

INSPECTION REPORT

RIVERVIEW INFANT SCHOOL

Gravesend, Kent

LEA area: KENT

Unique reference number: 118454

Headteacher: Mrs B J Oates

Reporting inspector: Mrs Linda Bird
17133

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th March 2001

Inspection number: 187664

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cimba Wood Riverview Park Gravesend Kent
Postcode:	DA12 4SD
Telephone number:	01474 566484
Fax number:	01474 331401
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R A Friday
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
L Bird 17133	Registered inspector	Religious Education	What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
H Akhtar 9561	Lay inspector		Partnerships with parents
			How well does the school cater for its pupils?
P Overton 18546	Team inspector	Science Information & Communication Technology	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
L James 15049	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and Design Design and Technology Music	
D Fisher 17520	Team inspector	Mathematics PE Special educational needs	
M Holling 15977	Team inspector	English Geography History	
S Richardson 1038	Team inspector	English as an additional language.	

The inspection contractor was:

The Cambridgeshire Partnership
Business Centre
Suite 2
St Johns Court
East Street
St Ives
Cambridge PE27 5PD

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

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House

33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Riverview Infant School is situated on the outskirts of Gravesend in northwest Kent. Pupils are aged from 4 to 7 years. The school is usually oversubscribed with pupils coming from a wider area than the Riverview estate. With 352 pupils on roll, the school is bigger than the average primary school. Three per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language, higher than in most schools. Just over twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs; this is broadly in line with the national average but there are fewer than average numbers of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Entitlement to free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils have attended pre-school provision and attainment on entry is average.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Riverview Infant School is an effective school with many strengths and few weaknesses. The school provides good teaching and promotes good attitudes and behaviour. The school environment is secure and caring and pupils feel valued. The Headteacher provides strong leadership and ensures that a clear emphasis is given to raising standards of attainment. The school is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils regardless of their different background and abilities. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The Governors are well informed and work hard on behalf of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve good standards in reading, mathematics, science and information technology.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The school fosters good behaviour and attitudes in the children. They enjoy learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school enjoys good relationships with parents.
- There are good relationships at all levels, and these help to create the warm and positive ethos that exists in the school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' writing and in particular the opportunity to develop their writing for a range of different purposes.
- Consistency in the quality of teachers' short term plans, marking and standards in the presentation of pupils' work.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development.
- Opportunities for pupils to work independently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in March 1996, the school has systematically tackled the weaknesses identified in the last report and has made good improvement overall. In the last inspection, a quarter of lessons were unsatisfactory. The vast majority of teaching is now satisfactory and much of it is good. Schemes and policies are now in place for all subjects. The leadership of subjects is carried out by small teams of teachers whose leadership and monitoring roles have been strengthened. These factors have contributed to the improved consistency in standards being attained across the school. The health and safety issues identified in the last report have been addressed. The school has a strong commitment to raising standards further and is now well placed to do so.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	1999
reading	A	A	A	B
writing	B	B	C	E
mathematics	A	B	C	D

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

The group of pupils taking the tests at age 7 years in 2000 contained a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the average, either for the school or nationally. This has depressed the school's results in comparison to similar schools in writing and mathematics. The standards of achievement by seven year olds in 2000 are well above the national average in reading and are in line with the average in writing and mathematics. The school has set challenging targets to raise these standards. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards are improving in the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science. Good standards were seen in information technology. Standards in art, music, history, geography and design technology are in line with what is expected. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and mostly reach appropriate levels by the end of Key Stage 1. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, and pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress with their work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and show interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well to all the opportunities the school provides for them to take responsibility. Pupils have good self-esteem. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is slightly below the national average. The Headteacher carefully monitors pupils' attendance and takes action when necessary. Systems for ensuring good attendance are satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and this is a strength of the school. Ninety eight per cent of teaching is satisfactory, including forty nine per cent that is good, and a further eleven per cent is very good. About two per cent is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and enables most pupils to achieve well by the age of seven. The strengths of teaching include good subject knowledge, a thorough introduction to the content of the lesson and teachers use questioning well that helps pupils engage with the lesson set. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well addressed and the lessons impact positively on pupils' learning. The teachers manage the pupils very well. They create calm and purposeful classrooms, relationships are very good. The learning support assistants significantly contribute to the standards achieved. The pupils show good levels of interest and apply themselves well to the tasks set. Teachers support and challenge pupils with special educational needs well throughout the school, by setting appropriate targets and ensuring pupils are helped to work towards these targets.

Teachers do not routinely specify the objectives behind the activities in their planning or clarify them sufficiently with pupils in lessons. Pupils, therefore, occasionally complete activities, but without focussing sufficiently on what they are meant to learn. The teaching does not consistently meet the needs of pupils of different levels of prior attainment. The quality of teaching in English, and science is good. It is satisfactory in mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which covers all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum for the under fives includes all the required areas of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early, are well planned for and they receive good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language are enabled to take part in all aspects of the curriculum and achieve satisfactory levels.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very effectively for its pupils.

Parents' and carers' views of the school are very positive. The school works hard to involve parents in its work and in supporting children learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership by the Headteacher who has a clear vision for the school and provides energy and drive to achieve it. She is well supported by the Deputy Headteacher. Curriculum leadership is good in English, mathematics and science and is developing well in other subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are conscientious and they support the school, offering time and advice willingly. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and check on work in classrooms by making their own visits and observations.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has an appropriate agenda for improvement in writing and mathematics. Better use could be made of information gained from monitoring to ensure greater consistency in teaching across the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school's use of its staffing, funding and other resources is sound and the Headteacher and Governors ensure that any specific grants are spent only on the purposes for which they are intended. Principles of best value, such as assessing competitive estimates for work to be carried out, are applied satisfactorily.

Staffing and learning resources such as books and computers are adequate and the accommodation is generally good. Teachers are experienced in teaching the age group for which they are responsible. Learning support assistants positively contribute to pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like coming to school and their behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are making good progress. • The school has high expectations of their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to see more school clubs or after school activities.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. Few infant schools offer a range of clubs or after school activities and the team's view is that provision for clubs and activities is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school achieves good standards in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are average. The positive ethos together with the clear educational direction of the school promote above average attainment.
2. On entering the school at the age of four, the majority of children have skills, levels of knowledge and understanding that are typical of their age. A few have special educational needs which have already been identified, often connected with speech and language delay. The overall good quality of teaching results in secure learning. Because of this, by the time pupils begin the National Curriculum at around the age of five, most have attained the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is often above what is usually expected.
3. The children under five in the Foundation Stage are taught the value of listening carefully, and they listen to stories well and respond clearly when asked questions. Most speak confidently, usually answering questions with a sentence, and using correct language structure. Most of the pupils who were admitted at the beginning of the school year form letters correctly and write their own names. In mathematics, most count to 20, and recognise, for example, the number before and after seven. The personal and social development of the children under five is good, as they relate well to each other and adults and quickly learn to co-operate in pairs and groups. Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They are aware of how things grow and change and use computers confidently. The children's physical and creative development is satisfactory. They develop understanding of moving forwards, backwards and sideways. They are able to express their feelings by moving in time to music. They are able to sing tunefully and maintain a rhythm accurately.
4. In the previous inspection, the standards of seven-year-old pupils were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations. Above average standards were found in aspects of English, mathematics and physical education. Reading was judged to be a strength of the school. In the period since the inspection, reading results have been consistently very high compared to schools nationally. This was true in 2000 and the previous three years. Standards in writing and mathematics were average in 2000, but had been above average for the previous three years. The results for 2000 in writing and mathematics have fallen when compared to the previous three years. This is because the group of pupils taking the tests at age 7 years in 2000 contained a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the average, either for the school or nationally. The school predicts improved results in writing and mathematics in 2001 and the evidence from this inspection confirms this. Teacher assessment in science shows performance to be close to the national average.
5. The results in 2000 of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing, mathematics and science were close to the national average. They were above average in reading. Compared to similar schools i.e. those schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards are above average in reading, below average in mathematics and well below average in writing. The work seen during the inspection is better than last year's results would indicate and gives every indication that the

school will attain improved test results in 2001.

