

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEHILL INFANT SCHOOL

Crowborough

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114392

Headteacher: Mrs L Stevens

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bald
17932

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 March 2001

Inspection number: 188812

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Luxford Road
Crowborough
East Sussex

Postcode: TN6 2HW

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Dalby

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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17932	John Bald	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
			Special educational needs	
			Equal opportunities	
11414	Ann Bennett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
			Mathematics	
			Art and design	
			Music	
25925	Elizabeth Pacey	Team inspector	English	
			Geography	
			History	
			Religious education	
27061	Ian Stainton-James	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Design and technology	
			Information and communication technology	
			Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitehill Infant School is of average size. It has 248 pupils, aged four to seven, with slightly more boys than girls. Twenty-nine four-year-olds attend part-time in reception classes, and there is a privately operated nursery on the school site. Almost all pupils are white, of United Kingdom heritage. However, five pupils, from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, are in the early stages of learning English. This is above the national average proportion. The school's social and economic circumstances are favourable, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. However, standards reached by pupils joining the school are broadly average, with weaknesses in the speaking and listening skills of a significant number of pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, but these pupils have significant learning and behavioural difficulties. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitehill Infant School provides good education. Pupils enter the school having reached average standards for their age, and leave with above-average standards. Teaching is good and the school is led and managed very well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall standards at seven are above average.
- Teaching is good, and very good or better in a third of lessons.
- The headteacher, other key staff and governors lead and manage the school very well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils develop very good attitudes to school and behave very well.
- Assistants and volunteers make very effective contributions to teaching and learning.
- The school has a very good relationship with parents.
- Resources for learning, including the library, are used very well.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing for higher-attaining seven-year-olds are too low.
- Older, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough in some lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected, in June 1996, it was achieving above-average standards in most aspects of its work, although standards in writing were average, with below-average spelling. The school needed to improve co-ordination of the curriculum and of special educational needs, to improve its arrangements for tracking pupils' progress, and to raise standards in physical education. The management of special educational needs is very good, especially for pupils with serious learning difficulties. The co-ordination of work for pupils in year groups, and in most subjects, is now very effective, and standards in most subjects are more clearly above average than at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordination of work in English has improved standards in spelling and has sustained boys' interest in reading, but has not had a significant impact on older pupils' writing. Standards in physical education are now good. The school tracks standards and progress well through improved detail in the school development plan. The proportions of good and very good teaching have risen significantly, and the school has maintained and developed its strong links with parents and the community. Accommodation has been transformed through the

school's move to a well-designed and attractive new building. The leadership of the headteacher has sustained a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school, and the school is very well placed to address its remaining weaknesses. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	C	A	C	C
Writing	D	C	C	C
Mathematics	C	A	B	C

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

Standards in national tests for seven-year-olds vary from year to year, and reflect the standards reached by pupils joining the school. Trends in the school's results have been broadly in line with national averages over the last three years. Standards in reading and mathematics during the inspection were above average and standards in writing broadly average. Significant numbers of pupils reach higher than expected standards in reading and mathematics, but higher-attaining pupils do not achieve above-average standards in writing. Standards in science during the inspection were above average, and significantly better than the results of teacher assessments of seven-year-olds in 2000. Pupils have a good range of scientific knowledge and understanding, grasp the basic principles of scientific investigation, and record their work well. Standards in speaking and listening at seven are above average.

Seven-year-olds reach well above average standards in art and design. They use a broad range of materials and techniques with confidence, and make excellent use of colour. Standards in all other subjects are above average, and reflect the good quality of teaching and learning in each class. Children up to five begin with average standards overall. Good teaching and learning ensure that they reach standards that are above average, overall, by the time they start work on the National Curriculum. However, some five and six-year-olds still have weaknesses in speaking and listening.

The school sets sound targets for raising standards. Action taken to meet these targets has been very effective in science and in boys' reading. In writing, standards are now improving among younger pupils, but not among older pupils. Pupils begin at the school with average standards, and leave having reached standards that are, overall, above average. This represents good achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, in class work, homework and in the school community.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall, but some unsettled behaviour among six-year-olds.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils learn to act responsibly and to show consideration to others. They work together well in groups.
Attendance	Average, with good punctuality.

Pupils with severe learning difficulties receive much help and support from other pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good or better in 34 per cent of lessons, good or better in 86 per cent, and satisfactory or better in 100 per cent. The overall quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. It is based on careful co-operation between teachers in planning and on good middle management by teachers who co-ordinate subjects and year-groups.

The teaching of mathematics is good, with a balanced range of activities that build up pupils' skills in all aspects of the National Curriculum, and good emphasis on mental mathematics and numeracy and on solving problems. The teaching of English is good in reading and in speaking and listening. Writing is taught well to six-year-olds and to a satisfactory standard in lessons for seven-year-olds. However, the teaching of writing does not consistently address the higher levels set out in the National Curriculum, and seven-year-olds' learning is hindered by a lack of consistency in using writing in subjects other than English. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to teaching and learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, and learning in all classes benefits greatly from the work of volunteers, both from parents and from the community. Teachers throughout the school make good use of resources, including computers and the library, and learning is consolidated by good links between subjects. Homework is regularly set and is very effective.

With the exception of older pupils' learning in writing, which is satisfactory, the quality of learning is consistently good, and very good or better in the third of lessons in which teaching is of outstanding quality. All classes shared in the best teaching, but it was at its most consistent in art and design, where tasks for pupils are exceptionally imaginative and well thought out. Overall, teaching meets the learning needs of all pupils well. The school identifies pupils with English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils at an early stage. Teachers track these pupils' progress carefully, and provide modified work that enables them to learn well. Specialist teaching for pupils with special educational needs is of good quality, and is backed up by outstanding support and individual teaching from assistants. This leads to very good learning for these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Learning opportunities are broad and well balanced, both for children up to five and in the National Curriculum. There is, however, too little time for writing in classes for older pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. All aspects of this work are carefully thought out and managed. Pupils take a full part in the school's life and work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked. Work is matched to their learning needs, and specialist teaching is provided where it is needed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a central part of the school's work, and is very good overall. Pupils' understanding of right and wrong is carefully fostered, and they have good opportunities to reflect on their lives and on the wider world. They have a good introduction to their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of pupils' health and welfare. It has good arrangements for assessing their work and guiding progress.

The school has an excellent relationship with almost all parents, and builds very well on the values children bring from home. The school secretary plays a very effective part in this work. A small number of parents remove their children for excessively long holidays in term-time, and this interferes with learning. Rewards for good work and behaviour are attractive and much appreciated. The curriculum for art, and the provision for pupils with statements of special educational need, are important strengths. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about animals and the environment. Parents are contacted quickly if children do not arrive for school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and other key staff provide clear and effective leadership, based on agreed values and clearly considered priorities for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors are closely involved in all aspects of the school, monitor its work well and contribute to its sense of purpose.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school uses all information at its disposal well, and addresses effectively the weaknesses it has identified.
The strategic use of resources	All available funds and resources for learning, both inside and outside the school, are used very well.

The school has sufficient teachers with good qualifications and experience. It is very well provided with teaching assistants and other support staff. It has very good resources for learning, including a very good library. Accommodation, including extensive facilities for people with disabilities and well laid-out grounds, is excellent and kept in first-class condition by the caretaker and his team. The design of the building promotes co-operation among teachers.

