for social, physical and creative development. There are too few opportunities for children to learn through exploration and investigation and to make choices, because the curriculum is subject rather than activity focused. Planning does not link the Desirable Learning Outcomes with the National Curriculum to allow smooth transition to the National Curriculum as children are ready to progress to it. The school has successfully reviewed the nursery curriculum and has identified the reception class curriculum as part of further development for children under five.

The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is suitably broad and balanced and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is an appropriate balance of time committed to the different subjects at each key stage. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies are well implemented and are having a positive effect on pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. The school has a commitment to developing drama to enhance literacy provision and this is beginning well at Key Stage 1. There is effective provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through the subjects of the curriculum. Literacy skills are well developed in geography and history, for example, while science contributes to the use of numeracy skills. There is insufficient planned development and use of information technology skills in Key Stage 2. As a consequence, pupils make unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 2 in information technology, particularly in word processing and research, for example, with CD ROMs.

Sex education is effectively dealt with in a manner appropriate to the age of the pupils. It forms part of the personal, health and social education programme. Where relevant, it is integrated into topics in different areas of the curriculum. Issues of substance abuse are dealt with through topics in the personal, health and social education curriculum. The school nurse leads sessions for Year 6 pupils aimed at making them aware of the dangers of drugs.

Policy documents are in place for all subjects, as are schemes of work. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are adapted to meet the needs of the school. Schemes of work satisfactorily support teachers in planning to appropriate levels in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills in each subject except art. The art scheme is too broad, is not fully implemented and does not specify the level at which pupils should be working as they move through the school. The school is waiting for new national guidance on the curriculum in order to review and improve its planning documents. The locally agreed syllabus is used well for religious education. The agreed planning process is adhered to throughout the school. The curriculum, including regular homework in English, mathematics and science, prepares pupils well for the next stage of education.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits linked to topics, to places such as Stoke Bruerne canal museum for the whole of Key Stage 2 and a residential visit for Year 5 pupils where information technology skills are developed. A visit to the Globe Theatre resulted in a particularly collaborative piece of work in design and technology by last year's Year 6 pupils. Other visits have included places of worship such as a synagogue, Buddhist temple and St Albans Abbey, as part of religious education studies by Year 3. The reception class and Year 2 visited the toy museum at Stanstead. A visiting storyteller worked with pupils to enhance the literacy provision. All classes have a curriculum-related visit each term.

There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils and these change each term. These currently include a lunch time mathematics games club for Year 2, dance for Years 5 and 6, ball skills for Years 3 and 4 and football and netball for Year 5 and 6 pupils. The football group plays in local tournaments with award winning success. These activities are well supported by the

staff, almost all of whom participate in running them, and are well taken up by pupils.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and complies with the Code of Practice. Individual education plans are provided, are of good quality, are used effectively and reviewed termly. Targets are set for each pupil and they are provided with work suitable for their particular needs, both within the class and in withdrawal groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to make progress towards targets set for them and to access the full curriculum. There are a few occasions at Key Stage 2 where pupils with English as an additional language are not identified for specific support.

Procedures for assessment in the nursery are good. Children are assessed on entry to the nursery and the information gained is used to target areas for their development. Other assessment is regularly updated and supports the teacher in matching work to children's needs to help them make good progress. Procedures for assessing children in the reception class are linked to the National Curriculum but do not take account of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five. While they give a picture of what children know, understand and can do, they do not sufficiently monitor the progress towards Desirable Learning Outcomes by those children who are still under five or who have not yet attained them.

Assessment procedures at Key Stages 1 and 2 are good. Baseline assessment is undertaken in the reception class and the information gained is used in planning. All subjects except art, physical education and music have established assessment procedures which inform curriculum planning. A wide range of effective procedures is used by staff weekly, half-termly and annually. The headteacher is fully involved in monitoring these and tracking pupils through individual profiles of attainment. All pupils have personal targets in English and mathematics, which are assessed and reviewed with them regularly. Information gained from assessment is used to adapt the curriculum for a class or an individual. Pupils have a record of achievement which moves through the school with them.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and very good provision for their social development. Assemblies are well planned and thoughtfully delivered and make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are helped to gain knowledge and insight into their own and other people's values and beliefs and, in particular, they are encouraged to respect and value the opinions of others and care for them. Moments of quietness are provided for pupils to reflect on what they have heard and to consider how they should respond. On occasions, lessons provide pupils with interesting and thought provoking experiences. Year 1 pupils expressed awe and amazement when they undertook a science experiment to find out which materials were water-proof. Year 5 pupils considered the beauty of the natural world as they studied and drew natural objects. Year 6 pupils expressed their feelings through dance.

Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The headteacher and staff, as well as providing good role models themselves, regularly remind pupils of the correct forms of behaviour and give reasons for them. The code of conduct and rules to encourage good behaviour are clearly displayed around the school. Even while under five, pupils are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and to treat staff, visitors and other pupils with courtesy and property with respect.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development and it is a harmonious and cohesive community. Pupils are encouraged to form good relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults. From the time they start in the nursery, pupils are provided with many opportunities to work and play with each other. Time provided for paired-reading is a good example of this. As they progress through the school, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively, to take turns and to share resources. The headteacher and staff regularly emphasise the need to care for others. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities within their classrooms. Older pupils are given a range of tasks around the school, such as delivering registers, assisting with lunch-time supervision and looking after younger pupils at wet break-times. The recently formed school council gives pupils from all Key Stage 1 and 2 classes a very good opportunity to develop and extend their social responsibilities. A residential visit in Year 5 and extra-curricular clubs, including sports, provide further settings beyond the classroom for pupils to work and play together. The social development of all pupils is further enhanced by their support of national and international charities. On occasions, pupils take the responsibility for organising their own fund-raising activities.

Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They are taught aspects of western and, particularly, British culture in subjects such as English, art and history. An appropriate emphasis is laid on the knowledge and understanding of other cultures during assemblies and lessons in religious education and geography. Pupils are taken on a variety of educational visits to museums, historical sites and religious buildings. The school has an appropriate range of books about the diversity of cultures, as well as our multicultural society. Since the previous inspection, the school's good provision for pupils' moral development has been maintained, while that for spiritual, social and cultural development has been substantially enhanced.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

The school's provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is good. The school continues the effective promotion of pupils' health and safety that was found at the time of the previous inspection. It provides a caring and supportive environment, in which pupils develop their confidence and independence and concentrate on their learning. There are particularly sensitive procedures for introducing children under five to school life, which ensure that they settle quickly and happily into the routine of learning. Pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice. The school's provision in this area enhances the quality of education provided, ensures a safe and secure learning environment and makes a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

All teachers provide sensitive support to pupils. Classroom and nursery assistants provide good support in many aspects of the curriculum, especially in the nursery and in the support of those with special educational needs. They make a very positive contribution to the quality of learning provided by the school. The site manager performs his duties conscientiously and, by so doing, makes a valuable contribution to the welfare of the pupils through the provision of a very clean and safe environment.

The school's formal strategies for monitoring progress and personal development, which include individual record files, are good. Its informal ones, which build upon teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals, are very effective. The progress of pupils with special needs is very well monitored. Good links have been established with outside support services, which have contributed well to the school's provision for pupils identified as having special needs. A

weakness, however, is that the support provided for the pupils for whom English is not the first language is inconsistent, with some teachers not being fully aware of which individuals are involved.

The measures in place to promote discipline and positive behaviour are good. They are understood and accepted by pupils. They are usually well implemented and understood by staff. The introduction of 'Golden Time', a special time in which pupils can select what they will do from a range of activities, has been universally accepted as a good initiative. It has focused pupils' attention on the benefits of good behaviour. Anti-bullying procedures are effectively implemented. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, set a good example which encourages learning. Parents are very supportive of the school's efforts in ensuring their children's well-being while at school.

The school's records for attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Its procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. It has rigorous procedures for recording unauthorised absence. Formal liaison with the school's educational welfare officer is good when required.

The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' well being and health and safety. The pupils are given clear advice about the importance of personal hygiene, and statutory requirements in respect of health education are fully met. There is good liaison with the school nurse. Supervision and support during lunch and breaktimes is good and has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. The opportunity to have some classroom assistants supervise at lunchtime provides continuity of approach to the support of pupils and is very effective. First aid arrangements are satisfactory. Those for fire safety are good. The school's procedures for dealing with accidents are secure, with effective liaison with parents when necessary.

The school's procedures for child protection are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. All staff are aware of the school's policy and of the need to be attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the children in their charge. The routines for transfer to secondary school are well organised. There is regular liaison between senior staff that ensures that the pupils' transfer to the next stage of their education is smooth and effective.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

The school's partnership with parents and the community is satisfactory. The positive features found at the time of the previous report have been maintained. Most parents, including those with experience of schools elsewhere, report themselves very satisfied with the work done by the school, the attitudes and support provided by teachers and with the information that the school provides. A significant proportion of parents are unhappy, however, about some aspects of the way in which the school encourages their participation and has handled their complaints. In the main, they are expressing their disquiet about a governors' decision to terminate an agreement for school premises to be used by an independent, commercially operated, 'After School Club'. These parents consider that the decision was communicated to them in an insensitive way. The 'After School Club' itself is beyond the remit of the inspection. No evidence was found during the inspection that the school does not deal appropriately with parental concerns and complaints on matters relating to its day-to-day running and the quality of education provided for its pupils.