6. During the inspection, lesson observations and work seen showed that the standards in reading, mathematics and science are improving and are above average. Standards in writing are average. Most seven-year-olds reach expected standards in terms of their confidence and willingness to speak and take turns to speak and listen appropriately. Pupils listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy reading and are developing the ability to use punctuation as a guide to expression when reading aloud. Pupils have a good knowledge of phonics. In writing, work seen in lessons and in the survey of work provided by the school shows that standards are average. Work in pupils' folders shows a heavy reliance on published work sheets, which limits opportunities for pupils' written work. Skills in handwriting and presentation also vary. There is a lack of rigour by some teachers, in insisting on best work on a daily basis.
7. In mathematics the work seen indicated above average attainment. Most seven-year-olds have a clear understanding of the place value of tens and units and can carry out simple calculations accurately. They recognise number patterns and know the difference between odd and even. They use money effectively and can work out simple problems mentally. Skills in mental mathematics are not well developed. Pupils can count forwards and backwards in multiples of 2, 5 and 10. Older pupils know how to double and halve numbers but mental recall of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is slow. The majority of pupils has a secure understanding of shape, space and measures.
8. The school has set ambitious targets for attainment in English and mathematics for 2001. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are on track to meet them.
9. In science, the attainment of seven-year-olds is above average. They learn about the life cycles of frogs. They know the conditions that plants need to grow. They study materials successfully and can categorise different types of materials.
10. Attainment is in line with the standards expected nationally in physical education, music, design and technology, history, geography and art. Pupils make steady progress in these subjects. In information technology the attainment of most pupils is above the national expectation and progress is good. Pupils are confident in using computers. In religious education standards are in line with those expected by the local syllabus. Pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Bible and the messages they hold for life today. Their knowledge of other major world religions is satisfactory.
11. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The extra support they receive in lessons and when they are withdrawn from class enables them to make good progress and they achieve standards which are frequently in line with the levels expected nationally. Good progress is made in reading, mathematics and science. In writing progress is sound in relation to their ability levels.
12. Pupils with English as an additional language make steady progress. In most subjects, they attain levels in - line with those achieved by the majority of pupils in their class.
13. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes are good. They enjoy school; this supports the views of their parents.

Pupils are interested in their work and are involved in the range of activities the school provides. They listen and concentrate well. In eighty seven per cent of lessons inspectors judged pupils attitudes and behaviour to be good and of those in twenty two per cent of lessons, attitudes and behaviour were found to be very good. During group activities, pupils co-operate well, and provide support for one another. In a geography lesson, which focussed on the local area, pupils displayed a good level of independence and interest by carefully collecting the necessary materials and resources for their work. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes to learning.

15. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and keen to co-operate with each other and with adults. They understand the rules and keep to them. They are acquiring a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Although there is some evidence of occasional challenging behaviour from a small minority of pupils, there have been no exclusions.
16. The good ethos of the school encourages pupils to respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils from differing ethnic backgrounds work and play harmoniously together. There was no sign of bullying or other anti-social behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude towards learning. They relate well to their teachers and support staff and when given the opportunity enjoy working co-operatively. In a few lessons when group work is not sufficiently matched to their ability, they lose concentration and become restless. Insufficient opportunities are provided for them to use information technology to support learning.
17. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are very good. Adults in the school, work hard to set good role models. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. Pupils respond in a positive manner and show caring and considerate attitudes towards each other and adults in the school community. Pupils' personal development is good overall. They care for resources and the property of others. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through speaking and listening and taking responsibility for undertaking such tasks as taking the register to the office and tidying up classrooms.
18. Attendance is slightly below the national average. The Headteacher checks on completion of registers and monitors attendance. She has taken action to request parents not to take their children on holiday during term time and during the Key Stage 1 test period. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils come to school on time and settle to their work promptly and calmly. This makes a positive contribution to learning. There is no evidence that the attendance of pupils with special educational needs is different from other pupils.
19. The inspection findings are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and very good relationships have a positive effect on the standards of attainment, the quality of learning and the quality of life in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Overall teaching is good and a strength of the school. Forty-nine per cent of teaching is good, eleven per cent is very good and thirty-eight per cent is satisfactory; two per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. These percentages indicate a very significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection in March 1996 when only 75% of

teaching was judged to be satisfactory. This improvement is due to the strong leadership of the Headteacher in setting high standards for teaching, and decisively tackling under-performance by teachers.

21. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the needs of young children and have worked hard to establish the new Foundation Curriculum. Lessons are planned effectively, work is conducted at a good pace, and pupils are appropriately encouraged to learn through well-structured play activities. Other adults working within the Foundation Stage, including the learning support assistants, demonstrate good levels of expertise with the age group and their support makes a valuable contribution to the standards achieved. The good quality teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children are fully prepared to begin the National Curriculum in Year 1.
22. When pupils are between five and seven years of age, teaching is good overall. Teachers manage pupils very well. The calm orderly environment enables pupils to make good progress. In most lessons teachers expect pupils to achieve well and give them good encouragement to do their best. Teachers explain work clearly and they have secure knowledge and expertise in the subjects they teach. The lessons are well structured with a good balance between instruction and activities for the pupils to carry out. The pupils show good levels of interest and apply themselves well to the tasks set.
23. Where lessons are less effective, learning objectives are unclear and tasks are not matched well enough to what pupils can achieve. There is an excessive dependence on work sheets which inhibits pupils' ability to control their work and develop skills as writers. The quality of marking varies from thoroughly marked work with comments that will help the pupils to improve to ticks which give no constructive comment.
24. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to teach the basic literacy skills. They are skilled in teaching phonics and providing pupils with strategies to develop reading skills. Opportunities for writing for a range of purposes are not as well addressed, partly because of the over-reliance on worksheet-based activities. The teaching of numeracy is well addressed and guided by the school's successful adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are well structured and expectations on the part of teachers are suitably high. Insufficient attention is given to the mental starter of the lesson and consequently mental skills are not well developed. The teaching of the basic skills is underpinned by the fact that teachers know their pupils well and clear annual targets have been set for each pupil.
25. In English, mathematics, geography, art, physical education and religious education all the teaching is satisfactory and about half of it is good. The quality of teaching in science is particularly strong with all teaching being judged to be good or better. In one very good science lesson on the life cycle of a bean, the teacher's knowledge and clarity of explanation about ways of measuring growth, promoted high levels of interest and understanding on the part of pupils.
26. Clearly laid out schemes of work underpin the teaching in each subject. This provides clear guidance as to what to teach and when. These schemes support teachers appropriately in their long and medium term planning.
27. Teachers work well together as a team. Joint year group planning helps ensure that pupils in similar age groups have similar experiences. Short term planning is inconsistent. Some teachers set clear learning objectives for their lessons but this is not so in all cases. It is in these lessons where there is room for improvement.

