

INSPECTION REPORT

CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117156

Headteacher: Mr Andrew King

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Huard
27290

Dates of inspection: March 31st – April 3rd.

Inspection number: 247733

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Derby Road Watford
Postcode:	WD17 2LZ
Telephone number:	01923 225129
Fax number:	01923 236660
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Dowdle
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27290	Mrs Christine Huard	Registered inspector	English, art and design, music. Educational inclusion Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well pupils are taught.
1305	Mr Brian Rance	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well the school cares for its pupils. How well the school works in partnership with parents.
23288	Mrs Marianne Harris	Team inspector	History, religious education, English as an additional language	
17171	Mrs Mary Last	Team inspector	Special support facility. The work of the speech and language units.	
19542	Mrs Shirley Lee	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, information and communication technology	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
27225	Mrs Anna Sketchley	Team Inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, science, geography, physical education.	How well the school is led and managed.

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Ltd, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey. RH8 0RE.

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager, Inspection Quality Division, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London. WC2B 6SE.

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Central Primary School is situated in the centre of Watford and is the oldest centre of education in the town. It caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven and nearly all attend from a small area enclosed by two major roads and the railway line. However, pupils attending the speech and language units are taxed in from further a field. It is an area of some considerable deprivation, has a very high level of unemployment and is below average in socio-economic terms. The school roll has fallen since the last inspection and currently 185 pupils attend. This includes 15 children attending part time in the nursery and 19 pupils attending the speech and language units for those with difficulties with communication. Overall there are slightly more girls than boys. Children join the Nursery class when they are three, and nearly all continue into the main school. When they join the school their attainment is below average, with well below average attainment in language, literacy communication and mathematics. A relatively high percentage of pupils join and leave the school during each year. A substantial percentage of pupils come from ethnic minority groups although 17 per cent of parents chose not to disclose their ethnic backgrounds. However, 62 pupils, (33 per cent) speak English as an additional language which is very high, of these over half are at an early stage of learning the language. The largest proportion of these pupils are of Pakistani origin, with the predominant language being Urdu. Other ethnic groups represented include Indian, Caribbean and African. Twenty nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Thirty six per cent of pupils (66) are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is well above average. Twenty five pupils (thirteen per cent) have statements of special educational need, this is very high. All but six of these statements relate to pupils with speech and language difficulties. Extra support is provided for pupils who have difficulties with speech, communication and learning as well as those with hearing impairment and emotional and behavioural problems.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Central Primary is a good school where pupils are taught in a sympathetic and caring environment. Although standards at the end of Year 6 are below average overall, they are improving throughout the school because the quality of teaching is now good enabling pupils to learn effectively. Pupils are attentive, persevere and have good attitudes towards their work and this has a positive impact on their achievements during lessons and over time. The school has very effective strategies to ensure that all pupils have the chance to do their best and achieve well whatever their prior attainment. They are prepared well for life in a culturally diverse society. Pupils in the speech and language units are appropriately integrated into classroom activities on a regular basis. The overall leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has quickly identified areas in need of further development and taken appropriate action to address these. He has a very clear vision for the future development of the school, which is shared by the senior management team, staff, governors and parents alike. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The outstanding leadership by the headteacher, with good support from senior staff, gives clear direction and has set the tone for improvements in teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, enabling all pupils to learn effectively.
- Standards in music are above average and are a strength of the school.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and gives them a good start to their education.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, which leads to them having good attitudes towards their work and behaving well. This has a positive impact on their learning.
- The school makes good provision for its pupils with special educational needs and in the speech and language units.

- Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good support and make good progress.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is below average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Assessment systems for some of the foundation subjects¹ are inconsistent and insufficiently used to help plan future lessons.
- Attendance is below average and a small number of pupils persistently arrive late for school in the mornings.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since then, it has made good improvements and appropriately tackled the issues identified then. Standards have improved considerably particularly in English where good progress has been made. In addition, pupils have more chances to investigate and experiment for themselves in mathematics and science. All subjects have appropriate policies and schemes of work which have recently been reviewed and amended. Good procedures are in place for assessing how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science and the information is used effectively to plan work that is well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. However, in some of the foundation subject assessments are not used consistently across the school to plan future work precisely enough. Most subject co-ordinators are new but they have already carried out audits of their subjects, identified priorities for development and contributed appropriately to the school improvement plan. The leadership and management of the school continue to be good. It is rigorous and focused towards raising standards. The new headteacher is very perceptive and has appropriately identified key areas for further development. This action has been successful in driving the school forward. For example, after intensive monitoring, teaching has improved and the actions taken to improve teachers' skills have been successful in raising their levels of competence and thus the standards attained by the pupils. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) is now fully covered although standards are still below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because the improvements have been made comparatively recently. However, ICT has yet to be fully integrated across all subjects although a very good start has been made on this and is identified within the school improvement plan. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection. All staff show great commitment to the school and there is very good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	D	

¹ The foundation subjects are all subjects except for English, mathematics, science and religious education.

Science	E	E	E	D	
---------	---	---	---	---	--

Although the school achieved results in 2002 which were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science when compared to national standards, they represented a significant improvement over the previous year. However, In comparison with similar schools² the results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Results at the end of Year 6 have improved over time at a rate broadly in line with that shown nationally, despite a down turn in 2001. The school did not meet its targets in English and mathematics for 2002 because they were unrealistically high and far too challenging, although considerable improvements were made. Standards in the current Year 6 are below those expected because of the very high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties. The targets set, for 2003 are lower than last years but realistic and appropriately challenging for these pupils. If the quality of teaching and learning are maintained at the present level the school will be on course to achieve them.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress, particularly with developing their communication and literacy skills, and by the time they join Year 1 almost all are meeting the expected standards. Children’s mathematical skills develop well because of the emphasis on role play and problem solving activities. Overall, nearly all the children will meet the Early Learning Goals in all the areas by the time they leave the Reception classes. Those pupils who remain in the school throughout Years 1 and 2 make good progress and achieve well. However, results of national tests are affected by a number of factors. The high numbers of pupils entering and leaving during the two years affects results adversely as frequently these pupils perform less well due to the interruptions in their education. In addition, there are a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. This means that results of national tests in 2002 showed that attainment was well below average in English mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows that although attainment overall remains below average in English, mathematics and science this is largely because the group of pupils is particularly small and contains a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

Standards in ICT are below average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, because improvements have only recently been made.

However, pupils achieve appropriately given their prior attainment. Standards in music are above expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils achieve very well. In all other subjects, including religious education standards are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment when they first entered the school.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because work is closely linked to their targets and they receive good support. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well and make good progress because pupils’ needs are quickly assessed and they receive the right support to enable them to understand and learn effectively.

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are eager to learn and concentrate well during lessons. Pupils are gaining more independence and learning how to work well together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. There have been 6 temporary exclusions in the two years although none since September.

² Similar schools comparisons are made between schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships between all members of the school community are particularly harmonious. Pupils are learning how to make reasoned decisions, and have good opportunities to work independently.
Aspect	Comment
Attendance	Poor. Although this is beginning to improve it is still well below average. This is due to a combination of sickness, the taking of extended holidays in term time and the reluctance of a few parents to cooperate with the school in ensuring their children attend regularly. In addition there are a few pupils who are consistently late for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Good teaching throughout the school is the main reason why pupils are making good progress with their learning. Teaching in English is good overall and enables pupils to learn effectively. The good teaching of literacy ensures that reading skills are taught well and pupils learn to blend letters to make words, they are also learning to read with understanding and have good recall of texts previously read. In numeracy, pupils are taught calculation skills well and pupils make good progress in applying their skills to solve mathematical problems. However, the teaching of mathematics overall is satisfactory and ranges between satisfactory and very good. Some teachers are less confident than others. This is why progress in mathematics has not been as good as in English. The teaching of investigative skills in science is good and pupils are developing more independence in planning and carrying out their own experiments.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the speech and language units are well catered for and they achieve well. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good overall, and they receive good support in the classroom enabling them to understand what is being taught. In all classes, teachers plan and organise their lessons well with good attention being paid to the needs of higher attaining pupils who receive a good degree of challenge in their work. Teachers engage pupils' interest well in lessons and they learn effectively because of teachers' skilful questioning techniques and clear explanations which ensure they understand new ideas and concepts. However, when teaching is only satisfactory average attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently or are left to get on with tasks without enough support or resources.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. This is much improved from the last inspection and there is good provision for all subjects. There is a good balance of subjects with an emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of visits and visitors to the school who share their expertise with pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The individual education plans for these pupils contain the necessary detail and appropriate targets. They help teachers to plan work that takes account of individual needs. Good teamwork between

	teachers and learning support assistants ensures that pupils receive effective guidance and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good overall. There is well focused support for these pupils particularly when they first enter the school with limited language skills. Suitable work is planned and the school ensures that these pupils are included in all aspects of school life.
Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. Very good opportunities are planned for pupils' spiritual development. The very good provision for social development is effective in helping pupils to play and work together constructively. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are taught right from wrong and are very aware of issues affecting the lives of others. Provision for cultural development is also very good and the cultural diversity in the school is appropriately recognized and celebrated.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils and has successful procedures for promoting good behaviour. The sound monitoring of academic progress and personal development helps teachers to plan for individual needs, although improvement is required in the use of assessment for some of the foundation subjects...

There is a satisfactory, although rather limited, range of activities outside of school hours. The school has positive relationships with parents. It keeps them well informed about school activities and encourages them to participate in the school community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and he is supported effectively by the senior management team and subject leaders. There is a very strong spirit of teamwork and commitment to continued improvement among staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a very clear understanding of the priorities that will help the school to improve further. They take an active part in planning developments and are very supportive. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school rigorously evaluates its own performance and sets challenging targets for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and systems for staff development are good. The school improvement plan is a very good quality working document. It outlines immediate priorities very well and effectively communicates the long-term vision.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Finance has been used well to support the school's priorities for improvement. Very good financial control and planning is helping greatly to minimise the effects of the school's falling roll. Educational and financial decisions are carefully considered to ensure that the school provides best value.

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff. The quality of resources is generally sound and they are used well. The accommodation is satisfactory and the school makes good use of the space it has available. However, there is not enough outside space for play and physical education which is a weakness and steps should be taken to try and rectify this.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The teaching is good and their children make good progress.• The school is well managed and led.• The children are expected to work hard.• The school works closely with parents and the headteacher and staff are very approachable.• Behaviour is good.• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number of parents thought that there were not enough activities outside lessons.

Only a fairly small percentage of parents responded to the questionnaire and attended the parents' meeting. However, some parents spoke openly to inspectors in the playground during the inspection and without exception were very supportive of the school. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. There is a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with attainment which is below average in nearly all aspects of early learning and well below average in English and mathematical skills. The children currently in the Early Years Unit make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and by the time they join Year 1 most children's attainment will meet that expected in all areas. However, this has not always been so in the past and the pupils currently in Years 2 and 3 suffered changes of staffing which disrupted their learning in nursery and reception with the result that most did not meet the expected Early Learning Goals,³ by the time they joined Year One.
2. Pupils' results in the 2002 National Curriculum test at the end of Year 2 were well below average when compared to the level expected (level 2 and above) in reading, writing and mathematics. They were well below average in teacher assessments in science. Results at the higher level (Level 3) were below average in reading, mathematics and science, but close to the average in writing. When compared with those of similar schools, the results are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results show a good improvement in mathematics since 2000, and a slight improvement in reading and writing. However, although pupils attained at a well below average level they achieved appropriately in relation to the levels at which they entered the school.
3. At the end of Year 6, pupils' results (level 4 and above) in the 2002 National Curriculum tests were below average in English. In mathematics and science the results were well below average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was also below the national average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the trend of improvement over time in the school has been broadly in line with that seen nationally. However, these results do not show the whole picture and there are many contributory factors outside the control of the school to be considered. There is a high rate of pupil mobility of the school with pupils entering and leaving at various times during the year. In addition, pupils are taken out of school for extended visits to home countries, which, although the school provides work to be completed, still constitutes a disruption in their education. As well as high levels of pupils for whom English is not their first language the school also has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the last two years there has been a prolonged period of severe staff instability which has resulted in considerable disruption to the pupils' learning, leading to underachievement and very poor results in 2001. However, this situation has been addressed. Since the appointment of a new headteacher, stability has been established and staff have been recruited who are keen, enthusiastic, and showed themselves, in the quality of work produced by the pupils during the year as well as in the inspection, to be good practitioners which has led to very good improvement in the school during the past two terms.
4. The results of tests in 2002 did not meet the targets set by the school as they were unrealistically high considering the prior attainment of the pupils. A trend of improvement has been established in the school. Although the targets set for the current year are lower, they are

³ Early Learning Goals are the standards set for children to attain in six areas of learning by the time they are five. These are: personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

still appropriately challenging but more accurately reflect the attainment of the pupils. If the quality of teaching and learning remain as they were at the time of the inspection, there is no reason to suppose the targets will not be met.