Middle management is particularly effective in co-ordinating work for children up to five and across year groups. Work in subjects is very well co-ordinated in art and design, science and information and communication technology. The school makes very good use of its funds, and is skilled in finding additional sources of finance. It is very effective in securing value for money.

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 are happy in school, work hard and learn to become responsible. • The teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works well with parents. • The school helps with problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Homework.

Parents expressed strong support for almost all aspects of the school's work, and the proportion of positive answers to the pre-inspection questionnaire was very high. Inspectors agreed with these positive views of the school. They found that the range of activities outside the classroom was typical of schools for children of this age. Inspectors found that the school made very good provision for homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in national tests at age seven in 2000 were above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. These test results were in line with those achieved by similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard at seven has risen since the last inspection; it is not possible to compare the proportions of pupils reaching above average standards, as this was not stated in the last report. The school's results over the past three years have been improving at a broadly average rate. Pupils taking the tests in 2000, when results showed a fall on those for 1999, had a pattern of low scores on baseline tests when they joined the school. During the inspection, older pupils were reaching above average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, and reading, and average standards in writing. Pupils read with good fluency and expression, and make good progress in independent reading through their use of the library. A high proportion of pupils reach the nationally expected standard in writing. Almost all write simple sentences with a sound degree of accuracy in spelling and punctuation, but too few higher-attaining pupils write to an above-average standard. Standards in speaking and listening were above average as a result of good long-term teaching and learning throughout the school. Standards in science were below average in teacher assessments in 2000, but were clearly above average during the inspection. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding in all areas of the National Curriculum for science, know how to conduct simple experiments and investigations, and record their work well.
2. Standards in art and design are well above average. Pupils develop very good skills in using colours and materials, in using design as a tool to guide them in making articles, and in evaluating their work. Their work in landscape is excellent. Standards in all other subjects are above average, reflecting the good quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
3. Children begin the reception classes with average knowledge, skills and understanding for their age overall. The proportion who have reached above-average standards at this stage is small, and a significant number do not speak clearly or concentrate well when listening to the teacher or to other children. Standards by the time pupils start work on the National Curriculum have risen, and are above average overall, though some five-year-olds still have weaknesses in speaking and listening that pose a challenge to teachers of Year 1 classes.
4. The pattern of standards at seven represents good overall progress and achievement over pupils' three years in the school. They reach above-average standards in all aspects of their work except writing, where standards are average. Pupils with special educational needs, who include an above-average proportion with statements of special educational need, learn very well. Pupils with English as an additional language, most of whom have recently arrived in the school and are in the early stages of learning English, learn well as a result of work that is closely matched to their learning needs. The school analyses strengths and weaknesses in its work closely, and sets realistic and challenging targets for improvement. Action taken to reach these targets has brought recent success in science and in boys' reading. In writing, the school has developed an effective approach to raising standards for five and six-year-olds, but not yet for older pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic and interested, and the youngest pupils quickly learn the routines of the classroom. A group of four-year-olds, for example, were observed taking their named peg, choosing the task they wanted to do, attaching the peg to the appropriate activity and then settling down to it industriously throughout the time available. These children were fascinated by the chicks hatched in their incubator, and talked knowledgeably about their need for food and drink. Older pupils frequently become absorbed in their lessons, listening to a story in silence or enjoying the challenge of estimating distances and programming the floor robot. They sustain concentration exceptionally well in the library, choosing suitable books and reading with close attention. They are keen to learn, and rise to the challenges set for them as they learn about batteries and electricity or experiment with different media in art. Their very positive attitudes are a result of good, imaginative teaching and strong parental support.
6. Pupils work well together and behave very well in most lessons. Some five- and six-year-olds, however, do not settle so well, and there were isolated examples of boisterous or inappropriate responses from boys of this age. In general, behaviour around the school and in the playground is of a high order. Pupils move around the building sensibly, and are pleased to hold doors open for their class-mates. The horseshoe seating arrangement in assembly is ideal; all pupils can see clearly, and they encourage each other in singing. Pupils enjoy being the centre of attention and being applauded in assembly for their achievements; they take pride in showing their models or receiving their certificates. There have been no recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour, and no exclusions, since the last inspection.
7. Relationships between pupils and all the adults in the school are very good: pupils are respectful, because they are treated in a kindly manner appropriate for their age. Pupils relate well to each other, and give particular support to those with special educational needs, for example, by learning to communicate with them through signing. During playtime in wet weather, they organise classroom activities without fuss. Pupils talk to each other: for example, rather than just rushing outside and running around, two boys were heard planning what game they were going to play at lunchtime. Pupils are keen to learn and to do their best. They take their homework seriously and are helped by the support of their parents to learn to organise themselves and to complete it.
8. The attendance rate at the school is only average. Despite the steps taken by the school to ensure good attendance, absences have been increasing in recent years, mostly because some parents take pupils on extended family holidays. In some cases, pupils do not return on the date agreed with the school. These holidays are hindering learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

9. The proportion of good and better teaching, 86 per cent, is substantially higher than in most schools, and leads to good learning in almost all subjects. Outstanding teaching, in a third of lessons overall, occurs throughout the school, and is very frequent in some classes. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it promotes sound learning for pupils in the lesson as a whole, but is not effective in some parts of the lesson. These most often involve writing, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. The overall standard of teaching, of children up to five and of pupils aged five to seven, is good, and the proportions of good and better teaching have improved significantly since the last inspection.

10. The good quality of teaching of children up to five is based on very clear understanding of patterns of learning among children of this age, which is translated into interesting and exciting activities. This teaching is very well organised, providing a good balance of learning across the day, and is enhanced by excellent planning for first-hand experience, such as close observation of the hatching and early life of chicks. Teaching and learning benefit from very good arrangements to assess and track individual progress, so that teachers and teaching assistants know exactly which stage each child has reached and what they need to learn next. The school establishes an excellent link between home and school for children up to five, with very good homework activities.
11. The consistency of good teaching across the school is founded on co-operative planning, which enables teachers to share their best ideas and which is kept under review. In both of the excellent lessons seen, on statistics in geography and on creating landscapes in art and design, work had been planned by all of the teachers in the year group, so that all pupils benefited from it in turn. Teachers know their pupils very well, and most management of classes is very good, leading to a good or very good pace of work and generating enthusiasm for learning. They use assessment and tracking procedures consistently, and are making increasing use of targets in English and mathematics. The assessment of reading is particularly good, with very close analysis of developing skills. However, teachers do not use information from assessment sufficiently to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are working at fully demanding levels in all subjects. Learning is, however, enhanced by the school's consistent provision of homework, which helps pupils build up the habit of learning independently.
12. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy is good overall, and very good in a quarter of lessons. Where the teaching is very good, activities for pupils are imaginative, involving simple problem solving using everyday objects, and the management of the class and presentation of work to pupils create a delight in learning. Reading is well taught, with well-organised resources and effective extension of pupils' interest in reading. Writing is taught effectively to five and six-year-olds, who learn to form letters consistently and make good progress in early spelling; they are beginning to write independently to an above-average standard when retelling stories. The teaching of writing to older pupils is satisfactory within lessons, but suffers from a lack of consistent planning for writing, both within the literacy hour and in other subjects, apart from science. The outcome is that pupils do not write enough, and higher-attaining pupils are not challenged consistently to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
13. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good teaching from teaching assistants and teachers, and work is matched well to their learning needs. The specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is complemented by outstanding individual teaching and support for learning from teaching assistants, who bring an outstanding combination of skills and personal experience to the work. This leads to very good learning and attitudes to school from these pupils, and in particular from those who have statements of special educational need.
14. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, learning is limited in parts of the lesson by work that is not matched closely enough to what pupils, most often those capable of reaching high standards, need to learn. The main weakness is in the teaching of writing to older, higher-attaining pupils, who are not required consistently to work at above average standards, but the issue also affects learning in a minority of mathematics lessons. In some classes for younger pupils, class management is satisfactory, but the structure of the lesson requires pupils to switch their attention too often from one activity to another. This makes it more difficult for those pupils who are

inclined to be restless to develop good concentration. Very occasionally, a well-planned lesson loses some of its effectiveness when pupils' attention is allowed to wander too far from the main point.