28. The school effectively promotes pupils' homework through the very well received 'learning together' activities. These activities are carefully prepared and support pupils' learning in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Parents also support their children by reading with them at home.
29. Pupils with special educational needs have clear individual education plans which outline their targets and strategies to be used to ensure these are met. Teachers make effective use of learning support assistants who work well with groups of pupils with special needs. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in class discussion and activities. In some lessons, when support is not available, insufficient attention is given to ensuring group activities are directly related to pupils' prior attainment. This was evident in numeracy lessons when lower attaining pupils were asked to solve problems beyond their understanding. They became frustrated and their behaviour deteriorated.
30. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are provided with the necessary support to make satisfactory progress. The school has not identified any particularly gifted or talented pupils. The school does, however, have adequate procedures in place to identify and support these pupils.

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

31. The overall quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory. The Key Stage 1 curriculum has an appropriate breadth and balance that satisfactorily meets the needs of all its pupils. Since the last inspection there have been improvements to the curriculum opportunities provided by the school. The development of schemes of work for all subjects has helped to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and that curriculum provision is appropriate to the needs and interests of its pupils. The year group planning meetings and the work of the curriculum teams in monitoring the half-termly curriculum plans, helps to ensure that the work organised for the pupils builds upon their previous experiences. The recently introduced Foundation Stage Curriculum ensures that all areas of learning are addressed. The content of the curriculum effectively meets the needs of the youngest pupils.
32. Pupils with special educational needs have access to all the curriculum. They benefit from additional support in numeracy and literacy. Individual learning programmes are planned for them and maintained effectively by their learning support assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Targets are agreed and reviewed termly. As a result, pupils make good progress and many pupils achieve the standard expected of their age by the end of the key stage.
33. There are appropriate strategies in place for the teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The teaching of basic skills is accorded a high status. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. The opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes need to be increased. The numeracy strategy has been adopted by all staff but pupils skills in mental mathematics need further development.
34. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Visits are made to local farms and places of interest during the year and a large number of pupils attend the summer term club. The Fun Week at the end of the academic year encourages a wide range of visitors into the school, including artists, musicians, story tellers, dance and drama groups and representatives of the local emergency services. These activities

make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

35. The school curriculum takes account of the needs of all pupils and there are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Provision for pupils learning English as a second language is appropriate and the school is successful in ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum.
36. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There is specific reference to this aspect of the pupils' education in the teachers' half-termly planning and a number of classes make use of "circle time" to facilitate discussion of a range of issues amongst pupils. There is not yet, however, a consistent whole school approach to this strategy for promoting personal, social and emotional development. The school has adopted appropriate policies regarding drugs and sex education.
37. Links with the community are satisfactory. There are a number of regular visitors to the school, including representatives of the local churches who participate in assemblies. Students from the nearby secondary schools and local college undertake work placement in the school. In addition, pupils visit the local senior citizens group and participate in a range of charity and fund raising events during the course of a year. All these links with the community make a clear contribution to pupils' learning.
38. Liaison with the partner junior school is good and there are regular meetings of members of the staff from both schools to discuss issues related to pupil transfer as well as special educational needs and the curriculum. Governors from both schools also meet to discuss issues of common interest to both schools. The arrangements for settling into the reception class are good and pupils are quickly made to feel happy and secure in their new environment.
39. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school's provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Pupils have a clear idea of what is right or wrong and this is a direct result of their teachers' high expectations concerning behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for routine tasks in classrooms, such as taking registration and tidying up. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in classrooms, which is conducive to learning.
40. The opportunities to provide for pupils' spiritual awareness, through assembly and the wider curriculum, are not fully exploited. Opportunities for spiritual development such as the lighting of the "thinking candle" time in assembly are lost because the teachers give insufficient time or emphasis to them. In English lessons literature and poetry are insufficiently used to develop spiritual awareness. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
41. The school continues to develop its approach to raising its pupils' awareness of the cultural traditions and diversity of British society. The religious education syllabus supports this and there is a range of artefacts in school, provided by parents and teachers, to develop pupil understanding further. The work on Hinduism studied by Year 1, was enriched with artefacts and books. Pupils were clearly interested in this world religion. In a geography lesson, pupils were considering the clothes which are worn by people in different climates. They discussed the sari with interest and this discussion helped to broaden their understanding of other cultures and traditions. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory and pupils are adequately prepared for living in a diverse society.
42. The school meets its statutory responsibilities in terms of religious education and the

collective act of worship.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school has made good progress in addressing issues about health, safety and supervision at the end of the school day, identified by the last inspection, and now provides good systems for the care of its pupils. There are effective admission arrangements and children in reception settle quickly into the daily school routines. Pupils in all years work in a safe environment free from harassment or bullying, and where teachers know the needs of each child well. All this supports the quality of education received by the pupils.
44. The school has an inclusive approach to meeting pupils' specific educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within classes by a committed team of support assistants who work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Very good liaison is established with outside agencies to provide specific support when needed. The school has established effective strategies to monitor pupils' academic progress, personal development and behaviour. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils for whom English is not their first language and this helps them to cope well with the curriculum. High attaining pupils and those who could attain well are particularly supported by extra group work during the autumn term.
45. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters. Supervision at play times, lunch times and at the end of the school day is good. Child protection is taken seriously, led by the headteacher who is knowledgeable in child protection procedures and keeps the staff informed about the issues. There is no separate policy on children in public care at present though it is implicit with the child protection arrangements. Pupils are also well guided on matters relating to their welfare, for example, through the circle times and talks from the community police constable.
46. The school points out the need for pupils to attend regularly but has not always been successful in its efforts to improve good attendance, since a small number of parents does not fully co-operate in avoiding unnecessary absences. For example, some parents take family holidays during the term time. Follow up of absences is satisfactory. Registers are marked correctly and reasons for absence recorded promptly.
47. The school is very successful in eliminating oppressive behaviour and promoting self-discipline and esteem. All adults within the school work well together to promote good behaviour, and earn the respect of the children. There is a good focus on rewards. Any concerning behaviour is well monitored by the headteacher through the 'contact with parents book' system. Bullying is not a feature of the school.
48. Pupils' personal development is well monitored; for example, pupils' annual reports include sections on relationships, behaviour and attitudes. It is well supported through the curriculum initiatives like the 'listening skills' project and the circle times. Personal development targets for pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored and effectively supported.
49. Procedures for assessing pupils' performance are good but there is inconsistent use of monitoring information to plan, to guide pupils and help them to improve. The systems for assessment and recording have improved since the last inspection, and are in the process of further development. The co-ordinator has a good view of both the strengths and shortcomings in the procedures. The baseline assessment is