5. The inspection findings are that, overall, pupils' attainments at the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, their achievement is generally good, when their previous attainment is taken into account. Throughout the school standards are rising and much of the work seen was of the expected standard. Where standards are below those expected it is usually due to the high levels of pupils with special educational needs in certain year groups, this is especially true of pupils in Year 2, where well over a third of pupils have special educational needs. However, these pupils receive appropriate support and are achieving well.
6. The school makes detailed analysis of the results of national curriculum and optional end-of-year tests. They use this analysis and information appropriately for grouping pupils and predicting future trends. In addition it is used to set targets in the core subjects for each pupil to achieve by the end of the year and at the end of Year 6. This gives a very clear picture against which to measure the progress of each pupil and shows that pupils who remain at the school throughout their school careers make good progress overall. The analysis undertaken to show the relative performance of boys and girls generally shows that girls are out-performing boys – but not to any significant degree. The inspection found no particular pattern emerging which gave rise to any concern. In addition, performance is also analysed by ethnic group. This shows that in general, pupils attain well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The school promotes a number of initiatives aimed at improving the attainment and inclusion of these pupils and their families. It is having some success with this through the provision of appropriate groups and workshops to make families more familiar with the language and expectations of school. Pupils joining the school during the year are carefully assessed to ensure that they receive additional support where necessary and are placed in the appropriate ability groups for class work.
7. In English standards are below average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, for reasons outlined previously. Speaking and listening skills are developing particularly well with teachers giving many opportunities for discussion and encouraging pupils to experiment with a wide range of vocabulary. However, for some pupils school is the only place where they speak English, as other languages are spoken at home. Standards in reading are generally average throughout the school and pupils of all abilities respond positively to reading. By the end of Year 2, writing is below average overall because although writing skills are above average for the higher attaining pupils, there are a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties whose writing is below average. Pupils are taught correct letter formation from an early stage and confidently construct their words using sounds so that most words are recognisable. By the end of Year 6, pupils use planning effectively to gather ideas and structure their writing. They write in a number of styles and for a range of purposes. The pupils use a wide range of interesting vocabulary and although spelling has improved, particularly that of the older pupils, enough attention is not always paid to this because word banks and dictionaries are not always available to check it. The presentation and handwriting skills of nearly all pupils are neat and it is clear that pupils take pride in their work.
8. In mathematics, pupils' attainment is below average throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' mental calculation is not yet well developed and some are not yet confident in simple computation. The few higher attaining pupils can recall simple addition facts. However, not all pupils are confident of place value to 100. In Years 3 to 6, pupils consolidate and extend their numeracy skills and their mental calculations are developing well overall. By Year 6, pupils are

using their skills to solve problems, however, many find this difficult because they have had insufficient experiences in the past. Pupils lower down the school find problem solving easier because they have had the benefit of learning how to applying their previous knowledge over a greater length of time.

9. Attainment in science is below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school a particular emphasis has been paid to developing pupils' investigative skills in response to the key issue of the last inspection. Younger pupils record what they have learned a range of ways including graphs and diagrams Pupils build well on their prior learning as they move through Key Stage 2⁴. Their understanding of scientific terminology is improving. They are given good opportunities to plan a task, carry it out and to record their results. However, there is an over reliance on worksheets and there is too little evaluation and interpretation of evidence at the end of an experiment. This means that some Year 6 pupils cannot explain clearly what they have learned.
10. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because pupils have had insufficient experiences in the past and are only now beginning to receive the full curriculum. Pupils throughout the school are now taught regularly in the new computer areas in each classroom and are gaining more expertise in basic skills. By the end of Year 2 most pupils can use a mouse, although keyboard skills are not developed as well as they might be. They have too little experience of handling data or control technology. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils have used the internet to search for information. Year 6 are familiar with word processing and they are gaining competence with editing procedures such as copy, cut and paste. Pupils have some experience of simple data handling, such as producing graphs. ICT is beginning to be integrated across the curriculum but this is not consistent across all subjects in all classes. This is a major area for development in the school improvement plan.
11. Standards in music are above average throughout the school and the pupils benefit from very good teaching by a music specialist, who concentrates on the areas that most teachers are least confident with, such as composing and appreciation, as well as singing which is augmented by teaching from the school's staff. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection and pupils show a sound understanding of all elements of the designing and making process. In art, pupils reach average standards by the end of Years 2 and Year 6. Pupils have the opportunity to work with a variety of media and make sound progress in learning a range of new skills and techniques. In geography, history, music and physical education pupils' attainment is in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. In religious education, pupils achieve what is expected in the agreed syllabus by end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of the basic principles of different faiths.
12. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because they receive good well targeted support. Individual education plans give good information for class teachers and targets are short term, achievable and regularly reviewed. Support staff are aware of what these targets are and work with class teachers to ensure they are planned for and taught to in lessons. Pupils who are part of the speech and language units also make good progress. They are integrated into class lessons where appropriate and always receive good support. They also receive some discrete teaching within the units and the combination of the two methods is successful in ensuring their integration within the school.

⁴ Key Stage 1 – Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 2 – Years 3 to 6.

13. Pupils learning English as an additional language [EAL] and who are supported by specialist teachers make very good progress through foundation stage and good progress through the rest of the school. Some start school with very little English and quickly learn some basic words. Their teachers help them understand what is happening in the classroom sometimes by using the language of the home. Support continues for pupils who enter the school in Key Stage Two with limited English. This means children integrate quickly and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Overall pupils' attitudes to learning are good as they were in the previous inspection. Their attitudes to their work have a positive impact on their learning. Most pupils like coming to school and they enjoy learning, not only in the classroom, but also on trips away from school. A good example during the inspection was on a trip to a local pizza restaurant when and reception nursery pupils demonstrated suppressed excitement, whilst gaining educationally from that visit. Pupils are articulate when discussing their life in school. They know and understand the well established routines of the school, and pupils who are new to the school quickly settle into them as well. Pupils are particularly good in classroom discussions at waiting to take their turn to speak or answer questions and do not do so until invited to by the teacher. They listen to each other and the teacher carefully, and respond appropriately, which all contributes well to their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the work of each class, as are the pupils from the speech and language units in the school who regularly join classes for part of the day. These pupils are also well provided for so that they also have positive attitudes to school and their learning.
15. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good as it was in the previous inspection. The role models provided by all the staff in the school together with consistent implementation of the behaviour policy are both significant contributory factors. The schemes for rewarding good behaviour, good effort and good work are enjoyed by all the pupils. Pupils know the school rules and together with their teacher devise the standards of conduct they adopt in their own class. Year 6 pupils are encouraged to befriend reception pupils and pupils from the speech and language units, and this also has a positive impact on all pupils' behaviour around the school. In the playground, pupils play sensibly together making good use of the good range and quantity of play equipment that is available. If incidents occur they are well managed by the staff using procedures that the pupils clearly understand. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection and pupils explained that on the rare occasions when it does happen they can be sure that the teachers will sort it out. Although there were six exclusions during the past two years these pupils are no longer in the school.
16. Relationships are good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. The pupils show respect for the values and beliefs of others and this is apparent in the way they relate to each other, both in lessons and elsewhere. Boys and girls, of different ages and from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds work mix happily. All pupils including those with special educational needs and from the speech and language units work and play together well.
17. Pupils' personal development is good and has improved since the last inspection. In class they work hard on their assigned tasks, listen to their teachers and respond confidently. They assist the teachers with numerous housekeeping tasks which help the smooth running of the lessons. Pupils share duties such as returning registers to the office and holding doors open for the class to pass through when moving around the school. The school council has elected representatives for each class; pupils take these responsibilities seriously and like to see their ideas for the school being put into practice. Year 6 pupils have a wider range of responsibilities on a rota

basis such as distributing the play equipment at lunchtimes, assisting in assemblies and being buddies with the younger children.

18. Overall, attendance is poor. It is below the national average and, although it is slowly improving, is not as good as it was in the previous inspection. The level of authorised absence is close to the national and Hertfordshire average for primary schools, but the level of unauthorised absence, is well above national averages. Some of the high level of unauthorised absence is the result of some pupils travelling back to home countries for extended periods to visit their families. Whilst being sensitive to the importance attached to these visits by many parents, and recognising that the experience can be valuable, the school is very aware of the negative impact that absence can have on the attainment of the pupils that are involved. However, other unauthorised absence is the result of a small number of parents having a relaxed attitude to the importance of school attendance, and not complying with the school's expectations and procedures. These high levels of absence inevitably have adverse effects on pupils learning and the academic standards that they achieve. A small minority of pupils persistently arrive at school after registration has taken place. These late arrivals are almost invariably the same pupils each day, who not only miss important information for themselves, but they also disrupt the start of the day for the rest of the pupils in the class.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when nearly nine percent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Fifty lessons were observed during the inspection of which over three quarters were good or better, with two fifths being very good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In the Foundation Stage, teaching observed was very good. This ensures that children in nursery and reception make a very good start in their learning. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 enjoy consistently good teaching with some very good practice. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good, although slightly less consistent because there has been some disruption in the provision for Year 4, with the greatest strengths in Year 5.
20. The teaching and learning of children in the nursery and reception classes is very good in all the six areas of learning. Nursery and reception are taught together and have many opportunities to engage in constructive play. There is a very effective balance between children planning their own learning and learning planned for them by the teacher. All tasks are set within a stimulating and rich environment where pupils are encouraged to be independent. The teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematics has a high profile and as a result most children will reach the early learning goals in these areas by the time they are five. The teacher and assistants have very high expectations of the children, their management of them is excellent and all are fully included and expected to succeed. A visit to a local restaurant was packed with exciting opportunities to learn across all the areas of experience. For example the children chose their own ingredients and made their own pizzas. Assistants and parent helpers are valued and used effectively and children benefit from the calm and caring atmosphere that is produced by them. This is very helpful to their learning and contributes considerably towards the progress that the children make by the end of their time in reception.
21. The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 was characterised by teachers' very good subject knowledge and challenging questions which probed pupils' understanding. Lessons were thoroughly planned. Good introductions and a drawing together of what had been learned at the end of lessons, enabled pupils to know what they were expected to learn about. Other strengths included teachers' good management of pupil behaviour and the way in which lessons were organised. Some of these characteristic were seen in a very good Year 1 mathematics lesson

when pupils were learning to recognise pairs of numbers which make ten. The teacher's good planning and subject knowledge was demonstrated by her clear explanations to pupils about what was required of them. The wide selection of resources was well organised and managed and the teacher had very high expectations that pupils would behave and take part. This encouraged pupils to participate fully, try hard and apply themselves well to the tasks they were given.

