

INSPECTION REPORT

CAMPS HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stevenage

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117226

Headteacher: Frances Knights

Reporting inspector: Mr D Shepherd
2905

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 November 2002

Inspection number: 247742

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior with Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chells Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 0LT
Telephone number:	01438 233800
Fax number:	01438 233801
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Brooks
Date of previous inspection:	13 - 24 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2905	David Shepherd	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9388	Anthony Mundy	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
20776	Robert White	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education	
26292	Helen Mundy	Team inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs	
20324	Vera Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Camps Hill is a large primary school for 352 pupils aged 3-11 years. The school has a Nursery catering for 36 children part-time. Most pupils are white British with a small number coming from minority ethnic communities. These are from an Indian, Bangladeshi, African, Pakistani, Caribbean, Chinese and black British background. Eight pupils are from other minority ethnic groups. Sixteen pupils speak English as an additional language [EAL] of which three are at an early stage of learning English. This is higher than in most schools. One hundred and thirty-one pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs [SEN] and one of these has a statement. This is higher than in most schools. The main needs of these pupils are moderate and specific learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is well below average. There are more boys at the school than girls, especially in Years 2 and 4. Most pupils come from the immediate locality of the school. There has been significant staff turnover during the past two years; fifteen teachers have left the school, most for personal reasons or for promotion, and sixteen joined during this time.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. With the exception of English, standards are average in most subjects by the end of Year 6. Unfortunately, pupils' lack of skills in literacy prevents them from making the progress they should in a number of subjects. Many pupils make above average progress in Years 3-6. However, they do not make enough progress in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is often good in the Nursery and Reception classes, Year 5 and in one Year 6 class. The leadership provided by the headteacher and governors is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides pupils with a good start to their schooling in the Nursery and Reception classes
- Enables pupils to make above average progress in Years 3-6
- Promotes pupils' positive attitudes to school
- Enables pupils to become mature and responsible
- Ensures parents and carers are well informed which results in them providing good support to the school and their children

What could be improved

- Standards in English throughout the school and mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low and pupils' behaviour is not always managed well enough in a few classes
- Marking and assessment of pupils' work
- Raising standards through the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by the headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors
- The effectiveness and efficiency of non-contact time allocated to subject co-ordinators and of the role of the co-ordinator for SEN
- The safety of pupils around the pond

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997. A number of key issues for improvement were identified at that time. Since then, the school has raised standards in design and technology [D&T] and information and communication technology [ICT] throughout the school. Standards have also been raised in science, art and music in Years 3-6. All subjects are now co-ordinated by a named member of staff. The National Literacy Strategy is taught systematically, but not enough opportunities are taken to teach literacy skills in other subjects. The roles of those staff with management responsibilities are clear but they do not focus enough on raising achievement. A rigorous programme to check standards in the classroom has yet to be implemented. Overall, improvements in the school are satisfactory.

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	C	D	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	C	C	
Science	A	D	C	C	

In 2002, pupils at the end of Year 6 attained average standards in mathematics and science and below average standards in English when compared to all school and schools in a similar context. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher grade was average in mathematics and science and below average in English. Standards in at the end of Year 2 are well below average in reading and mathematics and in the bottom five per cent of schools in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was below average in reading and writing and well below when compared to all schools. Frequent changes of teachers in Years 1 and 2 over the past two years has been a significant factor in the low standards achieved at the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 in 2002 made very good progress during their time in Years 3-6 in English, mathematics and science. Over the past three years, girls have outperformed boys in reading and writing, but not in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 6 there is no noticeable difference between the attainment of boys and girls in science.

The school met the targets set in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2002. however the targets set were not sufficiently challenging. Pupils enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below average in English, mathematics and in their personal development. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children have made good progress and achieve average standards in mathematics but they remain below average in English. Inspection evidence suggests that, with the exceptions of English, music and geography, standards in all other subjects are average. Standards in music are above average. Standards in numeracy are average, but those in literacy below average. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in geography. With the exceptions of English throughout the school and mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2, most pupils make good progress in most subjects and achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy lessons and most listen attentively to their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is very good around school. It is usually good in classrooms, but is spoiled by the immature behaviour of a minority of pupils in a few classes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. When given opportunities, pupils cheerfully accept responsibilities in classrooms and around school. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Sometimes they are good and this enables pupils to make good progress. The most effective lessons are planned well. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attainment to which pupils respond positively by behaving well and trying their best. Relationships are good and there is a purposeful atmosphere in class. High levels of teacher expertise feature in some of the most effective teaching, for instance, in music, art, physical education [PE], EAL and in the foundation curriculum. All these positive features help pupils make good progress and learn effectively. The teaching of numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory, but that of literacy and English unsatisfactory overall. Four weaknesses in teaching were noted. Many teachers do not hold high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They set the same tasks for all pupils irrespective of their abilities. As a result, work is set that is too easy for many high attaining pupils. This work is also often too hard for low attaining pupils, including those with SEN, who often need help from classroom assistants in order to complete it. The learning in many lessons is too slow. A few teachers do not control the disruptive behaviour of a few pupils in their class well enough. As a consequence, lessons are disrupted and time is wasted. A general weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not mark or assess pupils' work well enough so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Each of these factors mean that a good number of pupils do not make the progress they should. These weaknesses are particularly evident in individual classes in Years 1-4 and Year 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Not enough specialist provision is given in classrooms although when provided by the specialist teacher pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Good when provided by the specialist teacher, unsatisfactory at other times.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are taught the importance of high standards in their personal relationships and in their responses to the world around them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Pupils receive very good individual care from all adults in the school. However, the unfenced school pond represents a serious hazard for pupils. Procedures for child protection are very good. Pupils' work is not assessed well enough and does not help pupils to improve.

The school works in partnership with parents well. Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear educational vision and provides sound leadership for the school. However, the management provided by the headteacher and key staff has not led to high enough standards being achieved. For example in the use of those staff with responsibilities and particularly in the case of the SEN co-ordinator. The principles of best value are applied well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors are very supportive of the school. However, they are not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is not rigorous nor focused enough on raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Specific grants are used appropriately. The roles of the subject co-ordinators and the SEN co-ordinator are not focused enough on raising standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum. Due to staff changes, there is currently no permanent co-ordinator for art and design and PE. There are sufficient learning resources to teach the curriculum. The accommodation is good.

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 • Behaviour is good • The teaching is good • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems • The school expects children to do their best • The school is well led and managed • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More homework • More information about their children's progress • The school working closer with parents • A greater range of activities outside lessons

Inspectors agree with most of the positive views of the school expressed by parents except that they do not consider the teaching to be as good as do parents. They disagree with the negative views expressed by parents as inspection evidence shows. The provision of homework is satisfactory. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities provided. The school works closely with parents and provides appropriate information about progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are average and those in English below average. Standards are also average in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, PE and RE. They are above average in music. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in geography. Overall, standards are higher than they were at the last inspection. They have improved in a number of subjects - science, art and design, D&T, ICT and music. However, they are not as high as they were in English. Standards in all other subjects are similar to those at the last inspection. Raising standards in English is an area for improvement. The school met the modest targets set in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2002. Appropriate targets have been set for Year 6 pupils in 2003.
2. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics and science are below average and well below average in reading and writing. Standards in art and design, D&T, history and ICT are average. Standards in music are above average. Lack of evidence means that no judgements about standards in geography, PE and RE were made for this age group. Raising standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 is a priority for the school to tackle.
3. By the end of Reception, many pupils do not reach the standards expected nationally in all areas of the curriculum except mathematics. However whilst in the Reception classes pupils make steady progress, and sometimes progress that is good, due to the sound teaching they have received.
4. The most significant reason for the low standards being achieved, especially by the end of Year 2, is that pupils' learning has been disrupted over the past few years by frequent changes of staffing. For instance, sixteen teachers have joined the school and fifteen left during the past two years. Of these nineteen have been in the foundation stage [Nursery and Reception] or in Years 1 and 2. This is high and has meant that these young pupils have had to get used a number of different teaching styles. In addition, because most of these teachers have been inexperienced in teaching, the school's schemes of work for literacy and numeracy have not been taught rigorously. As a result, standards have been lower than they should have been. The school has taken steps to secure better teaching from Nursery to Year 2. An experienced teacher has moved into Years 1 and 2 from elsewhere in the school making three experienced staff teaching the youngest pupils in the school. This strategy appears to be working as only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in this part of the school. The teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is consistently satisfactory and sometimes good, and standards are rising in these classes as a result.
5. A further reason for low standards being achieved by the end of Year 2 is that many pupils enter the Nursery with standards in English, mathematics and personal development that are well below average. These pupils have a lot of ground to make up before they reach average standards. Through sound teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, a significant proportion of pupils make good progress and improve in these areas. For example, many pupils reach average standards in mathematics and in their personal and social development by the time they enter Year 1, but a high proportion still remain below average in reading and writing.
6. Progress in literacy is unsatisfactory because the school has not been teaching literacy effectively enough. Planning is satisfactory, but the assessment of pupils' learning is not. Not enough opportunities are taken to encourage pupils to consolidate and practise their literacy skills in other subjects, for example in RE. This is reflected in the below average standards in written work. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory and standards are higher as a consequence than for literacy.
7. Standards are higher in lessons taught by specialist teachers. For example, in music they are above average because the school employs a specialist music teacher whose expectations and

skills in teaching music are high. Pupils respond to this positively and take part in their lessons enthusiastically. The science co-ordinator has started to teach all the science in Years 1 and 2. Early indications are that this is helping to raise standards in science in these years.