15. The quality of teaching benefits from the management of the headteacher and of co-ordinators, who help colleagues to address weaknesses and to build on strengths. The consistently good quality of teaching in information and communication technology is a particularly good example of this, as it enables all teachers, including those who have otherwise had limited experience of computers, to teach the National Curriculum to a good standard. Replies to the parents' questionnaire showed an unusually high degree of appreciation of the quality of teaching.

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

16. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities for all pupils. Children up to five are offered a stimulating range of experiences in all of the nationally recommended areas of learning in the foundation stage, and pupils aged five to seven experience a good range of opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding. National guidelines, adapted to fit the needs of Whitehill, are used effectively to ensure that learning objectives are well focused and time is used profitably. Teachers' co-operative planning for the curriculum in each year group helps ensure consistency of learning from one class to another, and contributes to the good overall quality of teaching and learning. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to work together in groups, to take part in discussions and to use computers. All pupils have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities, and statutory requirements are fully met.
17. The curriculum for mathematics and numeracy is balanced and effective, leading to good development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the National Curriculum. It is supported by very effective links with other subjects, including imaginative early statistical work for six-year-olds in geography. The curriculum for English, including literacy, makes good provision for reading and speaking and listening, leading to above-average standards in these aspects of the subject. It makes good provision for spelling, and for writing for younger pupils. Six and seven-year-olds, however, are not spending as much time on writing as they should. Writing tasks in subjects other than English do not develop their writing skills consistently, and writing in English does not enable higher-attaining pupils to reach similar standards in writing to those they achieve in other aspects of English.

18. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. These pupils' learning is fostered by carefully modified work and by very good additional support from teaching assistants. In the case of pupils with statements of special educational need, whose learning difficulties are complex and demanding, the school's provision is excellent, and reflects great credit on the skills and personal resourcefulness of the teaching assistants who provide the bulk of the support. The parents of these pupils expressed strong appreciation for this aspect of the school's work to the inspection team. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are identified early and supported well by teachers and teaching assistants, with additional specialist teaching where this is needed.
19. Provision for personal, social and health education is embedded in all aspects of the school's work. Formal lessons provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and to develop an understanding of life within a community. They are encouraged to think about health, for example through their care of animals, and to care for each other and for those in need. The school makes good use of educational visits, both in the immediate vicinity of the school and further afield, and takes part in music festivals. These activities extend the opportunities for pupils to form good relationships, both with each other and with children from other schools. Links with the community are good, and many pupils attend various activities run by the community such as gymnastics, rugby, swimming, judo, ballet, squash and a French Club. Some of these ventures use the facilities of the school. Volunteers from the community work alongside parents in the school and make a valuable contribution to learning. Pupils get involved in raising money for various charities, both local and worldwide. While a significant number of parents thought that the school did not provide enough activities outside the classroom, the inspection team considered that its provision was similar to that in most infant schools. Older pupils told inspectors that they had many opportunities to learn outside school and to take part in clubs.
20. The school has good ties with other schools, including a system of exchange teaching with the Herne Junior School that eases pupils' transfer at the age of seven. Good contact with local nurseries ensures smooth entry to the school for children up to five.
21. Provision for spiritual development is good. Time and space are provided in assemblies and in some lessons for quiet contemplation and to consider the problems and feelings of others. The nature trail and the presence of living creatures in classrooms, especially the ducklings for children up to five, give pupils the chance to appreciate the wonder of nature and the importance of care. Pupils have very good opportunities in art to reflect on and evaluate their own responses to the work of famous artists, such as Monet and Lowry. Religious education allows them to learn about and reflect on Christianity and about key beliefs in other religions. The display of holy books in the library, including the Qur'an, the Torah and the Bible, helps pupils to understand how different books are special to different religions, and to respect them. Collective worship, prayer and the singing of hymns all contribute well to the spiritual development of the pupils.
22. Provision for moral development is very good. From their earliest days in the school, pupils begin to understand the difference between right and wrong and between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. School and class rules are presented in the context of the needs of the community, and carefully explained. Pollution problems for the world are considered in a moral context, and the drive for a greener environment with a litter-free school is brought to the attention of pupils. Pupils understand the fair systems for rewards and sanctions used by the school, particularly its carefully considered system of rewards, including certificates for their personal Records of

Achievement. The weekly 'leaf assembly', in which pupils who have done well receive a leaf with their name on it to place on the 'Well done tree', is popularly received, as pupils get the chance to acknowledge and share in each other's success. The school ensures that all pupils are represented in this in the course of a year.

23. The school gives high priority to pupils' social development, and work in this area is very good. All adults in the school, including administrative and mid-day staff as well as teachers and teaching assistants, show pupils the positive advantages of hard work, consideration for others, and kindness. Examples include the organisation of the dining hall, which makes lunch time a pleasant and companionable experience and promotes good manners. A formal invitation to lunch with the headteacher is carefully awarded and highly prized. Formal arrangements are reinforced by very good informal guidance, which develops pupils' self-confidence and nips potential problems in the bud. Pupils enjoy being given responsibility, and cheerfully undertake jobs such as taking registers to the office, feeding the chicks or stacking chairs after assembly. Provision for the social development of pupils with statements of special educational need is outstanding, with benefits both for the pupils themselves and for the other pupils in their classes.
24. Cultural education is good, with some outstanding features. In history, pupils are encouraged to understand the richness of their heritage with their 'Victoria day' and study of a broad range of objects from daily life in Victorian times. The exceptional quality of displays, with their imaginative use of colour and fabric, introduces pupils to the principles of interior design. The library has a good range of books representing different cultures, such as Africa, the West Indies and India. Pupils' receive an excellent introduction to English and European art, including opportunities to work with practising artists, and displays include a very good selection of African carvings. In music, a wide range of instruments from around the world increases pupils' awareness of other cultures. Pupils' study of major world faiths in religious education lessons helps them develop a good understanding, for their age, of the range of cultures in modern Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. Teachers and other adults in the school know pupils and their families very well and make very good arrangements for the children's welfare. Health and safety and child protection procedures are effective, known to all adults and carefully followed. Pupils receive very good personal guidance, both through their relationships with teachers and through their Records of Achievement, which record their participation in the school's reward system as well as their academic work. Pupils with special educational needs, who need high levels of care, receive excellent support from teachers, teaching assistants and from other pupils. This is greatly appreciated by these pupils' parents. Occasional boisterous behaviour from a minority of boys is kept well in check, and the school ensures that oppressive behaviour or bullying is dealt with immediately.
26. The school monitors attendance and punctuality very closely, contacting parents before morning break if their son or daughter has not arrived. It actively encourages parents not to take holidays in school time. However, it is not always firm enough in enforcing the rules on unauthorised absence, particularly when parents do not ensure that their son or daughter returns to school at the agreed date.
27. Arrangements to track pupils' progress are very good in the reception classes, and good for pupils aged five to seven. Teachers and teaching assistants in the reception classes use the information they gather to plan work effectively for all of the children and this contributes to progress. Teachers of pupils aged five to seven assess reading progress very well, and have recently begun to use the information from other assessment