22. In Years 3 to 6, strengths included teacher enthusiasm, encouragement of pupils to be independent and to make decisions for themselves and asking pupils for explanations of their answers. This challenged their thinking and helped them to make good progress as they learned. A very good mathematics lesson in Year 6 involved the use of the computer to plan and draw shapes. The lesson was planned in a very structured way and this led to pupils feeling secure in their learning. They had a clear understanding of what was required of them. Most teachers are particularly good at managing pupils, including those who find it difficult to settle down or in other ways present behaviour problems. This is particularly true in Year 6 where the teacher uses a judicious mix of good humour and warmth along with a firm and businesslike approach. The consistent use of the school's behaviour policy, and the emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour, has good results. However, strategies for managing behaviour are occasionally not as effective as they might be allowing a small minority of pupils to interrupt the learning of others.
23. Marking is generally of sound quality. Sometimes it makes helpful suggestions as to how work might be improved in the future, or how it might be taken forward but, again, this is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers occasionally refer to pupils' individual targets but this is not consistent and comments are not always followed up when they have not been appropriately responded to. Teachers keep clear and useful records, and know their pupils very well. Homework is used well to support work being carried out in class and whole school priorities.
24. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been well implemented, despite the staffing difficulties and changes experienced by the school over the last two years. The teaching of basic skills in both key stages is good. For example strategies for sounding out words by blending sounds are well taught and reinforced throughout Key Stage 1 and this is especially helpful to pupils when they attempt to build words whilst learning to read. By Year 6 pupils are learning how to make sentences more interesting by extending them with the use of conjunctions. Teachers in Key Stage 1 concentrate on number and pupils have many opportunities for rehearsing counting, adding and subtracting. By Year 6 they are able to use this knowledge when learning to measure in metric and imperial units. In these lessons, nearly all pupils try hard, concentrate well and apply themselves well to the tasks they are given.
25. The greatest strengths in subject teaching were in music where a specialist is employed by the school to teach all class groups. This is good value because class teachers also have the opportunity to learn and improve their own expertise by working alongside the music teacher. Although teaching in all subjects was satisfactory or better it was relatively less effective in some mathematics lessons where the confidence of some teachers was not always as secure as in other subjects.
26. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils from the speech and language units attend mainstream lessons where appropriate and integration is very successful. Throughout the school teachers and their assistants use many effective teaching and behaviour strategies and work together very closely. As a result, all pupils are well supported in their learning and make good progress. The good and very good lessons seen in the unit classrooms were all very well organised with a strong emphasis on speaking, listening and

communication skills. In a very good science lesson the vocabulary of pupils in Year 2 was extended to encompass the essential words needed for their circuit diagrams. Support staff understood pupils' needs and were able to give excellent guidance and develop pupil understanding. Because teachers have high expectations of pupils, they are thoroughly challenged, try hard and respond well.

27. Pupils learning English as an additional language, including those at an early stage in acquiring the language, are taught effectively and learn well. They are well supported in class. There is a team of specialist teachers and an assistant who work closely with the class teachers to ensure that the pupils who are not fluent in English understand the lessons. The bi-lingual assistant works with pupils in their mother tongue and this means that they settle well in lessons and can make good progress. Specialist teachers assess pupils' needs when they arrive in school and are able to give expert support in whatever class needs it most. In a Year 2 English lesson where the class was comparing different texts, six pupils requiring additional help were very well supported in their learning. The class teacher encouraged them to repeat words, learning the correct pronunciation, and ensured that they understood her questions.
28. In most lessons higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively because tasks are adapted to their needs. In a Year 3 science lesson whilst investigating soils, most pupils were supported by questions to direct their learning. Higher attaining pupils were expected to work independently, labelling their diagrams, listing components and identifying the type of soil, its colour, texture and content. Teachers often demand more detailed explanations from higher attaining pupils in answer to more searching questions.

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

29. The quality and range of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and enables children to make a secure start and gain a good basis for the work of the National Curriculum. All areas of the curriculum for young children are well covered and planning for each of these is meticulous. The curriculum is good for the pupils in Years One to Six. All subjects of the national curriculum and religious education are taught, offering a wide range of rich learning opportunities. The time allocated to each subject is appropriate.
30. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, when it was found that the planning did not ensure the progression and assessment required attention. There was also a lack of curriculum policies. This situation has been successfully addressed. Good schemes of work are in place, planning is consistently good and ensures pupils learning builds on what they have learned before.
31. All the pupils have access to the whole curriculum. For example, for pupils in the language units this includes good support in classrooms as well as in the units. The curriculum is enriched for these pupils by their regular integration into mainstream classes with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities organised by the school. Pupils with additional funding are supported well by teachers and learning support assistants and receive additional help both individually and in small groups. Pupils' individual education plans are drawn up by the class teachers, working with the co-ordinator and special needs teacher, and they are regularly reviewed. In these ways, the school is taking good measures to include pupils with special educational needs.
32. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well provided for. The teachers plan work well to ensure that opportunities are afforded in lessons for all the pupils to make progress. The

- support staff provide positive help in encouraging pupils. Sometimes they explain activities using language which is easier to understand or they provide additional resources to help pupils understand. This is especially effective in literacy and numeracy lessons and helps pupils make good progress, in line with their individual capabilities. The team keep detailed records of the pupils they support and plan work well based on these assessments. Pupils make especially good progress in their personal development. They very quickly become confident and well integrated into the school community.
33. Good opportunities are provided for the development of the pupils' personal and social development. The school is committed to providing an education which meets the particular needs of each of its pupils and lessons routinely contain separate activities designed specifically for higher and lower achievers. Setting in English and mathematics lessons extends this provision.
 34. The curricular provision for pupils in both key stages reflects the school's priorities for improving standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The National Literacy and the National Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully. The emphasis on continued improvement in listening, speaking and written competence as well as mathematics is helping to raise standards. The school uses the appropriate national and local curricular guidance, to provide a sound basis for the teachers to plan their work across the curriculum. The overall quality of planning is good, and is generally matched well to the targets identified by the school for groups and individual pupils.
 35. The quality of the provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school has a satisfactory policy and effective programmes for the teaching of health education, sex education and for bringing to the pupils, in an informed manner, the dangers associated with smoking, and the misuse of drugs. The school nurtures a caring environment, where the development of high quality individual care and inter-personal relationships are seen as very important.
 36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' moral development, although good, is not as strong a feature as the other elements which are all very good.
 37. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. This aspect has been improved since the last inspection. Older pupils articulate their personal beliefs and reflect on what is important to them. Assemblies and 'thinking times' in class give them an opportunity to focus on their thoughts and the impact of their actions. The amazement pupils experience when using digital imagery equipment in science to examine rocks closely makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Younger pupils' gasp with pleasure when they find unexpected number patterns in a numeracy lessons or realise that they can change the design of a duck using a computer program. In these ways they experience the joy of new learning.
 38. The provision for moral development is good, as it was in the last inspection. The staff work well together to carry out the school's procedures for rewards and sanctions although the various systems which operate currently are complex and are due to be reviewed this year. General rules are well known to the pupils and behaviour management strategies are consistently applied in lessons. Pupils understand that sharing equipment sensibly is important and this helps to make the classroom a calm learning environment and the playground a comfortable place to be in.

39. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to get along with each other. Activities are planned so that pupils sometimes work together in a group, operate as 'talking pairs' or, when appropriate, work independently. Purposeful stories in assemblies and class lessons re-inforce the need for cooperation and collaboration. The 'buddy' system, which involves Year 6 pupils helping younger pupils, and circle time are similarly used to achieve greater tolerance and help pupils to resolve difficulties in order to promote their personal development. Pupils have lots of opportunities to take on different responsibilities in the school, for example as library monitors and lunch box monitors. They treat their responsibilities seriously.
40. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Assemblies, which are planned to support themes across the school curriculum, also contribute very well to the value which the school places on the celebration of religious and cultural diversity. There is mutual tolerance and respect in the classrooms. Teachers foster this by planning many opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience aspects of different religions and cultures. For example, pupils learn about the festival traditions of Jews and Muslims as well as Christians, they see how people in the local community wear their traditional costumes. In addition they visit local places of worship such as the Buddhist temple. The richness and diversity of the school's culture is celebrated explicitly through careful provision of appropriate resources in music, art and literature. Teaching plans ensure that pupils gain insight into the historical past of Watford as well as regions further a field. Pupils are proud to tell visitors about the different nationalities, religions and cultures that are represented in their school.
41. Curriculum opportunities for pupils outside the main school day are satisfactory. There are a number of after school clubs including computers, recorders and football, which is run by professional coaches from Football 2000.
42. The school's links with the local community are very good and the school is working hard to improve them further, particularly through further community use of the Newton Price building, next to the school. This building is already used by the Watford Palace Theatre Education Unit and plans are well advanced for a before and after school club for pupils of the school. The school is visited by a number of authors, artists, musicians, the police and fire brigade. Pupils explained how much they enjoyed Setpoint Projects – a scheme of practical scientific or technology work run through Rotary and using the skills of retired engineers. Pupils pay visits to a variety of local places of worship, including Christian churches, a Muslim mosque and a Hindu temple. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity of a residential trip to the Isle of Wight; this embraces aspects of the physical education curriculum as well as enhancing their personal development and social skills.
43. Links with partner institutions are satisfactory. There are appropriate links with the many secondary schools to which pupils transfer. The Year 7 tutors from those schools come to meet their prospective pupils and consult with the Year 6 staff, and staff with responsibilities for special education needs. In July the Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to experience a trial day in their chosen secondary school. The school has particular links with Watford Girls and Boys Grammar Schools for art and science special projects. The school also welcomes some students from the University of Hertfordshire and the West Hertfordshire College for teacher and nursery staff placements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and welfare of pupils are good. Child protection procedures based on the very comprehensive Hertfordshire Child Protection Committee guidelines are in place, with the head teacher undertaking the role of designated

person. The school has good and well established relationships with social services and other support agencies. New members of staff are fully briefed on their responsibilities in this regard as part of their introduction to the school and all members of staff are regularly reminded at staff meetings. Routines for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents are in place with twenty one staff having been trained in emergency first aid. Health and safety risks are reviewed regularly by a committee including a governor and the caretaker. Safety checks on potentially hazardous physical education and electrical equipment take place annually. Practice evacuations of the premises take place each term and their timings and any difficulties encountered recorded.

45. The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good, and the school is implementing a number of procedures to try to ensure that the currently poor attendance and punctuality improve. With the assistance of the education welfare officer from the local education authority, the school works hard to monitor absences and lateness. Parents sign the home school agreement every year. This includes commitments regarding punctuality and notifying the school when pupils are unavoidably absent. The head teacher sends out newsletters on this specific topic. Nevertheless, a significant minority of parents do not cooperate fully with the school over this matter. When parents wish to take pupils abroad for extended periods, the head teacher meets with them to ensure that the impact on pupils' education is clearly understood. The school and education welfare officer have developed and implemented specific actions targeting particular pupils and their parents. Although this action is comparatively recent it is beginning to have a positive impact and the attendance of some of the pupils is improving.
46. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school has a good behaviour policy and appropriate rules. The policy is applied consistently by all staff throughout the school which leads to pupils invariably behaving well but knowing what to expect if they behave inappropriately. Each class develops their own code of conduct for behaviour during lessons, which is implemented by themselves and the class teacher. This has a positive impact on behaviour in the classroom and enables them to learn effectively. Pupils receive rewards for good behaviour as well as good work. The midday supervisory staff have received good training in managing poor behaviour and use a red/yellow card procedure which the pupils understand, and can lead to pupils having to stay in at lunchtimes.
47. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. In the foundation stage extensive formal records are kept. As pupils move through the school, recording is less formal and done on an exception basis when there are issues of concern, or progress is noticeably less than it should be. For pupils with special educational needs their individual development plans cover these aspects and are reviewed regularly with parents. The school employs a Pastoral Care Assistant who is a professional counsellor and is available to work in small groups with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 who have particular problems. This enables pupils to talk through their difficulties in a calm atmosphere, which has a positive impact on their ability to concentrate when they return to class. The annual reports on all pupils include mention of personal development and demonstrate the good understanding that teachers have of their pupils. There is good individual support as necessary for those pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, and those pupils with language difficulties.
48. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements in the implementation of consistent procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and attainment. The procedures for assessing pupils on entry to school, identifying those with special educational

needs, and those for who English is an additional language, are good. Assessment in the Foundation Stage against the achievement of the Early Learning Goals is very effective.