promptly carried out when children enter the school and it is well used to identify children's specific needs and in setting their attainment targets. The recently adopted 'pathways' system for monitoring pupils' progress against the set target is supporting the raising of standards in the core subjects. Progress of pupils with specific educational needs is carefully monitored and they are well supported. National tests are carried out, and recording and reporting requirements are met. The test results are analysed and on the basis of the analysis carried out last year, plans for improving standards in writing and numeracy have been put into place. All subjects have assessment procedures and teachers record assessment information well. Teachers have an appropriate knowledge of the attainment of individual pupils but tasks do not always promote sufficient progress. This is because teachers do not always make clear the exact learning that will take place, and select the most appropriate activities and forms of grouping to ensure it is achieved. Thus, the use of assessment information is not consistent in all lessons in ensuring that planned opportunities are matched effectively to the learning needs of all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Partnership with parents was good at the time of the last inspection and remains so. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Parents' views about the school, as expressed in their responses to the inspection questionnaire and in meetings with the inspectors, are positive and reveal a high degree of satisfaction with how the school is run and what it provides. Some parents are less satisfied with the range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors found that extra-curricular activities are satisfactory for an infant school. The school makes a very good effort to ensure that parents feel welcome and encourages them to become involved in their children's learning. Parents particularly appreciate the 'learning together' activities, like the spellings, writing and numeracy work sent home, which provide good opportunities for them to support their children's learning at home. The headteacher deals with parents' concerns as soon as they arise and there is good informal contact with her. The home school agreement clearly indicates its expectations of parental involvement and of pupils.
51. Parents help with reading, and provide good support in the library and the computer work. Parents also help on school visits. There is an active Parent Teacher Association, which aims to involve the whole school community. This has provided funds for many projects, including an attractive development of the playground environment. There are good links with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are kept fully informed about their child's progress and the targets that have been set for pupils to achieve. Overall, parents make good contribution to the life of the school and the school can happily rely on their cooperation in addressing any concerns regarding pupils' well-being and performance.
52. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The newsletters, prospectus and governors' reports are informative and helpful. Parents are encouraged to use the 'contact book', regularly sent home, for messages. There are frequent consultation and curriculum information meetings for parents and these are well attended. Some parents felt that they are not well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors found that pupils' annual written reports are satisfactory. Whilst the reports inform well what pupils can do, they give little information about what pupils should be doing or what exactly their parents can do to improve academic standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is efficiently and effectively led and managed. The Headteacher gives strong leadership of good quality and provides clear educational direction to the school's work. She is well supported by the Deputy Headteacher and by other staff. Governors are actively involved in the management of the school and meet their statutory responsibilities.
54. The aims of the school are clearly laid out and in large measure the school is successfully meeting these aims. The school has established a warm and purposeful ethos which supports its commitment to the achievement of high standards. The positive learning environment and the very good quality of relationships are conducive to the achievement of the schools aims.
55. The school complies with the legislation concerning equality of opportunity. The Headteacher and Governing Body actively promote equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. The school values all the members of its community equally and ensures that pupils from minority ethnic groups are supported in their learning. All staff offer pupils good role models in the way in which they value and respect pupils.
56. The Headteacher monitors and evaluates teaching and where there has been under-performance this has been identified and appropriate action taken. The monitoring of plans and pupils' work by curriculum subject teams is in place, but for many of the foundation subjects and religious education subject monitoring and the taking of effective action to secure improvement is not fully developed. Through monitoring, information is effectively collected, but better use could be made of this information to ensure a greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. In particular there is variability in the marking of pupils' work, in setting clear learning objectives and the way in which work is matched to pupils' prior attainment levels. The evaluation and development of teaching remains an area for further improvement.
57. Responsibilities are effectively delegated. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed. Curriculum teams now have a clear role, they provide subject leadership and expertise and they have a clear view about the standards and quality in the areas for which they are responsible. Since the last inspection, curriculum teams have put in place clear guidance for what is to be taught through a comprehensive range of schemes of work. This guidance is having a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The whole staff work closely together as a team, are committed and support each other well. They carry out their delegated responsibilities in a conscientious manner.
58. The Deputy Headteacher effectively co-ordinates special needs. She is enthusiastic and ensures that staff and parents are well informed. All staff are aware of the importance of early identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. The nominated Governor is well informed and ensures statutory requirements are met. The use of special support from outside agencies is well managed. The learning support staff are a strength of the school. They are fully committed to the school and pupils. They participate in training programmes and work closely with class teachers to ensure pupils with special needs are well supported. There is a clear development plan for special needs which shows precise time-scales and responsibilities.
59. A policy has been agreed for performance management. The Governors have set targets for the Headteacher and an initial review meeting has taken place for all teachers. The school is meeting the requirements for performance management.
60. The systems for analysis of pupil performance data are well developed. The

Headteacher carries out a thorough analysis of test results each year. Good use is made of the data to track individual pupils and set targets. The availability of this information has contributed to the raising of pupil standards. Challenging whole school targets have been set for 2001 in reading, writing and mathematics, and evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that pupils are on track to meet these targets.

61. The Governing Body provides strong support for the school. Governors undertake their statutory responsibilities well. The relationship between the Governors and the school is very good. The Governors have clearly defined roles and are knowledgeable about the issues affecting the school. Link Governors have been appointed to participate in the monitoring of the subjects of the curriculum. Governors are involved in the preparation of the school development plan and priorities are carefully costed. A school improvement plan is also in place which has rightly identified the need to focus on improvement in writing and mathematics.
62. Staff, resources and accommodation are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The number of teachers and support staff, and their qualifications are a good match to the needs of the school and the demands of the curriculum. The learning support assistants make a good contribution to the school's work and their expertise complements the skills of the teachers. Administrative support is sufficient to meet the school's needs and makes a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school.
63. The management of the school's finances is efficiently carried out. The Headteacher and Governors manage the budget efficiently and work closely together to gain the maximum benefit for the pupils from the available resources. A detailed costed development plan is produced annually. The current under-spend is appropriately planned to make sure that staffing levels can be maintained when the number on roll falls in future years and to cushion the effects of a financial reduction in the amount allocated for pupils with special educational needs which will occur in the next year. In-service training undertaken by staff contributes to their professional development. Induction arrangements for new staff are good and a strength of the school is the support of staff for each other. The school uses new technology well to support the administration of the school. Principles of best value are applied to good effect and the school has been able to purchase computers while ensuring that their maintenance is assured.
64. The accommodation has a good impact on teaching and learning. Classrooms are large enough to allow teachers to use a range of teaching methods. The corridors and classrooms are well organised and attractively decorated with displays of pupils' work to support the curriculum. The school has undertaken a range of initiatives to improve the quality of the accommodation since the previous inspection. Pupil toilets have been refurbished, and a major development to improve opportunities for outdoor play is shortly to be completed. The site continues to be developed and its presentation is well supported by its cleanliness, with high levels of care provided by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Resources are generally satisfactory to support all areas of learning although there needs to be some improvement to the book resources as a number of well used books require replacement. The resources available to the school and their effective deployment have a positive impact upon pupils' learning and the standards achieved.

What should the school do to improve further?

65. In order to continue to raise standards of work, the Headteacher, staff and Governing Body should:

Focus on improving standards in writing by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and for a range of purposes
- placing a greater emphasis on pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work
- increasing opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.

(paragraphs 6, 7, 128)

Further improve the consistency of good quality teaching and learning by using information gathered from monitoring to take action to improve:

- teachers' short term plans so that learning objectives are clearly specified for all lessons
- the match of work to pupils' levels of prior attainment
- the quality of marking so that children are clear about what they need to do to improve.

(paragraphs 23, 56, 79, 80, 89, 94, 98, 108, 125)

Systematically plan opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.

(paragraphs 40, 78)

Other issues should be considered by the school:

- increase opportunities for pupils to work independently.