procedures to set suitable targets for pupils in English and mathematics. The assessment of writing is used well to plan work for five and six-year-olds, but is not used to guide higher-attaining, older pupils towards the more demanding levels of the National Curriculum. While the school has made good recent improvements in its arrangements to assess science, assessment is not yet used to full effect in promoting the highest possible standards among older pupils. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is carried out to a very high standard, and is used to set well-thought-out targets in individual education plans. These in turn are reflected in the work these pupils are given in lessons. This aspect of the school's work has shown very good improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28. Parents are very pleased with the work of the school. There were few negative comments in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and the proportion of favourable responses to many questions was unusually high. Partnership with parents was a strength of the school during the last inspection, and it has developed further, not least through the campaign for the new building.
29. A large number work of parents work in classrooms as volunteers, and each class has committed helpers. There is extensive support through the Friends Association. Parents are very much at ease about approaching the school with their concerns. They have involved themselves through the parent governors with various school projects, such as making the wild life area, and in recycling. They respond well to the school's vision and feel a valued part of their children's education. Each week a local further education college provides a weekly session for parents at the school. This is a particularly valuable innovation, because it is specifically geared to helping parents support their children with work at home.
30. The school keeps parents very well informed, through regular meetings, newsletters, guidance about homework and information about what their children are learning. The annual reports provided for parents are very good, and show parents clearly what their children have learnt during the year. Teachers' comments show particularly good personal understanding of each pupil. Some contain good targets for future work, but this feature is not consistent. The school is aware of the issue and plans to change the reports to be issued this summer. Parents actively support their children with work at home, and make good use of the homework book. This is helping to raise standards, particularly with reading. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully consulted and very appreciative of the school's work. A few parents remove their children from school for extended holidays and visits abroad, and this hampers their progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

31. Leadership and management were strengths of the school during the last inspection, and this is still the case. The headteacher and other key staff, including the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators for work with children up to five and in subjects, provide a clear sense of direction for the school and create a strong sense of teamwork. Management has a clear focus on educational standards, which are now more closely analysed than at the time of the last inspection. Below-average spelling, identified in the last inspection report, has been improved, and an emerging pattern of lower reading attainment in boys has been effectively addressed among younger pupils. Standards in science have shown good recent improvement, and the school is taking steps to improve standards in writing, which are largely unchanged since the last inspection. So far, these have led to above-average standards among younger pupils, but have not yet had an impact on the work of older, higher-attaining pupils. The school has made significant improvements in managing its arrangements for tracking pupils' progress through the school development plan and for setting targets. The management of provision for special educational needs has improved significantly since the last inspection, and is now excellent.
32. Governors are closely involved in the school, and often have connections with it extending over several generations. They monitor its work effectively, using test results and other assessment data, and have a clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors have played a full part in recent initiatives to raise standards, and make good contributions to the process of setting targets. Governors maintain close contact with work in each subject, and their very effective financial planning has been maintained since the last inspection. Additional grants and funds are used for their intended purpose, and supplemented to meet the school's educational priorities, for example, to provide adequate personal support for pupils with special educational needs and to maintain classes with pupils from single year groups. The school raises additional funds from its own resources, and uses them well for the benefit of the pupils. Sponsorship is attracted where possible, for example in plants for the grounds. There is a strong sense of value for money, and commitment to obtaining maximum benefit for pupils, in all aspects of the school's management.
33. The school has sufficient qualified teachers to teach the National Curriculum and meet the additional learning needs of its pupils. Teachers take extensive responsibility for their own professional development, and their levels of professional knowledge and understanding are a significant strength, both in their work with children up to five and with older pupils, particularly where teachers have responsibility for co-ordination. In information and communication technology, for example, the personal interest of the co-ordinator enables all teachers, whatever their previous experience of computers, to teach the National Curriculum to a good standard. The headteacher and co-ordinators monitor teaching and pupils' work closely. Their most recent review of targets is effectively focussed on the needs of higher-attaining, older pupils, although this is not yet sufficiently reflected in teachers' planning. The school's teaching assistants are exceptionally well qualified and experienced for the work they do, and make a crucial contribution to its aims and ethos. The headteacher ensures that assistants' talents are fully used and recognised, for example in the creation of beautiful displays of pupils' work. Administrative staff, and in particular the school secretary, are extensively involved in all aspects of the life of the school, and are very efficient. Midday staff play an important part in maintaining the school's ethos of care and consideration for others, and the school is kept in first-class condition by the caretaker and his team.

34. The school has built up a wide-ranging and attractive collection of resources for learning. The library is well stocked and very well used, and materials and resources throughout the school engage pupils' interest and make learning attractive. The quality of resources reflects the professional skills and interests of the teachers, so that, for example, the school is fully equipped to teach the National Curriculum for art and design, and computer software has been carefully selected to support learning in each subject. Resources in the school grounds are carefully developed and conserved, so that the environment comes to embody the school's key values of care, thoughtfulness and respect.
35. The school's building and grounds provide excellent accommodation. Classrooms and other teaching and learning areas are very well designed to promote learning and social development. Classrooms are grouped to promote co-operation between teachers, but have good soundproofing, so that normal working noise from one class does not interfere with another class's work. The school uses space very well, for example in its housing of the library. The grounds are beautifully laid out and convenient to use. The school's strongly inclusive ethos for learning, which combines an atmosphere of care with high expectations of all pupils, has been enhanced by the excellent facilities in the new building for people with disabilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. To improve standards and the quality of learning further, the headteacher and governors should take the following steps:
- (1) Raise standards in writing among older pupils, by:
 - giving greater priority to writing when planning work, both in English and in other subjects;
 - ensuring that all writing tasks contribute to pupils' writing skills;
 - providing adequate time for pupils to develop and consolidate their skills in writing.
 - ensuring that the higher-attaining pupils are working consistently towards the higher levels of the National Curriculum in writing.
(Paragraphs 1, 4, 9, 12, 14, 17, 27, 31, 44, 48, 50-1, 73, 77-8)
 - (2) Improve the learning of older, higher-attaining pupils, by:
 - ensuring that the higher levels of the National Curriculum are consistently addressed in assessment and planning in all subjects;
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils, in all classes and teaching groups, are consistently working to the standards of which they are capable.
(Paragraphs 1, 4, 9, 11, 14, 17, 27, 52,77)

Minor issues for action.

