

INSPECTION REPORT

BRACEBRIDGE COUNTY INFANTS SCHOOL

Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120428

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Plummer

Reporting inspector: Mrs L P A Clark
25431

Dates of inspection: 24 -28 January 2000

Inspection number: 188735

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Francis Street Lincoln Lincs
Postcode:	LN5 8QG
Telephone number:	01522 520591
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Jackson
Date of previous inspection:	1 June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Lesley Clark	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Science	What should the school do to improve further?
		Information Technology	
		Design and Technology	
		Geography	
		Physical Education	
		Under Fives	
		Special Educational Needs	
		Equal Opportunities	
Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for it's pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
David Figures	Team inspector	English	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Religious Education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Art	How well are pupils taught
		History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Music	How well is the school led and managed?
		English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Leeds Metropolitan University
 Schools Inspection Service
 Fairfax Hall
 Beckett Park Campus
 Headingley
 LS6 3QS

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The Registrar
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 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is a small community infant school for boys and girls in the 3 - 7 age range. The nursery serves a wider catchment area than the school, drawing children from other parts of Lincoln. Many of these attend their local schools when they leave. Over a quarter of the pupils in the reception class have not attended the nursery. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average; pupils' attainment on entry to the reception class, though, is below average.

Number on role	78 + 26 FTE		Smaller than average
Pupils with English as an additional language	2 children under the age of five	1.9%	Above the national average
Pupils with special educational needs	19		Close to the national average
Pupils with statements of special educational need	1		Below the national average

The area served by the school is below average in socio-economic terms and deemed by the local authority to be a deprived area. Although the number of free school meals is broadly average, many pupils come from an unsettled home background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bracebridge Infant School is a school undergoing rapid change and with considerable strengths in the new leadership and management which give it the potential to be an effective school. The headteacher, governors and staff are working together well to improve the school and establish high standards. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics are above average and show steady improvement over time.
- The provision for children under the age of five in both the nursery and reception class is good and they are well taught.
- The school is very well led and managed. There is a widely shared determination to raise standards and many changes have been implemented since the new headteacher's appointment.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils who need specialist support are identified early.
- Support staff assist teachers very well to help pupils to learn.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading, writing, information technology and religious education are not high enough. Pupils write in a limited range of forms and do not talk about what they read or read for information.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. Some lessons are not sufficiently well planned to match work to pupils' level of understanding and their capability. Consequently some higher attaining pupils under-achieve and some pupils misbehave.
- Assessment of what pupils know and understand is not used extensively to determine what they are taught. Individual education plans are not detailed enough and do not set precise targets. Some end-of-year reports are misleading about pupils' achievements.
- There is no clear link between financial and educational priorities in the school development plan.
- There are no extra-curricular activities to develop pupils' cultural education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Standards in mathematics and investigative science have improved but there has been little improvement in standards of reading and writing. Until September 1999, many weaknesses identified in the last inspection in July 1996 remained. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, substantial improvements have been initiated though many are too newly in place for their effectiveness to be fully evaluated. Although some assessment procedures have been started, they do not as yet influence teachers' planning in all classes. The roles and responsibilities of curriculum co-ordinators are much clearer and they are now closely involved in curriculum and school management. The headteacher and co-ordinators monitor teaching and curriculum planning and this, together with the appointment of new staff, is helping to improve teaching. The recent stringent measures to reduce lateness and encourage attendance are very effective.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	x	D	D	D
Writing	x	D	D	E
Mathematics	x	B	B	C

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

Results in mathematics are above average compared with all schools and similar to those in similar schools. Results in reading are below average both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Standards in writing are weaker: no pupils attain above average levels and results are below average nationally and well below average compared to similar schools. Pupils lack the skills to read unfamiliar words and their comprehension is limited. Some write accurately but many have difficulties with handwriting and spelling. Most writing is brief and limited in subject matter. The trend in results has been upwards in mathematics though average performance over time indicates overall attainment is close to, rather than above, national standards. In both reading and writing the trend is for results to fall below the nationally expected level with few pupils attaining above average standards.

Standards are below expectation in information technology, religious education, art and music and close to the national expectation in design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Particularly good work is seen in the nursery and reception class and in Year 2 where current work on Japan is of a high standard.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good attitudes to work when it is interesting and challenging. The youngest and oldest pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; pupils generally behave well in lessons. In the playground, behaviour can be boisterous and sometimes unkind.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; pupils are learning to work together. They have good relationships with adults. Older pupils carry out their responsibilities sensibly.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory though there has been significant improvement recently.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary from class to class. Children under the age of five play very well on their own and co-operate well in a larger group as they learn to share. Older pupils behave well and are keen and eager to contribute to discussions. When lessons are unchallenging, pupils' behaviour tends to deteriorate and they find it difficult to work independently.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Not applicable

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 quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Eighty-seven percent of lessons were at least satisfactory and just over half of these were good or better. In 13 per cent of lessons, however, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory: this is a higher percentage than in most schools. The quality of teaching of children under the age of five is good and some very good teaching was seen in these classes. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics ranges from very good in the upper part of the key stage to unsatisfactory in the lower. In classes where the national literacy and numeracy strategies are followed closely, the quality of teaching is much better. The strengths lie in good question and answer sessions, which help to involve pupils in their learning and in thoughtfully planned, well-timed and challenging activities. The weaknesses lie in unsatisfactory planning when work is not well matched to pupils' needs. The pattern of teaching in all other subjects is similar. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are well taught.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; it is well organised now in most subjects though it is too recently in place to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of pupils' achievement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; the needs of these pupils are well known and identified early. They receive good quality support in lessons and make good progress. Individual education plans, however, are not sufficiently detailed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; provision and support for these pupils enables them to make good progress. Dual language classroom displays help them to learn.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory; assemblies encourage pupils to reflect and 'good work stickers' promote self-esteem. Teachers encourage pupils to review their own actions and to consider their effect on others. Cultural development is strong in relation to other cultures, less strong locally.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; new procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress, behaviour and personal development are beginning to take effect.

The school works satisfactorily overall with parents. Parents are very well pleased with the school and have no major concerns. Parents are encouraged to help in classrooms and their support is valued. The 'story sacks' give parents the opportunity to be closely involved in their children's education as does the newly started Family Literacy Project. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language are kept well informed. However, although parents receive regular newsletters about school events, they receive no detailed information about what their children are being taught, annual reports sometimes give unsatisfactory information on standards and progress and reading diaries are not a partnership between home and school.

The programme of classroom support for pupils with special educational needs or for pupils for whom English is an additional language is carefully planned to ensure that the pupils have good access to the curriculum.

There are no extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' cultural experience and they receive a limited curriculum in art and music.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the new headteacher quickly and accurately identified the needs of the school in order to address the outstanding issues of the last inspection and is giving very clear educational direction to raise standards. Financial planning does not follow educational priorities clearly enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; the newly formed governing body has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but has not yet established its role in curriculum and development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; immediate action taken to remedy weaknesses identified from an analysis of pupils' results and performance over time and monitoring of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; there are shortcomings in computer software and in resources for science and history.

The general quality of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory. Accommodation is generally well suited to its purpose though the siting of the library in a corridor inhibits its full use by pupils. Recent spending on information technology has improved the number and availability of computers though the lack of software reduces their usefulness.

There are particular strengths in the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and in the growing partnership with the staff and governing body. Already, new strategies are proving to be effective in improving the level of education provided by the school. Although principles of best value are informally applied through careful discussion, until the current audit of the school's work is complete, developments and requisite funding have yet to be agreed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school. • Staff are approachable and helpful. • Children are expected to achieve their best. • Children learn to behave responsibly. • Their children are well taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of activities in which their children could be involved in outside lessons. • Annual reports do not give an accurate indication of standards in relation to national standards.