Twenty-six per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the school's homework policy. Some parents feel that there is too much

homework and some that there is too little. The inspection evidence is that the school's policy is appropriate, with regular homework in English, mathematics and science, preparing pupils well for the next stage in their education.

The quality of information provided by the school is good, overall, although there are some weaknesses.

The prospectus is well produced and has many strengths. It is an informative document that gives very clear guidance to parents about school life. It does not, however, meet statutory requirements in respect of the inclusion of information on pupils' attendance and national comparatives for test and assessment results. Newsletters from the headteacher and the 'Friends of Two Waters', a noticeboard, and meetings about the curriculum, are good sources of information for parents. Pupils' annual reports are well presented, very comprehensive and meet reporting requirements. They provide a good summary of pupils' attainment and progress and identify areas of weakness that need further work. In so doing, they help parents to know how to support their children's learning at home. The governors' annual report to parents is a well designed, informative and user-friendly document. It gives parents a very good review of the work of the school. It does not, however, fully meet reporting requirements as it does not provide parents with attendance figures. The 1998 report omitted a full financial statement, but this has been addressed in the 1999 report.

Parents are welcomed into school and are encouraged to assist in its work. Those who help in school are well used and some good examples of the contribution that they make, especially in supporting reading, were seen during the inspection. The involvement of these parents and those who help with school trips and elsewhere makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The 'Friends of Two Waters' is well organised and run by a small group of committed individuals. It is very successful in raising funds that are well used to provide extra amenities that contribute to the quality of the learning environment provided by the school, for example adventure playgrounds.

There are regular opportunities, formal and informal, for parents to liaise with teachers to discuss their children's progress. The headteacher readily makes herself available, particularly before and after school, to meet with parents. Teachers are happy to meet with them, providing an appointment is made to ensure their availability due to teaching commitments. A good partnership is established with parents when their children begin school. As a result, children settle quickly into their new surroundings.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs are provided with specific arrangements for consultation. They are dealt with sensitively and honestly and are encouraged to play their full part in the education of their children. The school's links with a range of support agencies are satisfactory and the school makes effective use of them when necessary.

The school is successful in its efforts to bring visitors into school and in organising educational trips and visits that enrich the curriculum. Links with the local community are sound and there is satisfactory use made of them in support of the curriculum. Year 4 and 5 pupils visit a local supermarket as part of their work in food technology, for example, and a local fast food catering company provides prizes for school events. These links contribute positively to pupils' intellectual and personal development. Links with business are satisfactory and provide opportunities to introduce pupils to the world of work.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

## **Leadership and management**

The school has a positive ethos. It successfully meets its aims of providing a stimulating and caring environment, developing pupils' self-esteem and encouraging the development of their individual capabilities. It expects high standards of behaviour, celebrates pupils' successes and helps them to learn from their mistakes. The school encourages parental involvement in their children's learning, as it aims to do. All pupils have equality of access to the school's curriculum, although equal opportunities are insufficiently provided in a very few cases at Key Stage 2 where teachers are not aware of the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Overall, the school's policies are implemented well, although there are inconsistencies in marking practice.

The headteacher provides the school with good leadership and gives clear educational direction in the day-to-day running of the school. She is aware of what is taking place throughout the school and has identified areas in greatest need of development. She has established clear management structures, including the Key Stage 1 and 2 co-ordinator roles, in order to ensure effective communication and an emphasis on self-review and development. There is a very comprehensive and well structured proforma for the headteacher to use when monitoring teachers in the classroom.

The deputy headteacher has extensive responsibilities. Due to the headteacher's recent secondment, the deputy has charge of the school for half the week since the start of the current term. She is Key Stage 2 co-ordinator, which is a major role, as well as being co-ordinator for English and information technology. With the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, as well as other areas in English provision identified by the co-ordinator for improvement, English has been a key area of focus. Information technology is an area of weakness at Key Stage 2 and is presently identified as needing improvement. It is, consequently, a key development area at present. The deputy conscientiously and thoroughly carries out her overall management responsibilities, as well as those for co-ordinating Key Stage 2 and English. The extent of her duties has not allowed her to give the attention she would wish to information technology. The school is considering how this might be addressed through a new appointment for information technology.

The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator carries out her responsibilities well. The two key stage co-ordinators are instrumental in improving provision and in encouraging teachers to evaluate and develop their practice. This has a direct impact on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by pupils. One consequence of key stage meetings is the improved deployment and involvement in planning of classroom assistants. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator is also responsible for mathematics, special educational needs and the supervision of classroom assistants. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator keeps extensive records and ensures that the progress of pupils on the special needs register is carefully monitored. The headteacher is the 'responsible person' for special needs contact with the local education authority.

The role of other co-ordinators was identified as an area in need of improvement at the time of the last inspection. The school recognises that it has further work to do in this area, although the roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators are now better defined in general. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have good procedures for monitoring standards and provision in their subjects. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have led the school well in the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have observed teachers in the classroom. Other co-ordinators have opportunities to see teachers' planning and some, such as the science co-ordinator, monitor work in pupils' books, but they do not observe teaching.

A key issue of the last inspection was for a long-term development plan to be established with clearly defined priorities. The school now has a development plan for a three year period. It has improved as a working document since the last inspection, although there are some weaknesses. It is detailed, giving intended outcomes and success criteria, as well as resource implications for each aspect. Neither of these two features is sufficiently linked to the measurable raising of standards. The detail of the plan makes the identification of major priorities difficult. Indeed, the school's two main development priorities for the present year, information technology and physical education, are not included and this is a weakness. Procedures for school development planning are satisfactory, overall. The plan is drawn up by the headteacher and is discussed with staff at staff meetings. The governing body receives the plan in draft form and has an opportunity to comment. The limited involvement of the governing body is unsatisfactory. The school development plan is not used by the governing body as a monitoring tool and there is insufficient involvement of governors in an ongoing critical review of the plan's implementation and effectiveness. The school development plan is not a regular agenda item for governors' meetings, other than through references in the the headteacher's reports.

Governors are supportive of the work of the school. The literacy governor has observed some literacy hour sessions and the special needs governor meets twice yearly with the co-ordinator to be updated on the special needs register and the school's provision. Governors are each linked with classes although the extent to which they maintain these links in following their classes through the school varies, depending on their other commitments. The chair of governors is in weekly contact with the headteacher, as well as visiting whenever he can to help out and keep informed. Although many governors are committed to the school, they are insufficiently involved in its strategic management and in decision making regarding long-term development priorities. They do not formally monitor the work of the school in action, or report to the governing body on visits. There are some new governors who have not yet developed a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities, but are keen to do so. With the exception of the omissions in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents, all statutory requirements are met.

## **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

The school is staffed by suitably qualified and experienced teachers for the age groups in the school. There is a satisfactory balance of experience and expertise among teachers. All staff take part in continuing professional development. The appraisal of teaching staff is well organised and effective. Job descriptions are in place. Induction arrangements for new staff are good. There is effective mentoring in place for newly qualified teachers who settle quickly into their new environment. The school employs a satisfactory number of very caring support staff. They play an important part in all aspects of the life of the school, but particularly those associated with the support of pupils with special needs and the children in the nursery.

The overall adequacy of accommodation for the effective delivery of the curriculum is good. There are, however, some weaknesses in provision. The school is an attractive building surrounded by spacious landscaped grounds. The building is well maintained and, in recent years, there has been considerable expenditure to upgrade the quality of the accommodation which is now very good, both within the school and outside. The standard of cleanliness is high as a result of the commitment shown by the site manager. Classrooms are of an adequate size and the school has a number of specialist areas that enhance the quality of education and support provided for pupils. Weaknesses are that disabled access presents some problems and there is no toilet provision for children under five in the reception class that does not require them to go through another classroom. Outside, the hard surfaced playground areas are barely adequate for the numbers involved, but they are complemented by well maintained grassed areas and a well maintained playing field. Storage facilities are good and there is sufficient accessible storage space throughout the school.

The adequacy of resources for learning is good, overall. The weaknesses found at the time of the previous inspection have been properly addressed and all subjects are now at least adequately provided for. Resources for English, science, mathematics, information technology and religious education are good.

## **The efficiency of the school**

The overall efficiency of the school, in terms of its financial planning and control, use of staff and learning resources, and administrative and financial control, is satisfactory. The school has maintained the level of effectiveness found at the last inspection, but has not sufficiently moved forward in this aspect of its management.

Financial planning is satisfactorily organised. The school's use of the local authority's bursar service ensures that budget forecasting makes use of sound techniques and that financial decisions are based on the best information available. Governors receive reports from the headteacher, which enable them to properly perform their monitoring duties of budget variances. The school undertakes no maintenance or independent interrogation of its own financial databases, however, and there is an over-dependence upon the service provided by the local authority.