8. Overall, good progress is made by pupils with SEN when they are taught by the specialist teacher. Pupils with EAL and those of mixed race make good progress when they are taught by the specialist teacher from the local education authority and the bilingual assistant. At other times, though, all these pupils do not generally make the progress they should. This is because they are not always set work appropriate to the levels of their prior attainment and they do not receive the help they should from their teachers. Classroom assistants often support these pupils with their work and they do this well. However, the work set and the lack of direct teaching from teachers results in pupils just making satisfactory progress.
9. Throughout the school, girls outperform boys in English. Not enough structured support is given to boys to help them in their writing. Boys do better than the girls in mathematics. Boys and girls perform equally in science. Overall, with the exception of English, there is no significant issue about the performance of boys and girls across the curriculum. The issue for the school is to ensure that the performance of both boys and girls improves.
10. The progress made by higher attaining pupils, including those that are gifted and talented, is unsatisfactory overall. With a few exceptions, teachers do not set work for these pupils that is sufficiently challenging.
11. Little effective monitoring and evaluation of standards has taken place throughout the school. The monitoring that has taken place to date has not identified rigorously enough what needs to be done to raise standards. Too little action has taken place as a result of monitoring to raise standards. As a consequence, standards are not as good as they should be throughout the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning. Parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed that their children like school. Inspection evidence endorses this view. Pupils' attitudes have maintained the high standard noted in the previous inspection report.
13. Pupils come to school enthusiastically, and they enjoy lessons. When given opportunities they work independently without needing close supervision. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and respond politely to questions. Excellent attitudes were seen in a Year 5 RE lesson where pupils were silently engrossed in their work, responding to the hushed and reverent atmosphere created in the classroom by their teacher.
14. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection, and is very good around school and in assemblies. However, behaviour is unsatisfactory in classes where pupils are inattentive and do not fully comply with their teachers' instructions. For example, in a Year 6 dance lesson, the immature behaviour of a few boys delayed the start by fifteen minutes. These pupils gossiped throughout the lesson, and were generally unruly. They did not respond to the teacher's efforts to continue with the lesson.
15. The majority of pupils in all year groups have very good understanding of right and wrong. When questioned, older pupils can link the Ten Commandments with the rules of the school. All pupils care for the school building and equipment. For example, in the Breakfast Club, younger pupils ensure that the small components of games and toys are carefully collected at the end of each session. Pupils in all year groups accept a variety of responsibilities in their classrooms. In Year 6, they are proud to be appointed members of the SPOT [Super Pupils On Trust] team with whole-school responsibilities, including caring for younger pupils at playtime and lunchtime.
16. Most pupils have good understanding of the concept of self-discipline. They work well in classroom groups, readily exchanging ideas and sharing materials. The school council meets regularly, and confidently discusses issues raised by class representatives. Pupils do not chair or minute meetings, although some are clearly capable of learning the necessary skills to do so.

17. Most pupils are cooperative, and respectful to their peers and their teachers. Aggression or bullying is very rare, and reported incidents are managed promptly and sensitively by staff. During the school year 2001/2002, no pupil was excluded from the school.
18. Pupils' personal development is good because the school provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In each of these areas, their responses are at least good, and are often very good. They are reverential during assemblies, following the good examples of the headteacher and other staff when praying and singing. During the inspection, in a Year 5 RE lesson, pupils suggested values "worth fighting for". These included friendship and family bonds.
19. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils respond politely and confidently to each other and to adults, and pupils and teachers generally converse in friendly and respectful terms. Each member of the school community has equal status and receives sensitive and effective support from adults at work and play.
20. Attendance is satisfactory, and slowly improving, but is still slightly below the national average for primary schools. Most pupils arrive in good time for morning school, but a small number of families do not fulfil the legal requirement of ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance.
21. In most classes, registers are called within five minutes of the starting time for morning school. A further ten minutes elapses before morning assembly, and this time is rarely used efficiently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is similar to that noted at the last inspection. Teaching and learning are often good in the Nursery and Reception classes, in some classes in Years 5 and 6 and when carried out by the supply teacher in Years 3-6. Teaching and learning are good in music. Some good teaching and learning were also observed in science. In all other subjects, they are satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are particularly good when specialist teachers teach, as in music and EAL.
23. Teaching and learning have a number of good features, particularly where they are consistently good. These lessons are planned carefully and include well thought out learning objectives that provide a clear focus for the learning. In the best lessons, for example in Year 5, learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning and reviewed at the end. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, the teacher outlined the learning objective at the beginning of the lesson and checked pupils' understanding of it at the end through focused questioning. Planning is linked closely to national guidance and implements the National Curriculum effectively. Tasks are planned for pupils that are suitably challenging for them, no matter what their abilities are. For example, in a Year 4 RE lesson, pupils were asked to plan their written work about belonging to groups by brainstorming their ideas in their books before writing out their accounts. Higher attaining pupils wrote down interesting ideas using a varied vocabulary and a few read out their work to the class with expression and obvious enjoyment. Lower attaining pupils managed to complete brainstorming their ideas at an appropriate level for their abilities.
24. High expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards are set in the most effective lessons. As a response to this, pupils respond positively and behave very well and try hard to produce their best work. Relationships are very positive and constructive and the atmosphere in the classroom industrious and task orientated. Support staff are used effectively. For example, a nursery nurse in the foundation stage taught a group of Nursery pupils expertly how to use computers. High levels of teacher expertise feature in the best teaching, such as in a Year 4 PE lesson when the teacher demonstrated very effectively on a PE mat what was meant by good balance. In this lesson, the teacher acted as an excellent role model for the pupils. Pupils were encouraged to evaluate the balances performed by their classmates to see if they could use this knowledge to improve their own performances. Resources are used well to help pupils practice their skills, as in PE and ICT.
25. The quality of teaching and learning varies and is not always as positive as this. A general weakness in teaching is that some teachers do not expect enough of pupils and set activities

for them that do not challenge them enough. For example, on occasions tasks only require pupils to copy work, sometimes from worksheets, into their books. This does not encourage pupils to think and is a waste of time for all pupils, especially for higher attaining pupils. On other occasions, pupils are asked to draw pictures as a way of recording their ideas. This type of activity misses opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning in literacy. The same tasks are set for all pupils in the class irrespective of their abilities and prior learning. These lack challenge and interest for higher attaining pupils and are sometimes too hard for lower attaining pupils. Preparation focuses too much on the activities pupils are to carry out and not on what they are to learn. In a few classes, teachers do not control the behaviour of pupils well enough. In these lessons, a few pupils whose behaviour is immature and attention seeking, spoil the learning of other pupils. This is a pity as the behaviour around school is cooperative and often very good. Overall, teachers do not use computers enough in their teaching.

26. As a result of these weaknesses in teaching not all pupils make the progress they should. They are not required to put much effort in to their learning which proceeds at a slow pace. They present their work in a sloppy fashion; their handwriting, punctuation and spelling are much below their best efforts. However, the positive features of teaching outweigh the weaknesses overall, and this enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well, especially in the Reception classes and in Years 3-6.
27. The teaching of pupils with EAL is good in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially when the bilingual assistant is present. She is able to inspire these pupils by speaking to them from time to time in their home language of Bengali. The teaching of these pupils is good when the specialist teacher teaches them for one day a week. However, overall, the provision for pupils with EAL is not as good as it should be. Teachers have received a little training from this specialist teacher in teaching English as an additional language, but their expertise in teaching subject specific language, such as in science and mathematics is not as good as it should be. Consequently, not enough provision is made to teach subject specific language to these children in advance of or during lessons.
28. The teaching of numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. However, pupils' abilities to understand and solve mathematical problems are not as good as their number work. The teaching of literacy and English is unsatisfactory overall. Not enough opportunities are taken for pupils to consolidate and practise their writing skills in RE. The teaching of numeracy and literacy in Years 1 and 2 has weaknesses, and this is one of the reasons for low standards being achieved at these ages. The teaching of ICT is sound and many pupils are making steady progress in this subject.
29. The teaching of pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall, and is usually good for individuals or small groups withdrawn from classes by the SEN co-ordinator. However, her expertise is rarely available to colleagues as a teaching partner in their classrooms. Pupils with SEN have satisfactory access to the curriculum. They make good progress when taught in specialist groups, and satisfactory progress overall at other times. This is mainly due to the additional help given them by classroom assistants. The progress made by SEN pupils when taught by the SEN co-ordinator is not continued with effectively enough in other lessons.