The inspection team supports parents' positive comments and agrees that the extra-curricular activities and the annual reports could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Over a quarter of the children under the age of five have not attended the school's nursery. As a result, pupils' attainment on entry to full-time schooling is generally below average as is their attainment by the age of five. Although they make good progress, many children do not achieve particularly highly because of their poor linguistic and mathematical skills. By the age of five, children's standards of attainment are below the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical and creative development. Although children are willing talkers, their communication is restricted by lack of vocabulary and immature sentence construction. They enjoy listening to stories and know that letters make sounds. Higher attaining children begin to write quite well, spelling phonetically, whereas others have difficulty writing their first names. They begin to count accurately and enjoy correcting the glove puppet who invariably gets the answers wrong. They discover interesting facts about their world and become physically more confident as they explore apparatus in the hall or play with small construction toys.
- 2 The results of the 1999 national standardised tests for seven-year-olds show pupils' attainment in English to be below average nationally in both reading and writing, with particular weaknesses in writing. Compared to similar schools, standards in reading are below average and they are well below average in writing, where no pupils attain above average levels. The results of the 1999 national tests in mathematics indicate pupils' attainment to be above average nationally and in line with standards attained in similar schools. When the school is compared with others with a similar intake, attainment was in line with the average for such schools in English and mathematics at level 2, the expected standard for seven-year-olds, but below at level 3 in English, suggesting a degree of under-achievement by potentially higher attaining pupils. The trend in results since 1996 shows a slight decline in English results. Results in mathematics rise in line with the national trend.
- 3 Inspection judgement is that the attainment of pupils in the present Year 2 class is below average in reading and writing and close to the national average in mathematics because of the small number of pupils likely to attain above average standards in that particular year group. The 1999 teacher assessments for science indicate pupils' attainment is close to the national average. This is an improvement on the 1998 results and confirmed by inspection evidence.
- 4 There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls overall in reading but girls tend to achieve higher standards than boys in writing and also in mathematics. Both last year and this year there were twice as many girls as boys in the Year 2 class. A large proportion of boys have special educational needs. The school is well aware of potential differences in attainment between boys and girls and targets specific support to enable these pupils to attain more highly.
- 5 In English, pupils listen carefully and their speaking skills are satisfactory. The highest-attaining pupils read most words accurately with confidence and usually with understanding. However, many other pupils lack the skills to tackle unfamiliar words and their comprehension is uncertain. Some write accurately but briefly and in a

limited range of styles. Others have good ideas but poor skills. At its best, handwriting and presentation is satisfactory, but its quality is often less than satisfactory. In mathematics, most pupils have sound number and measuring skills and can compare objects with reference to their size. In science, pupils classify materials by their characteristics, can make predictions and understand the need to vary one factor at a time when conducting tests.

- 6 Overall, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory when viewed in relation to their starting point, particularly in language development. The pattern of pupils' achievement is not consistent, however, throughout the school. This affects pupils' overall attainment in writing in particular and some aspects of reading, mathematics and science where pupils do not consolidate basic skills sufficiently and go on to build on what they know and understand. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those with special educational needs, make good progress by virtue of the skilled support they receive. The potentially higher attaining pupils should be achieving more, particularly in literacy. The school has set itself targets, which are reasonable in the present circumstances, and is working industriously to help the pupils achieve them.
- 7 Standards of attainment in information technology are below the national expectation at the end of the key stage. Pupils have elementary keyboard skills and can control a mouse but are only just beginning to tackle simple word-processing. In religious education, attainment is unlikely to reach the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by the end of the key stage. The higher-attaining pupils recall some facts about Christianity but have no knowledge of other religions. Others are insecure in all areas of the subject.
- 8 In the remaining subjects, pupils are attaining in line with expectations for their age in design and technology, as in their work on Joseph's coat of many colours; in geography and history; and in physical education. In art and music, standards of attainment are satisfactory in those parts of the subject where pupils have experience. For example, they use colour competently and they can sing tunefully. However, because the present generation of pupils have had insufficient experience of some significant areas of the curriculum in these subjects, their overall attainment is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They come to school enthusiastically, ready to settle to the first activity of the day, and show interest in what the teachers have to offer them. They behave well in lessons. This is particularly so in the nursery and reception classes and when they are engaged by the lessons and suitably challenged. At other times, for example, when they are not challenged enough, their behaviour becomes inappropriate and their learning is adversely affected. Pupils are courteous and they use equipment, such as the computers and the musical instruments, with care. There have been no recent exclusions.
- 10 Relationships between pupils and the adults who teach them are good; sometimes they are very good. In lessons, pupils usually relate satisfactorily to one another. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 2 and in several literacy lessons, pupils worked well in groups, with a satisfactory regard for each other's feelings. Pupils show concern and a desire to help when someone is hurt or upset. However, elsewhere, notably in the playground, relationships are sometimes abrasive and

occasionally ill-natured. Older pupils accept responsibility for carrying messages, for example, between the classroom and the school office, and they undertake such duties with efficiency and dignity. Pupils' achievement in terms of the relationships they establish and their personal development is therefore satisfactory overall.

- 11 Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory, although there has been a significant improvement since the fourth week of the autumn term in response to recent punctilious measures to reduce lateness and encourage attendance. At 92 per cent, however, attendance compares unfavourably with the national figure of 94 per cent. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 12 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. In 87 per cent of lessons it was at least satisfactory with just over half of those lessons being good or better. It was less than satisfactory in 13 per cent, a higher proportion than is usually found. The best teaching was seen in classes with the oldest pupils and with children under the age of five. The proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching is less than that reported in the last inspection and the proportion of good and very good teaching is greater, indicating improvement since then. Some of the improvement is due to changes in staffing, some to the careful timing and structure imposed by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and newly implemented curriculum planning, and some to careful monitoring by the headteacher and some curriculum co-ordinators.
- 13 The quality of teaching of children under the age of five is good and some very good lessons were seen. Much of the teaching has some very good features. Teachers are well prepared and very well organised. They have a very good understanding of how to teach young children and select activities which engage their curiosity and make them want to learn. Activities are carefully chosen so that children are working at levels appropriate for their ability and are challenged to make good progress as they build on their achievements. Allowances are made in the reception class, for example, for children who have had no nursery experience but whose level of maturity requires they have time to explore sensory experience through structured play. Much time is given in both classes to developing pupils' relatively poor language skills and support assistants are equally good at developing children's vocabulary. Teachers make very good use of the resources in the class, and the teachers and support assistants work well as a team. They make good use of opportunities during the lessons to assess the children's performance and understanding so that the next stage of their learning can be planned. As a result, children are motivated to work hard and at a good pace, developing ideas as they work, as for example in a good lesson where the children made boats out of malleable material, experimenting and modifying their design till they succeeded in making the boats float.
- 14 The quality of teaching is good in the upper part of Key Stage 1 and less than satisfactory in the lower part. It is satisfactory across the key stage overall. No judgement is made of the quality of the teaching of art, design and technology or information technology as insufficient direct teaching of these subjects was observed during the inspection.
- 15 The most successful lessons are characterised by a clear understanding of the subject and of the learning needs of the pupils. Pupils eagerly respond to the very clear expectation that they will be industrious and fully involved in the lesson. Planning is very good, with plenty of detail, so that all pupils are working well at their own level.

This was seen to good effect in a very good Year 2 science lesson where all the pupils were enabled to investigate the effect of forces: as a result the pupils' scientific knowledge and their understanding of the subject were quickly raised. Teachers competently teach basic skills and are acutely aware of the need to develop pupils' understanding and use of language, extending their vocabulary as occasion arises. Teachers explain clearly so that pupils know what is expected of them. Questioning is good: it checks understanding, suitably challenges pupils of different ability, and obliges them to think about the content of the lesson. Classroom management is very good and creates an atmosphere which encourages pupils to respond with confidence. Lessons have a brisk start and good pace, so that no time is wasted. Resources are good, appropriate and well used to extend the pupils' knowledge, as, for example, in a very good geography lesson on Japan. Support staff make an effective contribution, especially when they work with pupils with special educational needs and with pupils for whom English is an additional language. Careful assessment and good record-keeping provide a good basis for future planning. In these lessons, pupils are engaged, interested, motivated and industrious.

- 16 Where lessons are less successful, it is largely because of unsatisfactory planning, so that the purpose of the lesson is insufficiently clear, work is not accurately matched to pupils' different learning needs, and some pupils are not challenged enough. Explanations are not clear, with the result that pupils are confused and lose motivation. Too many pupils have too much relatively unstructured time in which learning is insufficient. In each of these circumstances, interest flags, behaviour begins to deteriorate, and children do not achieve as much as they should. Sometimes over-optimistic assessment stands in the way of pupils, and their parents, obtaining a realistic view of their achievement. Throughout the school there is little planning for pupils' independent work. There is no teaching of library and reference skills. Pupils are offered a very limited range of writing and so they do not practise writing in different forms.
- 17 Pupils' work is regularly marked, but marking practice is inconsistent. In some cases, comment is supportive, with suggestions for improvement. In others, a tick and praise does not give pupils sufficient support. Homework is well used to support reading and spelling.

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

- 18 The curriculum for children under the age of five is good. It is well planned across both classes to take into account the requirements of the curriculum for early years as well as individual needs. The work is well planned to suit the different levels of attainment. Children who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language receive a suitable curriculum to help them to develop the skills they need.
- 19 The curriculum in Key Stage 1 is much improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It is well organised in most subjects, although it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of pupils' achievement. The curriculum is broad, and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, and a personal, social, and health education programme, taught through science, which includes health, sex and drugs awareness. It provides pupils with different needs with a good range of opportunities to learn.