49. Throughout the school there are good arrangements for the assessing and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. All teachers keep good records of pupils' progress which are reviewed twice each year. Teachers assess pupils on a daily basis and make notes to help them plan activities which will help pupils learn better according to their capabilities. In English pupils have targets matched to their individual needs. Pupils find this helpful as it helps them to take some responsibility for their own learning. Although assessments in mathematics and science are thorough they do not yet involve pupils' negotiating their own individual targets or evaluating their own learning.
50. In the foundation subjects assessment procedures are generally sound but are more comprehensive in some subjects than others. For example, assessment in music is good with a detailed evaluation for each child's progress in each unit of work studied. There are some opportunities for pupils to evaluate what they know and understand. For example, they do this well in design technology and younger pupils, in Year 2 are beginning to assess their own skills on the computer. However, these opportunities are inconsistent across the school. In all subjects assessments are carried out at the end of each term to inform the end of year reports which comment on pupils' progress linked to the National Curriculum. Teachers are more confident in completing this annual profile as a result of in-service training. However, there is no systematic assessment process which helps teachers plan on a day-to-day basis for all pupils throughout the year. This is a weakness which means that specific areas for development are not always identified in the foundation subjects.
51. Teachers' marking has been monitored to see if written work is marked regularly and helps pupils learn. An examination of pupils work shows that there has been a marked improvement in the quality of marking but that carried out by some teachers is still not as helpful as it should be.
52. The assessment co-ordinator is very experienced and knowledgeable. She has managed the improvements since the last inspection very well and she has trained all staff, including those new to the school, so that they understand the school's assessment procedure and systems for data analysis. The co-ordinator has been hampered by technical difficulties with the computer pupil tracking program. However, it is hoped that this will be fully operational at the end of this academic year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents' views of the school are very good. In meeting parents at school and from responses to the questionnaire there has been very little criticism, and in particular the questionnaire responses show a very high level of satisfaction with the school, especially the teaching and the progress that pupils make. Parents appreciate the caring ethos of the school, the standards that pupils achieve, the good behaviour and discipline that they learn, and the approachability of the head teacher and all the staff.
54. The information provided by the school to parents is very good. The general information provided through the newsletters is good, and includes, each half term, a timetable of events over the coming weeks. The prospectus and the Governors Annual Report to Parents are straightforwardly presented and conform to statutory requirements. The arrangements for consultation evenings are very well thought out. They are held every term. The school arranges alternative dates and early or late times, and tries hard to ensure that parents do not miss the opportunity to learn about their children's progress. At the end of the summer term parents receive the annual reports on individual pupils. These reports are good. They show clearly the

progress that the pupil is making in each subject and what they need to improve. There is a useful commentary on personal development and targets for the next year in the main curriculum subjects are included. Parents are invited to comment and many do.

55. Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is satisfactory. Each year, individual home/school agreements are signed by all the pupils and their parents. For the younger pupils parents support their children in learning to read and make good use of the reading record books. Parents positively encourage their children in their other homework assignments as they progress through the school. A number of parents come into school to assist in a variety of ways in the classrooms and in some extra-curricular activities. The Parent Teacher Association is very active in organising fundraising and social events at the school, and the money raised is used appropriately to enhance the schools' facilities.
56. The parents of pupils' with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children' progress. They are invited to reviews of their individual education plans and are always welcome to discuss any problems with teachers.
57. The team supporting pupils learning English as an additional language work well with parents. They are able to ensure that interpreters are available for parents' consultation evenings, and that newsletters and other information is available in the appropriate language

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The overall quality of leadership and management within the school is good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future educational direction of the school and his leadership is very strong and effective. Since his appointment at the beginning of the academic year a very comprehensive plan for improvement has been produced. The areas identified for further improvement are relevant and the plan shows what needs to be done and how the school intends to bring about a rise in standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Through this plan, and the well organised day-to-day management of the school, its aims and values are fully reflected and recognised and can be deeply felt in all aspects of its work. The senior management team work closely with the headteacher and ensure the effective and smooth running of the school on a daily basis. They also play a key role in successfully welding together staff teams. The whole staff work effectively together despite so many staff changes over recent months. The last inspection identified some inadequacies in the roles of subject leaders, particularly the monitoring of their subjects. The headteacher has introduced a focus on teaching and standards for all co-ordinators and this has brought about improvement in the quality of teaching and standards are beginning to rise.
59. Since the appointment of the new headteacher the governing body has become more aware of its statutory responsibilities. It is now fulfilling them well. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school both individually and through an appropriate committee structure and collectively they maintain an oversight of the school's work. There are a number of new governors, including a new chairman, but communication is good and members are becoming well informed. They have taken full advantage of training opportunities. They have a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have been fully involved in setting academic targets for English and mathematics with the headteacher and the local authority. A very good partnership exists between the headteacher and the governors. Governors are encouraged to ask questions and behave as a critical friend. In this way they ensure that they are fully involved in the strategic direction of the school.

60. The headteacher and senior staff have made a very good start in monitoring the school's performance. Lesson observations by the headteacher are having a successful impact upon the quality of teaching and learning, and performance management for teachers has been fully introduced. This is an improvement since the last inspection when no staff appraisal was in place. Individual tracking of pupil progress in English and mathematics and analysis of test results are all beginning to ensure that pupils are achieving to the best of their ability. Through this work actions being taken to meet the school's targets are good. The deputy headteacher has ensured that assessment procedures for pupils have been explained to all staff as they have joined the school. Procedures for supporting new staff are good and the support for a newly qualified teacher has been very good. This has enabled her to successfully complete her first year of teaching. The school has a well trained senior member of staff to support student teachers.
61. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very well organised and works closely with the special educational needs teacher as well as giving valuable advice to teachers and teaching assistants. She has some time out of her class to manage this vital area but it is insufficient which means much of the administrative work has to be carried out in her own time. Funding for special educational needs is used appropriately.

62. There is clear educational direction from the team supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. They work together well as a team, identifying the particular needs of the pupils and meeting that need within the classroom. As a result pupils settle into school well and quickly become confident and make good progress.
63. There are enough teaching staff to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, and they are helped by well trained and well deployed non-teaching staff. Midday supervisors and premises staff contribute well to the daily running of the school.
64. The accommodation is generally sound. The interior accommodation is mostly laid out on one level and much effort has been made to make it accessible to those with mobility problems. The classrooms are bright, airy and spacious. Storage space is satisfactory. The school is fortunate in having two halls, for teaching and for dining, which are large enough to accommodate the whole school comfortably. The library is positioned centrally, well laid out, readily accessible and used regularly. The main building is in sound decorative order and attractive displays provide a stimulating working environment. The school has the use of additional accommodation in the grounds – The Newton Price Centre. This offers a good deal of potential and there are appropriate plans to develop its use for the furtherance of arts and ICT activities. However, constraints of the school site and the cramped nature of the playground inhibit the teaching of the physical education curriculum. There is no grassed area, which is unsatisfactory, and pupils have to rely on visits to a local playing field when it is available. This entails a full scale cleaning operation of the site before teaching can take place.
65. The school's resources are satisfactory to support teaching and learning in all subjects. These resources are used effectively and the school's computers are beginning to be used well to support pupils' learning. The library contains a satisfactory range of fiction and non-fiction books.
66. The school has improved its procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it are appropriately used and monitored. They have resolved the deficit situation identified at the last inspection. However, because of falling rolls the amount of money available to the school is falling from year to year. The school is constantly having to juggle finances to ensure that all monies are appropriately spent. This means that all elements of the school's spending are carefully evaluated to ensure that the most economic and effective quality of education and support is provided for the pupils in its charge. The finance committee works closely with the headteacher and administrative officer to ensure that they have a secure grasp of the school's financial situation, so that its budget is managed efficiently.
67. The headteacher and governors are committed to providing a high standard of education and their financial planning is solidly based on ensuring that the school's educational provision is sustainable in order that its educational targets are met. Planned financial reserves, the amount of money that the school expects to carry forward into the next financial year, are low but entirely appropriate to the school in its current circumstances and there is prudent contingency planning that should allow the school to respond to changing circumstances with minimal disruption to its planned strategies. This would enable it to continue to focus on raising pupils' attainment and progress by giving increased attention to maintaining appropriate staffing levels, improving learning resource provision and raising the quality of the physical environment. The use of the specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, is well focussed.

68. The school's administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are very good. The administration staff are conscientious, undertaking their duties efficiently. The school office works smoothly and effectively. Good use is made of the information available from the school's computerised management system and there are financial and administrative procedures in place that enable the administrative officer to make a positive contribution to the work of the school.
69. In judging the school's performance, members of the governing body, supported by the headteacher, make good use of the four principles of compare, challenge, consult, and compete, to plan and implement the work of the school. Governors are aware of trends in performance and are making some appropriate comparisons with how school standards compare with those expected. There is a realistic view of the need to target improved standards but this is balanced by recognition that how pupils progress is also a measure of the school's performance. Good procedures are in place for ensuring that best financial value is obtained when purchasing products or services and there are some good consultation procedures, with governors making use of a variety of information from parents, staff and the pupils.
70. The leadership of the school at the last inspection was reported as sound. It has now improved and is good. There is determined and focused leadership and very good shared commitment from staff and governors. This results in the school having a very good capacity to successfully raise standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection, and has already identified appropriate actions in the school improvement plan in order to bring about the further raising of standards. In order to ensure this occurs the headteacher, governors and staff should :
1. Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - planning specific reading, writing and mathematical opportunities into subjects other than English and mathematics,
 - ensuring that average attaining pupils are appropriately challenged in mathematics in all lessons,
 - providing appropriate training and support where necessary, so that all teachers are confident in their own mathematical knowledge,
 - encouraging pupils to interpret evidence collected at the end of an investigation in science,
 - improving the quality of marking to that of the best so that it is constructive and shows pupils how their work can be improved.
(*paragraphs: 7, 8, 9, 23, 51, 98, 99, 100, 103, 108, 114*)
 2. Raise standards in ICT by:
 - making better and more practical use of skills acquired by utilising them more fully in the classroom.
 - developing the use of ICT across all subjects of the curriculum,
(*paragraphs: 101, 103, 110, 132-138, 141*)
 3. Improve the procedures for and use of assessment in the foundation subjects by:
 - establishing procedures which will be consistently applied throughout the school,
 - ensuring that the information gained from the assessments is used to guide planning in all subjects so that the needs of all pupils can be effectively met.
(*paragraphs: 50, 121, 124, 128, 131, 138, 147, 150*)

4. Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - continuing to work closely with the appropriate authorities in order to reduce absence,
 - making parents even more aware of the link between attendance at school and children's learning. (*paragraphs: 18, 45*)

In addition to the above, the headteacher, governors and staff should also consider the following minor issue:

5. Work with the appropriate authorities to plan ways in which the outside accommodation can be improved or extended in order to provide more space for physical education and outdoor activities. (*paragraph: 64*)

Special facility – Speech and Language Units

72. The school has maintained its good quality provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Despite several changes of staff and difficulties in appointing specialist teachers, the school continues to provide good educational opportunities. It meets the pupils' needs effectively by equipping them with strategies to help them communicate in a range of situations. As a result pupils make good progress in nearly all subjects.
73. On entry to the school, the pupils' attainment is low compared with their mainstream peers. The effect of their speech and language difficulties has frequently limited their early understanding and learning. However, with highly skilled help from speech and language therapists and carefully planned teaching the pupils make rapid improvement in their learning and their self-esteem. One pupil, who had been in school for less than two months, confidently asked a member of the Hindu community the height of a baby calf. This achievement is typical of many pupils who quickly enhance their skills and can then communicate effectively in a range of situations. Examination of the pupils' statements, individual educational plans and targets show that the pupils have followed logical steps of learning which have ensured this rapid progress.
74. The pupils' behaviour is good. Despite their communication difficulties they are polite, talk to visitors with ease and have positive relationships with teachers and classroom assistants. The work of the support staff is a major factor in the pupils' ability to concentrate and behave well during lessons. In the class for younger pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2, several have short attention spans but respond well to lessons where activities are changed frequently and keep them motivated.
75. All the pupils with language and communication difficulties receive very good guidance from teachers and support staff. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and in the class for the younger pupils it is very good. In the very best lessons, staff are persistent in improving the pupils' communication. Often a small clue or even a look will be sufficient to elicit a corrected response. For example during a role play of the Goldilocks story, a pupil said 'bear chair'. The speech and language therapist merely queried 'bear' or 'bear's' and the pupil instantly corrected himself. Where pupils are distracted, teachers make very good use of specific strategies to promote the pupils' concentration and communication, such as giving time limits or making alternatives clear.
76. Very good teaching for pupils up to Year 2 provides them with a stimulating and challenging introduction to education. They benefit from excellent planning where concepts in one subject are built upon and used in others. For example, in the enjoyable lesson based on Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the pupils built on the language of relative sizes which they had used in numeracy. They recalled such words as 'smallest and tallest' and 'bigger and smaller' then added 'soft and hard' and used them all effectively in their later role-play to demonstrate their

understanding. Pupils work harmoniously together in groups when supervised by staff and some, who are becoming more mature, can work successfully with a partner. Those who find it difficult to concentrate independently are given close support and guidance which enables them to work successfully.