- Continue to develop arrangements to track progress and set targets in science. (Paragraphs 27, 60)
- Distinguish more clearly between authorised and unauthorised absence. (Paragraphs 8, 26, 30).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	30	52	14	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	234
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	38	38	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	34	36
	Girls	38	38	36
	Total	68	72	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (93)	95 (87)	95 (93)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (97)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	35	33
	Girls	37	36	34
	Total	67	71	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (93)	93 (92)	88 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	178

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	474,503
Total expenditure	478,222
Expenditure per pupil	2071
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,218
Balance carried forward to next year	12,499

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	46	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	42	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	42	0	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	15	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	65	33	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents	44	54	0	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	33	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	39	23	4	11

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

37. Children up to the age of five are in three reception classes. The younger children attend part-time at first, in the mornings. The good quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection. The nationally recommended early learning goals, introduced in September 2000, are fully in place. Children begin with average overall standards for their age, and make good progress in their reception year. By the time children finish their year in the reception classes, they have reached the standards expected for their age, and many exceed them. The school identifies children with particular gifts and talents, for example in mathematics, at an early stage, and gives them suitably challenging work. Provision is also well adapted for children with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language.

Personal, social and emotional development

38. The children make good progress in this area of learning. When they come into school, some have attended the adjacent nursery and others local playgroups and pre-schools. Children in the reception classes learn confidence and are becoming increasingly self-aware. They are keen to share their ideas with adults and other children, and engage adults confidently in conversation, sharing their experiences. Children learn to settle quickly either to tasks given by the teacher or to work they choose for themselves. They can organise their learning, for example putting on aprons or finding the correct pieces of construction equipment for their models. They work well together in groups and are developing good personal independence.

Communication, language and literacy

39. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy in response to good teaching from teachers and teaching assistants. A significant proportion of children begin with weaknesses in speaking and listening, and throughout the school day they are encouraged to listen, pay attention and offer suggestions. Language development is encouraged effectively and imaginative play is given good emphasis. These activities generally result in good learning, although some children still have weaknesses in speaking and listening at five. The children are encouraged to form letters correctly and to attempt their own writing. They are keen to write their own names, and do so clearly and distinctly on their pieces of work. By the time they leave the reception classes, they can write recognisable sentences and have a secure knowledge of the main correspondences between sounds and letters. They respond well to stories, and realise that print conveys meaning. Many recognise some written words at sight, due to the regular reading practice they receive. Overall, standards are above average by the time children start work on the National Curriculum. Children with English as an additional language are identified at an early stage, and quickly learn to communicate in English. The literacy, language and communication skills of children with special educational needs, including those with severe learning difficulties, are very effectively developed, by teachers, teaching assistants and other children.

Mathematical development

40. Children make good progress and reach good standards in mathematics. Most develop a good understanding of numbers, of mathematical concepts and of mathematical language. The children learn to recognise and record numerals, identify two and three-dimensional shapes, and develop ideas about measurement. There is good teaching, based on a well thought out range of activities to keep the children involved and interested in mathematical ideas. The activities provided include a good range of practical work, where the children can learn from first-hand experiences. All children, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, have good opportunities to explore numbers and shapes. For example, they can create accurate repeating patterns, using colours, squares, rectangles and triangles. They have good opportunities to develop their ideas in three dimensions when playing and building with dough and sand, and when designing their own models from construction equipment. Children develop appropriate skills for manipulating numbers and can write these accurately. The school identifies children with gifts and talents for mathematics quickly, and the headteacher and the co-ordinator for children up to five ensure that their abilities are properly developed through challenging work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

41. Provision for children to learn about the world around them is good, with some outstanding use of first-hand experience. They learn about how things grow by planting bulbs and observing living things, such as rabbits, tadpoles and small chicks as they thrive. They are beginning to develop a secure understanding about the past and the passage of time, and have good opportunities to use computers and other technology to support their learning. Children study the local environment, and each year a batch of chicks is incubated in the central area of the suite of reception classes. These are a source of delight to adults and children alike, and contribute much to children's spiritual and moral development as they learn to look after them.

Physical development

42. Children generally make good progress in their physical development, and standards are above average overall by the time they leave the reception classes. The outdoor area provides good opportunities for the children to practise their skills, for example in pedalling and pushing themselves along on the variety of bikes, and in developing other movements such as propelling hoops along. There are effectively-planned lessons for the children to practise throwing, catching and aiming balls and beanbags. However, although there is a variety of equipment for the children to balance and refine their movement, at present there are too few pieces of equipment for them to experience challenging activities involving climbing and jumping. The children's manual skills are developing well. These skills improve as they use a selection of materials and implements, such as pencils, crayons, glue spreaders and scissors.

Creative development

43. The children make very good progress and reach standards that are clearly above average for their age. They learn to draw and use a selection of materials and media, and are taught different techniques. They use the equipment provided for role-play well and create their own stories, for example 'at the vet's' and when using the 'biscuit shop'. Music is well taught. The children have good opportunities to develop their ideas about

the sounds that instruments make, to sing tunefully and to pay attention to the beat and to other singers.

ENGLISH

44. At the time of the last inspection, standards in reading and speaking and listening were above average at seven. Standards were average in writing but below average in spelling. Standards in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were broadly average in reading and writing, though many more pupils reached higher than the nationally expected standard in reading than in writing. These standards were also similar to those achieved by comparable schools. Standards during the inspection were above average in reading and in speaking and listening, and remained broadly average in writing, where higher-attaining pupils were not achieving above-average standards.
45. Low reading standards achieved by boys in the most recent national tests had been effectively addressed by the time of the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs related to literacy make very good progress in response to good specialist teaching and very effective and consistent support in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. All of their work is based on the current work in class, closely related to their specific needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are making good progress in the initial stages of learning English.
46. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening between entering the reception classes and the age of seven. While some five-year-olds have still to develop good listening skills, and often speak in short fragments of sentences, six- and seven-year-olds express themselves clearly and well when answering questions from teachers and when taking part in discussion. They are confident when talking about their work and use technical vocabulary accurately. This progress is the result of the school's consistent attention to speaking and listening skills in all subjects, and to highly skilled questioning by teachers, for example in numeracy lessons. This develops confidence and helps pupils to make their meaning clear to others.
47. By the age of seven, most pupils read with fluency, expression and understanding. Lower-attaining pupils at seven read simple texts with satisfactory accuracy and understanding, while the highest-attaining pupils read powerfully, with excellent expression and dramatic skill. Pupils develop excellent attitudes to books through work in the library, and this contributes to good progress in reading non-fiction. Lower-attaining pupils make good progress in response to individual support from teaching assistants and family and community volunteers, and all pupils benefit from the regular and extensive reading they undertake at home.
48. Younger pupils in the five to seven age range make good progress in writing, including handwriting and spelling, and are now reaching above-average standards for their age in their independent work. Most seven-year-olds reach the standard expected nationally, writing short texts in simple sentences, but much of their written work is brief and they have too few opportunities to compose sustained stories and other longer pieces of writing. Higher-attaining pupils are not yet sufficiently challenged to produce written work that is of appropriate quality or quantity. Standards in spelling have improved since the last inspection, when they were below average, but the overall quality of older pupils' writing has not. The school has identified standards in writing as a problem and is beginning to deal with it. So far, its work is leading to improvements in the writing of younger pupils, but older pupils are not yet writing enough or at the highest standard of which they are capable. Writing in science provides pupils with good opportunities to consolidate and extend their writing skills, but writing in most other subjects does not.