- 20 Completed curriculum plans now ensure that the requirements of each subject are properly followed, in contrast to the previous inspection findings. Mathematics and English are both given due emphasis and the school's strategy for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Subject planning is strong in art and history, where there are now good schemes of work which cover all the required aspects of each subject, providing a suitable sequence of experiences to help pupils develop their skills. In English, a commercial scheme provides a satisfactory framework in the short term, although, of necessity, it is not planned in response to the specific needs of the children in the school. This limits its effectiveness in contributing to raising standards. A suitable strategy is in process of implementation in science and music. This is helping to raise standards in science. The curriculum is not securely planned in design and technology and physical education, although the school is well placed to make early progress here. The school's provision for extra curricular-activities is unsatisfactory.
- 21 Suitable arrangements are made to ensure pupils in most classes have equal access to the curriculum. In some situations, the practice of organising religious education and some foundation subjects in fifteen minute sessions raises questions about the pupils' curriculum entitlement. In one instance, a music lesson became a book-changing session at short notice. Lesson plans satisfactorily provide for pupils with special educational needs. Individual educational plans identify a suitable programme of study for pupils though many of the plans are not sufficiently detailed or specific.
- 22 The school's provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Some opportunities for taking responsibility are provided: for example, pupils carry messages to and from the school office and return the registers there after registration. Pupils are encouraged to seek their own solutions to problems encountered in class by the use of reference books.
- 23 There is satisfactory re-enforcement of the pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension through the acts of worship, and in religious education, where pupils studied, for example, Joan of Arc's response to her call. It is not planned into other subjects. Provision for the pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Teachers emphasise the need for self control, and in assembly, and elsewhere, there is a strong emphasis on being kind to each other. Teachers encourage pupils to review their own actions and recognise the impact they have on others.
- 24 The school's provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. The organisation of much class activity, notably in literacy and numeracy, is in groups where collaboration is necessary, and lunch-time arrangements require pupils to sit at tables of six and interact sensibly with each other. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, but it is stronger in relation to other cultures than the local culture. Work on Japan, on Hinduism and a display about Chinese New Year all serve to keep the notion of other cultures before the pupils. Suitable music before assembly and the use of traditional stories and nursery rhymes in lessons provide the foundation for the future development of pupils' understanding of western European culture.
- 25 Good contributions are made by members of the local community to pupils' learning. The story sacks for the youngest children are made, assembled and serviced by volunteers, parents and other helpers. A local factory operates a 'buddy' scheme by which employees visit the school to hear pupils read. The local librarian visits the school to talk about the library and encourage an interest in books. There are good

relationships with partner institutions such as the associated junior and secondary schools and the further and higher education colleges, which use the school for student placement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 26 The steps taken by the school to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. All aspects of health and safety in the school are currently under review. Expert advice is being sought and recommendations are followed. Risk assessments have not yet been carried out in science, design and technology and physical education. The 'pop-in clinic' run by the school nurse is a strength of the school's welfare provision and appreciated by parents.
- 27 Support for pupils at major changes in their school life is satisfactory. The integration of children into the nursery proceeds in a structured way, but at an appropriate speed for the child and not to any pre-determined timetable. The integration of pupils into reception is continuous, building awareness of the main school and its staff throughout the pupils' time in nursery. Transfer to junior school is similarly organised to give the pupils some contact with the main junior school during their time in Year 2.
- 28 Good procedures to improve attendance and punctuality are in place, but the monitoring of the initiatives are not yet fully implemented and so their effect is satisfactory so far. The measures taken to promote discipline and to encourage appropriate behaviour are satisfactory. However, the monitoring of behaviour is insufficiently developed to enable the school to identify patterns of behaviour, ensure consistency of approach or to plan further initiatives. Several incidents of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. These incidents were generally dealt with promptly but they all went unrecorded. In this sense, procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are unsatisfactory.
- 29 The recently introduced procedures to monitor pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory though they are too newly in place for their overall effectiveness to be fully realised. Teachers have begun to assess two pieces of work and compare them against National Curriculum standards in English, mathematics and science each term and to keep them in a year-group folder for reference. Short-term planning sheets have space for assessment and evaluation but these are under-used. Consequently, teachers do not adjust their lesson planning according to what pupils have learnt and what they need to know. The records of personal and social development are detailed and contain good evaluative comments to show pupils' progress, indicating pupils' developing sense of right and wrong and noting end-of-term certificates for achievement or improved attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 30 Parents are very satisfied with the standards their children achieve at school and have no major concerns. They are kept informed about school events through regular newsletters and are welcomed into school to discuss any concerns or suggestions they may have. The pupils benefit from the effective help given by parents and other members of the community in the classroom. Some very high quality resources, story sacks, have been produced for the nursery by weekly parent workshops.
- 31 The quality of information provided for parents is unsatisfactory. The school is well aware that the prospectus is an unattractive document which does not meet statutory

requirements and it is in the process of being re-written. Parents receive an annual report on their child's progress, but the content is sometimes misleading, tending to be over-generous in the statements on the pupil's attainment. The reports do not refer to National Curriculum levels when giving information about achievement. In addition, they do not include targets or indicate the next step for the pupil; the format varies from class to class and in some instances the same report has been given in successive years. Reports therefore do not enable parents to get a clear view of the progress made by their child.

- 32 The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and home is unsatisfactory overall. Parents receive no detailed information about what their children are being taught; this is in some measure because newsletters contain little curriculum information and reading diaries are not a dialogue between home and school. As a result of these factors, parents are restricted in their role as partners in their children's education. The 'story sack' initiative in the nursery, however, encourages high quality parental involvement in their children's learning. The newly begun Family Literacy Project also seeks to involve parents much more closely. Whilst the Home-School agreement is a satisfactory document, a more pertinent agreement could be made following closer involvement of parents in discussions and negotiations.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 33 The quality of leadership and management provided by the governors, headteacher, and key staff is good. The contribution made by the headteacher is very good, for her strong and effective leadership provides clear educational direction, designed to raise pupils' attainment, particularly in the core subjects. Within a very short time, she has quickly and accurately identified the strengths of the school and the areas which need development. Her programme of change, supported by the statement of aims, has already made significant improvements. The aims reflect the school's good ethos as a caring community which values its pupils and is committed to equality of opportunity. Although the aims do not explicitly refer to pupils' personal and academic development, their effect is to contribute significantly to the pupils' positive experience of school and to their positive attitudes to work.
- 34 The headteacher offers a high level of professional support to staff, parents and pupils, who value the improvements she has instigated. There are clearly defined roles for all staff with arrangements for regular review; this clarity contributes to a growing sense of team-work. Responsibilities are suitably delegated, and there is appropriate support; for example, when curriculum co-ordinators began to take responsibility for developing the subjects, there was careful discussion of the co-ordinator's role. Suitable arrangements are in place to support teaching as the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators monitor their subjects through classroom observations and by looking closely at pupils' work. Results of assessments are analysed and appropriate action taken to remedy weaknesses: teachers have recently attended courses on pupils' writing after this emerged as a weakness in the 1999 assessments. A good appraisal system is established, leading to annual or half-yearly negotiated job descriptions. Good support arrangements for newly appointed teachers are regarded as very helpful by those concerned. The day-to-day management of the school is good and ensures it runs smoothly.
- 35 The newly reconstituted governing body has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and, working through a suitable committee structure, is beginning to devise suitable strategies for school improvement. Governors are very

supportive of the school and committed to helping it to achieve high standards. The literacy governor, for example, has observed literacy lessons in all classes. Nevertheless, their role in some key areas of the school's life, such as overseeing the curriculum and in development planning, is not adequately established. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities in relation to pupils with special educational needs. Governors' annual reports meet statutory requirements.

- 36 The school development plan is unsatisfactory. The headteacher is clear about what needs to be done to improve it, recognising that the present document is short-term and has no clear order of priorities specifically designed to raise standards. There are no development plans for subjects and key areas for development are not identified. Without timescales or success criteria, the document gives inadequate guidance. There is no satisfactory relationship between the assessment of pupils' performance and spending decisions; nor are there satisfactory arrangements for such decisions to be reviewed in the light of their effect on pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, grants to the school earmarked for particular purposes are identified and effectively used.
- 37 The number, qualifications and experience of the current teaching and support staff are sufficient to meet the needs of the school and the curriculum. They are suitably deployed and function well as a team. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory: there are sufficient classrooms and outside play areas for the current number of pupils. The accommodation for children under the age of five is good and the fenced off outdoor play area is used well by both the reception and nursery classes. The library contains an adequate selection of suitable reference books, but its location in a corridor inhibits its spontaneous use by pupils. The hall is a good resource for both physical education and whole-school assemblies. The school is satisfactorily maintained and relevant and colourful displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms enhance the learning environment.
- 38 Learning resources are satisfactory overall with literacy and numeracy benefiting from recent additional resources. There are some useful relevant artefacts for religious education. However, the resources for science and history are inadequate. Recent spending on information technology has improved the availability of computers; the lack of suitable software inhibits their effectiveness as a learning resource. The school does not make sufficient use of its immediate environment and other local resources in support of studies in, for example, history and geography.
- 39 The best value principles are informally applied, through, for example, careful discussion by the governors of proposed items of expenditure. Support services bought from the local education authority are effectively used to encourage improved standards. The inherited budget surplus is being held until the current audit of the school's work is complete, so that agreed developments can be funded. This is an appropriate strategy.
- 40 When account is taken of the standards achieved by the pupils in relation to their attainment on entry; the improvement in mathematics and investigative science since the last inspection; the good teaching in three-quarters of the school; and the recent and rapid improvements initiated by the headteacher, supported by governors and staff; and the relatively high cost per pupil; this school can be seen to provide satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41 In order to improve further the quality of its provision and raise standards, the headteacher, teachers and governors should:

- ◆ Raise standards in English by:
 - improving pupils' knowledge of phonics in relation to reading;
 - teaching library and reference skills;
 - improving the quality of the home-school reading diaries;
 - encouraging pupils to talk about what they read;
 - improving pupils' handwriting;
 - providing writing tasks which are closely matched to pupils' needs;
 - broadening the range of writing so that pupils write in many different forms.(paragraphs 2-3, 5, 31, 56-58, 63-64, 66)

- ◆ Raise standards in information technology by:
 - providing a wider range of software;
 - creating more opportunities to use information technology in other subjects;
 - developing the use of control technology.(paragraphs 7, 58, 81, 84, 100)

- ◆ Improve the quality of teaching across the school to ensure greater consistency between classes by:
 - ensuring that learning objectives are explicit;
 - improving the quality of lesson planning and preparation;
 - monitoring the quality of pupils' independent tasks, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science lessons;
 - improving the quality of marking of pupils' work.(paragraphs 6, 9, 16-17, 20, 63, 70, 72, 78, 80, 87, 96, 100, 111, 113-114)

- ◆ Extend the current assessment procedures to include regular assessment of what pupils know and understand to determine what they are taught.
(paragraphs 16, 21, 29, 64-65, 72, 80, 89)

The following minor issues for improvement should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- ◆ Improve the quality of individual education plans so that they are more detailed and contain very precise targets.

- ◆ Clearly link educational and financial priorities in the school development plan so that the document is more useful as the central instrument of the school's planning.

- ◆ Ensure that annual reports to parents indicate clearly the standards pupils are achieving in each subject relative to national expectations for their age group.

- ◆ Introduce extra-curricular activities to broaden pupils' cultural experience.
(paragraphs 3, 6, 16, 20, 21, 31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	23	23	39	10	3	

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)	26	78
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR- Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
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
	1999	8	18	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	21	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (78)	80 (74)	92 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	21	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (78)	85 (86)	81 (82)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	48
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Average class size	16

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	3.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	220510
Total expenditure	216365
Expenditure per pupil	1772
Balance brought forward from previous year	17330
Balance carried forward to next year	26754

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

112

Number of questionnaires returned

41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22			
My child is making good progress in school.	66	32	2		
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	49			2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	52	15		15
The teaching is good.	73	27			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	52	5		2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	54			
The school works closely with parents.	49	46	2		2
The school is well led and managed.	49	41		3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	56			2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	22	28	2	25

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

- 42 Children under the age of five are taught in a nursery and a reception class. Their catchment areas are different and over a quarter of the children in the reception class have not attended the nursery. The spread of ability in the nursery is broadly average, ranging widely from children with severe special educational needs and children with English as an additional language to pupils whose attainment is above average. In contrast, the level of ability is below average overall in the reception class with only a very small number of children attaining average or above average levels when tested on entry to the reception year. Children are well taught in both classes and all children under five receive very good additional support from nursery nurses. Their attainment improves though, by the time they are five, it is below the national agreed desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.
- 43 In personal and social development, at the age of five, children attain standards below those expected of their age. In the nursery, standards are about average as children learn to play with other children, dressing themselves, for example, in front-buttoning long gowns, before clambering into a make-believe 'wedding car' driven by a driver in a helmet. They learn to follow instructions, and co-operate very well in a large group as they lift up the large parachute all together to tip the ball into the middle. Teachers integrate children with special educational needs well, encouraging them to participate and take their turn to crawl under the parachute through to the other side. Children concentrate for reasonable periods of time on their chosen activities and ask questions to help them to learn. Some children come up and introduce themselves as they carry on imaginary conversations on the telephone. In the reception class, teachers balance more formal activities very well with nursery-type activities so that children who have had no nursery education have similar opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. Children learn to play together, balancing the scales to weigh out fruit in the toyshop, or constructing a small house together. Some children seem in a little world of their own and find it hard to communicate with words, playing silently alongside others. Teachers take every opportunity to develop children's independence and to encourage them to participate fully. They invite individual responses and provide opportunities for children to demonstrate to others, developing their social confidence.
- 44 In language and literacy, five-year-old children attain standards that are below those expected of this age group. The beginnings of good working habits are established in both classes and children are encouraged to share. Teachers and nursery assistants work very well together as a team. There are clear expectations of good behaviour and this helps to create a well-ordered and happy environment where children can learn.
- 45 In the nursery, children's attainment in language and literacy is about average for their age. Children enjoy their teacher's dramatic storytelling, giggling at Mr Jelly's over-reaction to a falling leaf. They concentrate well for the duration of the story but most are unable to answer their teacher's questions about its content. Teachers encourage learning at home as children borrow 'story sacks' to read books and play related games with their parents and carers. Higher attaining children in the nursery begin to

learn initial letters and sounds. Teachers spend much time talking to children to develop their language. The benefit is clearly seen as children comment on each other's activities, remarking, for example, 'you tried to fill it up', as four boys pour water into containers. A child with English as an additional language exclaimed in triumph as she completed a jigsaw, 'I've done it!' and then rapidly became absorbed in listening to the conversation between the nursery nurse and two children sorting out different shapes and colours.

- 46 In the reception class, about half the children can write their first name and higher attaining children form their letters quite well. Most children are willing talkers but do not get beyond simple words and short phrases. All children take home five words to learn each week as well as reading books and a small number of children are beginning to read fluently for their age. These children are beginning to write independently and teachers encourage this independence by skilfully using information technology to develop children's interest in writing. Some of their spelling is phonetically good as in 'becos', 'plis' (for 'plays') and 'witm', showing a good understanding of initial sounds as well as awareness of the shape of words. The quality of teaching is good with some very good lessons observed in both classes. Through repetition and very careful timing of activities, teachers skilfully interest children and reinforce what they have learnt. This enables all children to make good progress.
- 47 In mathematics, five-year-old children attain standards that are below those expected of this age group. Their learning is appropriate for their ability in both classes and they are well taught. In the nursery, teachers take every opportunity to help children to recognise different shapes and colours, subtly reinforcing their concepts of circles and triangles, for example, by providing paper in these shapes in the painting corner and brushes of different width to create thin or thick bands of colour. Teachers use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and so, as children draw round different sized shapes, they learn about mathematical properties such as 'sides' and 'corners' and concepts such as 'big' and 'small'. In the reception class, teachers make appropriate allowances for those children who have not benefited from nursery education to reinforce their concept of number. They make good provision for higher attaining children through adapting and enacting rhymes such as 'Five currant buns in a baker's shop', extending children's use of numbers to ten as well as introducing them to the monetary value of coins. Most children find it difficult to work out how many are left without counting out each in turn though some recognise three objects at a glance. Teachers are very skilled at making learning fun and giving ample opportunities for active mathematics as in the circular game where children count in sequence quickly up to twenty. In the picture card game, children learn from each other: as one child counts the sequence, the rest check for accuracy, learning that if one is covered up there is one less. Teachers use a glove puppet very well to help children to count backwards and they gleefully check his accuracy, commenting, 'he got it wrong'. Support assistants are used very well to help children demonstrate the concept of decreasing. Because the puppet 'needs fingers to help him', children of all levels of ability delight in coming out individually to show him their fingers and so teachers skilfully check and develop individual understanding appropriate to the child's stage of development.
- 48 Mathematics lessons loosely follow the pattern recommended in the national numeracy strategy. Group activities are well judged to help children learn independently. Children behave very well indeed and clearly enjoy learning. Teachers are acutely aware of the need to teach basic concepts and skills. 'They devise ingenious ways to

support lower attaining pupils, higher attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language. For example, they encourage lower attaining pupils to use practical equipment such as bricks to build towers in a set time. Although pupils' attainment is below average at this stage, they have a very sound basis from which to develop at Key Stage 1.