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

30. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for RE. The school teaches sex education and about the misuse of drugs satisfactorily. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good throughout the school. This promotes an understanding of good citizenship and develops pupils' leadership and co-operation skills. The curriculum for pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes is sound and provides a range of learning for young children. The curriculum is better than it was at the time of the last inspection.
31. The time spent in teaching subjects is satisfactory overall. However, the allocation of time within the school day leads to a late morning start to lessons after assembly. There is also some imbalance of time in Years 1 and 2 where time spent teaching history and geography is

too low. This means the programmes of study in history and geography are not covered in enough depth whereas time spent on PE in these classes is very high.

32. The school has undertaken a comprehensive review of its curriculum to ensure that it offers a broad range of opportunities which meet pupils' learning needs and aptitudes. Curriculum planning at all levels is generally good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well and planning for numeracy is satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy is not taught well enough and planning for literacy is not good enough overall. The reinforcement of the basic skills of learning through other subjects is satisfactory in numeracy but unsatisfactory in literacy. The curriculum in foundation subjects is appropriate.
33. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory for pupils with SEN and EAL. These pupils are identified appropriately by the school and provided with extra help from classroom assistants in lessons. Those with most need receive extra help in small groups provided by the SEN co-ordinator and the specialist EAL teacher who visits the school each week. Suitable targets for their learning are included in their individual education plans and these ensure that these pupils have full access to the curriculum. Although class teachers plan pupils' work with the SEN co-ordinator, work is often set for them in lessons that is not appropriate for them. Sometimes it is too difficult, and sometimes too easy.
34. Provision for gifted and talented pupils, including high attaining pupils, is less systematic. A few of these pupils are withdrawn from lessons to receive more challenging work by the SEN co-ordinator, but overall, the work set for these pupils is often not challenging enough for them. Changes in the class organisation in Years 1 and 2 where these year groups have been combined in each class is cumbersome. This makes the organisation of teaching and learning difficult for teachers. This does not help pupils in these year groups to learn effectively. This is most frequently a problem in subjects based on sequential learning, such as mathematics.
35. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Clubs are held for football, badminton and chess. Pupils who have an aptitude for music can take instrumental lessons on the violin and receive keyboard lessons. Many pupils play the recorder and sing in the school choir. The school has a strong reputation for its Christmas performances. Its cheerleaders have won several trophies in the locality. The art club includes visits from local artists and pupils can take part in art and drama workshops organised by the local leisure centre in Stevenage. School journeys are organised for most year groups. For example, Year 6 pupils go to Aylmerton in Norfolk. The school operates a Breakfast Club from 8.00 am every morning. All pupils can attend. It provides a very good and friendly start to the day where pupils can meet and chat to each other in the dining area or the patio outside.
36. Links with the local community are effectively developed through the Education Business Partnership. Local companies, such as Glaxo and McDonalds, offer opportunities for Year 5 and 6 pupils to learn about business and team building. Last year pupils helped to design a questionnaire on how to improve the local shopping area. The school houses the local play group each morning. Visits to the school from local police and health workers reinforce learning in the PSHE programme. Members of Stevenage Football Club visit the school to give help with the football club. The school has good links with local schools. Arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary school are sound.
37. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
38. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies and RE lessons help pupils to gain personal insights and to understand the feelings of others. Assemblies are characterised by pupils' enthusiastic singing, and their reverence for special occasions.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions, and to make reasoned choices. The development of self-discipline is guided by the school's rules and by specific rules agreed by pupils in classrooms. Most teachers are particularly skilled in explaining to pupils why some actions by individuals have wider impact on others. Staff are very good role models for pupils. The consistently good relationships between staff and pupils promote strong moral values in all year groups.

40. Provision for social development is good. Relationships are very good, and are enhanced by residential trips in Years 2–6. Year groups mix amicably in the playgrounds. Table groups at lunchtime are self-selected and good humoured. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together, exchanging ideas and sharing equipment. Each class elects two school council members, and the council meets monthly to discuss topics proposed by pupils or staff.
41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. At museums, pupils study local and regional culture, and they know how their town has developed over the years. Aspects of western culture are taught effectively in art and music. Through the diversity of British society, pupils learn the values and beliefs of a variety of faiths and cultures. In RE lessons, pupils learn the teachings of Jesus, Mohammed and the Buddha. Contact is maintained with a school in Zimbabwe and other international links make a useful contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures. Recent visitors to the school have included a sculptor, a writer and a Caribbean band.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The safe and caring environment maintained since the previous inspection has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. Good procedures are established for child protection, including the training of staff, and ensuring pupils' welfare.
43. The school has appropriately adopted the local education authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out of school visits. However, an unfenced pond adjacent to the playground is potentially hazardous. Elsewhere on the site, good health and safety practice is supplemented by risk assessments for specific activities. Frequent fire alarm practices ensure that the complex single-storey building can be evacuated quickly.
44. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid, and all staff are sensitive to the welfare needs of pupils. Good supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playgrounds at break times and lunchtimes. Midday assistants are conscientious and interested in the pupils' activities. Fruit and healthy snacks are sold each day at morning break as part of the school's participation in a national initiative encouraging children to adopt healthy lifestyles.
45. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and are skilled in assessing their needs. Pupils receive good individual care and support from all teachers. Classroom assistants develop good relationships with pupils, and are skilled in providing curriculum and personal support for pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory as a whole.
46. The school monitors pupils' personal development appropriately. The school has good induction procedures that helps children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils joining other year groups generally adapt well to the school's routines. Good procedures in Year 6 prepare pupils for transfer to secondary education. Teachers know their pupils well and help them when they are worried about aspects of their lives. Pupils in all year groups acknowledge the school as a relaxed and happy community.
47. The school's behaviour policy is satisfactory, and day-to-day rules are agreed and displayed in most classrooms. A few teachers do not have adequate behaviour management skills to ensure that pupils always follow the rules. A credit award system acknowledges pupils' good behaviour, good work and effort. Credits are exchanged for valued certificates, presented at school assemblies and acknowledged in newsletters. Pupils appointed as members of the SPOT team have responsibilities throughout the school. The informal EXIT system of time-out for disruptive pupils is a major factor in the elimination of pupil exclusions from school.
48. A satisfactory anti-bullying policy establishes very good procedures, but does not provide pupils, parents and staff with definitions of bullying. Parents and pupils have few concerns about bullying: they know that reported incidents are promptly addressed by discussion and reconciliation. Staff and governors have not yet agreed a policy on the use of restraint by staff, or on procedures for noting incidents of restraint.

49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory, and contribute to satisfactory levels of attendance in each year group. To maintain a slowly improving trend, the procedures require greater rigour in setting short term targets for pupils and contacting families over unexplained absence on the first day.
50. Monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. In the Reception class, pupils are assessed on entry to school using the local education authority's procedures. A variety of assessment methods is used in Years 1–6. These include the results of national tests. A significant amount of a senior teacher's time is allocated to collecting and publishing statistics related to pupils' attainment levels in English and mathematics. With the exception of ICT, assessment in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Overall, there is not enough emphasis linking assessment to raising standards.
51. Although a significant amount of assessment information is available in English and mathematics, the format of the information is inadequate. For example, documents do not show the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils, groups of pupils, year groups or the whole school. Continuing whole school weaknesses, such as unsatisfactory standards in reading and writing, are not recorded in enough detail, and, consequently, are not corrected. During the inspection, the school was unclear about the identity of the teacher responsible for the co-ordination of assessment.
52. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory overall. A few written comments are difficult to interpret, and many complimentary comments do not help pupils to improve. A few teachers do not assess pupils' work accurately enough. There are examples of work in books not being marked. As a consequence, information from assessing pupils' work is not used when planning future work.
53. The assessments of pupils with SEN are good when carried out by the SEN co-ordinator. Her written comments clearly indicate pupils' needs, and are helpful to the development of pupils' individual education plans. However, assessments of these pupils by a few class teachers are generally unsatisfactory. They do not assess accurately enough what they have achieved and what they need to learn next.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning. Their opinions of the school were favourable at the pre-inspection meeting and in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
55. The school has good links with parents, and the inspection confirms these good relationships. Many parents want to be involved with their children's learning and help them at home. Parents confidently ask teachers for advice on general or particular issues related to their children's work. Parents enjoy the school's family learning days, but open meetings related to curriculum topics are not well supported. A few parents provide valuable help in lessons to groups of pupils and to individuals. The school has not recently enquired if parents have skills or interests to broaden the curriculum.
56. The parent-teacher association organises regular social events, and raises significant amounts of money for the school each year. Recent purchases have included an interactive white board to improve pupils' access to ICT. Good cooperation is established between the parents and the governing body, and some families are active on both committees.
57. The quality of information for parents is good. Most teachers provide outlines of the curriculum being taught each term, and the school's regular newsletters are informative about events and important dates on the school's calendar. At two consultation evenings each year, parents are informed about their children's progress. Subsequently, each family receives a copy of the teacher's notes of the discussion. Annual written reports to parents are of satisfactory quality, showing in some detail what children know and can do in English, mathematics and science, and often suggesting how attainment may be improved. The 2001 governors' annual report to parents does not include all the information legally required.