77. By the end of Year 2, pupils' ability and confidence in communication has already improved significantly. They listen carefully to adults' instruction and take on small tasks around the school. At the Hindu temple two pupils took turns in driving the bullock cart and were applauded by all the other pupils. This represents a major achievement for pupils who entered school with significant language difficulties and who were reluctant to communicate at all.
78. Teachers in the speech and language units are relentless in their pursuit of improvement and miss few opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking or to ensure that they communicate as effectively as possible. In the best teaching, all adults work to carefully planned tasks and when working in small groups or with individuals ensure that the pupils gain as wide an experience as possible in using their communication skills. When writing, for example, the emphasis on phonics helps the pupils to see and understand how their work on phonemes also applies to their written text. In discussion they similarly think about blending letters and are able to correct mistakes. In a science lesson, a Year 5 pupil paused after saying 'platsic' and quickly self-corrected it to 'plastic'.
79. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory some pupils are not fully and consistently challenged to do their very best because the tasks are not planned to meet their individual needs. For example, in a numeracy lesson about money with Years 4 and 5, the range and calculations were limited by the teacher so that pupils were instructed to work with a small number of coins. From their response it was clear that several could already complete these tasks and could have coped with more complex and challenging written and practical activities.
80. In all classes for pupils with language and communication difficulties the teachers' planning is detailed and involves all adults and pupils in identifying the progress they have achieved. Pupils' individual educational plans include challenging targets which are displayed in the classroom. A regular feature of lessons is the teachers' reference to the targets themselves and the work the pupils have undertaken to achieve them.
81. The role of the speech and language therapist is crucial in ensuring that pupils do well, and in guiding the teachers and assistants in their tasks. They make best use of their time by working alongside the pupils and teachers within lessons intervening appropriately to help the pupils learn. In a literacy lesson with Years 4 and 5 pupils, the speech and language therapist worked very effectively alongside the teacher to check on the pupils' expression and understanding. Together they gave an energetic demonstration of the meaning of 'springy' which a pupil used instead of 'spring-like'. This use of humour and physical involvement lent pace to the lesson and generated a great sense of learning as fun.
82. The work planned ensures coverage of the National Curriculum. It meets the pupils' individual needs effectively in most cases. However, in a small number of lessons, the work is not well enough matched to the pupils' abilities, particularly where they all work on the same task. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory and a lack of thoughtful organization resulted in two days delay between the teacher's demonstrations of Easter cards and the opportunity for pupils to make their own. The impact of their obvious enthusiasm and the knowledge they had gained as a result of watching the demonstration was therefore lost.

83. All pupils are included in the wide range of activities provided by the school including very good opportunities for pupils with speech and language difficulties to interact with others. The pupils all have regularly planned lessons with mainstream pupils, which give them a valuable opportunity to work with pupils who are not necessarily well known to them. The expertise of the speech and language teachers is freely shared with teachers in the school as a whole, so that such integration is successful and teachers understand how to support the pupils. The school also makes good use of its expertise to support a small number of pupils who need a nurturing environment. Such pupils attend on a carefully planned part time basis with a support assistant and are able to benefit from working in small language focused groups and help from the speech therapist.
84. The speech and language therapists are a major strength of the school. They are highly effective in providing excellent guidance for staff, well-planned tasks for pupils and superb subtle support in lessons. They understand the needs of the pupils very well and, because they work with them regularly, know precisely when they need help. Liaison with parents is good and they frequently visit the school for formal events such as annual reviews or parents' meetings. All staff attend these functions and also visit parents at home so that they can discuss any issues of concern. They also provide a very good opportunity for staff, such as therapists and assistants, to demonstrate and explain their precise role in the child's education.
85. The management of the speech and language classes is satisfactory, but frequent changes of staff and the appointment of temporary teachers have limited some important monitoring activities such as lesson observations. These difficulties have also affected curriculum development. Although resources are used well, not enough time is allocated to ICT. Pupils are not provided with sufficient computer time to develop their skills and to use the computer as an everyday aid to learning.
86. While the classrooms are of a good size, the position of the junior unit away from the main school is a disadvantage. In poor weather pupils get cold and wet and they do not get involved in the general hustle and bustle of school life in the main building.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	18	18	12	0	0	0
Percentage	4	36	36	24	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two, percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	170
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		53

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		25
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		66

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	62

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.7

National comparative data	5.4
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	12	10	11
	Total	21	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (64)	63 (64)	73 (76)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	9
	Girls	11	12	10
	Total	20	23	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (61)	77 (76)	63 (70)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	9	13
	Girls	10	8	13
	Total	21	17	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (39)	53 (42)	81 (76)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	12	10
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	21	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (44)	70 (69)	70 (75)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
74	0	0
2	0	0
11	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
7	0	0
3	0	0
25	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
2	4	0
1	0	0
2	2	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
33	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	26

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	685,236
Total expenditure	686,145
Expenditure per pupil	3555
Balance brought forward from previous year	48541
Balance carried forward to next year	42210

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	185
Number of questionnaires returned	37
Percentage of questionnaires returned	20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	43	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	51	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	52	11	0	5
The teaching is good.	65	30	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	32	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	57	41	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	46	0	0	0

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

32	31	24	0	14
----	----	----	---	----

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

87. There has been good improvement in teaching and provision for children in the nursery and reception since the last inspection. This enables them to make a very good start and is a strength of the school. Standards of teaching in the nursery have been maintained and in reception the teaching is now at least good and sometimes very good and excellent. Children experience a very rich and stimulating environment and staff work very well together and share expertise effectively. They have a secure knowledge of all six areas of learning and question children in a way which encourages them to develop their understanding. The very wide ranging needs of the children are well provided for and all are included in a variety of appropriate activities. Children who begin in the nursery are offered very good models of behaviour and attitudes by the reception children because of the organisation which allows nursery and reception children to work together. Accommodation is very good and space is well used to create interesting areas. Two very well equipped outside areas offer children opportunities to take part in physical activities. All resources are well organised and accessible to children. A particularly successful characteristic of the early years is the use of the “High Scope” method of encouraging children to make choices about their learning and to become independent. Learning plans for the day are very well balanced between activities chosen by the child and those chosen by the teacher. Every child’s progress is carefully monitored and learning adjusted accordingly. As a result children make very good progress throughout their time in nursery and reception and most attain the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning by the time they begin in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

88. Children make very good progress in this area of learning. The organisation of the day is such that they are given many good opportunities to make choices and decisions about their work. They learn to sit quietly and reflectively at the beginning of the day and enjoy the music that is played for them. At the beginning of “work time” they plan where they are going to work for the session and keep a record of it in their planning book. They are encouraged to be independent and are assisted in this through well organised resources which they can access easily. They find what they need and there is a high expectation that they will tidy up very well afterwards. They work and play together constructively, share and take turns when playing with games and puzzles. Very good self-help skills are developed by opportunities to help at “snack time” when they carry the drinks and serve each other. They are polite and helpful and can often be heard saying please and thank you to each other as well as to adults. On a visit to Pizza Express all pupils were expected to put their own coat on and off, look after their belongings, walk sensibly in the streets and say a polite “good morning” to the manager of the restaurant. Teaching is very good and as a result all children show good attitudes to learning. A mild dispute between two children was extremely well handled by the teacher. One child apologised and the other accepted the apology with a polite “thank you”. This area of learning contributes very successfully to all others.

Communication, language and literacy

89. Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to write, read, speak and listen and the teaching of literacy is good. All children recognise and write their own name and at least one

third of reception children are writing their own sentences. These children can spell simple words correctly and use full stops. Less able children are supported in their writing by the teacher scribing for them and by using word banks independently. All children are encouraged to read back their writing to an adult. Writing is well supported and encouraged throughout the unit by interesting opportunities in role play areas, for example, the Pizza Parlour and shops where they read menus and write lists. Through games children practise sounds and letter names which successfully develop their reading, speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to retell well known stories such as The Rainbow Fish and Noah's Ark and to build a good vocabulary in other areas of learning, for example their work on changes to materials. A reading record travels between home and school and children are encouraged to take their book home to read as well as their word pot to help them build a sight vocabulary. Children have good strategies to help them learn to read. They use their knowledge of sounds and pictures to help them build unknown words. They read or retell stories with interest and expression. Many very good opportunities exist for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. An important feature of this is the way in which the teacher extends their skills by often asking children to explain their answers. Literacy links with the other areas of learning are strong. The provision for children for whom English is a second language is very well supported and they make good progress. Reception children from the language unit are included well when they join the group.

Mathematical development

90. Teaching in this area is very good and children achieve well. By the end of the reception year most will have met, and some will have exceeded, the Early Learning Goals. A wide range of interesting mathematical activities ensures that children have opportunities to match and sort as well as learning to count to ten. They use bears to compare size and explore small, medium and large. Board games encourage counting and turn taking. Very colourful Indian shoes are used for counting in twos. During registration children were observed using a number line and were encouraged to add the numbers of nursery and reception children present that day. The teacher taught a good strategy to the children by telling them to keep the number seven in their heads and to count on five. In this way some children arrived very quickly at twelve. Whilst on a visit to Pizza Express children could name circle, square and rectangle. They notice and can repeat patterns. During their own work time two children were observed organising and correctly playing a mathematical board game by themselves. There are many opportunities to involve mathematics in role play areas through shops with tills. Children show good attitudes to learning and are keen and enthusiastic within this area of their development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

91. A broadening of children's development in this area is very well provided for both within the classroom and in the local area. The visit to Pizza Express was very well organised and created a particularly rich experience with many opportunities to begin to understand and respond to the world around them. During the visit the children saw the glassed in Tudor walls and the roof that had been a part of the original coaching inn. They were introduced to the idea that it is important to look after very special old things from the past. When making their own pizzas they chose from a wide range of ingredients, some of which were new to many of them. They wore chefs' hats and aprons to help them learn about the jobs that people do. In the classroom they followed up the experience through role play in the carefully constructed Pizza Parlour with its café atmosphere. Children ask questions, investigate and observe similarities and differences through a study of materials and how they change. They make toast, and freeze fruit squash, cook pasta and make play dough. Through these activities the staff team forge good links with other areas of learning, particularly in the extension of the children's vocabulary. An exciting collection of objects on a discovery table gives them a very good opportunity to explore and investigate colour

and light. The story of “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” is a good introduction to the life cycle of the butterfly. Computers are available for children to develop elementary skills in using the keyboard and mouse as well as supporting areas of learning. Children’s knowledge and understanding of the world around them is systematically planned and specific learning experiences are clearly identified.

Physical development

92. A wide range of outdoor equipment and physical education activities helps children to make very good progress in the development of their physical skills. Pencils, crayons, brushes and other small tools are used with relative confidence. They are encouraged to select from a good range of construction equipment to build and to develop manipulative skills. Making the pizzas on their visit was particularly challenging but they successfully shaped the large rounds of dough, pressed them into shape and held the large pizza pans, rolling the sauce over the pizza base. Clear demonstration by adults enabled children to copy how things could best be done. “Ride on” toys, wooden climbing apparatus and tubes help them to run, jump, balance and climb showing an awareness of others and the space around them. The teaching in this area is good. Children show confidence and enjoyment in physical activities resulting in good attitudes to learning.

Creative development

93. In their creative development, good progress is made as children explore their own ideas through drawing, printing and painting. They know the names of most colours and can use paint effectively to produce various paintings of their own. A small group of children were observed working with a teaching assistant to explore “creeping” colours. The assistant carefully demonstrated the technique to be used. Children handled the brushes with dexterity and chose their own colours creatively. They worked intently and quietly. “Rothko” has been used as a model for big block painting. Children respond well to stories and rhymes and have a good repertoire of action songs and generally sing in tune. The art area is large and well organised. The imaginative role play areas make an important contribution to this area of learning.
94. Overall, the nursery and reception unit provides a very good foundation for progression to Year 1 and the National Curriculum. Very good relationships exist between teachers, assistants and children and this provides a very calm and relaxed but purposeful atmosphere. Children are praised and encouraged and because of this they behave well, do their best and develop very good attitudes to learning.