- 49 Children's standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world are below those expected of five-year-olds. The range of knowledge and understanding in the nursery is very wide; for example, some children know the names of parts of the body such as neck and shoulders whereas others are uncertain. They learn that bees make honey and cup their hands very small to show the beehive where they live. Children develop a sense of time and say they like storytime, which they know follows playtime. In the reception class, children learn a great deal to interest them. When asked to predict whether salt, flour, rice and paper will dissolve in water, three-quarters think that rice will 'disappear'. They are fascinated to see what happens to flour, commenting that it looks 'milky' and 'lumpy'. Almost all the children find the concept of melting hard to conceptualise and are puzzled by the effect salt has on ice and how the toy fish emerges from the ice cube when it is placed into warm water. Teachers select practical activities well to develop children's knowledge and understanding. From most children initially being uncertain what flour is, they learn that combined with other ingredients and baked it will make gingerbread people. Children have limited general knowledge; for example, a third of children think that a caterpillar is a fast animal and only ten per cent recognise a picture of a hippopotamus. Using music and movement, teachers help children to hear and feel the slow ponderous movements of an animal like an elephant and so develop their understanding.
- 50 Children's creative development is about average in the nursery and their attainment is below average by the age of five in the reception class. Those children who have been in the nursery are familiar with different songs and rhymes. Most children sing tunefully and move rhythmically in time to music. Because of their limited language skills, children have difficulty in distinguishing between fast and slow and between loud and soft, though most children know that the 'runaway train' has fast music. In the nursery, teachers encourage children to explore a wide range of creative activities, supervised effectively by the well-directed nursery nurses. For example, children learn to print using string and different shapes to make effective collage pictures in black and white. In the reception class, teachers have imaginative ideas to stimulate children's creativity and children use scissors and glue well to make a sail and mount it on a straw mast. They are manifestly pleased when they succeed and work with concentration and perseverance, clearly enjoying the activity. Teachers organise children well and so children know where they should be and what they should be doing. Discreet support from adult assistants helps them to succeed.
- 51 In physical development, five-year-old children attain standards generally below those expected of their age. In very well taught and carefully structured lessons, though, they can achieve average standards. Both classes benefit from using the outside play equipment regularly. Nursery children learn to run, jump and climb, gaining increasing control over their movements. Some begin to play co-operatively, pushing each other along, whereas some just ride around, gazing at the others. Some opportunities are missed to encourage imaginative play when the weather limits the range of equipment in use. Teachers make good use of the hall to further children's physical development. Children comment that they have to warm up to 'wake our bodies up'. Teachers give children many ideas for physical activities and use praise and encouragement as well as suggested improvements to help children to learn. As a result, children learn to

climb, balance and perform different jumps with confidence. In the nursery, children develop sound cutting and sticking skills and manipulate jigsaws with small parts competently. Teachers show children how to hold pencils and paintbrushes correctly. This good teaching is continued in the reception class. Those children who have not had the benefit of nursery education have time to play with small construction kits, learning how to manipulate small parts. Higher attaining pupils go on to use their pencils to trace over their teachers' writing successfully. Children who have special educational needs are well integrated in both classes and teachers help them to develop their co-ordination as they learn, for example, to squeeze out paint into a palette.

- 52 The curriculum for Early Years is well planned across both classes. The organisation of space in the nursery reflects different curriculum areas, providing interesting areas for children to work in. Assessment is used well in both classes to check what children know and what they need to learn. Teachers have a very clear understanding of the abilities of the different children and plan appropriate work to suit the different levels of attainment. The provision for children who have special educational needs is very good and children who need additional support are quickly identified and given the assistance they need. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also good. In the nursery, displays are labelled in Cantonese and Hakka and in the reception class close attention is paid to clarifying children's understanding of unfamiliar words and phrases. In both classes, teachers use physical activities well to develop language and mathematical skills as in assembling parts to show the sequence of a story or threading different shaped beads on a string. Timing these activities further develops quick thinking and greater dexterity.

ENGLISH

- 53 Overall standards of attainment are below average in reading and writing. The results of the 1999 national standardised tests show pupils' attainment in reading and writing to be below the average expected nationally of seven-year-olds. When the school is compared to others with a similar intake, attainment is below average for such schools in reading and well below average in writing. Although a small proportion attain at the higher levels in reading, no pupils achieve above average standards in writing. These results represent a slight improvement in 1999 after a period of declining standards. The inspection judgement is that the attainment of the present pupils is below expectation in both reading and writing.
- 54 There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in reading, but in writing, girls are attaining at a higher level than boys. Both last year and in the present Year 2 class, two-thirds of pupils are girls and among the boys, more pupils have special educational needs, which partly accounts for the discrepancy between their results. The school is aware of potential differences between boys' and girls' attainment and targets additional support in lessons to help boys to improve the standard of their writing.
- 55 Pupils generally have satisfactory listening and speaking skills. From the earliest age, they listen carefully to the teacher and each other and, by their responses, show they are listening and thinking about the subject of the lessons. For example, reception class children listened carefully to the teacher's instruction for physical education, and carried them out accurately after they had transferred from the classroom to the hall. They are keen to contribute ideas to class discussion. For example, pupils in Year 2 contributed well to a discussion on family relationships. By the end of the key stage,

most pupils talk competently in an informal setting. In class, most can respond in short phrases; many respond in sentences.

- 56 Reading standards are below those to be expected in a national context. The youngest children handle books confidently, know that print conveys meaning, and recognise letters recently learned. By the time they reach Year 2, the highest-attaining pupils are confident readers, attaining levels in line with the average expected nationally. They read most words accurately and have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Others are reasonably confident and have satisfactory skills to decipher words but find it difficult to talk about the text and identify likes and dislikes. The lower attainers recognise monosyllabic words from an early reader but have poor phonic skills and their comprehension is uncertain. Teachers maintain reading records which list books read and record pupils' comments. There is no space for parents to contribute. Pupils have few library and reference skills.
- 57 Standards of writing are unsatisfactory overall. The highest attaining pupils write simple narrative. They have interesting ideas, as in one story where two children lose their parents. They record events in sequence, selecting suitable vocabulary which is correctly spelled - or plausible - for the most part. Their handwriting is legible and well formed. Others write less; they have good ideas for a story, but their handwriting, though intelligible, is unconventional and their spelling is phonetic. The lower attainers record ideas on paper, selecting suitable words. Their letters are large and uncontrolled but legible. There is little evidence that pupils tackle the range of writing styles set out in the National Curriculum.
- 58 The pupils' literacy skills and the general presentation of work are unsatisfactory. The handwriting of many pupils is unsatisfactory; in some cases pupils do not hold their pencils properly. Spelling is satisfactory on the part of the highest attainers. Others have still to understand how to use capital letters and full stops. Not enough work is presented with the help of information technology.
- 59 The contribution of other subjects to pupils' literacy is satisfactory. Opportunities are taken, in, for example, history and religious education, to give pupils practice in reading and writing. In science, pupils record the results of their experiments. In geography, pupils' interest is reflected in their writing.
- 60 Pupils' achievements by the end of the key stage, however, are satisfactory when viewed in relation to their language development at the start of the key stage. The absence of pupils attaining at level 3 in the National Curriculum assessments suggests that higher achievers are not reaching their potential. Most pupils by the time they are five have not achieved the literacy standards expected of children the same age. Many pupils consolidate their skills in Year 1. Lower attaining pupils begin to control their handwriting and lay the foundation of reading skills. In Year 2, the writing of the highest attainers improves, their handwriting gets better and their spelling more confident. For the average attainers, letters become correctly orientated and more evenly formed. The writing of the lower attainers grows in confidence over time. Pupils are clearly industrious and show increased independence in their writing.
- 61 The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. It ranges from very good in the upper part of the key stage to unsatisfactory in the lower part of the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support that they receive.

- 62 The successful lessons are characterised by good planning supported by the teacher's clear view of the pupils' learning needs. The teacher's calm presence ensures an atmosphere for work and achieves a brisk start to the lesson. Skilful questioning checks pupils' understanding, challenges pupils of different ability and obliges them to think carefully about the text. Clear instructions enable pupils to start work with confidence, knowing exactly what they have to do. Good classroom management creates a productive atmosphere which supports good learning. Supporting adults are used well to lead groups and to encourage pupils to learn. The variety of materials prepared provides pupils with opportunities to learn independently. Lessons move forward purposefully and carry the pupils along without wasting time. As a result, pupils behave very well, they are involved, eager to contribute and remain engaged in the lesson. The independent groups, once settled, work well, learning to solve their own problems. The assessment of pupils' work during the successful lessons is good. Comment is offered which supports, and challenges pupils to progress at their own pace.
- 63 In the unsatisfactory lessons, objectives are not clearly enough focused on what the pupils are intended to learn, and tasks are not closely enough matched to pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils sometimes are not sufficiently challenged, with the result that they lose concentration and their work-rate is not good enough. Too many pupils have too much relatively unstructured time in which their learning is insufficient. There is too much reliance on commercially produced worksheets that often provide low-grade activities which pupils do not find stimulating. In these lessons, there is insufficient emphasis on phonics to improve pupils' reading skills and pupils are not encouraged to talk about what they read. The range of writing offered to pupils is limited and writing tasks are not always closely matched to pupils' needs.
- 64 Marking in Key Stage 1 is inconsistent. At its best, it includes suggestions for improvement, and encourages pupils to undertake corrections so that they can learn from their mistakes. Sometimes, however, it tends to be limited to ticks with occasional praise. Homework is satisfactorily used to encourage reading and spelling.
- 65 The subject's co-ordination is unsatisfactory. There is no subject plan to give direction to its development. There is no policy or scheme of work. Although the National Literacy Strategy, has been conscientiously introduced and provides suitable material, it is not closely followed in all classes. A commercial programme provides a framework for planning but it cannot provide a curriculum that is absolutely specific to the needs of the pupils in the school. Arrangements for assessment are being developed, but pupils' work is not yet assessed against National Curriculum levels. A start has been made to analyse national test results and build up data which will provide material for further curriculum development. Resources are satisfactory and include the library stock with some suitable and attractive reference books.
- 66 The range of pupils' work was criticised in the last inspection report, and assessment was judged to be unsatisfactory together with aspects of teaching. In these respects, the school has not made satisfactory progress since that time.