(paragraphs 72, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	49	38	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		352
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		68

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	56	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	52	50	52
	Girls	62	55	56
	Total	113	105	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (99)	89 (97)	92 (95)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	51	53	52
	Girls	58	56	57
	Total	109	109	109
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (98)	92 (96)	92 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	231
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3:1
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25.5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	652502
Total expenditure	656070
Expenditure per pupil	1853
Balance brought forward from previous year	64460
Balance carried forward to next year	60892

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	352
Number of questionnaires returned	181

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	48	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	8	1	3
The teaching is good.	62	36	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	46	16	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	43	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	68	31	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	39	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	32	22	6	15

Other issues raised by parents

Parents indicated that they would like to see more school clubs or after school activities.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. On entry to school children's skills are broadly average with the language skills of some pupils being well below average. Children in the reception classes are following an appropriate curriculum for the early years and teachers have made a good start in introducing the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The standards achieved by most pupils at the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with the expectations for this age group. Children make good progress in reading and number. Care is taken to include all children and there are no noticeable differences between the attainment of different groups. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given appropriate support.

Communication, language and literacy

67. On entry, children's literacy skills are broadly average, and expressive language is below average. Many learn quickly because they are encouraged to listen, talk and use new words and appropriate vocabulary. With adult intervention children develop dialogue in role-play activities like making sandwiches in the café. Story tapes are used effectively to teach listening skills. When children are encouraged to ask questions, their speaking skills improve. All children are confident to look at books and many children are making good progress with reading. Good teaching of reading, using the Literacy Strategy guidance helps children make good progress. Children enjoy reading and taking their books home. Careful well constructed teaching helps children to understand that writing carries meaning. When children are inspired to have a go at writing or complete a writing challenge their writing skills are good. Many children write their name accurately and many of them, including those who entered school in January can copy letters and write over words. Many of the older children are keen to write, know some letter names and sounds, are beginning to spell simple words accurately and attempt simple sentences. Most teachers provide a good range of activities which teach language and literacy skills. Some teachers take great care to find out what children know and understand and use this when teaching new skills. Some of the work is too easy for the most able and greater challenge could be provided. Children make satisfactory progress and the majority are well on course to meet the early learning goals. A few children will exceed them.

Mathematical development

68. When children first come to school their mathematical skills are broadly average but they quickly learn to count accurately and match objects to numerals. They are beginning to add and subtract with increasing accuracy. Many children can count forwards and backwards and understand more, less and short, long and longer. Imaginative teaching helps children learn mathematical skills through carefully planned activities. Children are beginning to recognise different shapes and can name two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Well-structured investigative activities which require children to build models with three-dimensional shapes teaches them to understand their properties. When this is linked with searching questioning, children learn to remember the names and describe the shapes accurately. Sand and water activities are available but these do not always challenge children sufficiently and opportunities are often missed to link these activities to the main focus of the lesson. Teachers use correct mathematical language and this helps children's learning.

Children enjoy mathematics activities and are keen to practice their skills when given opportunities, such as using the white-boards to write numbers they know. Children make satisfactory progress and are on course to meet the learning goals by the age of five. A few children will exceed them.

Personal and social and emotional development

69. The children are welcomed into a well-ordered, supportive and caring environment. This helps them settle and feel confident. Staff make good efforts to engage children's interests and foster their ability to work and play independently or collaboratively as appropriate. Care is taken to help the children with under-developed skills. Because of this children share with each other, work well together, take turns and help each other. They can sit quietly as a group, listen to stories and many children can ask and answer questions. Children concentrate well and are motivated to finish their work. This is best in classes where the activities are interesting and are encouraged to use their imagination. Adults encourage children to be responsible and both boys and girls enjoy tidying up and looking after things. Children show independence at meal time and play safely and confidently outside. They behave very well in response to the adults' positive approaches and high expectations. Children have very positive attitudes and make good relationships with the adults and friendships with other children. They know about rules and try hard to follow them. Children are making good progress and will successfully attain the learning goals.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Many children are confident in using the computer, tape recorders and other electronic equipment. Their learning benefits when the teacher checks that they have the correct skills and teaches them how to do new things. This effectively aids their understanding of numbers, sounds and letter recognition, shape and space and direction and matching skills. Well planned and structured activities teach children about the environment, plants, insects and animals and the conditions they require. Children are very interested in growing seeds and careful teaching helps them learn how this occurs and how to record it. Teachers work together effectively to provide a stimulating range of activities which give children good opportunities to learn about how they grow, change and develop and to have an understanding of pattern, change and past events. There are few opportunities to reflect and wonder about these things. Children use construction equipment well, and make good progress when asked to make particular things. The imaginative use of the rhyme 'Mary Mary quite contrary' caught children's interest and good teaching helped children design, grow and make miniature gardens. Many children can cut and join materials and take delight in making folding snakes. Careful teaching helps children link this to an understanding of size. Children have a growing awareness of different cultures and festivals. The majority of children shows a high level of interest in a wide range of activities and makes good progress. They are on track to meet the early learning goals.

Physical Development

71. Children are provided with many activities which help them learn how to use tools, objects and malleable materials. They are taught skills like cutting, using glue spreaders, making pictures with different size crayons and pencils and using electronic toys and construction kits. They are helped to develop good hand and eye control. The thoughtful teaching and use of large apparatus helps them learn climbing and balancing skills. Children move with increasing control and co-ordination and show awareness of space. Good use of taped music teaches children to understand left and right movements. When children's movements are used as examples and

other children are asked to provide suggestions for improvement, their confidence and skill improves. Teachers generally use praise to encourage children to try new things. The provision for outdoor learning has greatly improved since the last inspection and plans are in place to improve this further. The outdoor development, which is about to be completed, will provide an excellent resource and will greatly enhance children's access to a range of physical and creative learning. Care is taken to teach children how to be safe and healthy. Teachers plan for a range of physical activities and outdoor learning with larger play equipment. The majority of children make satisfactory progress and are on course to meet the early learning goals.

Creative Development

72. Care has been taken to provide colourful, interesting and lively environments to motivate children and help develop their curiosity. The classrooms are stimulating, children have many opportunities for developing creative skills. They can paint, draw and make collage using a range of resources and materials. Children's learning improves when questioned to give reasons for their choices. They are taught observational skills and produce detailed and colourful paintings. These are especially pleasing when colour mixing is used for shades and tones in the petals of flowers. Some painting activities do not sufficiently challenge or provide opportunities for experiment, this occurs when the work is directed and overly controlled by an adult. Many children can sing in tune with growing awareness of rhythm. They are successfully taught to clap in time using different beats. When they are asked to reflect on the music they have heard they produce thoughtful answers. Reflection happens too infrequently and insufficient time is planned to allow them to extend their skills as creative artists. Some children know the name of some musicians. Artists' work, past and present is used to support learning. The imaginative role-play areas, café, vets and others provide children with opportunities to develop creative skills. When the teacher joins in with the activity, children learn more effectively. Children make satisfactory progress and are on task to meet the goals.
73. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Support assistants provide good support for children's learning. Adults have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They are providing a Foundation Stage Curriculum which is interesting, well balanced and covers all areas of learning. Plans ensure that children have opportunities to meet the nationally identified learning goals. The activities are well led and effectively managed. The children, a significant proportion of whom have identified special educational needs, are well supported. The adults provide all children with good levels of care and have high expectations of their behaviour. Children's progress is well tracked and this provides good opportunities for successful transition into Key Stage 1. Children enjoy school and show good attitudes as they move from activity to activity with confidence. They are keen to learn and work. Parents work alongside children and provide good support.

ENGLISH

74. The high standards in reading for seven-year-olds have been maintained since the last inspection. The trend has been for seven-year-old pupils to do less well in writing though standards are usually above average when compared to schools nationally. Results in the 2000 national tests show that standards in reading were well above national averages and still above these when compared to similar schools. Results in writing were comparable to national averages but well below those of similar schools. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Some pupils underachieve in writing, especially some higher attainers. Standards in lessons

and work seen broadly reflect the test results.