ENGLISH

95. In the national tests in 2002, standards at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and writing when compared with all schools and those of a similar kind. At the end of Year 6 standards were below average when compared with schools nationally but average when compared with schools of a similar kind. The results for both groups of pupils were a significant improvement on the ones from the previous year, particularly those at the end of Year 6 where 25 per cent more pupils attained the nationally expected level. English has been targeted as a specific area for improvement in the school and the results, and the inspection evidence show that the actions taken as a result of careful monitoring and analysis of pupils’ work are having a positive impact on pupils’ learning. This shows significant improvement since the last inspection. Although standards have generally improved, inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are currently below average. This is due to the very high percentage of pupils in these particular years with learning difficulties. Higher attaining pupils are recognised and suitably challenged, and the progress of pupils with special educational needs is good due to

the good support they receive both within the class and through additional support when they are withdrawn. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive good support in the classroom to ensure that they learn effectively and are able to fully participate in lessons. During the inspection there was no noticeable difference between the achievements of boys and girls. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the subject. Pupils' achievements overall are good.

96. By the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate that they are sound listeners, who follow instructions well. They generally speak clearly and have an appropriate vocabulary for their age. They are relatively confident speakers, using their vocabulary to express well what they wish to say with a reasonable vocabulary used for descriptions and explanations. All pupils are encouraged to develop speaking skills by discussion with each other on a regular basis. For example, when reading 'The Big Sneeze' they discussed, in pairs, the similarities and differences between that and 'Why Flies Buzz' a book they had read before. By the end of Year 6, many pupils speak confidently across many areas of the curriculum although some are not very articulate and struggle with the words to express exactly what they want to say. Teachers provide many good and varied opportunities for pupils to enter into lively debate and discussion, with the result that pupils are not afraid to express opinions and question what they hear. This was evident when they were discussing whether school uniform should be compulsory. They also show a good ability to listen to their teachers and to each other with respect, valuing the ideas of others. They show a good deal of sensitivity; for example, when they are appraising each other's work at the end of a session. Drama and performance provide good opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills in formal and informal situations and this adds to their increasing confidence.
97. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are around the national average. The pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they read. The lower attaining pupils have some elementary reading skills, but can only manage very basic text and make some haphazard guesses at unknown vocabulary. However, most readers can sound out simple words and show a satisfactory knowledge of letter sounds. The higher attaining pupils read with expression and good attention to punctuation. They are fluent and talk knowledgeable about what happened previously in the story and what they think might happen next. All pupils show an enjoyment of reading and are learning to read and understand what is written. Due to the interesting choices of texts, they all join in with great enjoyment when reading class texts, and respond well to challenging questions posed by the teacher. For example, when reading the 'The Big Sneeze', they were able to identify immediately that the story was similar to one they had read previously and a higher attaining pupil was able to explain the meaning of 'consequences'. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6. Although overall standards are below average in Year 6, in the rest of Key Stage 2 they are generally average. Pupils read clearly from a variety of texts in literacy and pupils in Year 5 show a good understanding of the text in 'Grandpa Chatterji'. This is helped by the fact that children had individual books, which made it much easier for them to follow. Challenging questioning at appropriate intervals helped to ensure that all pupils understood the text, and support staff gave appropriate support to those pupils who needed it. By the end of Year 6, some higher attaining pupils have developed a critical enjoyment of reading. They know the works of a fairly wide range of authors, and are beginning to compare and contrast different styles. Lower attaining pupils receive good support, often individually, which concentrates on specific needs and enables them to make good, sustained progress. Pupils are encouraged in their enjoyment of reading by the teaching strategies, which are used, and lower attaining pupils show that they have a very good knowledge of letter sounds and blends which enable them to work out unknown vocabulary. There is a good library and pupils are encouraged to browse and find their own books. They know how to use the library classification system and can find their way around dictionaries and information books well. This

is helping to develop independent research skills. They are also gaining some good experience in obtaining and using information from the Internet and CD ROMS.

98. Standards in writing are below average and although work shows considerable progress during the year there is a weakness in spelling which is the main reason for standards dropping below those expected. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils spell a range of simple words accurately, but have difficulty with more complex words although they are always willing to have a go. There are not always sufficient dictionaries and word banks available for these pupils to use when they are working. This means that although they have good ideas and produce a good amount of work it is of a lower standard than it need be because of the poor spelling. Good provision is made for lower attaining pupils who work with the class teacher to develop and reinforce early spelling strategies. In Year 1, pupils' spelling was better. This is because the teacher has developed many of her own resources – such as a bingo spelling game, clearly matched to pupils' individual abilities so they can all take part – and learning is really enjoyable. All pupils appreciate different styles of writing, and pupils in Year 1 sequenced the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' correctly and then wrote the middle part of the story for themselves. The presentation of work is generally neat and nearly all average and higher attaining pupils are beginning to use simple punctuation, such as capital letters and full stops, correctly. Some higher attaining pupils use speech marks correctly. The pupils enjoy the challenge that teachers provide through such tasks and also pay good attention to basic punctuation. However, the highest attaining pupils in Year 2 found the task relatively easy and finished their work quickly. On occasions, this group could be stretched even further if more challenging tasks were provided for them.
99. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in writing are below average. The progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, but again there is a weakness in spelling, particularly in Year 6 which is why pupils' work is below the expected standard. Some pupils in this class have limited strategies to ensure their spelling is accurate because of past poor learning experiences. In Years 3 to 5, pupils are gaining confidence in using and spelling a wide range of vocabulary, and use dictionaries and word banks appropriately. In Year 5, spelling was part of the initial input by the teacher and a good use was made of whiteboards for quick fire tasks. Pupils were given 30 seconds to spell 'because', and the great majority managed to spell it correctly. The teacher provides pupils with a range of strategies to help them remember spellings of more difficult words and pupils share favourite acronyms or ones they have discovered for themselves. Teachers have high expectations of presentation and most work is neat and well presented. Handwriting is generally of a sound standard and most pupils throughout the key stage write clearly. Most pupils use a legible and consistent joined style of writing. In all year groups, lower attaining pupils are benefiting from the support they are given to improve their basic writing skills. Assessment information is used effectively to match tasks carefully to pupils' capabilities and is resulting in better progress and higher standards in basic writing skills.
100. Teachers encourage pupils to develop and use a wide range of interesting vocabulary in order to develop their speaking and writing skills thus making both more interesting. Pupils understand that there is a need to write in specific ways for a given purpose. For example, pupils in Year 3 clearly understood that the instructions for making a sandwich should be straight forward commands, clearly stating what each step should be in a certain order. Older pupils in Year 6, used persuasive language to argue their cases for and against school uniform. Although the spelling was poor the content and ideas expressed were original, appropriate and showed a good deal of thought and effort. Every encouragement is given for pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work. When the writing was appraised by the rest of the class in Year 6 pupils still managed to find things to improve. They valued the content and recognised that this was good,

but also suggested that some better connectives such as ‘furthermore’ or ‘consequently’ could have been used to make the arguments more convincing. This class appraisal is well established and pupils accept the judgements from their peers equably because they are made in a sensible and constructive fashion.

101. The teaching of English is consistently good. Teachers are skilful in teaching the basic skills of English to enable pupils to make good progress. A strength of the teaching is the strategies used, which motivate and interest the pupils. It helps them to take responsibility for their learning, but ensures that the pupils build on their skills and knowledge well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables pupils to understand the purpose of what they are learning. Teachers make good use of assessment, thus ensuring that they carefully plan work that matches the needs of pupils of all abilities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, which noted this as a weakness. Pupils are split into ability groups within their classes and work is planned for four groupings which is well matched to pupil’s individual needs. This is effective and carefully planned tasks for pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language enables them to make good progress. Small target groups are particularly effective and some pupils benefit from the one to one attention when withdrawn from the classroom to develop specific skills. Other tasks requiring pupils to work together encourage pupils to listen and to take each other’s views into account. The most effective teaching shows good pace and a suitable balance of tasks.
102. In one very good lesson observed, the teacher planned a wide range of activities, around arguments for and against school uniform. The tasks ranged from pupils writing their arguments using the ‘Clicker’ software programme which helped pupils with spelling whilst enabling them to record their ideas quickly so they could see the results, to pupils working in pairs, independently discussing and debating the issue whilst recording the most pertinent points. Pupils learning English as an additional language were working with support to ensure they understood the vocabulary being used and careful, probing questions enabled them to develop and use a greater range of vocabulary. The teacher had worked hard to provide learning experiences that were active and purposeful. This resulted in interested and involved pupils, who listened and worked with sustained concentration. Overall, the teachers use effective questioning to challenge pupils and encourage their thinking skills. Homework is used effectively, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to support and extend what pupils are learning in the classroom. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall but variable in quality. Some of it is very good, refers to pupils’ targets and contains useful suggestions for development and improvement. However, much is more vague, with comments such as ‘not neat enough’, or makes specific requests which are not followed up, which is not particularly helpful. However, in many cases teachers provide good oral and constructive feedback to pupils on their work.
103. The strategies for the teaching of literacy are very effective. The use of individual targets helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers try to ensure that pupils use their literacy skills consistently across the curriculum, and although there are useful systems to ensure that this element is planned carefully, this is not as extensive as it could be. This also contributes to pupils’ understanding of the need to use and apply the skills they are learning in a range of contexts. Additional supporting activities where pupils work in small groups have also helped some pupils to improve their skills. Sound use is made of ICT both for drafting work and completing tasks. It is used at the appropriate level to extend the knowledge and understanding of pupils of all abilities. The school has a suitable range of books to encourage wider reading, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 use the library books as a source of information.

104. The systems for the assessment of pupils' work are good. They enable teachers to plan work to match the needs of pupils and also to set regularly reviewed targets. The analysis of pupils' attainment has enabled the school to identify key areas for development, and this includes the further development of writing and spelling skills. The subject is well led by a committed and knowledgeable co-ordinator. The policy for English is clear and comprehensive, and the co-ordinator has ensured that careful planning of the subject meets the needs of all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

105. In national tests in 2002, pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attained standards that were well below the national average. When compared with standards in similar schools they are below average. A high proportion of pupils in the school have special educational needs, and in addition about one third speak English as an additional language. Although this last may not necessarily hamper pupils' mathematical skills it can hinder interpretation of mathematical terminology especially in younger pupils.
106. Inspection findings show that there has been an improvement in pupils' attainment. Standards are generally below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This indicates sound progress overall although pupils make good progress in the development of numeracy skills. There are no marked differences difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well and make good progress.
107. In Year 1 the pupils count forwards and backwards to 20. They count and add using numbers to 10 and many can use numbers to 20. They know the names of shapes and some discuss the properties of everyday shapes such as rectangles and circles. In Year 2, most, but not all, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100. Some pupils recognise numbers patterns which help them to recall number facts. Higher attaining pupils can estimate the number of words on a page and then check this by counting in groups of ten. In Year 5, pupils use the four rules to solve simple problems in real life situations. Higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of fractions and decimals and their equivalents. They understand and respond positively to oral and written instructions to break a problem down into manageable steps. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils show a clear understanding of different measuring units and they articulate their thinking processes confidently when problem-solving. This shows they have a good grasp of the number system and its flexibility. Many Year 6 pupils find this much more difficult and struggle to see how previous learning can be applied to solve new problems. Some find ordering decimals difficult because of a lack of real understanding about how the number system works. The reason why attainment, overall, at the end of Year 6 is still below average is because there are only a few higher attaining pupils compared to those who are not quite reaching the required standards and those pupils who need considerable help and support. Real-life problem-solving is increasingly a feature in many lessons since the last inspection. This leads to greater understanding of how numbers work particularly when teachers explain clearly to pupils how they can use what they know already to help them work out a problem such as the cost of 2kg potatoes when they know the cost of 250g potatoes is 30p.
108. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall. All the lessons observed during the inspection were either very good or satisfactory. In all the satisfactory lessons there were some aspects of good teaching. The quality of the teaching and learning is often linked to how confident teachers are about their own mathematical knowledge. If they have a very good understanding of mathematics, pupils learn very well and this contributes to raising standards. Action is planned to improve all teachers' ability to analyse exactly what

aspect of learning is causing difficulty and how best to remedy it. In one very good lesson in Year 1, pupils finding change from 10p confirmed their understanding that $3p+7p=10p$ and $7p+3p=10p$ by seeing for themselves that three coins hanging from some string + seven penny coins pegged on to the string combine to make 10 coins whichever way the string is held. Pupils learned the joy of pattern spotting in another lesson in Year 3, where the teacher encouraged them to look for different patterns on a 100 square. Older pupils searched speedily for combinations of decimal numbers which when added made a new whole number, for example $2.4+4.6$. Throughout the school, teachers question well expecting all pupils to recall number facts quickly. In very good lessons teachers challenge all pupils, encouraging them to make connections between decimals and measurement, fractions and times on the clock. In satisfactory lessons, teachers do not always match questions to the ability of the child they want to answer and tend to focus too much on the middle range of ability during the mental starter. Conversely, when written tasks are set they do not always challenge average attaining pupils sufficiently. There has been an improvement recently in the way in which teachers mark pupils' written work. They identify what pupils have done well and what they need to work on to improve. Teachers use assessment regularly to help them plan more effectively. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is not always sufficiently secure for them to diagnose exactly what is the pupils' difficulty. When helping the pupil they tend to repeat the instructions of the task rather than to re-think the presentation of the problem so the pupil can see the links with what they know already. Where teaching is very good, teachers assess not only pupils' knowledge, but also their understanding of how mathematical ideas link together. For example younger pupils, learning with difficulty how to add $18+6$ were using their fingers to count on and find the answer. The teacher assessed that the difficulty was that the children had not seen the connection between $8+6$ and $18+6$. With careful questioning she helped the children to use this known fact to work out the new calculation.