The financial management of the school by the governing body, working closely with the headteacher, is satisfactory. Staff and governors work together to review and develop management policies which ensures commitment to their successful implementation. The governing body is very supportive of the school but governors presently take an insufficiently active role in its financial management. Too much responsibility is delegated to the headteacher. The governing body displays a lack of

awareness of its role and responsibilities in connection with the financial management of the school and it has few independent strategies to enable it to be a 'critical friend'. The lack of a formal finance committee, with appropriately delegated powers, results in many lengthy discussions taking place within the governing body as a whole, which is an inefficient use of time that could be used to more fully address wider strategic issues.

Governors, with the support of the headteacher, are aware of the need to obtain value for money and have good procedures for ensuring that best financial value is obtained. They have responded positively to the weakness reported at the time of the previous inspection and now have some good procedures for determining the impact of expenditure decisions on the quality of learning. Liaison with teachers, awareness of statutory assessment results, visits to school and comments from parents and pupils are used as effective sources of information, although there is no formalised monitoring.

In order to meet the school's priorities, recent expenditure has been higher than income with a consequent reduction in accumulated reserves. Governors, advised by the local authority and the headteacher, have had proper regard for the use of reserves and have made their spending decisions in line with the school development plan and the priorities for the school. The governors' decisions on the use of specific funds, in particular funding for pupils with special educational needs, are based on sound principles and are well targeted to have a positive impact on learning and progress.

Teaching staff are used appropriately. Classroom and nursery support staff are well used. They provide effective support to teaching staff and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The use of the accommodation and learning resources available to the school is satisfactory, overall, but under-utilisation of the computer room means that inefficient use is presently made of an important facility. This restricts pupils' progress in information technology and this is reflected in low attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

The school's overall administration arrangements and the day-to-day control of its finances, are satisfactory. Effective procedures are in place that allow the clerical staff to positively support the work of the school. The most recent school audit was satisfactory and its few minor recommendations have been fully implemented.

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science when they leave the school and their progress is good, as are their attitudes to learning. Taking these factors into account, together with pupils' average attainment on entry and higher than average socio-economic circumstances, as well as the average financial resources available to it, the school has improved the value for money it provides since the previous inspection. It is now judged to provide good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

Children enter the nursery on a part-time basis at age three. Those born between the start of September and the end of February begin in the autumn term. Children born between March and August are admitted in the spring term. They move to the reception class after three terms in the nursery and start to attend full-time. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly in line with the expectations for their age, although many have better than expected skills in speaking. Children make good progress in the nursery and, by the time they enter the reception class, many are close to reaching the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics, physical, personal and social development. They are on course to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development. Children's overall progress in the reception class is satisfactory. By the age of five, most children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics, physical and personal and social development. They meet them in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

#### **Personal and social development**

By the age of five, children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area. They make good relationships with adults and each other. They take turns fairly when sharing the computer. They work well as part of a group and show effective concentration skills when working independently or with others. They are independent in dressing and personal hygiene, moving through the neighbouring classroom confidently to visit the toilet. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and treat each other with respect. They accept responsibility sensibly, for example, when taking the register to the office.

Children, including those with special needs, make good progress while in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class. Nursery children increase their ability to sit in a group and take a turn to speak. They make good gains in sharing equipment, such as construction toys and take turns on the large outdoor apparatus. Reception class children build on these skills and show a growing independence in their work. They become better at persevering to complete a task, or pursue their own ideas, for example, when making a boat. They increase their sense of personal responsibility when clearing up after a task, for example, a cutting out exercise.

The teaching of personal and social development is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Opportunities to promote development are planned through all areas of the curriculum. In the nursery, the teacher and nursery nurse have high expectations of children's ability to acquire new skills. They actively promote children's consideration for each other in all group situations, especially in listening to each other. The teacher, nursery nurse and parent helpers are good role models for ways of behaviour to each other. In the reception class, opportunities are planned effectively for pupils to gain independence in a task and work collaboratively in pairs and groups. Opportunities are sometimes restricted by the confines of a curriculum planned to National Curriculum guidelines, rather than the recommended areas of learning for children under five. Regular assessment of children's personal and social development is carried out well and helps to promote progress.

## **Language and literacy**

By the age of five, children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area. They use a wide vocabulary to discuss stories and events. They take part in role play with confidence in 'the café' and listen to each other and the teacher carefully. They are aware of letter sounds and shapes and recognise some familiar words in books. They are beginning to blend together sounds such as "m" and "en". All know that text is read from left to right and 'read' stories from books, turning the pages correctly and using the pictures to tell a story. Most sequence four pictures into a story and give reasons for the order they have chosen. The highest attaining children read fluently from a simple book. Most pupils write their name, but not all form letters well. They attempt to write simple captions for pictures with varying degrees of skill.

Children, including those with special needs or English as an additional language, make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in reception class. In the nursery, they become aware that writing is read from left to right and gain some control in forming letters. They gain extra confidence in speaking and listening through role play both indoors and out. In the reception class they become better at recognising letter sounds and learning words. They make satisfactory gains in early reading and writing skills and in responding to stories with understanding. They increase their listening skills and become better able to answer focused questions, for example about snakes in a picture.

Language and literacy teaching is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. In the nursery, plans allow for focused learning in speaking, listening and language activities as well as providing children with a choice of activities through which they develop skills. The attention given to individual children is increased through effective teamwork involving the teacher and nursery nurse. This helps to promote effective progress. Regular updated assessments of children's needs help focus teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge of the language development of young children is better in the nursery than in reception. In the reception class, the constraints of providing for language development through the National Literacy Strategy do not always allow for activities to be planned in a way best suited to the needs of children of this age. Little opportunity is provided within this structure for children to choose language activities for themselves. Teachers in both classes have high expectations of pupils' attainment and plan accordingly. Support is provided for children with English as an additional language and this supports the acquisition of language well. The management of pupils is good in both classes. Nursery resources are well presented to promote language skills and reception resources are well focused for a special skill. Support staff are deployed well in the nursery and in reception when available. This provides good support for children's progress.

## **Mathematics**

By the age of five, children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in mathematics. They recognize numbers from one to ten, with higher attaining children knowing numbers to 20 and beyond. They create patterns which sequence two shapes or objects and are aware of the passing of time through knowledge that activities happen at different points in the day. They can describe objects and pictures, for example of elephants, using language of size such as 'big' and 'small'. When looking at a number of objects in a group, they give a reasonable estimate of how many there are. Most children complete simple addition and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as circles and triangles.

Children make good progress in developing mathematical understanding in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception class. In the nursery, progress is supported by the good range of opportunities for counting, such as a jigsaw for matching numbers, drawing round fingers and counting and sequencing black and white stripes for a Zebra crossing. Nursery children make good gains in counting to 5, 10 and 20 and sequencing beads of different colours to five. Reception children build on this and make satisfactory gains by regular counting activities at register time and through activities to estimate the number in a group. They also become more proficient in developing repeating patterns which are more proficient than those they made by sequencing objects when in the nursery. All children make good gains in remembering a range of counting rhymes and songs. The progress of children with special educational needs is good, as a consequence of the support provided and the activities which are planned to meet their needs.

The teaching of mathematics is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. In the nursery, a good range of activities is planned which includes focused taught activities, creative activities and role play indoors and outdoors to develop counting, sequencing and spatial awareness. Reception children have a focused activity from the National Numeracy Strategy but there is not the opportunity for a wider range of activities as in the nursery. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are secure and children's differing needs are appropriately planned for. Careful assessment of individual children's attainment supports the planning of future lessons and supports children's progress.

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

Children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area by the age of five. They have a sound understanding of keeping themselves safe in the local environment. They understand that a range of different sounds are made by shakers and reflect on what they see, feel and smell on a walk to a local village. They competently move numbers around on a computer screen in pairs, using the mouse to "click" for the action. A few show higher than expected knowledge and understanding to plan and build a boat with materials and glue provided, using satisfactory cutting skills.

Children make satisfactory progress in both the nursery and reception classes. Nursery children develop their understanding of safety by using role play to explore when outside, such as crossing the road safely with an adult. They become aware of the difference in plants in a wildlife area and the changes over time. Reception children increase their knowledge of the environment by exploring it through senses and highlighting points of danger. They increase their skills in cutting, joining materials with glue and making evaluations of their model canal boats. Through the study of senses, they are increasingly aware of the function of parts of their body.

The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory in both classes. Teachers have secure knowledge of this area of learning in both classes. Activities focused on a particular group of children are well planned and support children in making progress. This took place, for example, in learning safety with tricycles in the nursery. Planning for nursery pupils allows for consolidation after focused learning, for example safety, that is linked to learning about other people in the environment such as police, ambulance and the doctor, which pupils explore through role play. Satisfactory teaching in the reception class is planned from the National Curriculum and does not provide as many opportunities for children to explore their learning through role play. Assessment in the nursery ensures children progress against the objectives and in the reception class against National Curriculum guidelines.

## **Physical development**

By the age of five, children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area. Children are able to move about the hall safely, being aware of space. They control a ball well with their feet around an obstacle. They throw well but are not so accurate in catching a ball. They take turns in team games and follow instructions well. They handle tools such as pencils and brushes competently and most cut fairly accurately with scissors.