75. By the time they are seven years old, many pupils are able to speak confidently and clearly and listen attentively in lessons. They have positive attitudes about books and are keen readers. Many are reading fluently and with expression and are able to use a variety of strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Reading is a strength of the school.
76. Pupils are developing a range of writing skills. Handwriting is generally well formed and neat but is not yet being consistently joined by all pupils. Pupils are learning to spell, and where dictionaries and other aids are regularly available, this is having a positive impact on the accuracy of their spelling. The Year 2 project, recently initiated by the school to improve standards in writing, has had a positive impact on developing pupils as writers and enabling them to write for a variety of purposes. For example, pupils have labelled parts of plants in science and written postcards from Africa during a geography lesson. When given the chance pupils demonstrate that they are able to write at length, for example, in re-writing Bible stories in religious education. Generally, these two aspects of writing are not being systematically addressed across the school either in English lessons or in lessons in other subjects.
77. Work is planned with reference to the National Literacy Strategy and pupils make good progress in lessons. This includes pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, who are well supported by their teachers and learning support assistants. In literacy lessons, pupils learn about punctuation and grammar. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils quickly learned to discriminate syllables and use them correctly within sentences. In Year 2 they are learning to use more complex vocabulary and are being encouraged to use "interesting" words in their story writing. In another class in Year 2, pupils were learning about the various aspects of story writing and some were able to talk about characterisation and setting. Teachers are beginning to address the need to incorporate more planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example, in role-play. Pupils regularly use information and communication technology in developing their literacy skills, for example in a Year 1 class where pupils were writing a menu in connection with their work on the book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar".
78. Pupils are acquiring good learning habits. The majority of them concentrate, try hard with their work and are well behaved. They participate well in lessons and are keen to show what they have learned. They are mindful of each other and often help each other with their work. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where a group of pupils were researching different types of trees using non-fiction books, they talked together about the characteristics of different trees, unprompted by the teacher, and they helped each other in locating words using the index in several books. Overall, however, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop in this way as independent learners. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is developed well through the English curriculum. Spirituality is less well developed with many missed opportunities to reflect on these aspects through poetry and literature.
79. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and in over fifty per cent of lessons it was good or very good. The National Literacy Strategy provides a strong framework for teaching the English curriculum. Teachers use this to plan for lessons but whilst much of this planning is detailed, the approach to planning is not consistent across the school and not all teachers are clear about the learning objectives for each lesson. In some classes, the learning objectives are not consistently shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons or reviewed during plenary sessions. Teachers know pupils well and use this knowledge to plan suitable learning activities and monitor the learning. In

some classes though, insufficient attention is paid to the needs of the higher attainers and some lessons lack challenge for these pupils. Other features of teaching are stronger. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They manage pupils well and use a variety of methods to engage pupils in their learning. Learning support assistants and parent helpers are well briefed. Resources are usually used well, for example, the good range of big books for shared reading. In some classes too much use is made of worksheets.

80. The subject is well led in the school. Though the co-ordinator has been in post for a short time, she sets clear standards and is beginning to have an impact across the school. She fully recognises the urgent need to raise standards in writing and is clear about what needs to be done to achieve this. A number of features already underway in the school should help. The documentation to support the teaching of English, including schemes of work is good and target setting for individual pupils is being implemented. Teachers' plans are being monitored and pupils' work is being regularly sampled. There has been some observation of teaching and learning but this aspect now needs strengthening in order to ensure that the inconsistent practice across the school is addressed and the evident pockets of very good practice are shared.
81. There is a good range of resources to support the English curriculum though some class readers are now in poor condition and need to be replaced.

MATHEMATICS

82. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve above average standards in each strand of the curriculum. The 2000 statutory assessments showed attainment to be in line with the national average but below that achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, this cohort included an above average number of pupils with special educational needs. The school has established effective systems to track each child's progress and expect standards to be higher in 2001. Inspection evidence confirms the accuracy of teacher assessment. Over the last five years there has been no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language made good progress. Attainment has improved since the previous inspection. More pupils are now achieving higher standards. This is directly related to improvements in teaching and the use of assessment to set clear targets for each pupil.
83. By the age of seven, pupils have a secure understanding of place value to one hundred. Higher attaining pupils confidently describe numbers to a thousand. They give clear explanation of place value and can suggest different ways of using numbers to give the same answer. When asked to show how to make 25, all pupils could show $20 + 5$, or $15 + 10 = 25$. The above average pupils suggested a variety of ways of using the four operations to make the same answer. Pupils have a clear understanding of odd and even numbers. They can identify these numbers on number lines and in number squares. They understand that any number ending in 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9 will be an odd number and all other endings will indicate an even number. Pupils are unable to explain that when odd and even numbers are added, the answer will always be an odd number. Most pupils are able to count in multiples of 2, 5 and 10, but few pupils show confidence in mental recall of these tables. They develop an understanding of decimals through solving money problems. All pupils are able to show combinations of coins that total 50 pence. Pupils lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. There is too great a reliance on workbooks and not sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop understanding through practical activities. Pupils can halve shapes and numbers and sort objects into sets according to colour, shape and size. They understand how to use a Carroll diagram to

record observations. Most pupils are able to collect data using 'tally' charts and describe the difference between a pictogram and a bar chart.

84. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is much teaching that is good and some that is unsatisfactory. When teaching is good, it is directly related to clear planning, work matched accurately to pupils' prior attainment and the learning target for the lesson shared with pupils. A variety of activities are planned to consolidate and extend pupils' understanding. Mathematical games are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest. These are enjoyed by pupils who show a positive response to learning and enjoy working co-operatively. In the most effective lessons, teachers show secure class management skills and have high expectation of their pupils. Their personal enthusiasm is reflected to pupils who are eager to complete their work within a given time. When teaching is unsatisfactory, insufficient attention is given to presentation and recording. Work is not dated and marking is inconsistent.
85. Teachers make good use of questions and discussion to assess pupils. They ensure work is matched to prior attainment and set realistic targets for each pupil. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and work is directly related to their individual education plans. In one class, a group of pupils with special needs were given an envelope of numbers to 20 and asked to make a number line of even numbers. When completed, they were expected to check their work against a commercial number line. The pupils worked co-operatively and when they completed the task they showed their emotion by being unable to resist calling out 'We've done it'. The teacher celebrated their achievement with the rest of the class.
86. Teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy but there is some inconsistency across the school in planning. In the most successful lessons, the three-part lesson structure is soundly established and planning is satisfactory. Time is used effectively to stimulate pupils. The learning target for the lesson is explained to pupils and confirmed at the end of the session. Not sufficient attention is given to the mental starter to ensure lessons start at a brisk pace. Mental skills are not well developed. Pupils can count forward and backwards in multiples of 2, 5 and 10. Older pupils know how to double and halve numbers but mental recall of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is slow. Teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and pupils are able to describe multiples, total, subtraction, minus, estimation and the properties of three-dimensional shapes. The main focus of lessons is well prepared. Teachers make good use of resources to sustain pupils' interest. In one class, the teacher taught division by encouraging the pupils to think they were at a party. She provided plates and sweets for them to solve division problems. The plenary session is not used consistently to reinforce pupils' learning. Sometimes it is too long and less able pupils lose interest.
87. Numeracy skills are not sufficiently developed across the curriculum. In science, pupils measure the growth of plants and weigh bulbs. Opportunities are lost in registration and lessons to enhance pupils' mental skills.
88. The school has made satisfactory improvements in mathematics since the last inspection. The curriculum has been reviewed. Assessment is now used effectively to set individual targets and more pupils are achieving higher standards.
89. The co-ordinator has clear vision and has had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in each class. To further improve standards there is a need to ensure more consistency in planning, marking and the structure of lessons.