MATHEMATICS

- 67 Pupils attain standards in mathematics that are about average for their age. In the 1999 national standardised tests for seven- year- olds, pupils attained above average standards nationally and similar standards to schools with a similar intake. The average number attaining level 2 was close to the national average and the number of

pupils' attaining level 3 was above. Performance over time shows a steady rise in pupils' attainment although their performance averages out as close to rather than above the national average. Inspection evidence confirms this average standard in the present Year 2 class. Whilst a very small number of these pupils attain the higher levels, the majority attain at or slightly below the nationally expected level for their age. The attainment of the present pupils in Year 2 is unlikely to exceed national expectation at the end of the key stage.

- 68 Analysis of boys' and girls' performance shows that boys tend to achieve below average standards and girls above. The school is aware of this. Both last year and in the present Year 2 class, the number of boys is much smaller than the number of girls and among the boys there is a higher incidence of special educational needs. The school targets additional support within lessons to enable these pupils to attain more highly.
- 69 The pattern of pupils' learning is inconsistent across the key stage and this affects the behaviour, attitudes and concentration of some pupils. After an initially enthusiastic start, pupils do not go on to consolidate basic skills and build systematically on what they know and understand. This means that towards the end of the key stage they have a lot of basic work still to cover. Higher attaining pupils cope well but average and below average attaining pupils struggle to reach the required standard. It is very clear from looking at the pupil's books and folders that there is no progressive development of skills part way through the key stage. Much of the work requires ticks or colouring in or filling in missing numbers in sequence. Average and below average pupils do not form their figures properly, drawing rather than writing. The marking of these pupils' work is not as thorough as in other classes nor is the work sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. In contrast, older pupils cover a great deal of work in a very short time. Positive marking encourages pupils to work hard and there is a big improvement in the neatness and accuracy of pupil's work. For instance, basic practising of the numbers using squared paper helps above average and below average children to work tidily. Pupils of different attainment attempt work which is well matched to their capabilities. Higher attaining pupils, for example, learn how to measure in metres and centimetres and work out problems such as 'who is the tallest' whilst below average pupils attempt simplified problems on shape and measure, working out properties of two-dimensional shapes, for instance.
- 70 The quality of teaching reflects this same inconsistency and in the lessons seen ranged from unsatisfactory to good. In classes where the national numeracy strategy is followed closely, the quality of teaching is much better. In classes where it is followed loosely, some time is wasted and pupils do not work sufficiently purposefully on their own without support. The choice of activities is not planned to suit individual ability so that there is under-achievement, particularly of higher attaining pupils at this point in the key stage. All teachers plan according to the national numeracy strategy but in classes where the quality of teaching is good or better the planning is much more detailed. Extension activities are planned to develop pupils who could attain more highly and interesting work is given to lower attaining pupils to consolidate rather than repeat their learning.
- 71 Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers guide children to learn step by step. In one lesson, from an initial starting point where most children did not understand the signs on a calculator, in twenty minutes, pupils learnt to estimate answers to problems such as $100+100+100$ and then verify it successfully using the calculator. Because children worked in pairs, they also double-checked and questioned each other and so

pupils who over- or under-estimated received very good support and explanations at different levels. Teachers ask questions skilfully to encourage pupils to explain their answers. In good lessons, the questions are pitched according to different needs so that higher attaining pupils can respond to questions suited to their level of understanding. Teachers are alert to possible areas of confusion such as the relative size and value of coins. This helps children to succeed, as when a below average attaining pupils worked out that "You can buy more with the £1 coin but the 50p is bigger". Such teaching expects and receives high standards of work from all pupils. Initial sessions are based on sound teaching of mathematical principles. Pupils enjoy the variety of pace. They have a sense of satisfaction when they work things out for themselves. This was clearly seen when a below average group, working with a support assistant, suddenly understood the many different ways of making set sums of money using only using silver coins. Their triumph was reflected in the spontaneous applause given by the rest of the class who appreciated what they had learnt.

- 72 In lessons where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' knowledge of how young children learn is limited. Teachers do not make explicit what they want children to learn and so some pupils become confused and others lose interest. When ordering a random line of numbers up to 20, this is made unnecessarily complicated by including 0 so when pupils count five places to insert the number 5 they discover that it is in the wrong place. The putting of numbers in order is done randomly, backwards from 5 and upwards from 6, yet this is not made explicit to pupils and so opportunities are lost to teach counting on and counting back and to correct confusion over 'before' and 'after'. The same complex approach is evident in the work set for pupils to work on independently to use addition and subtraction to arrive at the same number. Ironically, below average attaining pupils succeed better than higher attainers because they are working with smaller numbers and with the help of a very good support assistant who uses counters, fingers and repetition to aid understanding. Because the pupils have no clear sense of the learning objectives, the plenary does not draw together what pupils have learnt. Assessment is not used to develop planning and so pupils' learning is inconsistent and they become bored and unable to work independently.
- 73 The mathematics curriculum, newly introduced last term, provides an adequate framework for learning. The co-ordinator monitors the weekly planning but has not monitored teaching in all classes as yet. The resources for learning are adequate but they are not always used as well as they could be to help pupils to learn. Since the last inspection, standards in mathematics have improved. Pupils' concept of number and use of mathematical skills is more competent overall. There is, however, still some under-achievement by younger pupils.

SCIENCE

- 74 Overall standards are close to those expected nationally. Inspection judgement confirms the 1999 teacher assessments for science, which indicate that pupils' attainment is close to the national average both nationally and compared to similar schools. In the 1999 assessed tasks, the weaknesses lay in pupils' knowledge of materials and living processes. Whilst an examination of pupils' work so far this year does not confirm weaknesses in these specific areas, it is evident that pupils' knowledge develops inconsistently over time and that they learn more in some classes than in others. As a result, only a small proportion of pupils attain above average levels and the number attaining the expected level is likely to be just below average, as

confirmed by the previous year's tests based on teacher assessment. These standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection.

- 75 The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the key stage. This limits pupils' potential to achieve higher standards because many pupils have not learnt and so do not fully understand basic scientific principles. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and the quality of pupils' learning varies accordingly. Although pupils' attainment is close to the national average by the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils under-achieve. The last inspection report identified pupils with special educational needs as under-achievers and indicated that there were too few opportunities for experimental and investigative science. These two aspects have improved since the last inspection and pupils with special educational needs now make good progress overall.
- 76 From looking at pupils' science books in Year 2, it is clear that they cover a great deal of work in a short time. The work is appropriately different for pupils of different ability and suitably varied methods of recording enable all pupils to cover similar material. For example, higher attaining pupils write their own labels for different parts of the body such as finger or toe whereas lower attaining pupils stick ready-prepared labels on the outline of a human form. There is evidence of experimental science as in the experiment to learn about the effects of fluoride on teeth by coating half an eggshell in vinegar and the other in toothpaste, recording their observations on a worksheet. Science investigation sheets are well prepared and invite pupils to predict. Higher attaining pupils begin to offer reasons for results. Teachers mark thoroughly and invite pupils to think more deeply as in questions such as, 'Is there a pattern?'
- 77 In successful lessons, where the quality of teaching is very good, teachers lead pupils by skilful questioning to understand the importance of fair testing and consistency if results are to be valid. In an experiment to test the effectiveness of forces on movement, pupils quickly realise that to test movement without force they need a 'slope' and 'a finger on the car at the top' so no pressure is exerted. When pupils consider which non-standard measure to use, initially they decide on shoes and then quickly realise that different people have different sized feet and so it would not be fair. Because the teacher has planned the lesson very well, pupils are able to learn very quickly that the higher the angle of slope, the more force the car moves with. Teachers' expectations are high and measures are employed to quickly raise the level of pupils' knowledge. The quick method of recording includes estimating and ensures that pupils with special educational needs can nonetheless work at the same pace and have the same scientific experience as others. Whilst the teacher works with small groups, other pupils work assiduously at well thought out and interesting tasks until it is their turn. Average attaining pupils, for example, begin to write some effective sentences incorporating words to do with physical force such as 'I push my chair in', thus also reinforcing literacy skills.
- 78 Where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils quickly become confused by unnecessarily complex demonstrations. For example, dropping a ball, hoping that pupils will understand that the force of gravity is pulling it down, is very hard for pupils to conceptualise when the ball bounces up again. Higher attaining pupils begin to understand that 'the floor is heavy' but lower attaining pupils merely recognise a bouncing ball. Further confusion arises as pupils misread the word 'gravity' on the board as 'gravy'. Lesson planning lacks sufficient detail to show what pupils are to learn and by what means. Activities tend to be consolidation of a very basic nature, insufficiently adapted to suit different abilities within the class and opportunities are

missed to develop pupils' recording or literacy skills. This leads to pupils becoming restless and inattentive and dampens their curiosity.