Children's progress is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Nursery children develop well their climbing skills and balance outdoors. They improve in their control of tricycles and scooters, showing an awareness of others. The nursery has identified a need for tactile balls to improve the slower progress in catching skills. Reception children improve in ball control skills and particularly the use of scissors. At the time of inspection, reception children had access to climbing equipment, but not wheeled toys. Hall facilities are used for the reception class.

Teaching of physical development is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Planning for outdoor play in the nursery is well focused for direct teaching, but also allows for exploration and consolidation of skills in a safe environment. In the reception class, lessons are well planned with clear objectives, but opportunities to reinforce skills such as catching are missed. Children are well managed and instructions and demonstrations are given clearly. Teaching in the reception class is limited by a lack of facilities for activities with large wheeled toys. This also limits opportunities for the children's creative development and for the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the world.

## **Creative development**

Children reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area by five. They show imagination when playing in 'the café'. They make pictures which are used to develop counting skills in twos with odd and even numbers. They look at boxes and consider their appropriateness for joining together to make a canal boat. By playing a look and cover game, they practice memory skills and enjoy talking about the stories like 'Little Red Riding Hood' that they hear on the tape player. All take part in singing and saying rhymes.

Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, overall, in the nursery and reception class. Nursery children make good progress in the music and imaginative play. This is because of well focused planning and organisation in music and the provision of a wide range of opportunities for role play. Nursery children gain confidence in using tools, such as a hammer with nails and cutting with scissors, or making thick paint stay on the paper on an easel. Reception children develop skills of designing, making and evaluating a model boat.

Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory, overall, in both the nursery and reception class. Planning in the nursery identifies areas of specific focus and times for free choice, which allows children to consolidate skills in building, painting and role-play. In the reception class, planning has a specific focus but there is not a range of creative tasks continuously available. This is a consequence of planning adhering to the National Curriculum rather than focusing on the areas of learning for children under five. It limits children's opportunities to make choices and explore new learning independently. Children are well managed in both the nursery and reception class. Teachers observe children well and select the right moments to ask well focused questions, comment or give praise for success.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **English**

Pupils' performance in the 1998 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests was above average in reading and well above average in writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the national standard, level 2 or above, was above the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing. The percentage reaching the higher level 3 was above the national average in reading and very high in writing. This represented a high level of performance by about a third of pupils in the year group. When compared to the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was average in reading and well above average in writing. Teacher assessments in 1998 showed a higher percentage of pupils reaching level 3 in reading, but a fairly similar picture to the tests in other respects. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance was above the national average in reading and writing. Girls performed better than boys in writing, but there was little discernible difference in reading. The 1999 test results show an improvement in the percentage reaching level 2 or above in writing, but a considerable fall in the percentage reaching level 3. In reading, there was a very slight improvement. The evidence of pupils' school work shows the present Year 2 pupils to be working at an above average standard in reading and writing. Their speaking skills are broadly average, although listening skills are below average.

In the end of KS2 National Curriculum tests in 1998, pupils' performance in English was broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the national standard, level 4 or above, was above the national average. The percentage gaining the higher level 5 was close to the national average. Teacher assessments showed the same picture. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was below average. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance was well above, the national average. Girls' performance was better than that of boys over the three year period. The 1999 test results showed considerable improvement within the school in the percentages reaching level 4 or above and the higher level 5. The evidence of pupils' school work is that the present Year 6 are performing at an above average level. At the time of the last inspection, a considerable number of pupils at Key Stage 2 were found to be underachieving. This is no longer the case.

Pupils' speaking skills are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Their listening skills are below average at the end of Key Stage 1, but are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils give clear answers to questions, with higher attaining pupils giving more extended answers. They do not, however, listen with the expected level of care and attention during question and answer sessions, for example about books they have read together as a class. They do, however, listen with absorption to very well read stories. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are articulate and enter into discussion and debate. They express their views about school with confidence and maturity, often giving extended and well considered answers to questions. Speaking and listening skills are applied and developed well in many other subjects of the curriculum including music, religious education and dance in Year 6.

By the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' reading skills are above the standards expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read fluently and with expression,

taking account of punctuation when reading aloud. They use phonic and sound blending skills effectively when tackling a difficult word. They can say what they like or dislike about a particular story. Higher attaining pupils use dictionaries well to find the meaning of unknown words. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make informed choices about reading material and read a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They have favourite authors and compare and contrast their styles. When reading fiction, they show a good understanding of the narrative and characters. They have very effective phonic skills. Higher attaining pupils self-correct when reading aloud to get the expression just right. The use of books for research in subjects such as geography, history and science, develops pupils' reading skills.

Pupils' attainment in writing is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils write at good length. They produce stories, news reports and descriptions of the school. They use simple punctuation correctly and show good awareness of audience in their story writing. They select language carefully to create atmosphere. Overall standards of spelling and punctuation are above average. Lower attaining pupils are not consistent in their use of punctuation. Higher attaining pupils use more complex punctuation accurately. Handwriting is usually neat and evenly formed, although lower attaining pupils do not join their writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write for a wider range of purposes. They produce notes, brief biographies of famous children's authors, stories, accounts of events such as the sinking of the Marie Celeste and reports of scientific investigations. While higher attaining pupils organise their writing in paragraphs, many others do not. Overall standards of spelling, punctuation, grammar and choice of vocabulary are above those normally found for the age of the pupils. All pupils write at length and with a good awareness of audience. Handwriting continues to be neat and evenly formed, although lower attaining pupils still do not join their writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes in other subjects of the curriculum, such as geography and history and this contributes to the development of their skills.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, overall, across the key stages. The present Year 2 and 6 groups were broadly average in attainment on entry to their respective key stages and they have made sufficient gains to now be performing at an above average standard. The only area of exception is that Year 2 pupils have made too few gains in listening skills. As pupils move through the key stage, they widen their vocabulary and express opinions with greater clarity and confidence. Key Stage 2 pupils listen much more critically and with increased attention. Pupils widen the range of fiction and non-fiction texts they read and gain independence in reading both for pleasure and research. They develop well their understanding of audience and purpose in writing. There are differences between year groups in the progress made by pupils currently in Key Stage 2 as a direct consequence of variations in the quality of teaching. Overall progress is good in Year 3, satisfactory in Years 4 and 5 and very good in Year 6. There are occasions in some lessons when the progress of a very few Key Stage 2 pupils for whom English is an additional language is restricted. This is due to some teachers being insufficiently aware of their specific needs.

Pupils' attitudes to English are good, overall. There are some variations within lessons directly related to the quality of teaching. Where work is challenging, in Years 1, 3 and 6, pupils respond very well. Pupils listen attentively and politely in most classes, although this is less so in Year 2 where pupils' listening skills are lower than expected. Most pupils are keen to answer questions and put up their hands to do so, although some in Year 2 call out. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are keen and enthusiastic about the stories they read together as a class. They enjoy activities such as re-arranging sentences which have been jumbled up. Pupils share ideas and help each other. Year 2 pupils, for example, amicably share their opinions in small groups about the story 'Rainbow Fish to the Rescue'. In Year 6, pupils help each other with research into Shakespeare's life and plays.

Most pupils work very well independently. Most pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, but a minority do not have such high standards. Behaviour in English lessons is consistently good.

The overall quality of teaching at both key stages is good and has improved since the last inspection. There is some very good teaching in Year 6 which supports pupils in making very good progress. In the lesson observed, the teacher had very high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining. Work was well matched to pupils' differing needs, questioning challenged their thinking and praise was used effectively to acknowledge good responses. Effective links were made with other subjects such as history. In other good lessons, activities are well structured and delivered at a good pace. Explanations are clear, learning support assistants are very well deployed, there is good support for pupils working on activities and the management of pupils and resources is good. All teachers understand the National Literacy Strategy and ensure that pupils pay good attention before the lesson begins. All these factors help pupils to make progress. Although all lessons observed were at least satisfactory, weaknesses were apparent in some. Expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are lower in Years 4 and 5 than in other Key Stage 2 classes. Work is not as effectively matched to pupils' differing needs in the Year 4 class. Other weaknesses relate to the organisation and presentation of some resources. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the seating arrangements for pupils discussing their opinions of a book made the sharing of ideas difficult. In a Year 4 lesson, instructions for a group were placed where the pupils could not see them. Organisational weaknesses of this type make it difficult for pupils to be fully involved and inhibit their progress in the lesson concerned. Marking is inconsistent in quality throughout the school. It is often supportive and, in the best example in Year 1, it gives good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. In Year 2, marking is mainly restricted to ticks and only very occasional comments.

The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. When given responsibility for English four years ago, she identified the areas in need of development and has worked systematically to improve provision. She pilots new developments herself and then takes them to the rest of the staff. This is helping to raise standards, most noticeably at the end of Key Stage 2. She has rightly identified drama as an area in need of improvement and developments in this area are starting to support speaking and listening skills development at Key Stage 1. There is a very good proforma used by the co-ordinator to support her monitoring of teaching and the curriculum through the scrutiny of teachers' plans. Although she has undertaken classroom observations in the past, this aspect of her monitoring role is temporarily suspended. This is due to her priorities presently being with her class whose last school year was disrupted due to a number of staff changes.