SCIENCE

90. The 2000 statutory teacher assessments showed standards to be close to the average when compared to those of other schools nationally. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection because of improved teaching and effective planning for science. Standards in Year 2 are above average. In their work on the life cycle of plants, teachers challenge their pupils well through a range of practical activities that enable them to understand the basic essentials for effective growth. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the life processes of plants is above average for their age and they are able to recognise and name the main organs of a flower and understand the effects of light deprivation on growth. Pupils are encouraged to record their work in a variety of ways and there are good links with other aspects of the school's curriculum, notably in art and mathematics where pupils' observational drawings, and measurements of plant growth, complement their research.
91. There are no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
92. The quality of teaching is good with a number of strengths that account for the good progress made by the pupils. The scheme of work provides a clear structure for teachers to plan and provide an effective curriculum. The scrutiny of pupil work revealed a good breadth of curriculum experiences for pupils with evidence of interesting work on materials, and their properties, and light and sound. The scheme also places appropriate emphasis upon a range of stimulating practical activities that hold pupils' interest and encourage relevant questions and answers. Teaching is based upon secure subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask probing questions that make pupils think. Teachers provide clear introductions to lessons and the focus of the learning is well supported through practical materials and visual resources. Teachers are able to describe complex processes in simple terms whilst at the same time introducing the pupils to the correct terminology. In Year 2, for example, pupils are able to identify, and describe the role of, the parts of a flower such as the stamen, carpel and stem. In Year 1, pupils are able to predict the impact of light deprivation upon plant growth and talk about the causes of decay.
93. Pupils' attitude to their learning is good and they co-operate well together in the range of practical activities they are involved in. They respond well to their teachers and they enjoy all aspects of their investigative work. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teacher assistants and adult volunteers and other pupils in the class.
94. The subject is well led, and the curriculum team, having audited staff strengths and areas for development, are currently developing strategies to support the teacher assessment of pupil skills in science. Systematic monitoring of teacher planning and pupils' work takes place but the regular monitoring of the teaching of the subject in the classroom and the sharing of the good practice that exists, needs to develop further. The school has developed a number of environmental areas to support scientific investigation.
95. There has been good progress in this subject since the last inspection and the school is well placed to build upon the security provided by the scheme of work and the strength of the teaching, to provide greater opportunities for independent learning, especially of the more able pupil.

ART

96. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment matches that which is expected for their

age. This is similar to the previous inspection. Some pupils achieve good standards, especially in painting, pastel, clay and collage. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and develop a range of skills using various media.

97. Pupils are given opportunities to work individually and collaboratively to produce paintings, collages, drawings, reflections, pastel pictures and fabric wall-hangings. Models using clay and other malleable materials show a growing awareness of detail and use of different tools to emphasise texture. Art and design work is used to good effect in other subjects. Pupils had been learning about the parts of a flower as part of the science curriculum, in art they are given the opportunity to make delicate pictures of flowers and drew on their knowledge of flowers. The technique and style of an artist, like Van Gogh, has inspired pupils to produce some work of good quality. Pupils' understanding improves when they are given opportunities to suggest improvements in their own and others' work. Pupils have benefited from the work of the visiting artists and a good photographic record is kept as a resource. Information Technology is used to support the subject with good use of computer generated images to illustrate work.
98. Two art lessons were observed. Where the quality of teaching was judged to be good the teacher had high expectations for pupil behaviour and standards of work in art. The teacher worked with the children to explore techniques and to share ideas. This impacted positively on the quality of collage work produced. There is, however, limited use of different designs or examples of style or technique to stimulate and inspire children to develop their own ideas more effectively. Teachers' planning often covers a good range of art skills to be taught, but the quality of planning is inconsistent.
99. Since the last inspection a comprehensive scheme of work and a policy have been developed. Teachers' plans are checked and guidance is offered by the art team. The art leader is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and has plans to introduce sketch books and develop the portfolio of children's art work. Resources are adequate.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. No design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence gathered from work on display, samples of pupil's work, photographs and talking to pupils indicates that pupils' attainment matches that which would be expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
101. The review of the subject since the previous inspection has focused attention on teaching a progression of skills and techniques. Teachers plan for a range of experiences using different skills and ways of generating ideas. The choice of the topic on buildings provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a range of designs for buildings linked to specific purposes. The good use of designing and making to show the acquisition of skills is well illustrated in the work pupils have undertaken to produce the moving parts in the drawbridges for the castles. Pupils are provided with a good range of experiences and opportunities to work in different media, including clay, paper and card. They are beginning to develop more sophisticated skills and employ different ways to communicate their ideas. The designing and making of seed packets links well with the learning in science and gives pupils effective practical applications for their work. Their evaluations help to generate further ideas. Pupils talk about their work with knowledge and take pride in it.

102. The design and technology team leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. A comprehensive scheme of work and policy has been developed since the previous inspection. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Attainment in geography is broadly in line with national expectations for seven-year-olds. In some lessons higher attaining pupils are achieving higher standards. By the time they are seven pupils have a developing knowledge of the world beyond school and are beginning to understand aspects of different environments. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where some pupils were able to talk about the influence of climate on the type of clothing worn in India. In this class pupils were able to indicate the equator and India on the globe and knew the characteristics of weather in countries near to the equator.
104. In Year 2, pupils have been learning about the growth of their local area. In all lessons observed, pupils were familiar with maps of the locality, were able to describe various features and in one class knew about the importance of the river and the railway in the growth of Gravesend. Pupils are beginning to develop a geographical vocabulary and a range of geographical skills, although sometimes these skills are practised without reference to the current topic. Pupils' work and other evidence indicates that a sound geography curriculum is being provided.
105. In all lessons, pupils, including those with special educational needs made good progress. They concentrate and participate well, work diligently at given tasks and are keen and well motivated. They are attentive listeners and are able to recall their learning from previous lessons well so that they can build on this to develop their knowledge and understanding further. Lessons in geography contribute well to pupils moral, social and cultural development but more could be done to support spiritual development.
106. The teaching in geography is satisfactory and often good. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, and exposition and questioning often engages pupils well, engendering interest and enabling them to think for themselves. The planning for lessons is variable. Where it is good, teachers set clear learning objectives and explain these to pupils so that they understand what they are aiming to achieve. Resources are generally well used and interactive displays support the teaching. Information and communication technology is not yet being used sufficiently and there is not enough time given to enabling pupils to use and apply numeracy skills within geography. In some lessons, pupils are able to apply their literacy skills, though this is not being systematically developed.
107. The co-ordinator works effectively within the subject team. Good documentation has been produced to support the geography curriculum, including schemes of work which have been updated to take account of the revised National Curriculum. The subject action plan is appropriate for the development of the subject but the process does not relate to the whole school system of development planning. Monitoring and evaluation strategies are in place but this does not yet include the observation of teaching and learning. This is a crucial next step to ensure continuing and consistent good standards. Assessment opportunities are now identified but pupils' progress and attainment are not being recorded. Fieldwork in the locality supports pupils' learning in geography.

108. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the majority of the necessary improvements have been made. Work still needs to be done on the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and attainment.