49. The quality of teaching and learning in English ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum and of the National Literacy Strategy. All lessons contain an imaginative range of activities that engage pupils well and contribute effectively to their personal development by encouraging them to share ideas with one another. In one very good lesson, for example, the technique of having a pupil assume the role of a character from a story and answer questions from the class enabled the whole class to explore the character and to identify key features in its make-up. Teachers in all classes manage group work very effectively, encouraging pupils to work independently and responsibly as they develop sufficient maturity. Teachers promote independent reading effectively, encouraging pupils to use the library very well. Much of the marking is carried out alongside the pupils, and helps them to improve their work.
50. The long-term planning of the teaching of reading is good, and teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills very consistently. The teaching of handwriting is sound. Other aspects of writing are taught effectively to younger pupils, but teaching provides too little challenge to higher-attaining older pupils to express themselves in writing to a high standard. In one class, for example, the weekly target, to write accurate sentences, was helping all pupils to reach broadly average standards, but did not take higher-attaining pupils further. Teachers keep very full records and assessments of pupils' work in English, and some reading records are excellent. Assessment is used very well to track pupils' long-term progress, both over their whole school career and from year to year. However, day-to-day assessments are not closely enough linked to the provisions of the National Curriculum, and this also tends to limit teachers' expectations of written work. The quality of homework is good, with regular reading and spelling work.
51. The co-ordination of work in English has enabled the school to improve standards in spelling, and to engage boys' interest in reading. It is helping the school to raise standards among younger pupils in writing, but steps taken to raise the standard of writing among older pupils, particularly those capable of achieving above-average standards, are not yet having an effect.

MATHEMATICS

52. Results in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were above average, and similar to those achieved by comparable schools. Results over the period from 1997 to 2000 have been in line with national trends overall, with no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. During the inspection, standards were also above average at seven, and were the outcome of good teaching and learning. This represents good achievement in the subject. Overall, the school has maintained the good standards achieved at the time of the last inspection, and has improved its provision for pupils to use and apply mathematical skills in solving problems. The school groups older pupils for mathematics according to their attainment in the subject. Pupils in the highest and lowest groups, including those with special educational needs, make good to very good progress. However, some of the more able pupils in the middle group are not being challenged consistently to work at higher levels.
53. Pupils can read and write numerals to 100 and beyond, and use clocks in both digital and analogue styles. As the pupils' confidence increases they learn about multiplication and multiples, for example counting in fives to 100 and beyond. Younger pupils use data very effectively to consider patterns in the weather. They record what they discover, using pictograms and charts, and begin to consider what the data does and does not tell them. Older pupils build well on this, developing good understanding of how to interpret

data, from frequency charts and bar charts. For example, they can analyse the numbers of children staying for school lunches on certain days of the week, and give appropriate reasons for variations. Pupils have good knowledge of fractions and the properties of three-dimensional shapes. Six-year-olds can work out problems using money, and can explain clearly how to create equivalent amounts. They can illustrate how they work out their answers, for instance, adding eight pence and two pence together first because it makes ten pence in total, before adding on the remaining amounts. Higher-attaining younger pupils use larger numbers confidently, and can manipulate number sums, for example, to make up an amount of money using as few coins as possible. Work is matched well to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. These pupils learn well in lessons, but the consistency of learning of some pupils with English as an additional language is harmed by excessively long absences from school.

54. Teaching and learning are good overall, and never less than satisfactory. There is very good teaching of higher-attaining older pupils and of some six-year-olds. The best teaching involves skilled and imaginative number work and data handling, and uses good problem-solving formats. Relationships and class management in these lessons are important strengths, and teachers often show good and appropriate sense of humour. One, for example, very seriously asked her class of six-year-olds if she should look in her purse for a 9p coin. Teachers have good understanding of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy, and use mathematical language well to promote the pupils' learning. Lessons generally move at a good pace, and teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to think and to explain their reasoning. The staff give clear explanations, so that the pupils have the confidence to try different strategies to arrive at their answers.
55. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, some work is not challenging enough for the highest attaining pupils in the class, and some pupils do not sustain concentration well for the whole lesson. There is effective use of computers to promote learning in mathematics in all classes. Teachers mark work regularly and generally give appropriate guidance on what pupils are to learn next in their work. The pupils have homework on a regular basis. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support pupils with special needs. They have very good knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics and are very effective.
56. The co-ordinator for mathematics promotes the subject well, and contributes effectively to the monitoring of teaching and to setting targets. The consistency of teaching and learning benefits from teachers' co-operative planning, and adjustments are made to plans in the light of experience. There are good arrangements for professional development, and information from courses is shared. Resources for mathematics are good overall and there is a good range to support numeracy in the school. Pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are further developed by work in design and technology and geography.

SCIENCE

57. Teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2000 suggested that standards were average rather than better, and below those achieved by similar schools. Standards during the inspection, however, were clearly above those expected nationally, and in line with those in similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language learn well, and the good use of writing in science makes a significant contribution to literacy. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were at least average and often higher. The school has made a good

improvement in standards, which are now more clearly above average.

58. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress in their understanding of electricity and are well aware that a circuit has to be complete for electricity to pass. Through their knowledge and understanding of materials, they are able to describe various ways of sorting these into groups according to their properties. Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of basic life processes by handling and studying the living creatures, including chicks, rabbits and tadpoles, kept in the school. The school also has a very good nature trail in the environmental area, where pupils can see for themselves such things as badger sets and fungi. Pupils' investigative skills have improved since the last inspection. They now carry out tests with predictions of their outcomes, and recognise and explain why the tests are fair.
59. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good, and is good overall. Teachers are confident in teaching science, and have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, which is reflected in their questioning of pupils and their clear and concise explanations. These enable pupils to understand new ideas and to learn scientific vocabulary quickly. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching strategies to gain attention, sustain interest and give pupils a balance of active learning and listening to gain knowledge and understanding. Learning targets are very clear in planning, and are shared with pupils to ensure that all are aware of what they are to learn. In summary sessions at the end of the lesson, teachers follow up these aims, and use pupils' contributions to assess what has been learned and what has not. Teachers make skilful use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking and to consolidate their understanding of scientific concepts, for example in a lesson in which pupils had to match batteries with a variety of appliances and to consider why different batteries might be needed. A brisk pace is maintained, and this helps pupils to sustain concentration.
60. The subject is well led. Earlier weaknesses have been recognised and appropriate strategies have been used to put them right. There are good monitoring systems, which include regular work analysis, analysis of planning and observation of teaching. The scheme of work has given a good framework for the school to work to and resources are good. Information and communication technology is being used more frequently. Assessment is used to inform planning well, and teacher assessment at the age of seven, which does not yet reflect the good standards the school is achieving, has been identified as an area for further training.