## **Mathematics**

Pupils' performance in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average. The percentages of pupils reaching the national standard, level 2 or above and the higher level 3 were close to the national average. Teacher assessments were more favourable at both levels. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the school's results were below average. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance was close to the national average. Boys performed better than girls over the three year period. 1999 test results show 100 per cent of pupils at level 2 and above and 38 per cent reaching level 3. This is a significant improvement over the previous year. Teacher assessments showed a similar picture to the tests in 1999. The evidence of school work of pupils presently in Year 2 is that they are performing at an average level.

In National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' performance was well above average. The percentages of pupils reaching the expected level 4 and higher level 5, were well above the national average. Teacher assessments were less favourable at both levels. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was above the national average. Taking the years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance was well above the national average. Girls performed better than boys over the three year period. The 1999 test results show an improvement on 1998 with 100 per cent of pupils reaching level 4 or above and 38% at level 5. Teacher assessments matched these results. The evidence of school work of the present Year 6 is that they are performing at an above average level. Mathematics standards have improved at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a clear understanding of numbers to 70 and complete addition and subtraction sums to 20. Higher attaining pupils use numbers and calculations beyond this. Pupils understand place value to 20 and successfully count money up to 50 pence. They recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and competently identify squares as a shape which tessellates and a circle as one which does not. Most pupils solve problems, for example, in how to present a month on a calendar in vertical or horizontal form. Higher attaining pupils pose their own problem question from a calendar. All have a clear understanding of standard and non-standard measures and recognise stages in the passage of time. All pupils tell the time to the hour and half-hour and higher attaining pupils do so to the quarter hour.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils confidently undertake calculation in the four rules of number to six digits. They competently convert fractions to decimals and find equivalent fractions. They correctly identify decimals as percentages, for example,  $0.5 = 50$  per cent. They use negative numbers competently, recognising that the range between  $-50$  to  $75$  is a range of 125. They have good mental calculation strategies when considering consecutive numbers. In measure, they recognise what fraction 25 centimetres is of a metre. They successfully collect data about how time is spent in a day and present this as a pie chart, line and block graphs on a computer database. They have a secure understanding of probability using words and phrases such as 'never', 'likely' and 'will happen' correctly. In solving problems, particularly in probability, pupils pose questions for each other. This is a strong feature of the mathematics teaching and is an improvement since the last report.

Progress across Key Stage 1 has been satisfactory for pupils currently in Year 2. Pupils entered the key stage with average attainment and have maintained this. Since September 1999, with new staff, the current progress of all pupils in the key stage is good. Year 6 pupils entered the key stage with broadly average attainment as indicated by the 1996 test results. Their progress across the key stage has been good, overall. Currently, progress for pupils at Key Stage 2 is uneven. The differences in the rates of progress are directly linked to variations in the quality of teaching. Progress is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 5 and 6, with very good progress in Year 6 in the aspect of number. As pupils move through the school, they show a growing confidence in the use of number. Key Stage 1 pupils' work increases their competence in simple addition and subtraction, while older Key Stage 2 pupils show a growing understanding of large numbers, fractions, decimals and negative numbers. Key Stage 1 pupils develop understanding of tessellating shapes and Year 3 pupils gain in the accurate measurement of right angles and identifying them in the environment. Pupils become increasingly proficient in mental mathematics strategies which successfully aids their progress when they are applied to their number calculations. All pupils make good gains in solving problems. A positive feature supporting progress is the specific planning for higher or lower attainers. Pupils with special needs are well supported to make progress towards their targets, but there is no specific identification of pupils with English as an additional language.

Most pupils have good attitudes and enjoy mathematics lessons. Their attitudes and concentration in lessons are good, overall. Attitudes to learning are better at the top of the school where, in one Year 6 lesson, pupils' concentration and response were excellent. All pupils eagerly take part in mental mathematics sessions and use mathematical vocabulary in their answers. They persevere with problem solving, discussing sensibly with each other. They work well independently or in groups and support each other's learning with positive comments. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are good. Most pupils try to present work well but some pupils in Year 4 have unsatisfactory presentation. Behaviour in mathematics lessons is good.

The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is always at least satisfactory and it is good in two-thirds of lessons, including some very good teaching in Year 6. The variations in overall quality of teaching result in pupils making better progress in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Lessons are well organised to National Numeracy Strategy guidelines, they are generally conducted at a brisk pace which raises pupils' enthusiasm and consequently supports their progress. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics is secure, and pupils are provided with challenging tasks. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give clear, direct teaching for new learning. Good use is made of questioning and this was particularly noted in a Year 1 lesson on addition and subtraction. Good relationships with pupils in a Year 5 lesson motivated pupils to do well. Teachers generally use praise well, but there is an inconsistency in marking in books. Comments are not always diagnostic to guide pupils to reflect on their work or pursue new learning. Where teaching is very good, the pace moves quickly, pupils are completely involved in the lesson through well focused questions for all abilities and progress is very good.

Mathematics is used and developed well in other subjects, such as measurement in design and technology and science. Planning has improved considerably since the last inspection. There are good assessment procedures in place to National Curriculum guidelines. Target setting and regular testing ensure that pupils make progress or address an area of need. The co-ordinator is well informed, an experienced practitioner and competently leads staff in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. She monitors all planning and has had opportunity to monitor teaching. She supports colleagues as a mentor and audits the need for resources and purchases them.

## **Science**

In the 1998 National Curriculum teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the national standard, level 2 or above, was above the national average. The percentage reaching the higher level 3 was well above the national average. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 was broadly average and the percentage reaching level 3 was well above average. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' performance was well above average. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 4 was well above the national average, as was the percentage reaching the higher level 5. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was broadly in line with the national average. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, pupils' performance was above average. Over the three year period, girls performed better than boys. From observations of the pupils at work in their lessons and a scrutiny of their previous work, inspection findings show that the present Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards above average. The standard of their work in experimental and investigative science is well above average. Standards in science have improved

since the time of the last inspection.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils successfully name the main external features of both the human body and a flowering plant. They know about the five senses and confidently explain how people differ in appearance, such as in their height and the colour of their eyes. Pupils know that food is needed for activity and explain what constitutes a healthy diet. They recognise and name common materials, such as metal, plastic and wood and know that some are man-made while others are natural. They understand that materials can be placed in different groups, such as 'magnetic' or 'water-proof'. Pupils confidently explain the role of batteries, wires and bulbs in making an electrical circuit and they know that a circuit will not work if it has a break in it. Pupils know that pushes and pulls are examples of forces and that twisting and pulling are forces that can change the shape of objects. Pupils are confident in explaining that light comes from the sun and that sound can be heard when it enters the ear. Pupils successfully undertake experiments on many aspects of their work, for example, when testing materials to see if they are water-proof.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in explaining many of the life processes of humans, including the functions of the heart and the circulation of the blood. They know the different parts of a flower and explain the importance of the roots and the methods of seed distribution. They know what constitutes a food chain. Pupils successfully describe and name a variety of materials, understanding the difference between solids, liquids and gases. They explain some of the changes that take place when materials are heated or cooled, know that materials can be made into mixtures and that they can be separated through processes such as evaporation. They confidently explain the role of insulators and conductors in relation to electricity. Pupils know that friction is a force which slows moving objects. In their studies on light, pupils explain clearly that shadows are caused by an object blocking the light. Pupils know that sound is caused by an object vibrating. Pupils know that the Sun, Earth and Moon are approximately spherical and they explain their relative positions. Pupils successfully carry out a wide range of experiments throughout the key stage. They make careful predictions, observations and records and clearly understand the concept of a fair test. They present data in graphical form.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. They develop and consolidate their knowledge and understanding across the science curriculum. The clear increase in their scientific skills and knowledge is greatly helped by the investigative work undertaken. As they move through the school, pupils' experiments become more complex, with pupils becoming more independent in selecting their own components and drawing their own conclusions. Pupils' use of the correct scientific terminology is a strong feature, which develops well and plays an important part in helping them to progress.

Pupils' attitudes to their work are consistently good. They listen carefully and undertake all aspects of their work with concentration and interest. They take part in all practical activities with particular enthusiasm, being confident in offering opinions and competent in using their enquiry skills to seek explanations. Pupils work well with other pupils and readily share resources and ideas, particularly when carrying out experiments. Most produce their written work carefully and neatly, although a minority of pupils take less care.

The overall quality of the teaching is good at both key stages and has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned and resourced, especially where experiments are being undertaken. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide a range of activities suitable for all pupils. They are enthusiastic and provide interesting and informative instruction at the start of each lesson. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and they make good use of scientific

vocabulary and assistance around the classroom, to encourage a high standard of work. All these aspects of teaching support pupils in making good progress. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but few comments of advice or praise are normally added and this is a weakness.

The school has a good scheme of work that is clearly linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum, which is effective in maintaining high standards. The co-ordinator sees plans of the work to be covered, as well as examples of pupils' books, but at present she has little opportunity to monitor work being undertaken by pupils in the classroom. Assessment is undertaken successfully and information provided is used to plan work for the future. The written work undertaken by pupils, especially that relating to reporting on practical activities, successfully supports the school's literacy initiative. Counting and measuring activities support the school's work in numeracy. Pupils in some classes are able to develop their skills in information technology, through using computer programs.