HISTORY

109. No history lessons were seen during the inspection. However, pupils' work, displays and other evidence indicates that standards for pupils by the age of seven are broadly in line with national expectations.
110. By the time they are seven many pupils can talk about people and events of the past, for example, The Fire of London. Some of them can offer explanations as to why the fire spread so quickly and caused so much damage. Younger pupils can talk about the building of medieval castles and some of them understand why they were built as they were. A "Memories Book" of their own lives and work on schools in 1900 has helped to reinforce the concept of change. Learning in history is often enhanced through model making and art work. A sense of chronology is being developed by the use of time lines and sequencing activities. Opportunities for historical enquiry and interpretation are less well evidenced, though the history action plan indicates the need to develop all the key elements of the history curriculum.
111. The co-ordinator provides clear leadership for the subject and works effectively within the history team. Good documentation, including recently revised schemes of work, is in place to support teachers in their planning. Appropriate learning expectations for each year group are specified but the planning for lessons could be more effectively supported by the provision of clear learning objectives for each topic. Monitoring and evaluation strategies are in place but this does not yet include observation of teaching and learning. Assessment opportunities are being identified for each topic but attainment against National Curriculum levels is not recorded.
112. The resources for history are well organised but as the co-ordinator has identified that more artefacts would help develop pupils' awareness of first hand evidence and enquiry work. Visits to the local area enhance the history curriculum but a school decision to stop these further afield means that pupils do not benefit from visits to museums and historical sites.
113. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and some important improvements have been made. However, enquiry work still needs further development and pupils' progress and attainment are not being recorded.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Standards in information and communication technology are above average overall. The school has adopted a systematic approach to the teaching of this subject and this has resulted in greater opportunities for pupils to develop their information communication technology (ICT) skills.
115. In Key Stage 1, the standards are at least in line with those expected for the pupils' age and, in many cases, they are better. Pupils are able to use the computer as a word processor and understand the value of using different sized fonts to enhance their writing. They are able to create pictures from stored graphics and are using the digital camera to record the life cycle of the broad bean in their science work and their work on castles in their history topic. They have experience of creating their own personal file and are able to edit their own work on the computer. They are able to enter simple

programmes into the Roamer to predict its movements and to achieve a desired outcome. The pupils have also been able to access the internet to retrieve data and information. They accessed the Natural History Museum site, for example, to retrieve information on dinosaurs and this has enhanced the work in this subject. The school has recently set up its own website page.

116. The teaching of this subject is secure and it benefits from a well-structured scheme of work. Teachers plan within their year groups and their planning is monitored by the curriculum team every half term. All teachers are attending the relevant national information and communication technology training and a recent school based professional training day helped to raise teacher expertise and confidence in this subject. The school is now using specific pupil booklets for ICT to enable pupil experiences and progress to be monitored more effectively.
117. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection due in large part to effective leadership. The resources for ICT are satisfactory and appropriate measures are in place to ensure that Internet access is safe.

MUSIC

118. No music lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence gained from pupil's work, photographs of musical events and talking to pupils indicates that pupils' attainment matches that which is expected for their age. The standards attained at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. In assemblies pupils sing tunefully and with enjoyment and listen attentively when the piano is played. They talk enthusiastically about playing percussion instruments, listening to music and playing their own compositions. Pupils are beginning to recognise the names of composers of music they have heard.
119. Music is timetabled for each class and teachers' planning shows that pupils are provided with opportunities to sing, compose and listen to music. The quality of teachers' planning varies. By the end of Key Stage 1, children compose using correct simple notation and build on their previous work using improvised symbols. Their experience of crotchets and quavers is supported by work in Year 2. Teaching resources are used to teach pitch, timbre and tempo. Pupils are beginning to investigate pitch with increasing accuracy. Music is effectively linked to drama and movement. Pupils' make good attempts to compose, write a simple score and play their compositions. They also use three-note notation to accompany popular songs like Frère Jacques. Pupils have opportunities to make good quality percussion instruments that help to motivate interest and enjoyment of music.
120. Teachers have received recent and effective training. The head teacher and music curriculum leader work together to promote music and give the subject a high profile. The range and number of instruments has improved since the previous inspection. There is now a comprehensive scheme of work and policy to guide teachers and this covers the full range of the national curriculum. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' planning is checked to ensure the subject is adequately addressed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. Pupils achieve standards expected of their age in dance and gymnastics. The standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. No judgement can be made on games as none were observed. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make

satisfactory progress in each year group. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

122. By the age of seven, pupils show confidence in performing a sequence of movements that have a clear beginning, middle and end. They show control, co-ordination and expression as they travel, turn and gesture in dance. When listening to taped programmes, they show confidence in following instructions to change speed, level and direction. In gymnastics, they are able to perform a variety of movements on the floor and apparatus. Most pupils show confidence in balancing using different body parts and moving forwards, backwards and sideways on the apparatus.
123. Teaching is variable but overall it is satisfactory. Teachers have secure class management skills and ensure pupils remain on task throughout the lesson. Pupils respond positively and show enjoyment in learning. They are well behaved and respond quickly to instructions. A weakness in teaching is the lack of opportunities for pupils to experiment and evaluate their own and each other's performance.
124. In the most effective lessons, teachers ensure a clear structure to the lesson. Warm-up sessions are used effectively and pupils recognise the effect of exercise on pulse rate. Pupils are challenged to develop movements in dance and gymnastics. Lessons end with a cool down period that ensures they leave the hall in a calm and orderly manner. In some lessons when pupils only use the apparatus they spend too long being inactive waiting for their turn.
125. The school has addressed the issue raised by the previous inspection and now ensures National Curriculum requirements are fully met. It has implemented a scheme of work but there is no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning. A curriculum management team has been established but their role has yet to be developed to identify good practice and share expertise.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Standards are average and are in line with the requirements of the local syllabus for pupils aged seven. Standards have been maintained at similar levels to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory gains in knowledge and deepen their understanding of Christianity and other major world religions as they move through the key stage.
127. The school places due emphasis on Christianity and pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Bible such as the Good Samaritan and understand that the stories they have been told have a message for life today. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the main festivals and celebrations of the Christian faith, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival and baptism. They are beginning to understand the symbolism that is important to other faiths such as Hinduism. The availability of some artefacts helps to enhance pupils' understanding.
128. Pupils are interested to learn about other religions and listened with interest to the story of Shiva, the destroyer of the world. They were eager to ask questions and discover more about Hinduism. They remember stories they hear and can recall them. Pupils complete the tasks required of them successfully, but much of the work involved worksheets that require pupils to fill gaps in sentences. This inhibits pupils from independently expressing their ideas about what they have learned.

129. Two lessons were observed. Teachers were secure in their subject knowledge and confident in their teaching and lessons were thoroughly prepared. The clarity of explanation by the teachers helped pupils successfully to engage with complex concepts. Teachers are also careful to build upon earlier work, which again aids pupil understanding. In the lesson which was judged to be good the teacher was able successfully to promote pupils abilities to understand others' feelings and emotions. The pupils were asked to consider how they would feel if they were blind. They responded in a thoughtful and sensitive manner.
130. The school scheme of work gives teachers clear guidance as to what is to be taught. This has been prepared since the last inspection and has been adopted very positively by the teachers. The criticism contained in the previous report that teachers have no view of standards and quality in Religious Education has been adequately addressed. A team of three teachers share responsibility for subject leadership. They have begun to monitor plans and provide advice to colleagues. They are at the early stages of forming a view about the quality of work in religious education. There remains a need to further enhance the resources available for teaching the subject.