ART AND DESIGN

61. Standards in art and design are very good and, at best, excellent, maintaining the high quality of work seen during the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make very good progress.
62. The curriculum for art and design is wide-ranging and creative, allowing pupils to work with a wide variety of materials and techniques. Six-year-olds, for example, reach excellent standards in landscape work, creating bas-relief effects with simple materials such as corrugated cardboard and using vibrant colours in re-creating the effects produced by famous artists. They have very good early experience of designing clay models, and use sketch books very well to experiment with techniques. Seven-year-olds during the inspection were creating a large-scale picture of the children playing in the school playground following their study of Lowry's paintings, and had made beautiful landscapes in the style of Monet, using pastel tissue to create three-dimensional effects that were entirely in the spirit of the original. In all of their work, pupils co-operate very well together and handle implements and materials correctly.
63. Teaching is very good, and at times excellent. Teachers have very good understanding of the subject, and use this imaginatively to develop pupils' techniques and ideas. They plan very well together, leading to a consistency of learning between classes, so that all pupils profit from teachers' best ideas. They teach the pupils very good techniques in art, for example, how to manipulate clay and create effects with a variety of implements to make indentations. Older pupils are given very good guidance on what to look out for to identify the distinctive characteristics of Lowry's work and the different types of media which will give a similar effect. Pupils are encouraged to improve their work and to consider how best to achieve this. Art lessons are very enjoyable and very well managed, with excellent deployment of voluntary help. Good links between art and design, and design and technology, enable six-year-olds to create their own designs for hand puppets and seven-year-olds to create decorations for items they have made. Pupils work co-operatively with visiting artists, and have produced a very attractive banner based on closely observed drawings, combined with a range of dyeing and printing techniques, including batik.
64. Co-ordination is very effective. The co-ordinator is able to offer suggestions to enhance the artistic experiences of the pupils, and these are incorporated into teachers' plans, often contributing to teaching of a very high standard from colleagues. This work builds well on the good standards children reach in the reception classes. Resources for art and design are very good and well organised. The subject is a strength of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

65. Seven-year-olds achieve above average standards. This represents an improvement on standards during the last inspection, which were less clearly above average.
66. Pupils reach consistently good standards in work across a broad range of projects, including puppets, model vehicles, cooking, levers and toys. They sew, cut, glue and measure carefully and well, and are effectively encouraged to try techniques out for themselves, such as the making of puppets with moving parts, leading to glove puppets, where the skills of sewing are introduced. All the projects contain a strong emphasis on design, and on using design to guide the process of making objects. Pupils can explain what they want to do, and evaluate their work well. The application and concentration on

the face of a seven-year-old boy, as he sawed and sanded a piece of balsa while constructing a toy of his own design, showed the obvious enjoyment pupils take in the subject. They pay good attention to safety when using sharp tools such as saws and scissors.

67. These standards are the result of good teaching. Teachers use focused practical activities to develop skills effectively. Resources are very well used, and the deployment and briefing of learning support assistants and parent helpers are first class. Good management and organisation of the class ensure that pupils are well behaved and interested in their work. Well-planned lessons, open-ended questioning and challenging projects all help pupils to make good progress. Assessment is regularly undertaken during lessons, with more detailed assessment at the end of the projects.
68. The subject is led and managed well. An effective policy and scheme of work ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Resources are very good and the school building provides plenty of space for practical activities, including facilities for cooking. Design and technology contributes to personal and social development by encouraging pupils to work carefully, to plan ahead and to co-operate with others.

GEOGRAPHY

69. Standards in geography were good, with some very good features, at the time of the last inspection, and have been sustained. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, learn well and make good progress.
70. Young pupils learn about their immediate surroundings by exploring and talking about the school and its environment. They learn about the features and purposes of buildings by going to look at some that are close to the school, and make good recordings in the form of labelled drawings. This work is then extended very well in art, where pupils make houses from slabs of clay. Pupils reach good standards in studying an imaginary island, and gain good early understanding of the main points of the compass. They achieve very good standards for their age in surveys of weather patterns, which also contribute well to their understanding of data handling.
71. Older pupils reach good standards in their study of the continent of Africa. They are extremely interested in the work, and are very keen to talk about how the lives of people differ due to effects of the location such as water supply and climate. They understand the purpose and use of maps and atlases, and have a good grasp of detail in their study and use of local maps. Pupils develop above-average understanding of maps for their age, and quickly pick out different lettering to indicate cities and the parts of the British Isles as well as being able to show where rivers and mountains are. They are very keen to show their excellent understanding of the reasons for the different types of weather at the poles and the Equator.
72. Pupils' enthusiasm for geography is the direct result of clear and interesting teaching. They make good progress and develop very positive attitudes which also contribute to their social, moral and cultural development by helping them understand the wider community than their family or the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make good progress.
73. Due to timetabling, observation of teaching during the inspection was limited. Evidence from pupils' work, and from the teaching that was seen, shows that teaching is good overall and is at times excellent. The carefully-planned analysis of weather for six-year-

olds, for example, involves sampling weather in the morning and afternoon, collating data and comparing patterns in weather between months in different seasons – during the inspection, between January and March. The analysis of this data, in particular when weather patterns were not as might be expected, gave pupils an outstanding introduction to statistical method. Good use is made of the local area to give pupils first-hand experience in order to develop geographical skills. Homework is used very well, and the use of the area around the school benefits greatly from the help of parent volunteers. However, while geography makes good contributions to the development of pupils' skills in mathematics, speaking and listening and reading, the subject is not making the contribution it should to the development of writing.

74. The curriculum is well organised, developing pupils' geographical skills systematically, and the school has a good range of resources, including the developing nature trail, which is heightening pupils' understanding of the environment.

HISTORY

75. Standards are above average by the age of seven, and the school has maintained the good quality of its work since the last inspection.
76. The younger pupils learn about the past by looking at places that they know, such as houses in the locality, to identify features that will show that they are old. This knowledge is built on as they move through the school by close examination of household artefacts and toys. Teachers develop pupils' observational skills carefully, so that they learn to make very good deductions about the purpose of items such as Victorian water pumps and potato mashers. At seven, pupils can place dolls accurately in a chronological line by considering the materials of which they are made and the style of their faces and clothes.
77. Older pupils develop good knowledge and understanding for their age of the lives of people in the past by learning about events, such as the Gunpowder Plot. Pupils during the inspection discussed with their friends the reasons for the plot and decided that it was because Guy Fawkes 'didn't like the King and his ideas'. They learn about famous people in the past such as Louis Braille and Grace Darling, and can talk in some detail about why they are famous. However, pupils' recording of this work in writing only just reaches average standards. Teachers encourage pupils to consider a range of information sources such as the library, drawings, pictures and objects from the past to support their learning. This work is successful because teachers have a clear understanding of the subject, plan questions carefully and design tasks that challenge pupils to explore the past. Excellent use is made of homework, with imaginative tasks such as asking parents to describe their own favourite toy.
78. Pupils very much enjoy their investigations into the past by examining original and replica objects. Animated discussions went on during lessons to try to explain how a pump worked, and pupils became engrossed in trying to decide whether a potato masher would work on onions or other vegetables. Pupils are keen to contribute to debates, and talk about historical events and people with interest. This high level of interest helps pupils to pay attention to detail and to begin to understand changes that occur with the passage of time. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make equally good progress. However, the contribution of history to literacy is under-developed, particularly in writing.
79. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Teachers have good understanding of the subject and of the National Curriculum, and plan work carefully to

develop pupils' skills across a broad range of activities. They motivate and encourage pupils to think hard about the subject, to investigate the evidence contained in everyday objects and to explore ideas. Lessons proceed at a lively pace and with shared enjoyment. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is some blunting of the focus of the lesson, and pupils pay too much attention to issues such as the condition of objects or models, rather than their design and purpose.