- 79 Teachers take opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and encourage them to talk about what they have learnt to the rest of the class. This helps pupils to become more articulate and confident. Other pupils were fascinated when one group explained that the two circles they had drawn to place 'push' and 'pull' toys inside had to be redrawn so they overlapped because they discovered that many toys could do both. Strategies to involve the rest of the class such as asking which ball would be the hardest to roll and then to allow the investigating group to deal with the answers and to confirm that 'the one with the spiky bits stopped it rolling' help pupils learn how to discuss.
- 80 The curriculum for science broadly follows a published scheme. Assessment procedures, initiated last term, involve teachers in assessing and levelling two pieces of work half-terminally according to National Curriculum levels. Teachers do not, however, assess what pupils have learnt in lessons and so do not adjust their lesson planning according to what pupils need to know. As yet, the science co-ordinator does not monitor planning in detail to check that pupils are building on what they know and understand. Support assistants are used very well to assist groups with special educational needs and contribute very well to their good progress.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 81 Standards in information technology are below average and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils then made 'slow progress in using information technology to solve problems' and those with special educational needs did not use it sufficiently to support their needs. At the present time, pupils are unable to use information technology with sufficient depth or frequency for standards to be higher. Although the school has sufficient up-to-date computers both in classrooms and in the library area, pupils are restricted in what they can do while the school awaits overdue software. Since the headteacher's appointment in September, the standard of equipment has improved considerably and the re-organisation of the library means that pupils can be withdrawn for specialist work on computers. The school is on the second stage of the National Grid for Learning.
- 82 The standard of pupils' work depends very much upon the level of support they receive from their teachers or other adults. Very young pupils, for example, develop their understanding of word construction and spelling well, skilfully assisted by support staff. They find it much easier to use the mouse than the keyboard but persevere to produce reasonably accurate sentences about 'My Friend'. Older pupils use a mouse quite skilfully to 'click' and 'drag' the frog's limbs across the screen but find it very difficult to assemble labels such as 'right leg' and 'left arm' successfully because they do not realise that left and right cannot be on the same side. By the end of the key stage, when pupils are taught specific computing skills, they become confident and adventurous and move the mouse to control a pencil adroitly to draw Florence Nightingale and changing to different colours for her hair and eyes.
- 83 The planned work for this term concentrates on using information technology to support writing and encourage literacy. The headteacher works with small groups of Year 2 pupils, teaching them computer skills. Pupils use their newly acquired skills well and quickly learn how to make print size larger and smaller. They understand the function of keys such as the 'shift' key and 'capitals lock'. Higher attaining pupils

understand how to use punctuation keys. The teaching is good because pupils are confident to experiment and work out how to change programs. They have a clear understanding of 'icons' and that these are instrumental in effecting change. Pupils work well together and, although initially they seemed unused to helping each other, they quickly organised themselves into pairs, a higher attaining pupil supervising a lower attaining one, and were scrupulous in taking turns to instruct each other. The teaching is methodical and quickly moves pupils on to more complex operations such as using a word-processing program to print out their work.

- 84 Much of pupils' learning seems to be very recent and pupils in Year 2 have not covered the expected range. The long-term planning is not sufficiently detailed to provide a clear picture of what pupils will learn and how the skills they acquire will be assessed and monitored. As yet, information technology is not planned as an integral part of pupils' learning and is not used consistently throughout the school to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The co-ordinator has received some training but has limited expertise in planning a sufficiently wide-ranging course encompassing, for example, control technology.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 85 Pupils' attainment in religious education is unlikely to reach the standards set out in the local education authority's agreed syllabus by the end of the key stage and their achievement is unsatisfactory overall. The highest attaining pupils are aware of the cross as a Christian symbol and know that a church is the sacred building of Christians. They can recall the story of the feeding of the five thousand, introducing into it the concept of prayer, but find it difficult to recall any other Bible story. They cannot demonstrate knowledge of other religions. They respond with enthusiasm to the idea of celebration and can name a number of occasions when people celebrate. Average and lower attaining pupils are insecure in these areas of knowledge. They give examples of good and bad behaviour, and know that parents and teachers help them decide how to behave, but are uncertain about Christianity and its teaching on behaviour. They are uncertain about the Bible and cannot retell any Bible story. They can identify personal likes and dislikes, but are not able to offer any reasons.
- 86 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are examples of unsatisfactory practice. Teachers are usually clear about the subject matter, and the purpose of the lesson. They introduce the topic well, and relate it to the pupils' own circumstances, choosing suitable resources to support it. They adopt suitable methods to help the pupils learn: for example, in a lesson on family relationships a sequence of story, discussion and small group work enabled all pupils to participate and make a contribution. As a result, pupils behave well, listen with attention, willingly form groups of two and three to discuss relationships, showing in the feedback section of the lesson that they have understood the concepts involved.
- 87 Sometimes, however, the lesson contains insufficient challenge, and focuses on the task to be completed rather than on what the pupils are expected to learn. When this happens, pupils do not grasp the underlying concept, and their achievement is insufficient.
- 88 A scheme of work was introduced at the beginning of the present term. This distributes the topics from the Agreed Syllabus appropriately across the nine terms of the pupils' time in school. It relies on a commercial scheme for its detail and this provides helpful material for planning, but necessarily is not built on the particular learning needs of the

children in the school. Arrangements for assessing what pupils have learned are still to be fully established. Resources, recently enhanced by the acquisition of artefacts to illustrate world religions, are satisfactory, but there are insufficient suitable books for pupils to refer to.

- 89 By establishing a scheme of work and acquiring more artefacts, the school has gone some way to responding to issues raised in the last report. Some tasks, however, continue to lack challenge, and assessment is still to be developed. Nevertheless, the development of the subject is in the hands of a newly appointed co-ordinator and is satisfactorily placed to make progress.

ART

- 90 Pupils' standards of attainment in art are in line with national expectations in those areas of the subject where the pupils have experience. Pupils successfully use watercolour to achieve different effects and varied moods. Their designs in contrasting colours demonstrate a good eye for colour and they carefully apply cutting and sticking techniques. Their essays in black and white show them creating convincing positive and negative images and the Year 2 project on Japan shows pupils successfully combining drawing, painting and construction skills in a display illustrating life in that country. Displays show children and pupils working with collage using different materials. The pupils' observation of objects and their skills in recording ideas develop satisfactorily as they progress through the school and gain in maturity.
- 91 However, the present generation of pupils has had little or no experience of printmaking, sculpture or textiles and therefore no opportunity to learn the techniques associated with these areas of the subject. Nor have they had adequate experience of the work of established artists. Attainment in the subject is accordingly unsatisfactory overall and, for the same reason, pupils' achievement is also unsatisfactory.
- 92 No art lessons were observed: it is therefore not possible to record a judgement on the quality of teaching or the quality of pupils' learning in response to their art lessons.
- 93 The subject is now led by a newly appointed co-ordinator who has prepared and introduced, from the beginning of the present term, a good quality policy and scheme of work. As a result, the subject is now well organised to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, and to ensure that children and pupils are presented with a suitable sequence of experiences through which they can build up their skills. Suitable arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of the teaching and learning have been established.
- 94 With the introduction of the new scheme of work, the school has satisfactorily met the criticisms made in the last inspection report; it is now very well placed to make progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 95 The last report indicated that pupils achieved standards in design and technology which were 'just about satisfactory for their age'. The same is largely true for the present pupils. Although standards are broadly at the expected levels by the end of the key stage there is inconsistency in the development of skills over time. Inspection judgement is based on a very small number of lessons and an evaluation of pupils' work displayed in the school.

- 96 Teachers' understanding of the design and making process is inconsistent across the school and their lesson planning varies in quality. Very young pupils are encouraged to make, test, review and modify as they manipulate malleable materials, experimenting with shapes and then testing and revising as they discover whether their boat will float. The teaching of this process is well thought out and the teacher clearly guides pupils using their success as a starting point for further discussion and experiment. In contrast, slightly older pupils undertook a much simpler task, with no understanding of the stages of design and making as they carefully coloured in parts of a pre-drawn clown. When questioned, they did not realise that they would cut these out and add paper fasteners to make the limbs move. Although these pupils were occupied there was a quiet undercurrent of misbehaviour and other pupils, randomly tearing up pieces of paper for a collage, squabbled openly. Because of imprecise planning, pupils were clearly unchallenged and lacked the motivation to work quickly and with a clear sense of purpose.
- 97 By the end of the key stage, however, pupils undertake tasks which clearly test their design and making skills and from which they derive satisfaction and a sense of pride. From initial paper designs of Joseph's coat of many colours using a template and crayons to good effect, pupils cut out a simple T-shaped coat in felt and carefully stitch the edges together. The quality of stitching is quite good with a mixture of large and small stitches to over-sew the edges. Some are well finished off with carefully glued on coloured felt squares.
- 98 Where teachers' expectations are high, the quality of pupils' learning improves considerably and pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to design and make articles which test their ingenuity and skill. From this, they become enthusiastic and intellectually curious and are motivated to learn. Year 2 pupils talked enthusiastically about the Japanese fans they had made and carefully explained why there were different designs. Design and technology projects such as these complement work in other subjects such as geography and mathematics and so contribute well to pupils' broader education. The co-ordination of this subject is in the early stages of development and much work remains to be done so that pupils receive a consistent curriculum in which they learn and build on skills. The resources for learning are satisfactory and in some classes are used with ingenuity to support learning.