58. Parents are well informed about the school's routines and expectations when their children are admitted to school. Those of pupils with SEN are fully involved at all stages of identifying needs and reviewing progress in achieving targets. The SEN co-ordinator is available each morning to see parents by appointment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Most of the weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school identified at the time of the last inspection have been successfully dealt with. Standards in science, art and design, D&T, music and ICT have improved, and pupils' achievement in Years 3-6 is better than it was. However, the monitoring of standards and classroom practice by the headteacher and senior staff and taking effective action remains an issue. Although the governing body are now better informed and link spending to school priorities, they do not yet have effective systems for evaluating the impact of their decisions and for monitoring the quality of the school's performance. These shortcomings in leadership and management have contributed to low standards being achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2. Overall, the headteacher provides satisfactory leadership for the school.
60. The roles and responsibilities of senior staff and subject co-ordinators are clearly defined. The headteacher and senior management team work closely to decide policies and practice. However, senior staff do not always check rigorously enough to judge the impact of policies and practice in raising standards, particularly in English throughout the school.
61. There is strong leadership in ICT and D&T where good systems have been established to improve and maintain standards and the quality of work produced. Staff turnover has meant that the leadership in art and design and PE is interrupted and developments within the school's provision adversely affected and this results an overall lack of specialist guidance for teachers in these subjects. A further obstacle to improvement is that many co-ordinators are not yet skilled enough because they lack training and experience in monitoring and evaluating clearly the quality of teaching and pupils' work in their subjects.
62. Overall, the school improvement plan provides a sound steer for the work of the school. It includes a number of appropriate priorities to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. A good number of quantifiable targets for improvement have been agreed in this plan. However, the amount of staff time involved in implementing these priorities has not been costed and a few priorities are not focused enough on raising standards. Progress in implementing the plan is checked and reported at senior staff meetings and governors' meetings.
63. Provision for pupils who are on the school's register for SEN is managed satisfactorily overall. Where the school identifies and supports pupils individually and in small groups, provision is generally good. A weakness however is provision for those pupils on the SEN register in their own classes where suitably planned work matched to their needs is not always available.
64. The governing body satisfactorily fulfils most statutory duties. Governors are very supportive and maintain a high profile within the school by helping with outings and events and by liaising with subject co-ordinators. They share in the work of setting the school's priorities and linking those to spending. They are aware that the school's roll is falling and the possible implications of this in reducing the funding available to the school. However, they do not check on the impact of spending decisions they have made. They do not know the strength and weaknesses of the school well enough.
65. Overall, the budget is managed satisfactorily. The school receives and spends about the national average amount on pupils' education. Additional costs are linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. Specific grants to the school are used appropriately for their designated purpose. Funding for pupils with SEN has enabled the school to maintain a high level of provision compared with most schools. However, governors have not monitored well enough the impact of having a full time co-ordinator for SEN. Good use of the National Grid for Learning funding has helped to improve resources for ICT. Funds for staff training and curriculum improvements are used to provide a generous amount of non-teaching time for each co-ordinator. The co-ordinator for SEN does not have a class. However, this decision by the headteacher and governors to sanction this cost has been made without procedures being

established for monitoring its impact on raising standards. Funding for the school is unclear in the light of the uncertainty of the school's roll. In addition, there are no clear systems in place to evaluate the impact of these costs on improved standards attained by the pupils. The school applies the principles of best value well.

66. Day-to-day administrative duties are carried out very effectively by the office staff. Financial management systems are good. A recent audit confirmed that internal accounting systems are properly in order.
67. Given the sound progress pupils make by the time they leave the school, the overall satisfactory teaching and the sound leadership and management, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
68. Procedures for teachers' appraisal and performance management are satisfactory, but job descriptions are undated. A good process of formal appraisal develops the skills of classroom assistants. Procedures are good for inducting teachers, including newly qualified teachers, to the school. The staff handbook gives clear, concise guidance on all aspects of school life.
69. Although the school has experienced many staff changes within the past two years, the number of teachers and support staff is sufficient to implement the National Curriculum. Most teachers have a good knowledge of primary school subjects. A few teachers with responsibilities for managing curriculum subjects have inadequate subject knowledge; and some subjects do not have managers. Classroom assistants are generally well trained, and all are conscientious and enthusiastic. They provide good support for individuals and small groups of pupils. The administrative and cleaning staff and lunchtime assistants all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school.
70. The accommodation is good. Classrooms are of a good size, and additional rooms are available for group work and specialist activities. Classroom furniture is generally in good condition, and is suitable for all pupils in the primary age range. Good displays of pupils' work enliven classrooms and open areas. Externally, the playgrounds are of satisfactory size, and the field is in fine condition. An unfenced pond is potentially hazardous. The school site and building are free of vandalism and graffiti, and are commendably well maintained.
71. The school's learning resources are satisfactory overall with the exceptions of geography and RE. The ICT suite is a good resource. Library books for Years 1 and 2 are in unsatisfactory condition. A similar failing in this library was noted during the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors, as appropriate, should:
 - (1) raise standards in reading and writing throughout the school and mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 by:
 - assessing accurately pupils' prior learning;
 - matching the work to the needs of pupils' of different ability;
 - providing challenging tasks for all pupils, especially for high attaining pupils;
 - teaching the skills of literacy effectively throughout the curriculum.

[paragraphs 93-109; 110-114; 115-121]
 - (2) improve the quality of teaching by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - ensuring teachers manage the behaviour of all pupils well;
 - checking that teachers plan all lessons thoroughly;
 - ensuring pupils with SEN receive the help they need within the context of lessons.

[paragraphs 22-29]

(3) improve marking and assessment by:

- ensuring all work is assessed and marked so that pupils know what is good about it and what needs to be improved;
- including this information when planning future lessons and when setting short term individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics.

[paragraphs 50-52; 114]

(4) ensure that the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the headteacher, staff and governors focuses on raising standards by:

- training appropriate staff to monitor, evaluate and take action in a rigorous way;
- scrutinising pupils' work in all subjects as appropriate;
- observing teaching and learning in lessons as determined by the school improvement plan;
- analysing curriculum planning in all subjects.

[paragraphs 60-61; 109; 121; 137; 150]

(5) evaluate and review the impact on standards of:

- the work of the co-ordinator for SEN;
- the use of non-contact time allocated to subject co-ordinators.

[paragraph 65]

(6) erect a suitable fence around the pond as a matter of urgency to eliminate the risk of accidents

[paragraph 43]

The school may wish to include the following minor issue in its action plan:

(1) provide more opportunities for pupils to use computers in subjects other than in ICT lessons.

[paragraphs 109; 114; 121; 136; 155]

The school's improvement plan for 2001-03 includes some of these key issues, for example, raising standards in English, mathematics and ICT.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	83

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	33	47	8	0	0
Percentage	0	9	33	47	8	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	334
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	129

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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	29	25	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	15	24
	Girls	22	18	22
	Total	41	33	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (70)	61 (57)	85 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	24	21
	Girls	23	22	20
	Total	42	46	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (62)	85 (83)	76 (81)
	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	38	26	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	29	36
	Girls	20	20	23
	Total	48	49	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (76)	77 (73)	92 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	N/a	N/a	N/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/a (71)	N/a (69)	N/a (76)
	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
313	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
8	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.7
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	225.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55
Number of pupils per FTE adult	1.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	859,243
Total expenditure	878,105
Expenditure per pupil	2,206
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,462
Balance carried forward to next year	7,600

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16
<hr/>	
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)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	352
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	37	2	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	47	7	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	60	1	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	12	1	4
The teaching is good.	38	57	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	45	15	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	42	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	50	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	45	16	3	5
The school is well led and managed	37	59	1	2	1
The school is helping my child to become mature and responsible	40	58	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities	40	41	13	0	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE [NURSERY AND RECEPTION]

73. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing and organisation of provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school is making good headway in establishing a Foundation Stage unit, embracing the recent national guidance for teaching and learning for these children.
74. Teaching is sound overall and children achieve satisfactorily as a result. However, the teaching and learning are not yet securely underpinned by detailed planning and assessment linked to the nationally expected targets for five year-olds. The current organisation of the unit is still in its development stage and does not always ensure the most effective use of learning resources and teachers' individual strengths in teaching.
75. When children first start the Nursery the attainment of the majority in language, personal, social and emotional development and understanding of number and shape is well below the level expected for their age. They have very limited knowledge of the world around them. They are well co-ordinated in their movements but lacking in some of the finer skills required to handle scissors, pencils and brushes effectively.
76. Most make steady progress in all areas of learning because of the sound teaching they receive. Teachers promote personal and social education strongly. They quickly establish routines for children to follow and constantly talk to them about care and respect for others. Teachers skilfully encourage children to talk to improve their confidence and vocabulary, and teach letter sounds and early language skills satisfactorily. However, teachers' planning and the assessment of pupils' progress do not yet lead to a systematic step-by-step approach in children's learning. Children do not reach expected levels of attainment in language and literacy by the time they leave the Reception class because they have a lot of ground to make up from entering school with attainment in this aspect well below average. Nursery and Reception teachers take every opportunity to make number work interesting for the children, encouraging them to count and match numbers to everyday objects and to use appropriate mathematical language. The teaching of number is generally brisk, so the pace of learning is good. As a result, most children are working steadily towards, and a few achieve, the nationally expected levels in this area when they leave the Reception class. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about shape, texture and colour, and to widen their experiences of technology and the world around them. Teachers are good at engaging children in conversation, encouraging them to think about and explain what they observe. Sometimes children do not learn as much as they could in art, music and drama because there is too little direction and adult support for their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Most children settle in quickly to daily routines and show increasing independence in choosing activities. They learn to show concern for each other, and develop a sense of responsibility. For example, they take turns in becoming the group 'helper' for the day and they help others to tidy up after an activity. They adapt their behaviour well to different situations and changes in routines. When they work in the computer suite, for example, they know they have to sit correctly and handle equipment carefully. Children develop trusting relationships with adults in school and work harmoniously alongside others. They behave well because it is expected of them. Teachers remind children to say 'please' and 'thank you' and ask before an activity begins. A few children call out spontaneously when being taught in groups and have to be reminded to take their turn. Reception class children are more confident in linking up with others in activities. Two children were seen to share a writing activity during which they practised writing letters and their names. During this activity they became engrossed in a creative dialogue in which one was mother and the other her baby. Children dress and undress independently for PE lessons, and sometimes take the initiative, such as when negotiating who does what in the role-play area. Children gain an awareness of the differences and similarities

between cultural groups, celebrating Diwali, for example as well as making pancakes for Shrove Tuesday. By the end of their Reception year, most children are approaching the standards in personal development which are expected of them.

Communication, language and literacy

78. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes listen to stories with increasing attention. They handle books carefully when browsing or sharing with others. Nursery children do not yet have the skills to interpret pictures and text and rely on adults to tell the story. Reception children are beginning to develop early reading skills. For example, a child talked quietly to himself about what he saw in the pictures as he turned the pages, but few children browse independently, preferring still to talk about the pictures. When listening to stories they do not question why things happen or give clear explanations of events. Because of sound teaching most children in the Nursery and Reception classes begin to build a vocabulary linked to their prior experiences. An example of this occurred when a teacher allowed a group of Reception children to talk about toys which they had brought from home. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children to talk about their experiences. This is appropriate especially for Nursery children who cannot express their ideas clearly because of their limited knowledge of words. Reception children are more confident in their speaking. For example, they played well in the 'toy shop' but most still communicated in short simple statements. Most do not use their imaginations much to extend their conversations.
79. Children learn their letter sounds and begin to link initial sounds to familiar words. However, Reception children are not yet able to use their knowledge of letter sounds to attempt simple written words because they lack confidence to do so. Most recording is in the form of a picture with a spoken sentence scribed by the teacher by the side. Although children progress steadily, especially in speaking and listening and achieve well given their ability when they start Nursery, their early reading and writing skills are below average when they leave the Reception class.

Mathematical development

80. Children in the Nursery school are interested in numbers. They enjoy counting to see how many of the class is present and singing number rhymes. Teachers encourage children to think about problems by asking questions such as, "If we had one more, how many would we have?" Children learn to recite the days of the week in order and they learn appropriate mathematical language such as 'before' and 'after'.
81. Reception children count reliably to 10 and match and count sets of objects. Songs such as "Five Little Ducks" help them to develop the idea of 'one less' as they count back to zero. More able children begin to calculate simple problems mentally, such as working out how many there should be if one or two are missing.
82. Teachers are beginning to introduce Reception children to elements of the numeracy strategy. For example, one group of Reception children was learning to count back from 20 to 1. However, this learning was less effective than it might have been because the teacher did not demonstrate practical ways of counting back, such as by using apparatus like cubes or toys. Good support is provided for children learning English as an additional language. Not all of these children understood fully about counting. They needed practical activities to enable them to follow up and consolidate their learning. Many children show numbers using their fingers but do not yet write them down. By the time children leave Reception class most pupils know the names of regular shapes and have an increasing mathematical vocabulary. High and average attaining pupils in the Reception class generally reach the nationally expected levels of attainment in mathematics but low attaining pupils do not.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Teachers plan a good range of experiences for children to broaden their knowledge of the world around them. Children examine natural features and objects to find out more about them. For example, on an autumn walk, Nursery and Reception children asked *why* the leaves had fallen and observed at first hand seasonal changes taking place. At appropriate times

during the year children tidy their class garden boxes and take care of the plants they grow in them.

84. Both Nursery and Reception children improve their skills at joining construction materials and getting them to balance by playing with large and small construction sets. They make models using adhesives to join together paper, cardboard and boxes. One child, for example, used an egg box and strips of yellow paper to make a model of a tiger. Children use computers confidently and most successfully complete simple programs such as spray can to create coloured pictures. Teachers use appropriate computer language, so children understand phrases such as 'log on,' 'log off' and 'click on'.
85. In the Nursery and Reception, children learn about other cultures and beliefs and gain a sense of time and place by talking about 'yesterday,' or 'a long time ago'.
86. Teachers often ask children questions while they are working. This encourages them to try something new and helps them develop their speaking and thinking skills. However, the activities are not always linked to other areas of learning, such as writing for example. This is a pity as it would make learning, especially in writing, more meaningful for the children.

Physical development

87. Nursery and Reception children control their body movement well. There are enough opportunities for children to run freely outside and to move in a controlled way during dance lessons. In one dance lesson, the children demonstrated good skills at adjusting speed and changing direction, showing good awareness of others around them. They learned to listen and respond to changes in music and gave good performances when moving to the Nursery rhyme 'Hush-a-bye Baby.' They learn that exercise is important and that it is important to cool down after carrying out a vigorous activity.
88. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to handle malleable materials such as dough and learn to use cutting and shaping tools. They understand that tools have to be used safely and use them sensibly when working independently.
89. Teachers build successfully on the skills children bring with them to the Nursery. By the end of their Reception year most reach the standards in this area that are expected of them.

Creative development

90. Children have opportunities to explore colour shape and texture using a variety of materials. They apply colour in different ways such as by blowing through a straw to spread paint, using brushes or creating designs on a computer. They learn to mix colours sensibly to achieve the shades they want. Creative work is sometimes stimulated by other areas of learning. For example, the autumn collage of leaves – both natural and painted – consolidated what children observed about the world around them.
91. Children are learning a repertoire of simple songs and enjoy performances of 'Hokey-Cokey' and 'Ring-a-ring-o'-roses.' During the inspection opportunities for children to learn about the sounds of musical instruments were limited. There were no instruments displayed to encourage children's interest and curiosity in the sounds they might make.
92. Teachers have established stimulating role-play areas where children play imaginatively. Reception children use the resources of the 'toy shop' well to act out real life situations. Nursery children still tend to play alongside one another, and rely on adult intervention to help them engage in their role-play.

ENGLISH

93. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in English are below average. They are lower than they were at the previous inspection. Many current weaknesses in English were identified during the previous inspection. For example, weaknesses in the teaching of reading were noted then

as were weak assessment procedures and low teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment. Overall, during the past four years, pupils in Year 6 have made steady progress in English.

94. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading and speaking and listening, and well below in writing. National test results in 2002 were well below the national average for all schools in reading and writing. When compared to similar schools, standards were well below average in reading, and very low in writing. Standards in English have been consistently well below average in each of the past four years when compared to all schools nationally.
95. Standards in reading of the current Year 6 pupils are unsatisfactory. Pupils of average attainment know the sounds letters make, but few other techniques for reading unfamiliar words. Teachers do not regularly hear pupils read and do not identify what are the reasons for weaknesses in reading. Consequently, reading skills do not develop as well as they should. Pupils regularly take home their reading books and reading diaries, but many of the books they read are too easy for them. The school does not have a structure to ensure that comments written in these diaries help improve pupils' reading. Average attaining pupils do not understand the simplified Dewey system in the school library. The school predicts that no pupil will achieve the higher level 5 in national tests 2003. Pupils with SEN and low attaining pupils, make satisfactory progress in withdrawal sessions supervised by the SEN co-ordinator.
96. In Year 2, standards in reading of a few pupils is close to the national average, and pupils of average attainment fluently read simple books. Although they successfully find clues in pictures or text to help them understand meaning, they sometimes fail to realize that a sentence does not make sense. Teachers do not fully understand how to analyse and correct the specific weaknesses that are restricting pupils' ability to read.
97. In Year 1, standards in reading are unsatisfactory. Pupils know many sounds of letters, but cannot fluently join one sound to the next to produce a simple word. When encountering an unknown word, some higher attaining pupils gain clues from pictures. Other pupils look to an adult for guidance. During the inspection, a reading recovery specialist worked intensively to develop the skills of individual pupils in Year 1. Progress was good, and these pupils quickly learned to identify their mistakes, and often to correct them. The school has not yet arranged for teachers to be trained in specialist reading skills. Reading in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. In Year 3, books are often not matched to pupils' attainment, and their progress is unclear because teachers' records of reading are unsatisfactory. In Year 5, where teaching is consistently good, average attaining pupils are enthusiastic readers. They are beginning to understand and appreciate a range of texts, and are likely to achieve the expected national standard at the end of Year 6.
98. Standards of writing in Year 6 are below average because of deficiencies in the teaching of literacy throughout the school. High attaining pupils write confidently and legibly in a variety of styles, including stories and play-scripts. Their work includes complex sentences. They have an understanding of prefixes and of active and passive writing. However, pupils of average attainment do not use paragraphs or punctuation consistently. Their spelling is erratic, and is not always corrected. Their vocabulary is limited. Pupils of below average attainment make satisfactory progress overall but tasks set for them are not always matched to their needs. However, where teaching is good in Year 6, progress made by pupils is good. For example, a pupil with SEN used his ICT skills to word process, print and display an original poem about autumn. Unsatisfactory literacy skills reduce the quality of writing in a number of curriculum subjects, including RE.
99. In Year 2, the volume of pupils' work increases significantly, but the content and layout of their work are often unsatisfactory. The writing of higher attaining pupils is generally legible, and they can re-write familiar stories. However, teachers' expectations are low, and they do not appear to notice when pupils' work in books deteriorates.
100. In Year 1, pupils of average attainment cannot write many words. They write random letters of the alphabet, but the small workbooks provided for them do not allow space for developing their writing. Teachers do not fully understand the needs of pupils at this low level of attainment. Standards of writing are not high enough in Years 3 and 4. Many pupils in these classes do not show enough pride in their work. Teachers have expectations of pupils' achievement that are too low, and unsatisfactory knowledge and expertise in the teaching of English. Pupils in Year

3 are often unable to decipher their own writing, and work set for them is sometimes too difficult. For example, during the inspection a pupil who could not use full stops and capital letters was asked to insert speech marks in his own writing. In Year 4, misspelled common words are not corrected. In Year 5, pupils' learning is sometimes confused by subject specific language. For example, some do not know the difference between metaphors and similes, or explain the difference between conventional poetry and concrete poetry.

101. Teachers speak clearly and fluently to their classes, and most pupils are attentive to instructions. Pupils in Years 3 – 6 show limited discussion skills. Although most listen politely to each other and to their teachers, they have few opportunities in lessons to debate or to explain their work in detail. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are often rushed, or are not planned carefully enough to allow pupils to explain their work and answer questions.
102. Most pupils entering Year 1 have below average skills in speaking and listening, and many speak in incomplete sentences. Their grammar is rudimentary, and their vocabulary limited. Although they make satisfactory progress, speaking and listening are continuing weaknesses in Years 1 and 2.
103. Throughout the school, inadequate provision is made in lessons for pupils with SEN. Work is often not matched these pupils' individual needs, and the progress they make is generally unsatisfactory. However, provision for these pupils is usually satisfactory when they are withdrawn from classes to work with the SEN co-ordinator. Her teaching is sometimes good, but pupils' learning is occasionally too slow because of the unsatisfactory quality of some of the commercial worksheets used.
104. Pupils with EAL make good progress when taught by the specialist teacher from the local education authority because the teacher identifies the needs of the pupils and matches teaching to them appropriately. They also make good progress when helped by the bilingual classroom assistant. However, the needs of these pupils are not fully understood by their teachers and provision for them in many lessons is unsatisfactory.
105. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. During the inspection, some good and very good teaching of English was observed. Evidence from pupils' books also indicates that much of the teaching during the past year has been unsatisfactory. This is the most significant factor explaining the low standards being achieved.
106. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and, on occasions, excellent. In the best teaching, teachers held high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attainment, lessons was taught at a fast pace and a variety of teaching methods ensured that all pupils were fully engaged in their learning. This occurred in most literacy lessons in Years 5 and 6.
107. Where the teaching was unsatisfactorily it was because the purpose of the lessons was unclear. Teachers' knowledge and expertise are often unsatisfactory, and their expectations of pupils' work too low. Teachers do not assess pupils' work well enough and they do not know the strengths or weaknesses of pupils' attainment in English; teachers have satisfactory knowledge of pupils' National Curriculum attainment levels, but know little of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals. Consequently, targets set for pupils are often of little value. Sometimes too many targets are set and too difficult to achieve. For example, during the inspection, a higher attaining pupil in Year 3 judged his weaknesses in writing to be lack of spaces between words and incorrect letter formation. He could not understand most of the twelve targets set by his teacher, but was aware that spacing and letter formation were not among them.
108. Throughout the school, teachers' marking is unsatisfactory. Comments are often too long, and not specific enough to help pupils improve their work. Much untidy work is accepted as satisfactory, and sometimes praised indiscriminately.
109. The co-ordinators of English are experienced teachers, but are untrained in monitoring and evaluating teachers' planning and teaching, and pupils' learning. They are not yet making enough impact on raising standards from the work they do. Computers are not used enough in English.

MATHEMATICS

110. In 2002, standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 were average when compared to all schools and schools in a similar context. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades was average also. This is similar to the standards reported at the last inspection. Over the past three years, girls have outperformed boys in mathematics. At the end of Year 2 in the 2002 tests, standards were well below average when compared to all and similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was also well below average. Standards in Year 2 are much lower than they were at the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in Year 2. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in Year 6 are average and those in Year 2 below average. Numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory.
111. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of counting forwards and backwards to 20. Most are able to add and subtract to 10 mentally, although many rely on counting aloud. In one lesson pupils were confident about counting in fives to fifty. In another, pupils recognised coins to fifty pence and beyond, and could subtract the “fewest” coins to make fifty pence, though less able pupils in this lesson were struggling to subtract from ten pence. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good level of mathematical skills and knowledge and use a range of strategies to solve combined measurement problems involving length, capacity, weight, time and money. They use decimals, fractions, proportions, ratios and percentages to solve these problems often demonstrating considerable skill in doing so. They understood and use concepts of estimation and prediction to help them solve problems.
112. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school are satisfactory overall. Much of the teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good. Teachers’ subject knowledge is generally good. Lessons are well planned with clear targets and explanations, supported by good questioning that reinforces pupils’ learning. In Years 5 and 6, teachers’ expectations of pupils’ attainment are high and pupils respond by learning effectively and make good progress. In Years 3 and 4, teachers do not always recognise how much pupils can do and understand so opportunities to build on existing pupil confidence and skills are lost and as a result the pace of learning slows. In Years 1 and 2, activities are not well matched to meet pupils needs and the pace of learning is too slow for some pupils, especially high attaining pupils. For example, in a lesson about telling the time two thirds of the class were still learning to read the hour and half-hour, while most of the remainder of the class could minutes. Pupils are therefore making unsatisfactory progress overall in Years 1 and 2. Overall, pupils with SEN and other lower ability pupils make satisfactory progress because of the good help they receive from classroom assistants. High attaining pupils in Year 6 make good progress, but those in Year 2 do not.
113. Pupils enjoy their mathematic lessons and they adopt very positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and listen attentively to their teachers. They cooperate very well indeed with each other and are enthusiastic and polite.
114. Mathematics is managed effectively by an experienced co-ordinator. Curriculum planning is sound although opportunities to consolidate mathematics’ skills in other subjects are not always taken. Computers are not used enough in mathematics. Assessment is not carried out consistently across all year groups; some, but not all, teachers keep up-to-date records about pupils’ attainment and progress in mathematics tracking pupil progress. Teachers do not evaluate their teaching or pupils’ progress well enough and many pupils are not given sufficient feedback on what they need to do to improve.

SCIENCE

115. By the end of Year 6, standards are average when compared to all and similar schools. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in science is also average when compared to other schools. By the age of eleven, pupils are performing well in relation to their prior attainment at age seven.

116. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in the teacher assessments in science are well below average when compared to all and similar schools. The reason for these low standards is partly due to the lack of subject teaching expertise in the recent past. This has now improved because the science co-ordinator now teaches all science lessons in Years 1 and 2. It is also due to the present lack of rigorous monitoring and assessment procedures in science. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough with scientific enquiry based work which would allow access to the higher attainment levels.
117. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in science. Pupils with SEN received appropriate extra support in Years 1 and 2 and they make steady progress in science. This is not the same in Years 3-6 where pupils with SEN do not receive enough help in their work and consequently do not make as much progress as they could.
118. By the end of Year 2, pupils learn about the main parts of the human body and how babies grow into adults. They also learn about the way animals and objects move. In a Year 2 lesson, by testing how a brick moved over different surfaces, pupils began to learn about friction. Most higher attaining pupils were able to describe why a brick moved more easily over a smooth surface. They used a force meter and measured accurately the force required to move the brick over a surface. Year 1 pupils learn about light and dark. In one lesson, by switching a torch on and off, pupils were discovering how objects could be hidden and seen inside a box. A few pupils carried out the investigation accurately and were beginning to develop an understanding of how light behaves. However, a limited understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary meant that a significant number of pupils were not able to use the correct words during their discussions.
119. By the end of Year 6, pupils learn how to keep healthy. They know that the pulse rate is a measure of how fast a heart beats and how it is affected by exercise. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were investigating pulse rates and learning how to make their findings fair and reliable. Many pupils showed a good understanding of the investigation and used correct scientific vocabulary to describe what was happening. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were learning about the interdependence of green plants. Most recognised the process of photosynthesis and the basic conditions in which plants grow. Good scientific vocabulary was used during the lesson, which added to pupils' learning.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most of the teaching was good in most classes in Years 2 and 5. Most teachers use national guidance effectively to plan their lessons and this helps to provide a clear focus for teaching; lesson planning is generally sound. Appropriate resources are available for pupils to use. However, the work set is not always pitched at the different abilities of the pupils. For instance, higher attaining pupils are not provided with enough work at their level; some of it is too easy for them. At the beginnings of lessons, teachers make good links with previous learning and share specific lesson objectives with pupils. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to use appropriate scientific vocabulary and there is a strong emphasis placed on the development of scientific enquiry skills. On occasions, the pace of learning is too slow. As a result, pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration and they do not try as hard in these lessons. Teachers' questioning skills are generally sound. However, occasionally teachers direct their questions to a narrow range of pupils without assessing the understanding of the rest of the class.
121. Resources for science have been managed well and an appropriate scheme of work developed. However, the co-ordinator does not monitor and evaluate the teaching in order to raise standards in the subject. Teachers do not assess pupils' progress in science well enough. Computers are not used enough in science.

ART AND DESIGN

122. Standards in art and design have improved since the last inspection. They are now at average levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design.
123. Previously identified weaknesses in the subject have been corrected. There is now a well established framework for planning and the quality of teaching is now satisfactory.

124. Teachers are now well informed about the subject and use their knowledge and skills to plan lessons which provide a suitable challenge for pupils. Resources are prepared well in advance of lessons so that lesson time can be used efficiently. Teachers demonstrate skills clearly to pupils and this encourages them to try out new techniques on their own. Pupils in Year 5, for example, produced some good examples of pottery as a result of the teacher showing them clearly what they might achieve. Basic skills are taught well, and pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas by exploring different materials. Year 6 pupils used the theme of 'People in Action' to paint designs by observing examples of designs. They then printed their designs after making their own print blocks. Sketch books are used particularly well. Pupils use them to practise drawing and shading techniques and to collect pictures for reference.
125. In Year 1, pupils learn how to mix colours. They devise collages, working with a wide range of materials to produce self portraits and designs from woven fabrics. Pupils in Year 2 work in more detail. They concentrate on features such as eyes, which they develop into imaginative designs in the style of the artist David Hockney.
126. Exciting projects such as 'St George and the Dragon' provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. Year 4 pupils designed and produced a large banner depicting this legend which was then translated into a series of tile mosaics. A local craftsman has now mounted the tiles, which provide an attractive display. Good three-dimensional work was also stimulated by a visiting sculptor. The resulting totems make an interesting display in the school garden.
127. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching art and design and this is reflected by pupils' positive attitudes. Resources are plentiful and used effectively.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY [D&T]

128. Standards have improved and are now average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are now making steady progress in D&T. The school has successfully dealt with the weaknesses identified in the previous report.
129. The school has adapted national subject guidance to guide planning and this is having a positive impact on the teaching and learning. There is a strong focus on design and evaluating these designs. This enables pupils to think critically about their own work and how they can improve the products they have made.
130. In Years 1 and 2, pupils design and make puppets and toys which include mechanisms, such as wheels and axles. They learn basic food hygiene when creating 'healthy' meals, such as salads. They design diya lamps to celebrate the Hindu festival of light, Diwali.
131. Pupils in Years 3-6 build satisfactorily on earlier skills. They design products in more detail and their models incorporate more complex systems such as cams, pulleys and electrical circuits. Pupils use an appropriate range of materials for construction, including textiles.
132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some of it is good. In the best lessons, teachers taught at a brisk pace and the work was suitably challenging for pupils. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils used construction sets to investigate nets of solid shapes. This was a very effective way to help them understand how solid shapes are put together. This provided a good basis for their future designs for Christmas packaging. In Year 5, the teacher used the lesson on sampling different types of bread very well to promote literacy and mathematical skills as pupils were evaluating and recording their findings. In both of these lessons teachers' management of pupils' learning and their control of the pace of learning were very good.
133. Good leadership and management of the subject have resulted in the steady improvements in standards in D&T. The recently appointed subject leader has developed a clear action plan for further improvement. This includes the use of computers in the design process. A clear direction for the subject has been established and the school's capacity to raise standards in this subject is good.

GEOGRAPHY

134. The evidence upon which judgements are made in geography is the sample of pupils' work throughout the school and the observation of one lesson in Year 5. From this limited evidence, standards of attainment in geography are average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 and pupils make sound progress in the subject. This is a similar picture to that at the last inspection. There was not enough evidence available to judge standards of attainment by the end of Year 2.
135. Teaching is sound overall. However, there is evidence of work not being taught in enough depth in Years 1 and 2. The teaching was sound in the lessons observed. In the Year 5 lesson, the teacher held high expectations of pupils' learning and used an effective combination of strategies and resources that led to effective pupil learning about the uses of water. The pupils made detailed and comprehensive records of evidence and were able to produce their own categories of use such as industry, farming, leisure and in the home. At the end of this lesson, many pupils could explain and record evidence and understand how water is used. A few pupils were using computers to find out about water is used in developing countries. In another lesson in Year 4 pupils were collecting evidence about the environmental impact of litter and other rubbish. They wrote letters to their local councillor to find out about the policy of the local authority environmental committee on litter and waste. These letters were well written and included clearly detailed questions.
136. The co-ordinator is not a specialist in this subject and has not carried out any monitoring of standards or teaching. There is a good scheme of work for geography, but it is not well resourced. Computers are not used enough in geography.

HISTORY

137. At the last inspection insufficient evidence was available to make judgements of attainment at the end of either key stage. On this inspection, based on lessons observed, scrutiny of past and present written work, classroom displays and discussions with pupils' standards of attainment were found to be average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject.
138. In Years 1 and 2, lessons about Remembrance Day were carefully planned around a video of scenes from World War 1. The teacher led an interesting discussion followed by careful questioning of pupils. The pupils listened attentively in this lesson with great interest. At the end of this lesson, many pupils said that they had learnt something they did not know before and understood better what is being remembered on that day. The written work seen from pupils in Year 2 last year showed that they had a good understanding of two famous people, Mary Seacole and Alexander Bell.
139. In Years 3 to 6, pupils increase their understanding of history through their study of the Ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Tudors and Victorians. In Year 3, pupils' enjoyment and understanding of history is apparent in their written work and classroom displays. They have drawn maps of Ancient Greece, compared the cities of Athens and Sparta in considerable detail and stated a preference for in which one of these cities they would like to live. They have written about and illustrated the story of the wooden horse and Troy. Pupils know which sports the Ancient Greeks are famous for and can describe them. They also know how the Greeks lived and what food they ate. Examples of good written work in history were seen by both higher and lower attaining pupils.
140. In Year 6, pupils are studying the Tudors, and their displays and projects books show real pride in their work. In the lessons observed, pupils were using evidence from inventories to identify and compare the characteristics and features of the lives of rich and poor people living in Tudor times. They were able to interpret evidence and make deductions about people's wealth, their occupations, homes, leisure activities and education. They then recorded and illustrated their findings in their project books. The pupils' pace of learning was maintained well by the teacher posing probing questions of pupils.

141. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and include a range of interesting and challenging activities which appropriately promote the development of skills in historical investigation and understanding. Teachers ask pupils probing questions and these help to maintain a good pace to the learning.
142. The history curriculum is supported appropriately by school visits to places of interest. For example, pupils have visited the Verulim Museum for the Romans, the Stevenage Museum for the Egyptians and the Hitchin Museum for the Tudors. There are good pupils displays around the school of Egyptian papyrus writing, Ancient Greek pottery and architecture, and the Tudors.
143. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator, who has a specialist interest in the subject. A new scheme of work, based on national guidance, has been adopted by the school. There is an increasing use of computers in history, for instance, in the use of websites.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY [ICT]

144. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the school's provision for ICT and the school now complies fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum, covering all elements of the subject. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be below national standards for the majority of pupils at end of Years 2 and 6. An appropriate scheme of work, based on national guidance, is now being taught and the well-planned use of the school's computer suite enables all pupils to acquire new skills and understanding of computers. These improvements have helped to raise pupils' standards of attainment and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils reach standards that are broadly at nationally expected levels. Pupils throughout the school, including those with SEN and EAL, make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference between the overall progress and attainment of boys and girls.
145. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are becoming more confident in their use of computers. They know how to log on and log off, how to open and close a word processing program, and to print and save their work. Most high achieving pupils have a good understanding of the main keyboard functions. Lower attaining pupils are uncertain of some specific functions of keys on the keyboard such as the shift and shift lock keys. Pupils' work also reflects an appropriate breadth of coverage including the use of LOGO based turtle software and a graphics program to create pictures.
146. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have developed their range of skills further. Pupils in Year 3 work on databases and create records and fields for fruits and vegetables. In Year 4, most pupils are confidently deleting and inserting new words to improve the clarity of text. Some pupils are beginning to organise and amend a longer piece of text. By Year 6, all pupils are confidently exploring hyperlinks and navigating websites and CD-ROMS in preparation for developing their own pages in a powerpoint presentation. Most pupils are developing an understanding of how to access multi-media information and are able to compare the use of computers with books to research knowledge on a specific topic.
147. The teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory overall. The school has enough computers for a whole class to use them at one time. Lessons are planned effectively with clear learning intentions. Teachers are familiar with the programs they use and show a satisfactory understanding of the subject. Computer skills are taught directly with opportunities provided for pupils to practise and apply the appropriate learning objectives. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability to work independently with the equipment and the majority of pupils respond positively to this and work well on computers.
148. Sometimes, however, the teaching and learning have weaknesses. The progress of pupils in one lesson was adversely affected because the teacher could not control the pupils' behaviour well enough. Teachers' planning does not always take into account the different abilities of pupils. Higher attaining pupils are not always well provided for and they find the work easy.
149. Each classroom in Years 3-6 has two computers and, in Years 1 and 2, one. On occasions, these are used appropriately and linked to the main lesson. However, overall, computers are not being used effectively or often enough as a tool to help learning in other subjects.

150. The co-ordinator is leading and managing the subject well. This is making a significant impact on the subject throughout the school. All teachers are being trained under a national initiative in order to improve their computer skills. The co-ordinator is monitoring the subject across the school by scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure the scheme of work is being taught in full. Appropriate procedures for assessment are being used. This provides staff with information on pupils about the progress they are making. It also helps to inform teachers about the content of future learning. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored the teaching in lessons. Resources are good; the school has thirty-nine computers in use around the school. An inter-active whiteboard has just been purchased to increase opportunities for direct teaching of computer skills. A weekly computer club for Year 5 and 6 pupils makes a good contribution to raising the subject's profile in the school.

MUSIC

151. Pupils' attainment in music is now above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The majority of pupils make good progress as they are provided with a range of opportunities for making music, including instrumental practice. In addition to the music opportunities in lessons and assemblies, extra-curricular clubs are provided for choir and recorder. Violin and keyboard lessons with a peripatetic teacher are also available. Overall, there is good breadth of subject provision.
152. By the end of Year 2, pupils use a range of percussion instruments to make music and they develop their performing skills. Most respond well as a group and attempt different rhythms on a drum. They listen intently to their teacher learning how to respond to a conductor when performing a musical sequence.
153. By the end of Year 6, pupils make rhythmic patterns to create a composition based on two kinds of sounds. They are keenly involved and practise different combinations of sounds. They learn musical vocabulary, such as rhythm and pitch, and this contributes to the quality of their evaluation of each other's compositions. Pupils are able to improvise with short rhythms as part of a group performance. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils learnt how to perform three songs simultaneously in a round. Most pupils sing confidently and in tune. They know how to breathe effectively to control the sounds they make. Girls sing more confidently than boys. During a whole school hymn practice led by the music co-ordinator, pupils learnt different sections of a hymn. They sang the hymns confidently with enjoyment, enthusiasm and expression. They sound the words clearly. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection when singing was considered poor during the previous inspection with pupils lacking confidence and enthusiasm.
154. The quality of teaching and learning in music is good. A specialist music teacher is employed by the school for one day a week. This teacher is making significant improvements to the quality of learning throughout the school as she teaches all the classes for music in Years 3-6. In all lessons, learning objectives are shared with pupils and effective explanations and demonstrations by the teacher enable pupils to understand the key elements of the lesson. Overall, lessons are well planned and pupils well motivated and encouraged to respond accurately to instructions. In the best teaching, very good subject knowledge and high teacher expectations enable pupils to work effectively on group compositions. Class teachers sat in on lessons when they were being taught by the music specialist. In some of these lessons, class teachers did not actively involve themselves whilst the music specialist led the lesson. This is a waste of teacher time. There is a need for the school to review this arrangement to enable teachers to be used more effectively during music lessons.
155. The school's plans of work is appropriately based on national guidance and the resources to support the scheme are satisfactory. A commercial scheme is used for Years 1 and 2. This is successfully integrated within the school's approach to music. Computers are not used enough in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION [PE]

156. Standards at the end of Year 6 in dance and gymnastics are average and pupils make satisfactory progress in these elements of the subject. Standards in swimming are above average. Most pupils can swim 25 metres before they leave school. Many can swim much further than this. Standards and progress are similar to those reported at the last inspection. During lessons observed in Year 3, girls reached higher standards than boys in dance. Not enough evidence was collected during the inspection to judge standards in games and outdoor and adventurous activities at the end of Year 6 or standards by the end of Year 2.
157. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In most lessons teachers have confidence in their knowledge of the subject, high expectations of pupils' learning and pupils are used as exemplars from whom others can learn and improve their own performances. Teachers assess pupils' work during lessons and help them to improve. All lessons were adequately planned and showed clear learning objectives. Most teachers share these objectives with pupils at the start of the lesson. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils worked well to learn controlled body movements as they developed a theme on flight using their feet and hands. Pupils experimented confidently and safely. Overall most pupils throughout the school display a positive attitude to physical activity. Pupils' behaviour is generally well managed. When this is not the case, pupils' safety is at risk. In a few lessons, a minority of boys did not behave well, and this adversely affected the overall quality of teaching and learning.
158. The school has good facilities and resources for physical education and appropriate use is made of the school hall, gym and playing fields. A good feature of the subject is the excellent way all pupils change into appropriate clothing for PE lessons. The school has recently implemented a commercial scheme of work, which reflects national subject guidance and teaches the main areas of games, dance, gymnastics and swimming. However, procedures for assessing pupils' progress in PE are not included in the scheme of work. A greater time allocation to the subject has helped achieve adequate coverage of the National Curriculum.
159. At the time of the inspection, there is a temporary co-ordinator who manages subject resources appropriately. A recently written policy has been agreed and resources have been re-organised to reflect the school's approach to PE, including the purchase of new equipment for the Nursery and Reception classes. However, no time has been assigned for the co-ordinator to monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in PE lessons. Provision for extra-curricular clubs is satisfactory. During the autumn term this includes football and badminton for Years 5 and 6, and country dancing takes place for Years 1 and 2. The school also competes against other local schools in football.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION [RE]

160. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6, and reflect the standards suggested by the locally agreed syllabus for RE. Standards are similar to those noted in the previous inspection. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in RE.
161. In Year 2, pupils of average attainment have very good understanding of the Creation. They know that the world contains living things, including people, plants and animals. They visit a local church and understand the significance of simple Christian artefacts. Pupils in Year 3 recognise that Christianity is symbolised by a cross, and that Christians believe Jesus was the son of God. They are taught about some of the teachings of Mohammed, but often confuse religious figures with Zeus and other characters from their current mythology topic.
162. All year groups study major world religions. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils compared a christening and a Sikh naming ceremony. In Year 5, pupils have good knowledge of some aspects of Judaism, including dietary laws. In Year 6, pupils can recall some stories told by Jesus, but do not recognise the word 'parable'. They know aspects of Buddhism; pupils of average attainment explained clearly the meaning of 'inner peace'. In all year groups, pupils have good understanding of the symbols associated with a variety of faiths, including Islam and Judaism.

163. The teaching and learning of RE are satisfactory overall. However, the quality of learning is reduced because RE lessons are limited to thirty minutes. This does not give enough time for pupils to produce good quality written work in lessons. Much time is also wasted in the second lesson of the week recapping the learning from the previous one.
164. Not enough opportunities are taken for pupils to consolidate and extend their literacy skills in RE. Too often, tasks are set for pupils that include drawing with little writing attached. Good links are made with the school's programme for personal, social and health education. Pupils are aware of how poverty and deprivation in Africa may be partially alleviated by their own charitable work. Resources are satisfactory overall, although few reference books are suitable for older pupils. There is a growing use of computers in RE lessons, for example, in gathering information from websites.