### **Information technology**

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the layout of the keyboard and independently type their name, using capital letters appropriately. They change the style of printed words, type a list of instructions or procedures and print them out confidently. When using a paint program they know how to change the thickness of lines and change colours, using the mouse carefully to select an on screen icon. Most know the procedures for saving their work. They use tape players effectively to support their language work.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below national expectations. There is insufficient breadth in the range of skills and knowledge of pupils presently in Year 6, resulting largely from lack of consistent practice while they were in Year 5. Pupils use computers for data handling and produce good examples of pie charts, block and line graphs. In using text, they effectively produce different sized words when making a poster to advertise living in the area. A language program to support grammar and punctuation work in English affords effective acquisition of skills in editing with commas or moving text into correct boxes. Pupils are weak, however, in their use of the computer for research and do not have the expected competency in using CD ROM or the Internet. Too few pupils regularly draft their writing onto the computer to practise using and refining all learned skills in word processing. Pupils' performance at Key Stage 2 has declined in relation to national expectations since the last inspection.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress, including those with special needs. At Key Stage 2, progress is unsatisfactory, overall, for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. In Year 1, pupils gain in confidence in using the mouse independently to form a screen picture. Year 2 pupils gain in secure skills of saving work or printing it after paired working. Unsatisfactory progress for pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2 is a consequence of lack of consistent practice over time, particularly during last school year and since the start of the present one. All year groups in Key Stage 2 do not have enough regular opportunity to practise word processing skills or become confident and independent in the use of research skills in all appropriate areas of the curriculum. Satisfactory progress in specific skills is evident, such as in the production of data charts from collected information in Year 6, a beginning of a news print in Year 5 and filling in a record sheet in Year 3.

Pupils' attitudes to information technology are generally good. They work well in pairs, discussing

sensibly the work they are doing. They treat the computers with respect and take turns in operating the mouse or keyboard. Key Stage 1 pupils are careful with headsets for tape players and Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate independence in the use of overhead projectors and tape players. Year 1 pupils, particularly, show concentration and perseverance in moving items on screen with the mouse. Pupils behave well when using computers or other technology.

Teaching is satisfactory, overall, at Key Stage 1, but it is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, secure subject knowledge and appropriate time management, of teaching and practice of skills, aid satisfactory progress. High expectations and clear instructions in teaching sessions motivate pupils to learn quickly. Effective use is made of pupils who have experienced an activity to help a partner. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory, overall, because of lack of planning for pupils to make progress through regular word processing opportunities and limited opportunities for pupils to regularly research information, using the computer. Many teachers lack confidence in teaching information technology at Key Stage 2 and this has contributed to pupils' unsatisfactory progress. There is some satisfactory teaching in Year 6, specifically through the teacher's demonstration of how to use the language and mathematics programs. This has helped in satisfactory practice and development of keyboard and mouse skills and scrolling in menu boxes to support knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. Effective use is made of pairs of pupils to support each other at the computer. Clear expectations of behaviour at the computer are conveyed to all pupils and independence is fostered through some self-assessment of a task. Different work for higher or lower attaining pupils is not identified in planning.

There is a scheme of work for information technology which includes all areas of learning in a progressive development with suitable recording and assessment sheets to National Curriculum Levels. There is a good range of resources to support the curriculum, but these are not directly linked to a topic or subject to allow teachers with less secure knowledge and understanding to be efficient in delivery of the curriculum. Teachers of Years 1, 2 and 3 clearly identify opportunities for the use of information technology in their literacy plans, but others do not. A language activity bank effectively supports learning in language and literacy across Key Stage 2 and Year 6 presentation of data supports numeracy. The school has recently set up a computer room for word processing opportunities, which is not sufficiently utilised and has purchased new classroom computers to a good standard. An internet line has been installed, but is not fully operational. Information technology is a priority of the school and training for new teachers is planned, although there is no identification of this on the school development plan. The co-ordinator has clear priorities for the development of information technology and has recently enhanced provision with the purchase of sensors and digital cameras. She monitors planning but not teaching and is efficient in the limited time she can devote to information technology due to a particularly heavy work load.

## **Religious education**

At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam and know some of the stories of famous figures from each religion. They are familiar, for example, with stories of Jesus, Rama and Sita, David and Jonathan. Pupils know that religious believers have books that are very special to them, such as the Bible and the Qur'an. They are aware of some of the symbolism related to religious beliefs, such as the importance of the cross to Christians and the lotus flower to Hindus. Pupils recognise that religions have a variety of ceremonies, such as Divali and Hannukah and they explain the significance of such occasions. Pupils understand the need to belong to a variety of groups and they recognise the importance of

their own family and friends.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know a wider range of stories from the world faiths. They identify some of the similarities and differences between religions and discuss various creation stories with confidence. Pupils have visited a range of religious buildings, such as churches, mosques, temples and synagogues and know some of their features. They confidently identify some of the requirements for entering religious buildings, such as removing shoes or covering the head. Pupils know that all religions have distinctive traditions and life-styles and, for example, identify the importance of the Five K's to Sikhs and the Five Pillars of Faith to Moslems. Pupils are aware that family and community life is usually ruled by codes of conduct and they understand the consequences of breaking those rules. Pupils understand the need to be tolerant of other people's dress, life-style and ritual. Pupils, at both key stages, successfully reflect on what they have heard, explore their own feelings and confidently offer their own views.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through both key stages. Pupils are introduced to a growing range of world religions and they become increasingly aware of the different leaders, religious buildings, rituals and lifestyles. Pupils show increasing awareness of the importance of family and community life and the need to care for one another. In studying the range of world religions, pupils increasingly recognise the need for tolerance and understanding in dealing with different people. Pupils show growing awareness of the need to ask questions and formulate their own opinions on what they see and hear.

Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. They listen carefully to their teachers, provide a variety of thoughtful answers and find the subject interesting. They are particularly thoughtful when considering the needs of others and in recognising the need for caring. Pupils are confident in expressing their thoughts and feelings and they are tolerant and understanding of other people's beliefs and life-styles. Pupils are well behaved and they settle to their written tasks with good concentration. Many pupils endeavour to produce work which is neat and tidy, but not all pupils aim for the same standards.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and thought provoking. Challenging ideas are introduced to pupils. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and good questioning encourages pupils to think carefully and respond. Teachers are careful to introduce pupils to the correct terminology used in different faiths. Pupils are encouraged and praised for their efforts and summary sessions are held at the end of lessons, both to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and to celebrate their work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but few written comments of praise or advice are added.

Through the written activities provided for pupils, religious education supports the initiative in literacy. Assessment opportunities are listed in planning, with informal assessment taking place during lessons and samples of work being retained in pupils' portfolios. These are used to help plan appropriate future work for the pupils. The co-ordinator receives plans of the work to be covered each half-term and she monitors the outcomes through seeing samples of pupils' books. At present she has no opportunity to observe teachers and pupils at work in the classrooms.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and these were in Years 5 and 6. Additional

evidence was gained from looking at pupils' work on display around the school, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. All work seen was two-dimensional.

The standard of much of pupils' two-dimensional art work is above that expected for their age. Year 1 pupils are competent in using thick and thin paint brushes. In their work on the theme of canal art, they create brightly coloured patterns, demonstrating good control as they paint within boundaries of shapes such as triangles. Some achieve a good visual effect in their paintings of flower patterns on black paper. Their paintings on the theme of transport are of a good standard and fill the whole paper. Pencil drawings from photographs on the same theme show effective observation and recording skills in representations of penny farthing bicycles. Large illustrations of books read together are created by pupils in Year 4 and these are visually effective. Pupils in Year 5 are aware of light and texture in drawing natural objects such as a leaf or piece of bark. They have good control of pencils, but not all hold them accurately for sketching. All successfully record from close observation. Higher attaining pupils capture well the texture and shape of the objects they draw and shade their drawings to achieve the effect of light. They use pencil crayons well to add colour to their drawings. In their paintings from imagination of castles, many achieve a good impression of depth. Year 6 pupils successfully mix paints to produce a wide range of colours and shades. They use pencil well for line and tone. They demonstrate awareness of the styles of famous artists such as Dali and successfully experiment in painting in their styles. Overall standards in drawing have improved since the last inspection.

On the basis of the limited evidence, pupils make satisfactory overall progress, with good gains in two-dimensional art work. They develop skills in the use of pencils and paintbrushes and become more aware of colour, including how paints can be mixed to achieve the desired shade. They increase their ability to record from observation and gain an awareness of the work of famous artists. They do not make the expected gains in three-dimensional art work, such as clay or sculpture, as the school does not place emphasis on this aspect of the art curriculum.

Pupils have good attitudes to art and many consider it to be one of their favourite subjects. They take pride in having their work displayed. In art lessons, they show great interest and are very attentive to their teachers. They settle quickly to practical work and concentrate well as they observe and carefully draw natural objects in Year 5. Pupils of all ages, even in Year 1, share resources such as paints and pencils amicably and show a good level of independence in organising themselves. Behaviour in art lessons is good.