GEOGRAPHY

- 99 Overall standards in geography meet national expectation. This is similar to standards reported in the last inspection. Current work in Year 2 on Japan, however, is above average in response to very good teaching and the teacher's excellent subject knowledge. This indicates the beginnings of improvement since the last inspection.
- 100 Younger pupils learn from looking at local photographs that buildings can have different uses and that a building may have more than one purpose. Through carefully chosen pictures of places pupils know very well, the teacher encourages pupils to talk about the local shops, streets and houses, recognising that they are within walking distance. Pupils begin to appreciate that places can be ordered in terms of size and importance, learning, for example, that the suburb they live in is part of a city which is in a country. Older pupils begin to use maps and plans confidently, identifying some geographical features. Teachers miss opportunities, however, to develop the learning of higher attaining pupils. For example, pupils drew geographical features such as trees or houses on an imaginary island but they did not draw the island for themselves nor make any use of the squared grid to locate different areas. Pupils began to record

the weather on a weekly chart but completed only two days and higher attaining pupils, for example, did not go on to draw conclusions about weather patterns. Similarly, whilst pupils began to use simple compass directions, they did not explore these practically using information and control technology.

101 The work on Japan, however, is quite different and indicates how pupils can attain much more highly when work is thoughtfully and imaginatively planned. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils are fascinated by the different cultural traditions. The keenness of their interest and sharpness of their observations is evident in the questions they ask and the details they remember from week to week. The resources are very well chosen and, because many of them are very special, the pupils treat them with care and respect, feeling privileged as they attempt to pick up tiny scraps of paper with chopsticks. Learning to form Japanese letters develops their control as well as giving a real incentive to be neat and pupils comment, 'It's hard to write with paintbrushes.' The different activities, which all pupils have the opportunity to try, are equally interesting and designed to give pupils practical experience of very different customs. A number of pupils find out more about Japan in their own time because it has so engaged their imaginations.

102 Since September, much thought has been given to developing this subject to suit pupils' needs, recognising the insularity of many pupils' experience. The overall planning to extend pupils' knowledge from their own locality to the wider world is made evident to the pupils in the displays around the school from the reception pupils' local street plans to maps indicating the extent of the world. The co-ordinator monitors planning and checks coverage of the curriculum by looking at displays and pupils' work to see the progress pupils make from year to year.

HISTORY

103 The attainment of pupils in history is on course to reach national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and their achievements in the subject are satisfactory. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of some of the events of the great fire of London, and have compared a famous person in the present with a famous person in the past. The highest attainers have a good recall of factual information about Florence Nightingale and can quote relevant dates. Average and below-average attainers can recall relevant facts although with less detail. Pupils draw information from different sources and have a satisfactory sense of chronology: they know that the great fire of London happened before the Crimean War and both were a long time ago. However, they have not yet begun to look for reasons why events took place.

104 The quality of teaching in the subject is satisfactory. It is derived from a satisfactory knowledge of the subject, and lessons are effectively planned, with the available resources suitably deployed to provide pupils with additional information. Additional adults are used to enable a wider range of activities. Opportunities are provided for the pupils to practise reading and writing skills. As a result, pupils work industriously, consolidate concepts of the passing of time, learn to use reference books as a source of information and acquire new information about the lesson's topic. Their behaviour is satisfactory.

105 The leadership of the subject is in the hands of a newly appointed co-ordinator whose subject policy and scheme of work have been introduced at the beginning of the present term. The scheme distributes topics for study suitably over the time pupils are in the school, drawing on the national model scheme for detail and content. The co-

ordinator monitors teachers' planning but arrangements to monitor pupils' learning have yet to be put in place. Resources for history are unsatisfactory. There are some suitable books in the library, but there are too few artefacts, and insufficient posters and pictures to help bring the subject alive to the pupils.

106 By the introduction of a new scheme of work, the criticisms in the last inspection report have been satisfactorily met, and overall planning, now based on the National Curriculum, is much improved. The school is now well placed to make progress in the subject.

MUSIC

107 Pupils' standards of attainment in music are in line with expectation in those areas of the subject where pupils have experience. They sing confidently, in tune and with an accurate rhythm. Higher-attaining pupils play the percussion instruments accurately, playing rhythmically and keeping silent as the music demands. Average and lower-attaining pupils have more difficulty in hearing and accurately reproducing required rhythms.

108 Nevertheless, the pupils at present in the school have insufficient experience of composing their own music, and of listening to and responding to music composed by others. Pupils' attainment in these areas is necessarily unsatisfactory as a result, and, accordingly, attainment is unsatisfactory overall. For the same reason, although pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to sing, their achievement is not satisfactory in other areas of the subject.

109 The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory. Pupils learn to enjoy singing, for example, because of the teacher's enthusiasm, and gain confidence as a result of the capable accompaniment she provides. The lesson's good pace carries the pupils along with it and ensures their continued attention and good behaviour. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. The appropriate use of suitable resources helps the pupils put the lesson in context. For example, Indian clothes and photographs of India suitably introduced the theme of Indian music in Year 2.

110 A newly-appointed and suitably qualified co-ordinator gives good leadership for the subject. A satisfactory policy and scheme of work is progressively being introduced from the beginning of the present term. When the scheme is fully implemented, the subject will be organised to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are presented with a suitable sequence of musical experiences through which they can develop skills and understanding in the subject. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring teachers' planning, but there are no arrangements to assess what pupils' have learned.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111 Overall standards in physical education are broadly in line with those expected nationally. The criticism made in the last inspection that 'progress is extremely variable and pupils' ability is not fostered and developed from one year to another' is still true. Pupils' attainment varies from class to class as does the quality of teaching. Whilst individual lesson planning is often of a high standard, in some lessons, planning is far too generalised and what pupils are expected to learn is not made explicit.

- 112 The quality of teaching ranges from very good to poor. In lessons which are good or better, teachers give very clear directions and pupils respond readily and willingly, enjoying the physical exertion. Pupils co-operate well with a partner or in groups to join together, for example, like a bunch of bananas, holding their curved shape well. Teachers vary activities well and have good strategies for control as they balance active with static movements so pupils have no time to misbehave as their energies are skilfully channelled. Through good demonstration, teachers substantially improve the quality of pupils' movements, teaching them how to pulsate like a spider; pupils then mimic the movement very well indeed, using carefully controlled and deliberate movements. Teachers select pupils to demonstrate to others and, through praise and evaluation, develop pupils' confidence. These movements are then combined into a simple dance sequence as the teacher tells the story which develops pupils' imaginative expression through motion. Teachers' calm words are very effective at controlling pupils' exuberance.
- 113 Without this thoughtful understanding of how to manage pupils' energies, pupils are very ready to run out of control, for their behaviour can be very immature if not checked. Where the quality of teaching is poor, lack of planning and a clear sense of direction in the lessons means pupils become inattentive. Although pupils are selected to demonstrate to others, teachers do not point out good features nor ensure that other pupils are watching and listening attentively. Pupils enjoy using the apparatus but because their movements verge on the uncontrolled this is potentially hazardous. Jumps and forward rolls are performed too quickly and sometimes on unsafe surfaces. Because there is a limited range of activities, pupils do not improve their performance and find it difficult to calm down at the end of the lesson to clear the apparatus away sensibly and quietly. Support teachers are used very well to assist pupils who have special educational needs and their direction also benefits other pupils.
- 114 In two-thirds of the lessons seen, teachers paid due regard to safety. Pupils understand very well the reasons for warming up and as a result involve themselves thoroughly in physical activities. Not all teachers change into suitable clothing or footwear, however; not only does this set a bad example but it inhibits the movements of the teacher and affects their capacity to demonstrate effectively. There are good discussions about safety rules regarding apparatus but these are not followed scrupulously in classes where teachers' control and management of pupils is less secure.
- 115 The long-term planning lacks detail. The criticisms made of the co-ordination of this subject in the last report remain and there has been little development in the planning since then. At present, teachers are following an outline curriculum plan. The resources are adequate and suitable for an appropriate range of physical activities for infant pupils.