109. Since the previous inspection in 1998 The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. Teachers plan well and use the recommended structure confidently. After monitoring numeracy teaching, the co-ordinator encouraged a whole school focus on improving the final part of lessons, the plenary. As a result, the last part of the lesson is being used more consistently to assess that the pupils have understood the main objectives. In all lessons there is an emphasis on the use of mathematical vocabulary. Pupils learning English as an additional language and special educational needs are given extra help with this.
110. Although the use of ICT in mathematics is improving some teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical knowledge through the use of ICT. Pupils use mathematics to help learning in other subjects, for example graphs in science and measurement in design technology.
111. The subject leadership is very good and the coordinator has very good mathematical expertise. He has implemented a very good mathematics policy, monitored the quality of teaching and how well pupils learn and has accurately identified the main areas for development and the action required to raise standards. There is a careful analysis of the school's national test results which leads to targeting of additional support for pupils. Overall, assessment processes and systems have improved since the last inspection but pupils are not involved in either setting their own targets for improvement or in evaluating their own competence. Homework is used positively throughout the school to support the pupils' learning,

SCIENCE

112. In 2002, the results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were very low and in the bottom 5% of the country nationally. Standards of pupils reaching the higher level in the

assessments were well below the national average. Results were the same when compared with those of similar schools. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated since the last inspection. In 2002 they were well below average nationally but below average for schools in similar circumstances. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Over the last four years the results have kept pace with the national trend in terms of improvement.

113. Inspection evidence showed that the standard of work attained at the end of Year 2 is close to the national expectation and pupils are achieving well. In their study of electricity pupils can say why a bulb is not working. They record electrical appliances in the home in simple graph form and draw diagrams to show how to construct a simple circuit. In their study of how materials can change when heated they can predict that chocolate and butter will melt in their hands and, after carrying out the experiment, compare it with observed results. Higher attaining pupils can predict what might happen to eggs when cooked in a variety of ways. Pupils in Year 1 study parts of the human body, make simple graphs of eye colours in the class and sort toys into push and pull using Venn diagrams.
114. Standards are below the national expectation in the current Year 6. However, the pupils are achieving satisfactorily given their prior attainment. No lessons were seen but work in their books indicates that during the year they have revisited previous learning, recapped upon essential knowledge and conducted experiments. There is an over reliance on worksheets and pupils are given prepared charts to record information. Although this supports many in the year group who find the work difficult, it does not challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently. Opportunities for scientific enquiry have improved considerably since the last inspection. However, work in pupils' books shows an emphasis upon predicting outcomes of experiments and of collecting evidence rather than on the interpretation of evidence at the end of an experiment. This is a contributory factor to pupils not attaining the average national standard at the end of Year 6. Only approximately two thirds of the pupils in this year have sound factual knowledge and understand, for example, the differences between solids, liquids and gases and can accurately remember and name parts of plants and flowers. The combination of a high level of special educational need and extreme disruption to teaching during their time in Year 5 is expected to affect the improvement in results of Year 6 pupils this year. Throughout the other Key Stage 2 classes work is generally in line with what is expected. Scientific enquiry is carefully threaded through the different areas of study. Work on physical science, living things and materials is well balanced. In Year 5, there are very good links with other subjects, especially mathematics. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their numeracy skills when conducting experiments.
115. The quality of teaching is sound overall. The one lesson seen in Key Stage One was excellent, and of lessons seen across Key Stage Two, two were good and two were sound. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers' planning and preparation for lessons is good, and learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they are to learn that day. Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain concepts clearly and to pose questions, so that pupils are actively engaged in learning and develop their understanding. For example in a good lesson in Year 4 about planning an investigation to identify good and poor insulators, the teacher posed several key questions such as "What are we going to change?" "What are we going to keep the same?" and "What are we going to measure?" She insisted on the proper use of technical terms and continually focused upon the questions, asking pupils to explain their ideas for the experiment. Teachers ensure that good links are established between science and other subjects, especially design and technology, mathematics

and literacy. In the best lessons, tasks are clearly matched to pupil ability and there is a brisk pace. For example in Year 2 when pupils were investigating how materials often change when heated, higher attaining pupils investigated three different cooking methods for eggs, whilst other pupils worked with more simple food such as chocolate and butter. Classroom assistants play an important role in supporting pupils, often those with special educational needs, so that they gain as much as they can from the activities. They are included well in science across the school.

116. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and well organised and as a result the management of the subject is good. Some lessons have been observed and planning and pupils' books have been looked at. This has contributed well towards the school's knowledge of standards in the subject. A good improvement since the last inspection is the introduction of a comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress and for the careful analysis of results over time, which is guiding improvements in teaching. Resources are adequate and easy to locate. The school has very good links with the community and has been involved in science challenges, which considerably enrich pupil experiences.

ART AND DESIGN

117. No lessons were observed as the teaching of art and design is alternated with that of design and technology and was not being taught during the inspection. However, discussions with the pupils, as well as an analysis of the planning and work around the school indicated pupils' achievement in art and design is satisfactory and, by Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations. Teachers' planning shows that pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support if this is required, enabling them to make sound progress. In addition teachers ensure that pupils at an early stage of learning English fully understand the tasks so they make progress similar to their peers. This maintains the standards seen at the last inspection. However, although the curriculum is adequately covered the school misses opportunities to extend pupils' developing skills by integrating art into other areas of the curriculum such as English and history.
118. Year 6 pupils have painted self-portraits and a good deal of thought and effort has gone into mixing the correct skin tones and colours to achieve correct shading and on the positioning and size of features. The paintings show that pupils have developed good observational skills and good paint mixing techniques to enable them to achieve the effects they desired. Pupils talked animatedly about how they studied various facial expressions and tried to ensure they could reproduce these accurately. In Year 5, pupils have studied the work of Andy Galsworthy and have used what they have learned to help them develop their use of natural materials in their own work. They have made a range of earthenware pottery, planning and creating their own original shapes and designs. Many of these have been tried out in cardboard prior to making and adapted before using the clay. The execution of the work itself is quite skilful although some of the finishing could have been better, for example, some rough edges have not been sanded down prior to firing. To support this work, a good display of art in nature has been assembled. Pupils in this class have also made lanterns for the local festival using willow withies. These have been carefully crafted and a range of original shapes and designs generated. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 have created paper sculptures by experimenting with a range of techniques such as rolling, curling, cutting, folding, tearing, scrunching and creasing. The results are original, although on quite a small scale. In Year 1, pupils have painted bears for their bear factory role play area. These show developing observational skills and careful colour matching
119. In discussion it emerged that pupils study the work of a range of artists. They showed good knowledge of impressionist painters such as Van Gogh and Monet. As yet they have carried out little work using computer programs although they used computer software to design a cover for their compact disk.

120. Although no teaching was observed it is clear that pupils are being taught the skills and techniques needed to work successfully with different media such as clay, as well as drawing and painting. From discussion with pupils they have good attitudes to the subject. They discuss their work confidently and frequently evaluate the effectiveness of their work and to make improvements. A weakness of teaching is that sketchbooks are not used effectively to help pupils develop their skills. In the past, art has not been so well promoted as other the other creative arts of music and drama. Plans have now been put in place to address this issue, such as the development of the use of the Newton Price centre and the plan to introduce artists into the school on a regular basis. A major barrier to greater improvement is the fact that the subject has not been allocated as much time as the majority of the other foundation subjects. This has limited the time available for teaching new skills and also the range of activities provided.
121. The art co-ordinator is relatively new to the post but very enthusiastic and she has a clear direction for the future of the subjects. In this she is enthusiastically supported by the headteacher. There is a clear policy and new scheme of work that should effectively develop pupils' progression of skills. However, as it has only recently been implemented it is too soon to judge its impact on pupils' progress. There are no formal assessments of pupils' work and this makes it more difficult for teachers to plan for the next stages of learning. She has monitored effectively and identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has good plans to tackle them. Resources are adequate although some are rather tatty and require replacing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. During the inspection only two lessons were observed. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of photographic evidence, pupils' work, teachers' plans and other documentation and discussion with teachers and pupils. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is the same as the judgement from the last inspection. Pupils, stages including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. For example photographs, taken with a digital camera, show how younger pupils with special educational needs, can test materials to see if they are waterproof.
123. Pupils in Year 1 choose appropriate materials to make a house and say why they prefer one box or sticking agent to another. At the end of Year 2, pupils make designs, discuss changes that need to be made and evaluate the finished product. They make choices from a variety of materials in order to make a bear puppet. Some pupils select felt to make the bear soft and sequins because they sparkle. Pupils are used to investigating the effectiveness of the materials, thinking about the appearance, design and function. They can demonstrate how to cut out their templates to ensure a good shape and avoid injury. Pupils in Year 3 plan and make sandwiches with fillings selected for healthy eating. They choose different kinds of bread including pitta and French bread explaining where these breads originated. They use their carefully drawn plans as they prepare with excitement to make their sandwiches. Year 4 pupils who had designed balloon buggies earlier in the year explained the need for careful sawing of the wood to ensure a good fit. Relevant health and safety points were raised, such as working safely with glue guns. Higher attaining pupils could explain how the balloon was inflated and the air expelled as the balloon buggy was propelled forward. This was a good link with science. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 made bandrollers during a successful workshop led by a visiting carpenter. They revised and improved their understanding of joining techniques. Pupils worked well together using their own detailed plans and modifying them as appropriate. They produced well-labelled diagrams and carefully evaluated what they had done noting what could be improved.

124. There is a well-structured scheme of work based on nationally recognised guidance. This ensures that pupils experience progressively more complex tasks and activities to support the development of skills. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. A useful internet web-site has been developed with recommended references to support teachers' planning and preparation. The co-ordinator has drafted a new policy for Design Technology and she has a clear plan for action to improve standards further. Following the introduction of a new planning structure, there has been some monitoring of the making aspect of design technology. However, pupils' progress throughout the year is not assessed and recorded regularly to assist the systematic development of skills. This has been identified in the school improvement plan as an area to be tackled.

GEOGRAPHY

125. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for their age. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are grouped appropriately and frequently receive additional support enabling them to make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language also achieve well, with teachers ensuring that they understand technical terminology. Younger pupils study the local area and the types of houses that they live in. Good links are made with other subjects. They visit the local shops and this forms a very good introduction to fieldwork and the use of a primary source of information. By choosing a favourite place in their walk around the area they express their views of places and features of interest. In Year 2 they explore different places in the world through the travels of "Barnaby Bear". They begin to ask and answer questions about other environments and observe the differences. They are helped by the excellent resources the teacher provides through Barnaby's suitcase. For example, when on a visit to the Sahara desert he took his passport, a mosquito net, travel journal, sun lotion and water.
126. As pupils move into Year 3 they build upon their work in Year 1 as they study Watford town centre. They answer questions about its location and where people work. They study the shops, buildings and leisure activities available and write a guide to Watford which creates very good opportunities for them to use their literacy skills. By the end of Year 5 pupils are continuing to make good progress. In their investigation of the River Colne, they make very good use of their numeracy skills and enter information onto a spreadsheet using the computer. They show sound understanding of mapping skills, using keys, co-ordinates and grid references. These are all improvements since the last inspection. Their fieldwork of a study of traffic rules and the subsequent arguments they put forward regarding restrictions are well reasoned and make a good contribution to enquiry skills. Year 6 work on mountains is somewhat over-reliant on worksheets and although within their study of rivers they develop their research skills through using the internet as well as books, both topics contain some unchallenging tasks.
127. Three lessons were seen during the inspection as well as a sample of pupils' work from across the school. From this evidence teaching is judged to be satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In all the lessons seen teachers used resources well and planned carefully for the needs of all pupils. For example in a good lesson in Year 1, pupils with special educational needs were well supported by pictures to help them to sequence events and this meant that pupils with English as a second language were also fully included. A particularly good feature of the lesson was the use of the role play area where the "Bear Factory" had been recreated as seen on their walk in the shopping precinct. Pupils had clear roles, and activities promoted good speaking and listening and numeracy opportunities as they used money to buy bears.