On the basis of all the available evidence, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with good teaching of two-dimensional art. There is no evidence of three-dimensional art teaching. In the two lessons observed, teaching was good in Year 6 and satisfactory in Year 5. In both lessons, teachers showed secure subject knowledge, explained the work clearly, used questioning well to involve all pupils and to check their understanding. In the Year 6 lesson, the teacher had high expectations of the standards all pupils were capable of attaining and allowed pupils to make choices about materials. A great deal of support was provided to pupils while they worked. All these aspects of teaching helped pupils in making progress. In the Year 5 lesson, there was insufficient challenge of individual pupils and this limited the extent to which they were able to progress. There was good promotion of language skills in the Year 1 lesson as the teacher asked pupils to describe the marks they made on paper.

The co-ordinator is in her second term of responsibility for art and is also in charge of the nursery. Her priority has been the development of the nursery and she has not yet been able to give a great deal of attention to art. She is aware of what is taking place in art throughout the school by monitoring display work and receiving teachers' planning which informs her of curriculum coverage. There

is a scheme of work for art which was developed by a previous post holder. The scheme shows a broad and balanced curriculum covering drawing, painting, printing, three-dimensional work and textiles as taking place in each year group. This is not what takes place in practice as the emphasis is strongly on two-dimensional work limited mainly to drawing and painting. The scheme states that work in each year should build on what has gone before. It does not support teachers in implementing this as there is no indication of how knowledge, understanding and skills should be developed over time. There are no whole school assessment procedures for art. Consequently, assessment is not used to inform planning or the matching of work to pupils' varying needs, even though teachers evaluate short-term planning. Although progress is satisfactory, overall, the lack of effective assessment procedures limits the gains pupils make and the standards they achieve. Pupils have some art experiences additional to their lessons funded by the Friends of Two Waters. These included an artist working with all classes in the school in October 1998.

### **Design and technology**

Only one lesson was observed in design and technology. Other evidence was drawn from discussions with teachers and pupils, a scrutiny of teachers' plans, displays around the school and other examples of work.

Throughout the school, pupils' work in design and technology is in line with the standards expected for their age. Some pupils in Key Stage 1 make a boat from foil and reflect on its suitability for floating or carrying a load. Others design and refine a drawing of how they think a building should look for their village street. They thoughtfully match their design to an appropriately shaped box. All build and join competently with construction materials. Through discussion, they evaluate designs to see if they are fit for the purpose intended. Key Stage 2 pupils, enthused by a visit to Stoke Bruerne and a canal topic, design and make canal boats in a range of cards and paper, such as thick, thin or corrugated and use making, joining, cladding and decorating skills appropriate to their age. Year 5 pupils have satisfactory skills in creating a three-dimensional drawing of a design for a motorised vehicle, labelling parts and identifying the resources needed to build it. They use instructions and diagrams well to make a motorised base with circuits and wheels and test it to see if it is fit for its purpose, or if modifications are needed.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across both key stages. They develop skills in cutting, joining and sticking with a range of glues. In new design tasks, they apply and build on previous learning. Year 2 pupils, for example, confidently use their previous knowledge of cladding on boats when considering their new designs of buildings. Key Stage 2 pupils become more confident in a range of design tasks, showing growing awareness of the need to evaluate their work as it develops. Well written sequences of procedures and evaluations and labelling of diagrams is an increasingly positive feature through Key Stage 2, as is collaboration on a task.

Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. They show pride in their finished articles and treat exhibits on display with respect. Year 2 pupils, working together, respect each other's need for space when working with tools such as scissors and collaborate well on a drawing. Year 1 pupils take pleasure in each other's achievements, for example in floating a foil made boat. Pupils persevere with designs in Key Stage 1 and show pride in recorded designs or evaluations in Key Stage 2. They tidy away carefully, with a sense of responsibility, after completing a task. Behaviour in design and technology lessons is good.

From the limited observations of lessons and scrutiny of teachers' planning, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Lesson plans are clear and sequential and good use is made of questions and discussion to promote pupils' thinking. Pupils are well managed to help them evaluate their work thoughtfully and consider the next steps in their designs. Classroom assistants and students, when present in lessons, make a positive contribution to supporting pupils in Key Stage 1, as groups are made smaller and receive increased targeted attention. Pupils are guided effectively to think about the resources needed for a task and evaluate their decisions for the intended outcome. Satisfactory use of the assessment of pupils' needs during lessons helps learning to proceed.

The curriculum has been satisfactorily planned from the local education authority guidelines. It promotes the sequential development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the design and technology curriculum. Assessment is informal, but examples of work are kept and assessed to appropriate National Curriculum levels. These guide teachers in understanding the level at which pupils are working. Assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of a unit of work support teachers in planning future lessons. There is a new co-ordinator who monitors planning. She has audited current planning to ensure that a range of skills are covered and that work in Key Stage 2 builds on that in Key Stage 1.

## **Geography**

The standard of pupils' work in geography is in line with that normally found for the age of the pupils.

At Key Stage 1, pupils successfully identify physical features of places, such as houses, roads, shops and the canal. They draw simple plans of the classroom and the school grounds, successfully find their home address on a map and readily follow their route to school. They follow directions, such as left and right and up and down, with confidence. Through study of a contrasting locality in Australia, pupils confidently identify differences, for example, in housing and landscape. Pupils discuss the attractive and unattractive features of the local area and suggest how it might be improved. At Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in identifying towns, countries and sea areas on an appropriate range of maps. They use co-ordinates successfully to locate particular features. They have knowledge of an appropriate range of contrasting localities, including Sandown in the Isle of Wight and Benin. Pupils successfully identify the parts of a river system, such as a tributary, meander and source and explain the differences between a river and a canal. Pupils know that towns vary in size and that they are developed for different purposes with, for example, some being ports and others market towns. Pupils show a concern for the environment, expressing particular concern for the problems caused by pollution and de-forestation.

As they move through the school, all pupils including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They show increasing confidence in using an increasingly complex range of maps. They develop their knowledge of contrasting areas, and become more competent in identifying differences in such things as landscape and houses. They gain greater awareness of environmental issues, initially related to Hemel Hempstead and later those of world-wide significance.

Pupils' attitudes to geography are good. They are enthusiastic, listen to their teachers with interest, and provide a range of thoughtful and appropriate answers to questions. They study maps and photographs with interest. Pupils show special interest in the work undertaken on the Grand Union Canal. They work well within groups, and help each other find appropriate information. Older pupils are confident in reporting their findings, to other members of the class. Pupils show considerable concern for the environment, not only identifying problems that are being caused, but

looking for ways in which improvements might be made. Many pupils produce neat work, but some take less care with their presentation. Behaviour in geography lessons is good.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and more consistent than at the time of the last inspection, with some good teaching in Year 6. Work is well planned, and teachers have secure subject knowledge. They give clear explanations, especially when discussing aspects of mapping work, and provide an appropriate range of activities for pupils. Relationships are good and teachers provide pupils with much support and advice. Fieldwork opportunities are appropriately provided, to such places as Stoke Bruerne. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but comments of help and advice are less frequently provided.

A satisfactory scheme of work is in place, and careful planning ensures full coverage. Assessment opportunities are listed in teachers' planning, and informal assessment takes place in lessons, with samples of pupils' work occasionally placed in their portfolios. Assessment provides useful information, which teachers use to help plan future work. The co-ordinator receives teachers' planning and monitors samples of work. Written work undertaken in geography contributes to the schools' initiative in literacy. Measuring activities, particularly in relation to co-ordinates, and the measuring of distances on maps, successfully support the school's work in numeracy. Weaknesses identified in the provision for geography at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.

## **History**

During the inspection, no lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. Evidence was obtained from looking at teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' books and displays of work around the school and discussions with teachers and pupils.

The standard of work in history is in line with that normally found for the age of the pupils. At Key Stage 1, pupils identify some of the changes that have taken place over time, in such things as houses, games, clothing, food and transport. In sequencing household artefacts and forms of transport, especially aeroplanes, pupils show a satisfactory understanding of chronology. Having studied historical aspects of life on the Grand Union Canal, they confidently discuss the life styles of children who lived on the barges. Pupils have a secure knowledge of some historical figures, for example Queen Victoria and the Wright brothers, as well as important past events, such as the Gunpowder Plot. At Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the Romans, the Tudors, and Britain since 1930. They confidently explain the characteristics of particular periods and what distinguish them and many put those periods into a proper chronological framework. They have a more detailed knowledge of changes that have taken place in such things as housing, living conditions and forms of dress. Having studied aspects of the canal system around Hemel Hempstead, they can explain why the canals were built in the area, how they were built and which goods were carried. They explain with some accuracy, important events that have taken place in the past, such as the sinking of the "Mary Rose" and they recall the lives of famous people, such as Boudicca and Henry VIII.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across the key stages. They increase their knowledge of the past and become more competent in identifying change, as well as more secure in their understanding of chronology. In studying the history of the canals, younger pupils concentrate on the social aspect, whilst older pupils examine a wider range of topics, such as their building and use. Through the school, pupils are introduced to a growing range of historical figures and important events. They gain an increasingly extensive historical

vocabulary.