80. The subject is competently led by the co-ordinator, who has also ensured that a very good range of resources is available to give pupils first-hand experience of historical enquiry. Pupils' interest in the subject is further developed through visits and through highly attractive displays.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

81. Standards at seven are above those expected nationally. While this was also true at the time of the last inspection, the range of pupils' skills has been effectively extended, and computers are integrated into all aspects of learning throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs learn well in the subject and make effective use of computers to build up their skills in number work.
82. Learning for pupils aged five to seven builds effectively on the good basic skills they bring from the reception classes. By the time they are seven, most pupils use a broad range of programs with confidence, and some reach very high standards, for example in using art programs to create pictures with variety of brush styles in different colours. Pupils understand the use of information and communication technology outside the school, explaining how computers are used in shops and libraries. By the age of seven, they can load the CD-ROM and explain how to find information using the computer. Pupils have good understanding of control technology and use programmable floor robots skilfully. Using a data-handling program, they successfully organise information and display their findings in graph form.
83. Six- and seven-year-olds use word processing independently, printing and saving their documents, and add design features, for example when preparing invitations to Cinderella's wedding. Although pupils' typing skills are slow, they begin to develop familiarity with the keyboard from six onwards, when the layout is used well as part of spelling lessons. Pupils understand the directional keys, know that words have to be separated by the space bar, and can use the shift key to produce capital letters, particularly when typing their name. Pupils are familiar with e-mail and all classes have their own e-mail address.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All of the teachers and teaching assistants in the school, including those who did not use computers during their training as teachers, operate and use computers confidently, so that learning is very consistent from class to class. Lessons are very well planned, and are followed up consistently, so that each pupil has a good opportunity to practise and consolidate his or her skills. Teachers track pupils' progress in detail, using the assessment system developed by the co-ordinator. Their use of computers to support learning in other subjects is particularly effective in mathematics, geography, art and English. Pupils enjoy using the computer and confidently talk about their previous experiences. They treat equipment with respect, and work sensibly without direct supervision.
85. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, and has identified a broad range of software to support learning across the school. She provides very good technical

support for colleagues and ensures that training is directly related to their needs, although the lack of specialised technical support places considerable additional demands on her time. The overall quality of resources is good.

MUSIC

86. Pupils make good progress, and seven-year-olds reach standards above those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The school has maintained the quality of its work in the subject since the last inspection.
87. Six-year-olds sing tunefully and are well aware of the established routines and warm-up exercises that form part of every lesson. They have good opportunities to explore different instruments, some of which are recent acquisitions from The Gambia. Seven-year-olds are learning how to create mood, and compose entertaining accompaniments to well known tales such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these sessions and gain much from them.
88. The pupils are well behaved during their music lessons and often show very positive attitudes and responses to the teaching they receive. They are also becoming increasingly aware of other children as performers and that there is a need to co-operate to perform well. They handle instruments properly, explore sound, and are learning how to ensure that sound travels as it should, for example by holding the instruments correctly, so as not to 'block' the sound.
89. Teaching is of good quality. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of music, including the National Curriculum, and use musical terminology well to promote learning. Lessons proceed at a good pace, and pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. Teachers explain work clearly, giving pupils confidence to experiment, for example in creating sound effects. Technology is used effectively. For example, taped music and sound effects are used to illustrate to the pupils how different cultures use instruments to convey feelings. Pupils have good opportunities to learn to play a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Their good behaviour and attitudes contribute positively to learning and help to create a happy atmosphere in the class.
90. The co-ordinator for music has a high level of professional skill and understanding and promotes the subject very well. Lessons are observed regularly, and staff can observe and work in tandem with the co-ordinator to develop their own expertise and understanding. Her skills are complemented by those of several other teachers, whose musical ability enriches the curriculum and provides a very good example for pupils. The pupils' work is assessed regularly and recordings are kept of their achievements, for example of Christmas productions. Resources for music are plentiful and of good quality. Six-year-olds take part enthusiastically in the local music festival, and seven-year-olds have their own production at the end of each year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

91. The school provides a full programme of physical education, including dance, games and gymnastics, and standards at seven are above average. There has been substantial improvement in standards and teaching in the subject since the last inspection.
92. Seven-year-olds show good control of their bodies during jumping, hopping and turning movements. Pupils use their own space well when travelling, altering speed on a given command with an awareness of safety for others. All lessons start with an appropriate and entertaining warm-up. Pupils understand the importance of warming up before an

activity, can explain the effects on their hearts and know the benefits of exercise. Most have developed their throwing and catching skills well, and can use several different passes, such as chest pass, bounce pass, over arm pass and under arm pass. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress - in a lesson for seven-year-olds, for example, a pupil with special educational needs was the most confident and proficient in the class at throwing and catching. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of tactics and were quick to grasp where to stand when defending an area.

93. The teaching of physical education has improved since the last inspection and is now good, with very good teaching in some lessons. Lessons are well constructed and planned, with very good control and management of the pupils. This ensures that all pupils are fully involved in their work and make good progress. Good use is made of pupils to demonstrate techniques, and these demonstrations often draw spontaneous applause from the rest of the class. At all times teachers give appropriate attention to safety. All pupils approach physical education with enthusiasm and are eager to improve their skills. They work well together in pairs or small groups and are always keen to show what they can do. These attitudes make an important contribution to learning.
94. The subject is well managed, with good long-term planning based on a well-designed scheme of work. Physical education contributes to pupils' social development by encouraging them to work together, take turns and play by the rules. The school has a very good hall, large playground and good resources. Although there are no opportunities for competitive sport within the school, many pupils involve themselves in various activities, such as rugby, football, hockey, swimming and squash, organised by local sports clubs. The annual sports day, on a local recreation ground, is well attended by parents and friends of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

95. As at the last inspection, standards in religious education exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the age of seven. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
96. Young pupils learn about the Passover meal and its importance to Jews. They can link the Passover to the story of the Exodus and can name the items on the Seder plate. They are very firm in their knowledge of the story of Old Testament figures such as Moses. They develop an increasing awareness of the importance of beliefs to Muslims, Jews and Christians. They show evident respect for holy books and understand the importance of handling them correctly and with respect, for example, washing their hands before touching the Qur'an. Seven-year-olds reflect on the meaning and importance of celebrations such as weddings. All pupils learn the Christmas story and can re-tell its main features well. Older pupils learn about the story of Easter, and show mature understanding of the underlying features, such as why some people did not like Jesus and what Easter means to Christians. Good links are made between religious education and science, when pupils consider the symbolism of lights in festivals such as Divali and Christmas. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and can explain very clearly what they have done.
97. The quality of teaching in religious education ranges from good to very good, and is good overall. Teachers are very well prepared for lessons, and give simple and clear

explanations in answer to questions. This in turn stimulates further discussion and sensible questions from the pupils that deepen their understanding. The library contains an adequate selection of books about a variety of religions and a very good display of the key texts of major world faiths. There is an adequate selection of artefacts to help bring the subject alive for the pupils.

98. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to religious education with the thoughtful consideration of the natural world around them during spring linked to the Christian belief of new life at Easter. This also contributes to spiritual development, as pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the beauty of spring. Work in religious education is effectively co-ordinated and makes an important contribution to the aims of the school.