128. There is currently no co-ordinator for the subject and it is currently being managed by the headteacher. The policy for the subject is in need of review so that it will be in line with those recently produced for other subjects. There are no assessment procedures in place to track pupil progress. Resources are satisfactory but require some updating.

HISTORY

129. Pupils attain standards in history that are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 2 know about famous historical figures, such as Guy Fawkes and Grace Darling. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils use a wide range of materials to research historical topics and have a good understanding of what life was like in Ancient Greece, for example. Pupils make good progress during their time in school and they achieve well.
130. There was only one lesson seen during the inspection, and judgements on the quality of learning have been made by looking at work in books and on displays. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about old and new equipment and write confidently about the difference they observe. They learn about historical events and write thoughtful accounts about these events. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 systematically learn about various historical times and understand about the various customs of these times. Pupils in Year 4, for example, know about how the Ancient Egyptians mummified their dead Pharaohs and about other customs associated with dying. Later in the year they learn about the Tudors and discuss the impact of the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon. Teachers provide a wide variety of research material for the pupils. This means that pupils in Year 5 have used the very good first hand documents about the school in the Victorian times. They have looked at photographs of the school and the surrounding area and compared them to what they see now, and this has resulted in a good understanding of the differences between life in Victorian Watford and life in more modern times. Information and communication technology is also used effectively to help pupils in Year 6 research Ancient Greece. Teachers encourage the pupils to ask questions about the current historical topic and then research the answers using the available books and the internet. Many pupils are able to write lengthy accounts of their research, using the skills learn in information and communication technology.
131. History is well led and managed in the school. The co-ordinator has researched useful internet sites to support learning in her subject. She monitors plans and looks at pupils' work. However, assessment of pupils' historical knowledge is unsatisfactory and is mainly tick lists. Some classes have their work muddled up with other subjects, like geography and religious education, and this results in teachers not always having a clear view of how much progress the pupils have made in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected. This is because although improvements have been made, many initiatives have been only recently introduced. Although in the last inspection pupils at the end of Year 2 were judged to be average and at the end of Year 6 below what is expected of pupils of that age, nevertheless there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection in many aspects of the subject. Pupils throughout the school are making at least satisfactory progress, but they have not had sufficient opportunities to consolidate this which is why standards are below average overall. During the inspection only one ICT lesson was observed. Judgements have been made based on discussion with pupils and teachers about their work and examination of the work produced.
133. Throughout Key Stage 1 there are too few opportunities taken to involve pupils regularly in ICT. It is sometimes planned to support a subject such as mathematics, as a final activity in the lesson

rather than an integral part of the lesson, which may mean the pupils have little time to engage in the task. Progress is satisfactory in the communication aspect of ICT. Pupils talk confidently about how they use the internet to research a topic and they use word processing to communicate. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to develop an understanding of appropriate vocabulary and how to edit text. They can use a digital camera to record their work and enhance displays.

134. Pupils in Key Stage 2 progress well in some aspects of ICT, particularly those in which teachers feel confident. For example, pupils in Year 5 integrate text and graphics into documents and they explain clearly how to do this so that others can follow their instructions. They are proud of the display of the work they produced on fairy tales with a twist. Higher attaining pupils use these skills to make a school newspaper. Pupils understand increasingly how ICT can be used in databases and spreadsheets. Some pupils in Year 6 can discuss how they have developed their understanding of knowledge, control and measure by instructing a programmable robot. The pupils are given good opportunities to develop their word processing and Internet research.
135. The use of ICT is beginning to be integrated into other subjects. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson the digital imaging equipment was used to give pupils the opportunity to examine rocks much more closely. All the pupils were amazed and excited by the fragments of rock and the textures that were revealed when using the equipment. This experience made a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development. Older pupils have produced a CD. They were able to explain well how they had composed the music and they knew how to edit their compositions. Year 6 pupils talked eagerly about how they used simulation software to help them to simulate real life decisions about managing the population of a city. They did this through playing a game, which required them to consider the impact of their actions when spending an allocated budget. In this way pupils can see that ICT has an important part to play in helping them to learn in different subjects.
136. Teachers who have had little experience themselves with spreadsheets and databases do not encourage their use to support learning in different subjects. These factors inhibit the pace of pupils' progress. This has been identified in the school improvement plan as an area to develop and training is being provided in order to rectify this situation.
137. The ICT coordinator has very good subject knowledge. He has organised in-service training for the summer term which will give teachers the opportunity to further develop the skills that they have defined as being their weakest. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm and expertise is having a positive impact on both teachers' and pupils' response to ICT. A very good action plan is in place to promote the use of ICT. The co-ordinator's vision is to see the use of ICT as integrated across the curriculum so that it is central to teaching and learning rather than being used to support subjects occasionally. There has been good improvement in the school's resources for ICT, and there is now equipment for the monitoring and control aspect. The resources are satisfactory and they are maintained by a technician employed by the school for two hours a week.
138. Since the last inspection, progress is satisfactory overall although much better than that in the last school year. Resources have improved and pupils now have access to, and use, control technology equipment, digital imaging and the digital camera. A structured scheme of work has been introduced and is enhancing teachers' planning. Although systematic assessment of pupils' progress throughout the year is not yet in place, this is an area for development in the School Improvement Plan.

MUSIC

139. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils achieve very well. Those with special educational needs, particularly those in the speech and language units are well integrated into lessons and receive additional support where appropriate. Pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. The quality of teaching and music provision are strengths of the school and pupils learn very effectively. A music specialist works very well with all classes in the school. Pupils enjoy music and this is augmented by extra-curricular activities, such as recorder groups.
140. Pupils have a secure knowledge of a wide range of music. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the structure of music. They use correct musical terminology and some read music competently. Almost all pupils have a sound understanding of rhythm and are gaining a good understanding of music from other cultures, such as Gamelan and Calypso. Pupils sing with good tone and diction and have good control of their breathing. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in their learning and they develop a breadth of knowledge across the whole music curriculum. Younger pupils in Year 1 are gaining a good understanding of dynamics. They are learning to follow rhythm patterns and can create their own for their peers to follow. The pupils are enthusiastic and behave well, listening well to each other and trying hard when composing their own patterns. They learn to perform confidently. Very good explanations ensure that pupils understand instruction and pertinent question such as 'where do you start to write in your book' ensure that pupils 'read' their pattern cards correctly when performing.
141. The school has made very good provision for teaching music. A music specialist takes all class lessons. The quality of this teaching is very good. Pupils participate in an appropriate warm-up, progressing, in a very good Year 5 lesson, to singing a three part harmony. They were studying the Gamelan tradition and followed the tenets of this carefully, including the requirement not to step over their instruments in case they broke the threads of the composition. The class teachers work in tandem with the music specialist in all lessons and this is good practice. It provides very good experience for the teachers and enables them to develop their own knowledge, expertise and confidence. As yet, there is little use of ICT in music.
142. The music specialist also co-ordinates the subject. She has ensured that very good guidelines and lesson plans are in place so that class teachers can take the class if for any reason she is away. Music is well resourced with a very good range of instruments. The music teacher assesses pupils' levels of understanding regularly and the information is used well to plan future lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to make a judgement about the standards in physical education. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well in the lessons observed. Pupils' achievement has been enhanced by a few opportunities to participate in extra curricular football and rugby and currently swimming is a part of the curriculum for Years 3 and 5. The lack of a playing field and the small, cramped and sloping conditions of the playgrounds places a severe constraint upon the development of some aspects of the subject.
144. Younger pupils follow the rhythm of the music and repeat and recall sequences to form a dance. Their movements show good co-ordination and balance when moving. In a very good mixed Year 1 and 2 lesson in dance the teacher asked pupils to imagine that they had paint on their feet and that they were going to cover the floor with dots. As the size of the dots changed pupils were led to change their movement and pace. Other movements were successfully added for

squiggles and dashes until the pupils had built a sequence. They were challenged further by moving in and out of their group. The final dances were performed and pupils evaluated each others' work by looking for similarities and differences. The lesson also offered very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills by working together in small groups. Pupils were required to listen very hard to the music and to explore their actions. This helped to develop their listening skills for other subjects.

145. In Year 4, very good links are being forged with mathematics and geography through work on following directions in preparation for adventurous orienteering activities. Pupils are required to write directions for others to follow and carry out. They understand the points of the compass and use quarter, half and whole turns. They relate these to angles and degrees and use the correct terminology such as clockwise and anticlockwise. By Year 6, pupils practise and become adept at a variety of skills used for games such as cricket and rounders, but the small areas in the two playgrounds prevent them from being able to enjoy a proper game. Many are good at dribbling a ball, and they learn how to hold and use different kinds of bat proficiently and to field.
146. In the few lessons seen, all teaching was at least satisfactory and some very good. Teachers engage pupils in good warm up and cool down exercises during which the pupils work very hard. Older pupils know and can explain why these are important. Lessons are carefully planned and are well paced keeping pupils active throughout. Safety is attended to and earrings are taped where necessary. Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their work. Nearly all pupils show enthusiasm and respond well. A questionnaire conducted by the co-ordinator for the subject shows that pupils enjoy physical education. They change into appropriate clothing, their behaviour is good and they handle equipment responsibly. This is an improvement since the last inspection when response from pupils was sometimes poor.
147. The management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well organised. There is a very good draft policy in place and the school are using ideas for teaching the subject from nationally approved guidelines. There is a good range of curricular activities provided by the school but the lack of access to proper playing fields and a reasonable sized playground, limits the opportunities of pupils to develop high standards in athletics and games activities. The annual residential visit provides pupils with experiences of outdoor and adventurous activities. Currently there are no assessment procedures in place to record pupil progress and to date there has not been an opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor standards across the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. Pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 attain standards in religious education that are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. By the time they leave Year 2, pupils understand about aspects of some major religions, for example the signs and symbols that are meaningful to Muslims, and know about some of the Christian traditions. By the end of Year 6 pupils know about Buddhism and can talk sensitively about their own personal beliefs. Pupils' achievements are good and they make good progress during their time in school.
149. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned, teachers' knowledge is good and good use is made of resources. For example, a very good lesson based on the Stations of the Cross, was thoroughly planned and the pupils understood the feelings and emotions behind the symbolism. Lessons contribute significantly to the spiritual development of the pupils. In another good lesson in Year 2, the teacher explained clearly what the pupils were going to learn and made sure that pupils remembered what they had learnt in the previous lesson. As a result the pupils understood about the Last Supper and could relate it to the Jewish feast of Passover.

In most lessons, pupils respond positively and show a good understanding of other faiths and religions, respecting the various practices. In lessons that were satisfactory, but not as good as others, pupils were restless and found it difficult to concentrate. Teachers managed this well and used the school's behaviour management system to ensure that the learning of others was not disrupted. Work in books is usually marked with encouraging remarks, but there is little to help pupils to improve their work. In some classes the religious education work is muddled with other subjects, such as history and geography, and this work is not well presented, nor is it easy for pupils to see what they have learnt in previous lessons.

150. The leadership and management of religious education are good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and supports her colleagues well. She ensures that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are taught systematically and that the local community is reflected in the teaching. This has resulted in the Islamic faith being given more emphasis than suggested, meaning that all of the pupils gain a greater understanding of the Muslim community. This is a very positive move. There has been little time for her to monitor her subject, but she is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses within it. There are currently no formal assessment procedures for religious education with teachers merely completing check lists. This does not give an accurate record of how the pupils have progressed in religious education, especially in personal development which is a strong feature of religious education in the school. There was little evidence of information and communication technology being used in lessons, or in the work seen. Not only does the subject promote spiritual development well, but it also contributes to the pupils' cultural development. Pupils have a greater understanding of a wide variety of cultures through their study of the religious beliefs and practices. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.