Pupils' attitudes to history are good and they enjoy it. They have great interest in the topics studied, especially the canals. They listen carefully, answer questions thoughtfully and set about their work with good concentration. They readily work with other pupils, sharing information and discussing ideas. They study books, displays and photographs with concentration. Many pupils take care with the presentation of their work, but others take less pride in its appearance.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and is more consistent than at the time of the last inspection. There is some good teaching in Year 1. Planning is thorough and teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. They use questioning well to make pupils seek their own answers. Resources are used well, particularly the display on the canals and opportunities are also provided for pupils to visit historical sites. Teachers are supportive of pupils when they are working and provide help when it is required. Work is marked appropriately, but comments of praise or advice are rarely added.

An appropriate scheme of work is in place and it is well implemented. The co-ordinator monitors work, through seeing plans and samples of pupils' work. Assessment opportunities are identified in teachers' plans. Informal assessment takes place during lessons, with samples of work being included in the pupils' individual portfolios. This information is used in helping to plan future work for pupils. The work in history successfully supports the development of pupils' literacy skills. Weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.

## **Music**

The standard of work in music lessons is broadly in line with that expected for the age of the pupils, although it is well above the standards normally found in Year 6. Standards of singing throughout the school are high. Pupils in Year 1 have good listening skills and many differentiate between fast and slow music. Year 2 pupils know the names of untuned percussion instruments such as the tambourine, maracas and Indian bells. In making sound effects for the sea, they create soft and crashing sounds to represent the waves. They successfully work in small groups to make a sound picture of the sea. Year 4 pupils identify loud and quiet music. Pupils in Year 6 understand musical notation and competently clap a rhythm with four beats to the bar. Their singing in five parts, using a song sheet with formal notation, is of a high standard. In assemblies, the whole school sings well together.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Progress in singing practices is good. Very good progress was made in a Year 6 lesson. In this lesson, pupils consolidated their previous understanding of notation and built on this very well during singing in five parts from notation. Unsatisfactory progress was made in a Year 4 lesson due to weaknesses in the management of the pupils and too low expectations of the standards they were capable of attaining. Overall, pupils satisfactorily develop their listening skills during music lessons and gain confidence in using untuned percussion instruments. Older Key Stage 2 pupils develop an understanding of notation.

Pupils' overall response to music lessons is satisfactory. They are interested in music and pay good attention when music is played to them. Year 2 pupils share musical instruments amicably and eagerly volunteer to create the sounds of seagulls or waves. At the end of the lesson, they carefully tidy away the instruments. Year 6 pupils show a high level of involvement as they discuss the

values of notes and then sing from notation. They are keen to develop the quality of their performance. In contrast, during a Year 4 lesson, a significant minority of pupils deliberately sang badly and many paid little attention to their teacher. With the exception of this Year 4 lesson, behaviour in music lessons and whole school singing practices is good.

The overall quality of music teaching is satisfactory. There is some very good teaching in Year 2, but also some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 4. In most lessons, planning clearly identifies learning objectives and activities are well matched to pupils' prior experience and present needs. Teachers use correct musical terms, for example 'lyrics' in Year 1 and 'syncopation' in Year 6. Resources are well prepared and lessons are structured to have each activity building on the previous one. Pupils are well managed. These aspects of teaching support pupils in making satisfactory progress. Where teaching is very good in Year 6, the teacher has particularly high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining. She gives high value to pupils' responses and encourages them to 'have a go'. Assessment opportunities are identified on the lesson plan and are closely related to the learning objectives. The pace of the lesson is excellent. Teaching with these qualities enables pupils to make very good progress. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher did not set the right tone at the start of the lesson which meant that the lesson began without pupils giving it their full attention. Little learning took place because all the teacher's energies were on disciplining the pupils rather than on providing challenging experiences to involve them in the lesson.

The co-ordinator has had responsibility for music since September 1999 when she was appointed to the school. She is also responsible for science. She is keen to develop music but is aware of the need to give science her attention first. She receives teachers' planning and consequently is aware of what is taking place in music throughout the school. She is not monitoring the planning or the evaluations of it. She expects to do so as her role develops. She is also keen to observe teaching but does not presently have the opportunity to do so. The school has a commercial scheme of work which is used by teachers to support them in planning their lessons. There is also a satisfactory school scheme of work which outlines the level at which pupils in each year group should be working. While teachers use informal assessment methods and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, there are no whole school procedures for assessing attainment and progress in music. This restricts pupils' progress as it limits the extent to which teachers can plan their lessons with a view to how standards should develop across the school.

## **Physical education**

Overall standards in the lessons observed were in line with those expected for the age of the pupils, with the exception of a dance lesson in Year 6 in which pupils performed at a very high level. In gymnastics, Year 1 pupils hold a balance well for their age. Pupils in Year 2 balance on body areas such as their backs or bottoms and on body points such as one foot and one hand. They show a satisfactory level of control in this. Higher attaining pupils show good control. Almost all pupils have good co-ordination as they skip or hop about the hall and freeze when asked to do so. Pupils in Year 3 also balance on different body parts and use different heights of balances such as tall ones and low ones. They move about the hall, forwards and backwards, with a satisfactory awareness of the space around them. Year 5 pupils, working on ball skills, are better at throwing than catching. They have good co-ordination and control as they run around the playground and perform a variety of jumps, such as star jumps. In dance in Year 6, pupils work in groups to create a dance on the theme of 'opposing forces'. They successfully represent tension in movement and demonstrate very good physical control and co-ordination as they use different heights and twist, turn, push and pull.

Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the key stages. They increase their understanding of the value of exercise and the importance of warming up before undertaking strenuous activity. They develop co-ordination and control in movement in gymnastics and refine throwing and catching skills during games lessons. In the Year 6 dance lesson observed, pupils made excellent progress. They very quickly developed their understanding of how to express complex ideas through movement. They also developed vocabulary connected with the dance, such as 'advancing' and 'retreating'.

Pupils attitudes to physical education are satisfactory. They move sensibly to the hall or playground for lessons. They follow specific instructions well, for example to jog, jump or skip. They are not so focused when given more complicated instructions, or allowed freedom of choice to create a sequence of movements. Not all pupils pay good attention to the teacher once instructions move beyond the simple and specific. Many pupils do not appear confident in independent work in games and gymnastics. Year 5 pupils work collaboratively in pairs to throw and catch. In the Year 6 dance lesson, pupils' response was excellent. The whole class changed to go to the hall in less than one minute. They were attentive, following instructions carefully and worked exceptionally well together to devise a short dance. The pupils in this class show a tremendous pride in their work. Behaviour in physical education lessons is satisfactory, overall, and excellent in Year 6.

The overall quality of the teaching of physical education is satisfactory, although the teaching of dance in Year 6 is outstandingly good. Teachers plan lessons satisfactorily and identify what it is that pupils are expected to learn. They have secure subject knowledge and usually give clear instructions to pupils. The correct language is used such as 'body points' and 'body areas' in Year 2 and 'aerobic exercise' in Year 5. Teachers observe pupils' work and attitudes carefully and adjust activities where necessary. All these aspects of teaching support pupils in making satisfactory progress. In the teaching of dance in Year 6, the teacher ensures that all pupils are fully aware of the reasons for activities. She uses demonstration very well, has high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining, and the lesson proceeds at a very brisk pace. This outstandingly good teaching results in pupils making excellent progress.

Since January 1999, physical education has been the responsibility of a teacher on a temporary contract. She is also the reception class teacher, and has found it necessary to give this area of responsibility priority over physical education. She is effectively reorganising the storage of resources and has led developments in how sports day is organised. The school uses a scheme of work from a neighbouring local education authority to guide its planning. Assessment is informal and there are no whole school assessment procedures to inform long-term planning. This means that the work planned in one year group does not always build sufficiently on that undertaken in earlier year groups. The co-ordinator receives teachers' planning and checks it for coverage of the curriculum. The school is aware that staff need further training to improve provision.. Although not included on the school development plan, provision for physical education is a school priority.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspection was undertaken between 11 and 14 October 1999 by a team of four inspectors, including a lay inspector, who spent a total of 14 inspector days in the school.

47 lessons were observed and evaluated, with a total of 33 hours and 25 minutes spent in classrooms while teaching was taking place.

Discussions were held with members of the governing body, teaching and non-teaching staff, and a cross-section of the pupils.

Documentation was analysed prior to and during the inspection, including curriculum and other policies, subject documentation, service and administrative records, school registers, written reports to parents, samples of pupils' records and individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

A range of pupils work was examined from each year group for the current year. A sample of work from the last school year was also seen, including the work of pupils now in Year 7 and attending different schools.

The views of parents were considered through analysis of pre-inspection questionnaires and a meeting attended by 36 parents.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	219	0	26	6

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

8.50

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

25.76

#### Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:

5

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

102.2

Average class size:

31.3

### Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	378, 299
Total Expenditure	386, 541
Expenditure per pupil	1, 610
Balance brought forward from previous year	32, 546
Balance carried forward to next year	24, 304

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

165

Number of questionnaires returned:

67

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	15	49	9	10	16
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	28	25	7	18	21
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	19	19	10	30
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	18	45	21	12	4
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	18	48	18	13	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	22	58	19	9	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	16	54	19	9	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	22	46	6	18	7
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	19	57	15	7	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	28	52	15	3	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	43	46	7	1	1